UNH Paralympians Receive Nation's First Winter Sports Scholarships For Athletes With Disabilities

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DURHAM, N.H. – Two student-athletes at the University of New Hampshire have received the nation’s first winter sports scholarships for athletes with disabilities.

Tyler Walker (Franconia), a member of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team, and Taylor Chace (North Hampton), a member of the U.S. Sled Hockey Team, are recipients of the scholarship, funded by a donation from Chet Homer and the Homer Family Foundation through UNH’s Northeast Passage.

“Chet’s support will provide disabled athletes the opportunity to be both world-class athletes and students without having to sacrifice one for the other,” said Tom Carr, athletics program coordinator for Northeast Passage, a program that delivers disability-related health promotion and adapted sports programs throughout New England.

Chet Homer, of Portsmouth, and his family have been loyal friends and generous supporters of Northeast Passage since 2001. “Chet, his family and his foundation share Northeast Passage’s belief that athletics and exercise are fundamental to creating healthy lifestyles for people with and without disabilities,” said Northeast Passage director Jill Gravink. “Northeast Passage is honored by their support.”

“Northeast Passage and UNH provide these student-athletes with the athletic and academic resources to be successful both today and into the future. I am pleased to be able to assist with some financial resources to hopefully open this great program up to even more student-athletes,” said Homer.

Scholarship recipients must be current or incoming University of New Hampshire students competing in the winter sports of disabled alpine skiing, cross country skiing, or sled hockey. In partnership with UNH Athletics, scholarship recipients will train in the university’s varsity facilities. While athletic success is not a condition for scholarship, it is expected that recipients be focused on, and aspire to, competition on the local, national, and international level.

About the 2006 Recipients:

Tyler Walker, a mono-skier, captured his first World Cup win in giant slalom in 2004 and was victorious in the 2005 and 2006 World Cups. Walker began skiing in adaptive programs at Waterville Valley and Loon Mountain, eventually joining the New England Disabled Ski Team at Loon. A spinal birth defect led to the amputation of both legs above the knee when Walker
was 4 years old. At UNH, Walker is a third-year student in political science.

Sled hockey player Taylor Chace had committed to play hockey for the UNH Wildcats when, while playing for the New Hampshire Junior Monarchs in 2002, he broke his back and sustained an incomplete spinal cord injury. He translated his hockey skills and knowledge to sled hockey with the Northeast Passage/UNH Wildcats, and he was named to the U.S. Paralympics Sled Hockey National Team in 2005. At the Paralympic Games in Torino in 2006, Chace scored the goal that won the United States a bronze medal. Chace, who is in his first year at UNH, plans to study sports management.

About Northeast Passage:

Northeast Passage has been working with the U.S. Paralympics since 2003 to promote Paralympic sports. Northeast Passage delivers disability-related health promotion and adapted sports programs throughout New England and is an affiliate of Disabled Sports USA. For more information, visit [www.nepassage.org](http://www.nepassage.org).