

Pros give back to those who contribute

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It had been a few months since Gordon Hayward had been back to Butler before Tuesday night.

Hayward, a forward for the Utah Jazz and a star of the Bulldogs' 2010 NCAA Tournament run, was back on campus as an awards presenter for the St. Vincent Sports Performance Spirit of Sport Awards, held at Clowes Memorial Hall.

"It's not just about the best players," he said. "It's about people who do well athletically, helping in the community. It's impressive what these kids have accomplished. It's a very special night for them."

The Spirit of Sport Awards is designed to recognize local high school athletes not for their performance on the playing field, but for their contributions to the community and their dedication to their sport. About 300 local student-athletes were on hand Tuesday for the program.

Hayward was one of several high-profile athletes who served as presenters. Others included Indiana Pacers forward Josh McRoberts, IndyCar drivers Tony Kanaan and Ana Beatriz, Indiana Fever forward Tamika Catchings, New York Jets safety Eric Smith and gymnast Bridget Sloan.

"It's a great honor that these people are nominated for these awards," said Smith, who presented Guerin Catholic High School boys basketball manager Matt Marsk with the Reverence Dr. Robert E. Cravens Memorial Award. Giving the award had special meaning for Smith, who said he knows just how important trainers can be to a team.

"Those are the unsung heroes of the sport," Smith said. "Having good trainers is key because there are times when you spend hours with those guys every day. You see how much heart they put into their jobs."

Dick Hoyt, who has become famous for running more than 1,000 marathons and triathlons with his quadriplegic son who suffers from cerebral palsy, was also on hand to accept the Trinity Dove Award. Hoyt and his son, Rick, have been competing in races since 1977.

Beatriz presented the Hamilton Heights boys and girls swim teams with the Creativity Award for their philanthropic efforts over the past year. With the encouragement of their coaches, the swimmers raised more than \$1,000 for the Race for the Cure, delivered more than 8,000 toys to the Peyton Manning Children's Hospital and donated to three families who were fighting HIV.

"I would have loved this as a high school kid," Hayward said. "It's right around where I grew up, so it's cool to see what these kids are doing. It's very impressive."