

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Connecticut Golfer Selected as Section 1 Recipient of NFHS  
National High School Spirit of Sport Award**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 29, 2012) — **James Burgoyne**, a golfer at Darien (Connecticut) High School, has been selected as the 2012 Section I recipient of the “National High School Spirit of Sport Award” by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

The National High School Spirit of Sport Award was created by the NFHS to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the spirit of sport that represent the core mission of education-based athletics.

At Darien High School, Burgoyne has been a four-year varsity golf team member, capped by being selected captain his senior year. He has placed highly in several metropolitan PGA golf tournaments during that time.

Burgoyne has been equally outstanding in the classroom, where he has maintained a 3.91 grade-point average. A member of the National Honor Society, Burgoyne takes several AP and honors courses, and he scored a 2,200 on his SAT.

While embodying the ideals of exemplary athletic and academic achievement is outstanding in and of itself, what has really set Burgoyne apart from the crowd is a volunteer program that he developed as a mere sophomore.

At that time, Burgoyne wanted to do something to support America’s troops overseas and their families stateside. He became aware of the PGA’s “Birdies for the Brave” program in which sponsors donate a certain amount of money per birdie made, and he approached Darien High School golf coach Tom O’Donnell to see if there might be a way in which the golf team could become involved with it.

“I was immediately struck by two things,” O’Donnell said. “First, this is a great idea, and second, what an impressive and mature young man to show such empathy, gratitude and initiative. As a direct result of his efforts, \$3,500 was raised and donated to the program on behalf of the Darien High School golf team.

“That alone would have been significant, but while communicating with the PGA Tour on the project, I discovered that Darien High School was the first high school in the country to be involved with the program. As a result of our success, the PGA Tour decided to initiate a ‘Birdies for the Brave Golf Team Pledge Program,’ and now other teams are starting to get involved.

“Utilizing sports to help others is one of the most positive values of athletics and James Burgoyne has helped remind us of that. In addition, he has also reminded us that charitable work in sports is not the sole responsibility of the professional leagues and that each of us can use the love of sports to make a positive impact on the lives of others. James Burgoyne started all of this in motion, but there is no telling where it will end or how many people will be helped because one athlete used his love of sport to show his gratitude and appreciation to those who provide the safety and security he enjoys.”

The NFHS divides the nation into eight geographical sections. The states in Section I are Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Nominations for this award were generated through NFHS member state associations and reviewed by the NFHS Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee composed of state association staff members.

While the national winner will be recognized July 8 at the NFHS Summer Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, the section winners will be recognized within their respective states and will receive awards before the end of the current school year.

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### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and Rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school

coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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