

Lincoln—Jennifer Newell, a 37 year-old mother of two from Lincoln who hauled in five Cornhusker State Games gold medals in three different sports, has been named the 2007 Female Athlete of the Year. Kearney's Dante Rodriguez, 11, won male honors by following up his 4-gold medal CSG Wrestling performance with a national championship at the State Games of America in Colorado Springs last weekend.

Carolyn Foster, a 59 year-old badminton player from St. Paul earned the E. Lee Todd Senior Athlete of the Year Award, winning a pair of bronze medals in the CSG Badminton competition.

Newell competed in swimming for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from 1988-90, but then left competitive sports for 16 years to focus on her medical education/practice and starting a family. She returned to competition in 2006, adding biking and running to her training regimen with the goal of competing in a triathlon. In less than two years, she rose to the top of the state's female triathlete rankings, winning this year's CSG overall female title in an impressive 1:12:31.

Prior to the Triathlon, Newell earned the overall female gold in Open Water Swimming and three gold medals in the CSG Adult Swim Meet at Woods Pool.

Rodriguez earned four gold medals in the CSG Wrestling meet. Two weeks later, in the State Games of America, he captured the gold medal in the boys 70 pound weight class. In six years of CSG competition, he has amassed 21 wrestling medals and has earned the title of CSG Outstanding Wrestler three times.

Newell and Rodriguez have been nominated for National Congress of State Games Athlete Of the Year Awards, which will be presented at the NCSG Annual Banquet in Lincoln on Sep. 28. The banquet is held at the conclusion of the National State Games Symposium which will be hosted for the first time by the Nebraska Sports Council.

Foster is regarded as a champion of the fitness benefits of badminton as well as one of the more popular players, not only at the CSG, but also at regional and national events. She is a P.E. Teacher, volleyball coach, as well as an accomplished racquetball player. The CSG Senior Athlete of the Year Award is named after E. Lee Todd, a native of Grant, who resumed a stellar high school and college athletic career after 40 inactive years to become a regular CSG multi-medalist and a national-caliber masters track & field athlete well into his 80's.

The 2007 Cornhusker State Games were held July 20-29 in Lincoln with 12,008 athletes participating in 59 sports. Medal results for all sports, as well as full results for many are available at [CornhuskerStateGames.com](http://CornhuskerStateGames.com). Photos from many sports can be viewed and/or purchased at [AllStarSportsPhotography.com](http://AllStarSportsPhotography.com).

The 2008 Cornhusker State Games are scheduled for July 18-27. The Games are conducted by the Nebraska Sports Council and sponsored by BNSF Railways, the Lincoln Journal Star, the Nebraska National Guard and other Nebraska Sponsors. More

information on Nebraska Sports Council programs can be found at [NebraskaSportsCouncil.com](http://NebraskaSportsCouncil.com) or by calling 1-800-304-2637.