

## Winners of the Tom Longboat 2017 National Awards Announced

OTTAWA, (Oct 2, 2017) - The Aboriginal Sport Circle is pleased to announce the 2017 winners of the prestigious Tom Longboat Award. **James Lavallee** is named the male Aboriginal athlete of year and **Joy Spearchief-Morris** is named female Aboriginal athlete of year. - [The Tom Longboat Awards](#) were established in 1951 to recognize Aboriginal athletes for their outstanding contributions to sport in Canada. The Awards provide a forum for acknowledging the growth and strength of the Aboriginal sport movement in Canada and its' tremendous impact on sport development from community level participation to elite level competition.

James Lavallee is a member of the Junior National Canoe/Kayak team, a proud Metis, loves the outdoors and is currently studying Environmental Science at the University of Manitoba.

"James Lavallee demonstrates daily the positive attributes of being a leader. James quietly leads by example and speaks volumes by his actions" explained Dave Anderson, Team Manitoba Canada Games head coach. "James has a deep respect for all aspects of his sport. As James has grown, he has become more aware of his heritage and embraced it. This self-awareness of who he is seems fitting for someone in a water sport, as his respect for the environment plays a daily role in his life."

Joy Spearchief-Morris is a role model both on and off the field. She is both a multi-sport athlete and track and field champion, recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in History and minor in First Nations Studies from University of Western Ontario, is Academic All-Canadian student athlete and is an active volunteer within the Indigenous community.

"On the track she was an OUA 1<sup>st</sup> team All-star and CIS 1<sup>st</sup> team All-Canadian multiple years. She has also found time to volunteer where she is most passionate and has been an incredible role model to indigenous youth", described Vickie Croley, Head Track and Field Coach, Western University.

The two national recipients will be recognized as award winners at Canada's Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on November 9, 2017 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

"The Aboriginal Sport Circle is very pleased to recognize these two outstanding athletes and their contributions to sport and community development. We celebrate the positive role models they represent both for our youth and leaders of tomorrow" commented Heather Kaulbach, Executive Director Aboriginal Sport Circle. "We are also very grateful for our partnership with Canada's Sports Hall of Fame and their support of our 2017 award winners".

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For additional information on the Aboriginal Sport Circle, the national voice in sport, fitness, culture and recreation pursuits for the Aboriginal peoples in Canada please refer to [www.aboriginalsportcircle.ca](http://www.aboriginalsportcircle.ca).

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