



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Finalists announced for the 49th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards:
Presented by Canadian Direct Insurance**

Winners for performances in 2014 to be honoured at ceremony on March 12th, 2015

Richmond, BC (January 20, 2015)

Sport BC, on behalf of the BC Sport community, proudly announced the outstanding amateur athletes, coaches, and officials, named as finalists for 13 of the 18 award categories to be presented at the upcoming Athlete of the Year Awards, founded by Sport BC.

The 49th Annual Awards Ceremony and Gala dinner is set for Thursday, March 12th, 2015 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. The ceremonies will recognize BC's best in amateur sport including athletes, coaches, and officials for outstanding performances in their sport over the 2014 season. Each finalist was nominated by their Provincial or Multi-Sport Organization, High School, College or University. The 2014 Selection Committee, chaired by Bernie Pascall, included 15 highly regarded sportswriters, broadcasters, and amateur sport leaders in British Columbia.

"A significant number of very strong nominations for each of the categories were received this year," notes Sport BC President & CEO, Rob Newman. "The Athlete of the Year Awards provides a great opportunity to recognize these talented and deserving athletes, coaches and officials. In 2013, Sport BC partnered with ProMOTION Plus in adding the Female Coach of the Year Award category, ensuring that we continue to strive for gender equity in sport while encouraging girls and women to take on strong leadership roles in our community. This year's nominees in all of the award categories are certainly a testament to the strength and depth of sport in our province. So too is the amazing support that we have received this year from our sport and business partners. In celebration of 2015 as the Year of Sport, we are excited to kick off the New Year with recognizing the extraordinary athletes that represent our country and province through sport."

Finalists for the 49th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards represent 21 sports from 24 various cities and are noted as follows:

Athlete with a Disability

Ina Forrest (Armstrong) - Para-Curl

Lauren Barwick (Aldergrove) - Para-Equestrian

Josh Dueck (Vernon) - Para-Alpine

Female Coach of the Year

Tammy Thomas (Kelowna) - Volleyball
Tara Self (Coquitlam) - Athletics
Joanne McLeod (Burnaby) - Figure Skating

Male Coach of the Year

Marek Jedrzejek (Vancouver) - Athletics
Paul Eberhardt (Vancouver) - Basketball
Randy Bennett (Victoria) - Swimming

Female High School Athlete of the Year

Nina Schultz (New Westminster) - Athletics
Payton Smith (Maple Ridge) - Wrestling
Christine Howlett (Delta) - Volleyball/Basketball

Male High School Athlete of the Year

Nathan Wadhvani (Maple Ridge)- Cross-Country/Track & Field
Adam Lambert (Mission)- Athletics
Jordan Lu (Vancouver)- Golf

Female Junior Athlete of the Year

Emily Overholt (West Vancouver) - Swimming
Naomi Ko (Victoria) - Golf
Maggie Coles-Lyster (Maple Ridge) - Cycling

Male Junior Athlete of the Year

Samson Reinhart (Ice Hockey) - Saanichton
Dylan French (Richmond) - Fencing
Alex Tougas (Pitt Meadows) - Cycling

Master Athlete of the Year

Al Campsall (Williams Lake) - Archery
Doug Roxburgh (Vancouver) - Golf
Brian Ellis (Vancouver) - Orienteering

Official of the Year

Howard Hum (Burnaby) - Volleyball
Steve Seibel (Kamloops) - Basketball
John Carroll (Surrey) - Gymnastics

Female Senior Athlete of the Year

Janet McLachlan (West Vancouver) - Wheelchair Basketball
Marielle Thompson (Whistler) – Ski-Cross
Jessica Hewitt (Kamloops)- Speed-Skating

Male Senior Athlete of the Year

Tory Nyhaug (Coquitlam)- Cycling
Shea Weber (Saanichton)- Ice Hockey
Denny Morrison (Fort St. John)- Speed-Skating

Team of the Year

Men’s Langara Basketball (Vancouver) - Basketball
McNamara (Delta) - Beach Volleyball
Canadian Team Pursuit – Cycling

University Athlete of the Year

Coleman Allen (Vancouver) - Swimming
Lisa Barclay (Vancouver) - Volleyball
Brad Gunter (Courtenay) - Volleyball

An additional five awards will be presented at the ceremony including College Athlete, Best of BC, Community Champion, Harry Jerome Comeback and the Daryl Thompson Lifetime Achievement Award.

About the Athlete of the Year Awards

The Athlete of the Year Awards, founded by Sport BC, is the longest standing amateur sport recognition event in the country. Awards in 18 different categories are given each year to athletes, coaches, and officials on their performance and contribution to sport in the province of British Columbia. The awards play a valuable role in nurturing athletic success while recognizing extraordinary accomplishments in BC.

About Sport BC

In 1966, a small group of dedicated volunteers created an organization to provide a unified voice for amateur sport in British Columbia. While much has changed in 46 years, our core purpose remains the same.

Who we are:

Sport BC is the non-profit sport federation, representing over 60 Provincial Sport Organizations in British Columbia. As a member-based organization, Sport BC offers services and programs to build the capacity of our members and advocate on their behalf to improve the landscape for organized sport in BC.

Mission:

As a leader in the sport system, Sport BC strengthens and builds the capacity of the Provincial Sport Organization in order to encourage and foster the growth of sport in British Columbia.

Vision:

Sport BC is regarded as an effective, ethical organization that is viewed as a leader provincially in the area of organized sport. We envision a strong amateur sport community in BC that works together to provide quality opportunities for athletic development and achievement, and build healthy communities.

Values:

Trust, Integrity, Team Work, Transparency

TICKET INFORMATION: For information on the purchase of a table or individual tickets for the 49th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards, please visit www.sportbc.com or contact:

Shelley Johnson, Event Manager, Athlete of the Year Awards

Tel: 604-875-1775

Email: Shelley.johnson@sljproductions.ca

MEDIA CONTACTS

Rob Newman

President & CEO, Sport BC

Tel: 604-340-8432

Email: rob.newman@sportbc.com

PREVIOUS AWARD RECIPIENTS: *For a list of previous award winners and additional information, including recognition of our corporate and community sponsors and partners, please visit www.sportbc.com*

For additional information, please contact:

Christine Wong

Athlete of the Year Coordinator, Sport BC

Tel: 604-333-3421

Email: Christine@sportbc.com