

LEXINGTON PARK, MD – This morning, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) met with the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games Men's Soccer gold medalists from St. Mary's County to congratulate the team on their victory and present them with a Congressional Record tribute. Each member of the team was presented with a Congressional Record statement signed by Congressman Hoyer. Photo and statement are below.

[To view the photo, click here.](#)

“Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a remarkable team from Maryland's Fifth Congressional District who, last month, proved that practice, perseverance, and teamwork can lead to victory. On July 2, Team USA, consisting entirely of athletes from St. Mary's County, Maryland, defeated Spain in the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games Men's Soccer Championship match in Athens, Greece. They are the first U.S. team to bring home the gold in this event.

“In a come-from-behind win, Team USA emerged triumphant over the Spanish team with a 2-1 victory. Avery Long, who had never touched a soccer ball before this year, scored both the tying and winning goals. On the first, he was assisted by team member Larry Mills. With only two goals scored against him in the entire tournament, goalie Alan Hill can take great pride in being the most successful goalie in the 2011 games. TEAM USA was rounded out by Sam Huffman, Steven Summerfelt, Wesley Thompson, Sack Hall, Terrel Nowlin, Thomas Smith, and Shaun Ridley. All of these men can take great pride in the culmination of their hard work and dedication.

“So, too, can the team's leadership and coaching staff--Director Mary Lu Bucci, Head Coach John Toner, Assistant Coach Ken Cohen, and Manager Minter Willis. Together they have a combined total of 74 years of experience with Special Olympics in Southern Maryland.

“I also want to pay tribute to the 7 additional members of Special Olympics Maryland who

traveled to Athens to be among the 7,500 athletes from 185 countries to participate in the 2011 World Summer Games. They are: Syd Lea (Cycling), Randi Penebough (Powerlifting), James Purnell (Kayaking), Samantha DiSanti (Kayaking), Zachary Poston (Swimming), and James Dietrich and his Unified Partner, Robert Battista (Sailing).

“In all, Team Maryland achieved tremendous success, winning a total of ten medals--8 of which were gold. I want to congratulate them on their impressive achievements and I ask that all Americans join with me in applauding these outstanding individuals who have brought great pride to our nation.”