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THREE WCHA MEN'S AND WOMEN'S STUDENT-ATHLETES NOMINATED FOR HOCKEY HUMANITARIAN AWARD

LSSU's Nick Kossoff, Wisconsin's Annie Pankowski and Ohio State's Jacyn Reeves among 17 candidates for national community service honor

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – Jan. 11, 2019 – One men's and two women's Western Collegiate Hockey Association student-athletes are among the candidates for the 2019 Hockey Humanitarian Award, the Hockey Humanitarian Award Foundation announced Thursday.

Lake Superior State goaltender **Nick Kossoff** (Sr., West Des Moines, Iowa), Wisconsin forward **Annie Pankowski** (Sr., Laguna Hills, Calif.) and Ohio State forward **Jacyn Reeves** (Sr., Holmen, Wis.) are three of 17 candidates from all levels NCAA men's and women's hockey for this year's award.

"We want to congratulate Nick, Annie and Jacyn as nominees for the Hockey Humanitarian Award," WCHA men's president and commissioner **Bill Robertson** and women's commissioner and vice president **Katie Million** said in a joint statement. "It is a tremendous honor just to be considered for what is one of the most important awards in our sport. Their selection also highlights one of the core values of the WCHA – personal growth and development. They are three of numerous student-athletes in our men's and women's leagues who willingly and actively give their time and effort to worthy causes in their communities."

A three-year member of Lake Superior State's leadership council, **Kossoff** consistently represents LSSU and Laker Athletics in local schools and with many outreach opportunities. He has been active with the United Way of the Eastern Upper Peninsula – helping organize and distribute food in the annual 'Giving Thanks' Thanksgiving food distribution event, assisting with their grant allocation process, volunteering in the chili cook-off event and other initiatives. Kossoff has also been a leading member of the team in assisting with Check.Slash.Survive, the Laker Hockey cancer awareness and fundraising event. Additionally, the West Des Moines, Iowa, native is involved with various outreach opportunities with the youth of Sault Ste. Marie – as a Pen Pal to local classrooms and as a youth hockey coach. Kossoff's leadership extends into the classroom as well, as he achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA in the Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2018 and Fall 2018 semesters. He has never received a grade lower than an A- and currently holds a 3.956 GPA, while majoring in kinesiology with a focus on rehabilitation services and human performance with a secondary major as a health/fitness specialist.

In addition to her time on the ice, **Pankowski**, a zoology major with plans to become a veterinarian, has spent nearly her entire Badger career volunteering with OccuPaws, an organization that trains and pairs service dogs with the visually impaired in Wisconsin and neighboring states. After sitting in on guide dog training sessions during the spring semester of her freshman year, the Laguna Beach, California native began to house and train dogs herself, usually for one to two weeks at a time. Dogs in-training accompany Pankowski everywhere, from classes, to practices, to video sessions and more. As her involvement with OccuPaws grew and she began to take dogs for longer periods of time, all while balancing a rigorous academic regimen and the demands of being a student-athlete.

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Pankowski and her most recent trainee, Brandy, have spent more than 1,000 hours together. In addition to Pankowski's efforts raising the dogs, she also has helped organize fundraisers for Occupaws and has served as a mentor to other students at Wisconsin that are involved in the organization.

Throughout her time at OSU, **Reeves** has set the example for what a student-athlete can achieve, both on the ice and off. She's played a vital role in helping the Buckeyes reach new heights on the ice, helping get the team to its first Frozen Four in program history. Off the ice, Reeves earned the Elite 90 award, given to the student-athlete with the highest grade-point-average that's competing for a NCAA championship. In addition to the rigors of playing hockey at the highest level, and maintaining stellar grades, She has spearheaded multiple community service operations for the team. Either on her own, or with the team, Reeves has spent upwards of 300 hours volunteering at food pantries, the Make-A-Wish foundation, Ronald McDonald House, and the 2nd and 7 Foundation.

Presented annually since 1996, the Hockey Humanitarian Award recognizes a deserving college hockey student-athlete who makes significant contributions to his or her team and the community-at-large through leadership in volunteerism.

Finalists for the Hockey Humanitarian Award will be announced in February. The 2019 recipient will be honored in a ceremony on Friday, April 12 during the NCAA Men's Frozen Four weekend in Buffalo, N.Y.

About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association Men's League

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association, among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in all of collegiate athletics, will proudly mark its 67th season of men's competition in 2018-19. The 10-team Division 1 conference consists of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (Chargers), the University of Alaska Anchorage (Seawolves), the University of Alaska (Nanooks), Bemidji State University (Beavers), Bowling Green State University (Falcons), Ferris State University (Bulldogs), Lake Superior State University (Lakers), Michigan Technological University (Huskies), Minnesota State University (Mavericks) and Northern Michigan University (Wildcats).

About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association Women's League

The Women's League of the Western Collegiate Hockey Association is celebrating 20 Years of Excellence during 2018-19 anniversary season. The nation's premier women's hockey conference, WCHA member institutions have won a record 16 national championships since the league's inception in 1999 (including 15 of a possible 18 NCAA titles), while producing seven Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award winners, 98 All-Americans and numerous Olympic and national team members. The seven-team, NCAA Division 1 conference consists of: Bemidji State University (Beavers), the University of Minnesota (Golden Gophers), the University of Minnesota Duluth (Bulldogs), Minnesota State University (Mavericks), Ohio State University (Buckeyes), St. Cloud State University (Huskies) and the University of Wisconsin (Badgers).

For more information on both leagues, visit wcha.com.

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