

South Tahoe gives athletes a place of honor



Glen Plake, right, talks as fellow athletes, from left, Jamie Anderson, Hannah Teter, Maddie Bowman, Travis Cabral and Juan Torres listen. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

In some ways the athletes inducted into South Lake Tahoe's Champions Plaza look ordinary. But wait. Listen to their accomplishments or watch them in person or on TV or look at photographs and the truth is crystallized. These are no ordinary human beings.

These 11 athletes, five could not attend the June 15 ceremony, have redefined their respective sports. Some were pioneers – doing things no one else was at time, while others reached the pinnacle of their sport in a more traditional path.

All, though, put in countless hours of training. They gave up

normal childhoods and teen years. Their families paid in many ways. They reached heights that most people don't even fantasize about.

After the 2014 Olympics, when the area had three medalists, South Lake Tahoe officials decided it was time to honor the area athletes in a permanent, public way. This is how Champions Plaza at Lakeview Commons came into being. But it's not just about Olympians – all athletes are eligible if they meet the rigorous criteria.

A bronze statue was commissioned two years ago. On Friday the unveiling of the names of the inaugural 11 inductees was commemorated. The name of each person and a brief list of accomplishments is etched into a square paver that is embedded into the walkway right in front of the statue.



Large squares highlight the athletes' accomplishments. Photo/Denise Haerr

In attendance were:

- Jamie Anderson – Olympic gold medalist, Olympic silver medalist, X Games gold medalist – snowboarding.

- Glen Plake – Three-time World Hot Dog champion, in U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame, pioneer of extreme skiing.
- Maddie Bowman – Olympic and X Games gold medalist – skiing.
- Juan Torres – World light welterweight champion, International Kickboxing Hall of Fame.
- Hannah Teter – Olympic gold and silver medalist, X Games gold medalist, World Championships bronze – snowboarding.
- Travis Cabral – Olympian, World Cup champion, U.S. Nationals champion – skiing.

Not in attendance:

- Jonna Mendes – Olympian in 1998 and 2002, World Championships bronze medalist – skiing.
- Kyle Smaine – World Championships gold medalist – skiing.
- Elena Hight – Olympian in 2006 and 2010, X Games gold medalist – snowboarding.
- Travis Ramos – U.S. Nationals champion – skiing.
- Shawn Palmer – X Game gold medalist.