



International Rowing

Press Release

**For immediate release
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Agostino Abbagnale (ITA) to be presented with the 2006 Thomas Keller Medal

The 2006 Thomas Keller Medal for an "outstanding career in rowing" will be awarded to Agostino Abbagnale from Italy, one of the famous three Italian brothers who reigned over rowing throughout the 1980's and 90's.

The youngest of the three brothers, and most successful in sculling, Agostino won three Olympic Gold medals (Seoul 1988, Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000) and has two World Championship titles in the quadruple sculls from 1997 and 1998.

His recurring battle against thrombophlebitis (the inflammation of a vein with the formation of a blood clot) forced him out of the sport for five years after winning his first Olympic title in 1988. Overcoming these significant health problems make his achievements all the more remarkable. The disease finally forced him to retire shortly before his attempt to win gold medal number four at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games.

The medal has been established as the highest honour in the sport of rowing and is presented to recognise an exceptional rowing career as well as exemplary sportsmanship. Named after the late President of FISA, the first medal was first awarded to the great Norwegian oarsman Alf Hansen in 1990 and has already been won by Agostino's brothers Giuseppe and Carmine in 1997 which makes this the first time that three brothers have won this award.

The 18-carat gold Thomas Keller Medal will be presented to Abbagnale by Dominik Keller, son of the late Thomas Keller, on Sunday 9 July 2006, just before the start of the afternoon finals at the Rowing World Cup final regatta in Lucerne, Switzerland.

A full list of previous Thomas Keller Medallists is attached below.

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THE
THOMAS KELLER
MEDAL FOR
AN OUTSTANDING
CAREER IN
ROWING



Previous recipients of the Thomas Keller Medal are:

1990	Alf Hansen (NOR)
1991	Thomas Greiner (GER)
1994	Yuri Pimenov (RUS)
1996	Francesco Esposito (ITA)
1996	Nikolai Pimenov (RUS)
1996	Rolf Thorsen (NOR)
1997	Giuseppe Abbagnale (ITA)
1997	Carmine Abbagnale (ITA)
1997	Jana Sorgers (GER)
1997	Thomas Lange (GER)
1998	Kerstin Koeppen (GER)
1998	Roland Baar (GER)
1999	Silken Laumann (CAN)
1999	Kathleen Heddle (CAN)
2001	Steve Redgrave (GBR)
2002	Marnie McBean (CAN)
2003	Peter Antonie (AUS)
2004	Nico Rienks (NED)
2005	Matthew Pinsent (GBR)
2006	Agostino Abbagnale (ITA)