



2023 Collegiate Award Winners Announced

May 11, 2023 - The United States Fencing Coaches Association is pleased to announce the winners of the 2022-23 Collegiate awards. Representing men's and women's programs, the USFCA presents both overall National Collegiate awards and Division III awards. All awards were determined by a nationwide vote of USFCA member fencing programs.

In addition to the Collegiate Award winners, starting this season the USFCA presents two different recognition awards. The Community Service Recognition Award recognizes those collegiate members who demonstrated strong commitment to serving their communities. The Excellence in Communications Recognition Award recognizes those who provided strong communications support and/or press coverage of NCAA fencing. Those who are being recognized this year are included in this announcement.

National Collegiate Men's Team Award Winners

Coach of the Year: Gia Kvaratskhelia, University of Notre Dame

Assistant Coach of the Year: Matt Zich, Brandeis University

Epee Athlete of the Year: Jonas Hansen, Harvard University

Foil Athlete of the Year: Marcello Olivares, University of Notre Dame

Sabre Athlete of the Year: Luke Linder, University of Notre Dame

Foil Newcomer of the Year: Chase Emmer, University of Notre Dame

Sabre Newcomer of the Year: Lev BenAvram, Brandeis University

National Collegiate Women's Team Award Winners

Coach of the Year: Zoltan Dudas, Princeton University and Gia Kvaratskhelia, University of Notre Dame

Assistant Coach of the Year: Matt Zich, Brandeis University

Epee Athlete of the Year: Karen Wang, Northwestern University

Foil Athlete of the Year: Lauren Scruggs, Harvard University

Sabre Athlete of the Year: Nora Burke, Columbia University and Maggie Shealy, Brandeis University

Epee Newcomer of the Year: Karen Wang, Northwestern University

Foil Newcomer of the Year: Velma Hall, Denison University

Sabre Newcomer of the Year: Megumi Oishi, Northwestern University

Division III Men's Team Award Winners

Coach of the Year: Ben Bratton, New York University

Assistant Coach of the Year: Matt Zich, Brandeis University

Epee Athlete of the Year: Ian Adler, New York University

Foil Athlete of the Year: Farr Dickson, New York University

Sabre Athlete of the Year: Antonio Escueta III, Brandeis University

Epee Newcomer of the Year: Brian Li, Vassar College

Foil Newcomer of the Year: Farr Dickson, New York University

Sabre Newcomer of the Year: Lev BenAvram, Brandeis University

Division III Women's Team Award Winners

Coach of the Year: Rob Charlton, Wellesley College

Assistant Coach of the Year: Matt Zich, Brandeis University

Epee Athlete of the Year: Olivia Barnes, Vassar College

Foil Athlete of the Year: Maria Stamos, New York University

Sabre Athlete of the Year: Maggie Shealy, Brandeis University

Epee Newcomer of the Year: Grace (Xin Yi) Xu, Wellesley College

Foil Newcomer of the Year: Gina (Ching-Tzu) Huang, Wellesley College

Sabre Newcomer of the Year: Sharon (Shang) Huang, Wellesley College

Community Service Recognition Awards

The USFCA is pleased to recognize the following individuals and groups for their community service work during the 2022-23 season: Annika Santos, New York University. Read below to learn more about the work done by these teams and individuals.

Annika Santos – New York University

Within the past year, Annika has worked in service mostly for the New York homeless community. With NYU's Catholic Center, she has done Homeless Outreach once a week. Here, she speaks to the homeless community around NYU about their lives and their interests in order to form a more inclusive culture. Annika also buys them needed goods like food, clothes, etc. As the Director of Service of her residential hall council last year, Annika was also actively making programs to support the homeless. For example, in a blanket making event, she gathered University Hall residents to create and distribute blankets for the homeless during the winter months. As a sophomore, she became a member of the Deans Service Honors Corps, where she ran a massive school-wide food drive for Bowery mission, as well as created 60 sanitary kits for the organization. This spring, Annika will be using the resources of her position to create a book drive program, where donated books will be sent to poorer communities in the Philippines.

Outside of service for the homeless, she has also fundraised— using a bake sale within her residence hall — for the Adolescent Health Center of Mount Sinai, specifically their Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention Service. She has also assisted with a book drive within NYU, where donated textbooks could be offered to students in order to save on resources.

Excellence in Communications Recognition Awards

The USFCA is pleased to recognize the following individuals for their work in Athletics Communications and press coverage of the sport during the 2022-23 season: Ricky Baptist of Denison University and Josh Podolsky of Wellesley College. Read below to learn more about the work done by these individuals.

Ricky Baptist – Denison University

Since taking over as Denison's Sports Information Director in the fall of 2021, Ricky has transformed the Athletic Communications Department. Most importantly, he's taken great care to learn the sport of fencing and that care shows in everything he does from the authority of his write-ups to the ideas for stories he pitches to the coaches, to the amazing speed at which he responds to any emails or questions and with which he gets every story out. His enthusiasm has pushed the visibility of Denison fencing to a broad range of people, including administration. From a coach's perspective, Ricky has been a joy to work with and a real asset in bringing broader attention to the sport we love.

Josh Podolsky – Wellesley College

Josh was terrific for Wellesley this season. He provided outstanding press releases done within hours (or less) of completed competitions, terrific live-streaming including live scoring on broadcast, conscientious and thorough coverage of all of their competitions.