

## AAU Strength Sports Recognition Program

The AAU was founded in 1888 by William Buckingham Curtis to establish standards and uniformity in amateur sport. During its early years, the AAU served as a leader in international sport, representing the United States in the international sports federations. Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) is one of the largest and oldest non-profit, volunteer sports organizations in the United States, and it is now more than 125 years old. AAU was involved in promoting and sanctioning Olympic weightlifting in the mid-1900s; into the 1970s, the AAU worked closely with the Olympic movement to prepare athletes for the Olympic Games.

AAU was the first sports organization to sanction powerlifting as a sport. In 1964, the AAU sanctioned its first powerlifting meet at York Barbell in York, PA, and the sport of powerlifting was born. In 1965, AAU sanctioned its first national powerlifting championships, also at York Barbell. In 2012, AAU initiated competition in Feats of Strength under AAU Powerlifting, and in 2013 added combine as a competition. AAU also aligned both AAU Powerlifting and AAU Weightlifting under the overarching division of AAU Strength Sports.

Today, AAU sanctions national and international championships in powerlifting, Olympic weightlifting, Feats of Strength and combine, and the AAU Strength Sports Recognition program extends to all four sport disciplines. Each year, recognition will be given to AAU athletes, officials, and coaches who demonstrate the highest standards of athletic achievement, sportsmanship, and dedication to the ideals of AAU Strength Sports. Candidates for these awards must meet strict criteria, and the awards will be given at one of the following events:

1. AAU 3-lift or single-lift World Powerlifting Championships;
2. AAU World Weightlifting Championships; or
3. AAU Junior Olympic Games (for youth and teen competitors).

The awards represent the highest recognition bestowed upon any AAU Strength Sports member. Because of the rigorous criteria involved, some awards may not be given in a specific year. **A detailed resume outlining the member's activities in the strength sports should be submitted to the AAU Strength Sports Board of Directors for consideration; the cutoff date for submission of nominations for the Brother Bennett award, Athlete of the Year award, and the Hall of Fame is August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.** The AAU Strength Sports Board of Directors will review nominations and announce recipients at the AAU 3-lift or single-lift World Powerlifting Championships or AAU World Weightlifting Championships later that year.

**The period of consideration for AAU Strength Sports Academic All American status is the academic school year.** Ideally, athletes meeting the criteria will be recognized at the AAU Junior Olympic Games.

The AAU Strength Sports Recognition Program consists of the following awards:

### **Brother Bennett Award**

The Brother Bennett Award recognizes extraordinary, selfless service to AAU Strength Sports. It is named for a Brother of the Sacred Heart at Saint Stanislaus College, who introduced powerlifting to youth and teens in Mississippi in the mid-1970s. Brother Bennett's Mississippi Invitational attracted some of the biggest names in powerlifting, and it became one of the first drug-tested powerlifting competitions in the country, paving the way for drug-free competition in the United States. In the spirit of Brother Bennett, this award is given to one individual annually who goes above and beyond the norm in supporting athletes, coaches, meet directors and the strength sports in general.

### **Strength Sports Academic All American**

The title of AAU Strength Sports Academic All American is an honorary title bestowed upon Elementary, Middle and High School strength sports athletes who 1) maintain a 3.4 or above average (on a 4.0 scale), or who are listed as being on their school's "Honor Roll" in their academic studies, and who 2) place among the top three athletes in their age and weight division at either the AAU Junior Olympic Games, AAU National Championships, or the AAU World Championships in their specific strength sport discipline (powerlifting, weightlifting, etc.). **AAU Strength Sports athletes will certify their eligibility academically by providing a copy of their end-of-year report card or transcript to the AAU Strength Sports Board of Directors for the previous academic school year.** An annual list of AAU Strength Sports Academic All Americans will be published on the AAU Strength Sports website, and if available, will be acknowledged at the annual AAU Junior Olympic Games. Athletes receiving this honor will typically referred to as, "Strength Sports Academic All-Americans".

### **AAU Strength Sports Athlete of the Year**

The AAU Strength Sports Athlete of the Year Award (Junior & Senior level) is earned by the male and female athletes with the most successful competitive year, as defined by championship wins and national and world records. Strength Sports Athletes of the Year will be nominated from all AAU Strength Sport disciplines. Junior Athlete of the Year will be chosen from among youth and teen strength sports athletes in grades K through 12. Senior Athlete of the Year will be chosen from among collegiate, open and masters division competitors. The junior and senior male and female Strength Sports Athletes of the Year will receive a custom award recognizing their accomplishments during the world championships.

### **AAU Strength Sports Hall of Fame**

Originally founded as the AAU Power Lifting Hall Of Fame in 2012, the AAU Strength Sports Hall of Fame celebrates the rich history of AAU Strength Sports athletes. From the early days of Olympic

Weightlifting competition within the AAU, to the first AAU-sanctioned powerlifting meet in the United States more than 50 years ago at York Barbell, to establishment of Strongman-style Feats of Strength competitions and creation of the Combine, AAU has led the way in creating innovative opportunities for powerful athletes to compete.

Inaugural members of the AAU Powerlifting Hall of Fame were inducted at the 2013 AAU Single-Lift and 2013 Three-Lift World Championships in Boston and Las Vegas, respectively. In 2015, the AAU Powerlifting Hall of Fame was renamed the AAU Strength Sports Hall of Fame, and expanded to include early Olympic Weightlifters and early powerlifters.

The criteria for election to the Hall of Fame is significant, meaning only a select few will be admitted. Men and Women must have competed in multiple national and international events, and have traveled to National and World meets. Service as a meet director, referee and in an AAU Strength Sports leadership position will be considered. Candidates must have demonstrated a minimum of five years of active participation in AAU Weightlifting, Powerlifting, Feats of Strength or Combine events to be considered. The Strength Sports Board of Directors will endeavor to select at least one individual to the Hall of Fame on an annual basis.

Candidates applying for selection to the AAU Strength Sports Hall Of Fame must submit a detailed resume. Applicants will be judged for entrance into the AAU Strength Sports Hall of Fame based on national and international competition results, national and world records, service to the strength sports and AAU specifically, and involvement as a leader within the AAU Strength Sports movement.