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Millennium High Athlete Recovers from Scoliosis, Invasive Back Surgery - Awarded PCH Sports Medicine Comeback Student Athlete of the Week



(PHOENIX, Ariz.) – January 5, 2010 -- Carolyn Houser, of Glendale, has been selected as the [PCH Sports Medicine Comeback Student Athlete of the week](#). Houser is also eligible for the PCH Sports Medicine Comeback Student Athlete of the Year and Fan Fave Comeback Student Athlete of the Year awards, which will be handed out at an April, 2010 banquet. The awards honor outstanding young athletes who have returned to athletic competition after receiving treatment for an injury, illness, or physical limitation.

Winners of the two end-of-year awards – the PCH Sports Medicine Comeback Student Athlete of the Year and the Fan Fave Comeback Student Athlete of the Year – will receive \$2,500 and \$2,000 respectively in scholarship money. The winners' athletics program will also be given a cash prize of \$1,000.



Carolyn, 17, is a senior at Millennium High School who dominates the badminton court as a varsity athlete. Watching her play, you would have no idea that she dealt with a serious medical condition that could have crippled her – scoliosis.

Carolyn began noticing back problems in middle school when she had difficulty maintaining straight posture in her back. By the time she was a junior in high school, the scoliosis was so severe that she was experiencing difficulty breathing. Doctors determined that Carolyn would require extensive back surgery, which would leave her with two metal rods and 22 pins supporting the alignment of her spine.

While most patients take months on the road to recovery, Carolyn was back in the gym just six weeks after her surgery. "Not being able to play badminton my senior year was not going to be an option," said Carolyn. With the support of her family, friends and coach she came back to play the entire badminton season only two months after surgery.

"The rehabilitation was really grueling, but her hard work and dedication lead to a faster than expected recovery," said Jason Beck, Carolyn's badminton coach. She completed the season as the number one player on a 5A state semi final badminton team. Carolyn was the 5A State Runner Up in singles badminton.

Off the court, Carolyn enjoys raising guide dog puppies, giving back to the community as a volunteer and working hard to achieve a 4.2 GPA. She plans to go to college with an academic scholarship upon graduation and become a veterinarian.

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"There was never a question 'if' I would return to athletics, but 'when' I would be ready to play," admits Carolyn. "My miraculous recovery has my family very proud."

Carolyn's Comeback story was featured on KPNX Channel 12's Friday Night Fever which follows The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien. [Click here](#) to check out **Carolyn's Comeback video**.

Editors Note: Digital images available upon request.

About the Comeback Student Athlete of the Week

[Phoenix Children's Hospital Sports Medicine Program](#) has launched the [Comeback Student Athlete of the Year Award](#) which honors outstanding young athletes between the ages of 8 and 18 who have returned to athletic competition after receiving treatment for an injury, illness, or physical limitation. Nominees have the chance of being chosen as the "Comeback Student Athlete of the Week" and be highlighted on KPNX Channel 12's Friday Night Fever or 12 Sports Tonight. Nominees are also eligible for the PCH Sports Medicine Comeback Student Athlete of the Year and Fan Fave Comeback Student Athlete of the Year awards, which will be handed out at an April 2010 banquet. For information or to nominate yourself or someone you know visit www.comebackathlete.azcentral.com. Nominations will be accepted from now through February 14th, 2010.

About Phoenix Children's Hospital

Phoenix Children's Hospital is Arizona's only licensed children's hospital, providing world-class care in more than 40 pediatric specialties to our state's sickest kids. Though Phoenix Children's is one of the ten largest freestanding children's hospitals in the country, rapid population growth in Arizona means the Hospital must grow as well. Phoenix Children's recently announced a \$588 million expansion plan to bring its special brand of family-centered care to even more patients and families. The plan includes a significant upgrade of the Hospital's current campus, an aggressive physician recruitment effort, and new satellite centers in high growth areas of the Valley. For more information, visit the Hospital's Web site at www.phoenixchildrens.com.