

Gadsden native Smoots inducted into NCCU Athletics Hall of Fame

Times Staff Report

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Gadsden native and Litchfield graduate Jason Smoots, second from left, poses for a picture at the North Carolina Central University Athletics Hall of Fame induction ceremony Sept. 13. (North Carolina Central University | Special to The Times)

DURHAM, N.C. — Gadsden native Jason Smoots was among seven North Carolina Central University student-athletes and one team inducted into the Alex M. Rivera Athletics Hall of Fame on Sept. 13 at the Durham Convention Center in downtown Durham, N.C.

Smoots, a graduate of Litchfield High School, was inducted for his stellar track and field career at NCCU from 1999-2003.

He is a six-time NCAA Division II national champion and the 2003 NCAA Division II Male Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year.

Here are some details on Smoots' career achievements:

- Six-time NCAA Division II National Champion (2001 indoor 55m, 2001 outdoor 100m, 2002 indoor 60m, 2002 outdoor 100m, 2002 outdoor 4x100m, 2003 indoor 60m);
- Winner of three consecutive indoor track sprint (55-meter and 60-meter dashes) national titles, the first NCAA Division II sprinter to three-peat;
- Eight-time NCAA All-America performer;
- Six-time individual conference champion;
- Twice named CIAA Most Outstanding Male Track Athlete (2002 indoor, 2001 outdoor);
- Twice honored as the NCAA Division II Southeast Regional Men's Indoor Track Athlete of the Year;

- Winner of the 100-meter dash at the 2003 Penn Relays.

Individual inductees alongside Smoots included Brandon Gilbert (football, 2004-08), the school's all-time leading scorer and MVP of the 2005 CIAA Championship Game; Katerina Glosova (cross country/track, 1999-2002), winner of 15 individual conference championships and a NCAA Division II national champion; Riccardo T. Jones, DDS (tennis, 1972-75), three-time conference champion at No. 1 singles and member of four conference championship teams; Amba Kongolo (basketball, 1999-2002), two-time CIAA Player of the Year and WNBA draft pick; Shari Matthews (volleyball, 2006-07), the 2006 NCAA Division II National Player of the Year and the school's career record holder in kills and aces; and Greg Pruitt, Jr. (football, 2004-06), the school's all-time leading rusher and MVP of the 2006 CIAA Championship Game.

The 2006 football team was also inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Under the direction of head coach Rod Broadway, the Eagles were declared Sheridan Broadcasting Network Black College National Champions, repeated as CIAA Champions, earned the school's highest national ranking at No. 4 in NCAA Division II, posted the most wins in school history with an 11-0 regular-season record and broke the NCCU single-season record by scoring 371 points