

## Students ponder ethics in sports, meet Olympic athlete

By [Leigh Kelley](#)

Times-News Staff Writer

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ASHEVILLE — Amateur and professional athletes alike should not lose sight of their ethics in the pursuit of victory, Henderson County high school students said Tuesday during the 2013 Junior Achievement Business Ethics Luncheon in Asheville.

A group of 45 students from West Henderson, East Henderson, North Henderson and Hendersonville high schools shared their thoughts during the annual event sponsored by Junior Achievement Western North Carolina.



*Leigh Kelley/Times-News*

Olympic silver medalist Lauren Tamayo speaks to area high school students as her husband, Michael, looks on during the 2013 Junior Achievement Business Ethics Luncheon Tuesday at UNCA.

In partnership with business people and educators, Junior Achievement uses hands-on experiences to help teens understand the economics of life. Junior Achievement of Western North Carolina began four years ago and serves 5,000 students throughout the mountains.

An athlete can display good sportsmanship by showing respect for themselves, their opponents, coaches and officials, said Karleigh Holt, a Hendersonville High senior.

Holt was one of three students who won awards for their essays on ethics in sports during the luncheon, held at the University of North Carolina-Asheville. Holt and two students from Buncombe County were honored with awards prior to comments by the event's keynote speaker, Lauren Tamayo, Olympic silver medalist with Women's Team Pursuit Cycling.

In her essay, Holt used another U.S. Olympic medal winner, swimmer Michael Phelps, as an example of good sports conduct.

“Michael Phelps is pretty successful in the sports industry,” Holt said. “He's been successful and he's an example of an athlete who has been successful on his own — he doesn't cheat, he didn't cross boundaries — and he's a good role model.”

In writing their essays, students were given three prompts regarding ethical principles as they apply, or don't apply, to the sports business. One of the prompts asked students to either defend or challenge the statement “Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing,” famously said by National Football League Coach Vince Lombardi.

The statement misses the mark when it comes to ethics, said West Henderson student Kady Tipton.

“I see what he is saying, but in ethical terms, it's not about the win, it's how you get

to the win,” she said.

Her sports marketing teacher Stephanie Gaddy, said athletes' behavior can help teachers get the message across to impressionable young people.

“We see so many choices that professional athletes make, and it impacts kids,” she said. “They see these athletes doing questionable or unethical things and we need to be the buffer and tell them, ‘No, this is not right.’”

JA leaders were thrilled when they learned that Tamayo agreed to speak at the luncheon, said Julie Vidotto, regional director for Junior Achievement WNC.

The Olympic athlete's excellent behavior on and off the field makes her a good role model, especially the fact that Tamayo stayed in high school and college while continuing to train and compete in her sport, Vidotto said.

“One of JA's main thrusts is graduation rates, staying in school,” she said. “The longer kids stay in school, the more successful they are going to be – bottom line. She's proof that it can be done.”

Tamayo credited the support of her family and her husband, Mike Tamayo, with helping her achieve the pinnacle of her sport, an Olympic medal. Mike Tamayo is general manager and team director of the United Healthcare Pro Cycling Team.

“I never truly believed I would go to the Olympics,” Lauren Tamayo said. “To have that belief in me from somebody else was pretty inspiring.”

Reach Kelley at [leigh.kelley@blueridgenow.com](mailto:leigh.kelley@blueridgenow.com) or 828-694-7871.

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