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Press release: Steinmark Award, 2023.

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## **Mason Rowland, Durango High School, Recipient of 2023 CHSCA Freddie Steinmark Award**

Mason Rowland is a true all-around student athlete who is the complete package. Mason is a three-sport All-State athlete for the Durango Demons who has been exceptional in volleyball, basketball and soccer throughout her decorated career. Mason was enjoying a much needed break vacationing with her family in Hawaii when learning the news of her selection. "I am so happy and so proud, but also surprised. This is such a great honor."

Mason is the 51<sup>st</sup> female winner of the Steinmark Award. The Steinmark Award honors Freddie Steinmark, who excelled in football, basketball and baseball while attending Wheat Ridge High School in the 1960s. He was also an outstanding student and was active in several school and community-oriented endeavors before attending the University of Texas, where he helped the Longhorns to the national football title in 1969. He died from cancer in 1971 at the age of 22.

"This award is about more than just achievements on the court or field, but also about leadership and giving of yourself to others. Mr. Steinmark was dealt a much more serious blow, but his response to his diagnosis was incredible. When I was hurt during the volleyball season and wasn't at my best physically, I needed to be at my best for teammates, my family, my community and my family (like Freddie was). Through my adversity, I have learned to be a more powerful leader."

Mason had been a two-time first team all-conference volleyball selection, team captain, Southwest League Player of the Year and was two-time state honorable mention before injuring her back early in the volleyball season this past fall.

Rowland, a Colorado Mesa basketball commit, rebounded from her back injury and finished off her high school athletic career with a first team all-state selection in basketball where she was the Southwest League Player of the Year for the second time and led her team to a trip to the Final Four. Mason led her team in points, rebounds and assists. She was a four-time first team all-conference selection and is the all-time leading scoring in Durango basketball history with 1,412 points. Mason participated in "The Show" All Star basketball game and was invited to play in the CHSCA All State basketball game this summer.

She followed up basketball season with an equally impressive campaign on the soccer field. A two-time first team all-state selection, she led the Demons back to the state tournament after a semifinal run during her junior campaign. Mason led Durango in goals in back-to-back seasons while racking up every league accolade possible and has truly been the engine and leader of the Demon soccer program. Her coach Melissa Halonen commented, "Mason competes at the highest level every day. She holds herself to the highest standards; practicing on her own, being a student of the game and being cognizant of exactly what each player needs on the team to support and motivate them to keep going and be their best."

While her athletic accomplishments are many, her impact on her school and community helps Mason stand out among the elite. It is not lost on her the difference she has been able to make in the Durango area and strives to leave a legacy in which they can all be proud. She loves mentoring and working with younger athletes. "I am now one of those athletes that younger kids in the community look to as a leader. It is a privilege to have Durango's future athletes approach me and tell me how I have impacted and inspired them."

In the classroom and at school, Mason maintained over a 4.2 GPA while loading her schedule with numerous AP courses and was first team academic all-state in all three sports her junior and senior year. Mason is an active member of National Honor Society; she leads tutoring sessions in the school and is involved in the Link Leader program where she helped lead the transition of freshman coming into Durango High School.

The first girl to win the Steinmark Award was Anne Vento of Pueblo Centennial in 1974. Dave Logan of Wheat Ridge was the first boys' winner of the award in 1972. In 2022, Amanda Licht of Kent Denver received the girls' Steinmark Award and Dallas Macias of Regis Jesuit was the recipient for the boys. The Colorado High School Coaches Association is proud to be the sponsor of the Freddie Steinmark Award and congratulates the athletes, and their coaches, who were nominated for this award.

Finalists for the 2023 Steinmark Award: Samantha Darnell, Windsor; Jensen Renquist, Julesburg; Brakelle Westphal, Springfield.