



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Sask Sport Inc. Announces the 2017 Sport Award Recipients

Sask Sport Inc. is pleased to announce the outstanding recipients of the 2017 Saskatchewan Sport Awards. Saskatchewan athletes are recognized in the 2017 Athlete of the Year award categories of Youth-Female, Youth-Male, Female, Male, Team, and Master. Coaches, officials and volunteers are recognized in the categories of Volunteer, Coach of the Year, Coach Dedication Female, Coach Dedication Male, Female Official and Male Official.

“On behalf of Sask Sport Inc. and the entire amateur sport community, congratulations to the award recipients, finalists, and nominees of the 2017 Saskatchewan Sport Awards,” said Darren Wilcox, Chair of Sask Sport Inc. “All of the award nominees deserve recognition for their outstanding achievements, dedication to sport, and leadership. Thank you for your commitment to excellence and the positive examples you have set for others. Like you, we believe that sport is more than a game. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition. We are all #SaskProud.”

“Congratulations to all of the nominees and winners of the 2017 Saskatchewan Sport Awards,” Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Gene Makowsky said. “Athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers accomplished a great deal in 2017 and Saskatchewan recognizes their dedication and excellence in sport and to community.”

Nominations in all award categories were submitted by Sask Sport Inc.’s active and affiliate members. A voting process involving these members was used to determine the following recipients of the 2017 Athlete of the Year awards.

2017 YOUTH-FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR:

Rebecca Dean | 15 | Regina | Swimming

Nominated by: Swim Saskatchewan Inc.

- Won bronze in the 1500 Free, placed 6th in the 200 Fly and placed 9th in the 400 Free events at the 2017 Jeux du Canada Games, competing against participants from 12 provinces. She was chosen by her teammates as the Female Captain for Team Sask – Canada Games Swim Team.
- Won gold and a Canadian Trials Qualifying time in the 15-over Girls 1500 Free event at the 2017 ManSask Provincial Championships, competing against 31 teams from five provinces. As well in the 15-over Girls category, she placed 4th in the 400 Free and 800 Free, and 9th in the 200 Free.
- Placed 9th in the 15-17 Girls 200 Fly event at the 2017 Canadian Junior Swimming Championships, competing against 38 swimmers from 145 clubs.
- In the 14-15 Girls category, she won gold in the 1500 Free, placed 3rd in the 200 Fly, and finished 4th in the 200 Free at the 2017 Bennett Cup, competing against 15 clubs from two provinces.
- Won gold in the 200 Fly, 400 Free, and 800 Free in the category of Girls 13-14 at the 2017 Long Course Prairie Championships, competing against 15 clubs from three provinces. She also won silver in 200 Free, and earned bronze in the 100 Fly in the 13-14 Girls category.

The other finalists were:

- Jordan Kos, 17, Regina, Bowls (Lawn)
- Jasmine Runge, 18, Regina, Baton Twirling

Review their bios and feature stories at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards/youthFemale2017.html>.

2017 YOUTH-MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR:

Connor Sparks | 17 | Saskatoon | Baseball

Nominated by: Baseball Sask

- Finished 5th at the 2017 Roberto Alomar Tournament 12 Showcase, competing against 160 other players, and was asked to join U18 Team Canada to play against MLB Fall extended teams.
- Won a gold medal at the 2017 Jeux du Canada Games, with a batting average of .417 and only giving up two earned runs while pitching 10 innings.
- Placed 6th at the 2017 U18 Baseball Canada Nationals with a .368 batting average, competing against teams from 10 provinces.
- As a part of Team Canada in 2017, he pitched three innings versus the Major League Baseball Fall Extended Team - Pittsburgh Pirates, giving up only one run. He also pitched two innings against the Toronto Blue Jays Fall Extended Team, giving up only three runs.
- Played basketball for Marion Graham Collegiate and finished 4th at the 2017 Bedford Road Invitational Tournament; he was the only Saskatoon player named as one of the tournament all-stars.

The other finalists were:

- Marco Schumann, 18, Saskatoon, Speed Skating
- Rylan Wiens, 15, Pike Lake, Diving

Review their bios and feature stories at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards/youthMale2017.html>.

2017 FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR:

Marsha Hudey | 27 | White City | Speed Skating

Nominated by: Saskatchewan Amateur Speed Skating Association

- Finished 6th in the 500m at the 2017 World Single Distance Championships, competing against 24 participants from 11 countries.
- Finished 4th in the 500m at the 2017 World Cup Final, competing against 12 participants from eight countries.
- Received a silver medal in the 500m at the 2017 Fall World Cup 2, competing against 20 participants from 10 countries; this was Marsha's first international medal.
- Won gold in the 500m to qualify as a member of Team Canada at the 2017 Fall World Cup Selections.

The other finalists were:

- Shelby Newkirk, 21, Saskatoon, Swimming
- Larissa Werbicki, 21, Saskatoon, Rowing

Review their bios and feature stories at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards/female2017.html>.

2017 MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR:

Alexander Eiswerth | 22 | Regina | Athletics

Nominated by Saskatchewan Athletics

- Awarded a gold medal in the 1500m and a silver medal in the 800m at the 2017 Jeux du Canada Games, as well as ranked number one in Saskatchewan for Senior Men 800m.

- At the 2017 USPORT Track & Field Championship, Alexander competed against athletes from seven different provinces and placed 9th in the 4X400m Relay, setting a record for the University of Regina in the 4X800m relay—placing 8th in that event.
- Set a new record for the University of Regina in Men's 1000m and won bronze at the 2017 Canada West University Track & Field Championship, competing against athletes from four provinces.
- Won gold in the 1500m and silver in the 800m at the 2017 Tri Province Meet. Currently ranked number one in Saskatchewan for Senior Men 1500m.
- Won gold for both the 1500m and 800m events at the 2017 Saskatchewan Athletics Provincial Championships.

The other finalists were:

- Ron Brandt, 59, Saskatoon, Special Olympics - Snowshoeing
- Jarret Kenke, 23, Saskatoon, Canoe Kayak

Review their bios and feature stories at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards/male2017.html>.

2017 TEAM OF THE YEAR:

Team Saskatchewan Baseball | Saskatoon | Baseball

Nominated by: Baseball Sask

- Won a gold medal at the 2017 Jeux du Canada Games.
- This is the first gold medal won by Team Saskatchewan in baseball at a Canada Games event.
- It was the only gold medal won by a team event at the Canada Games for Saskatchewan.

The other finalists were:

- Team Canada West, Regina, Floor Hockey
- Team Saskatchewan Senior Women, Regina, Water Polo

Review their bios and feature stories at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards/team2017.html>.

2017 MASTER ATHLETE OF THE YEAR:

Jennifer Gardiner | 38 | Regina | Swimming

Nominated by: Swim Saskatchewan Inc.

- Set long course provincial records in her 35-39 age group in all of her swimming events at the 2017 FINA World Masters Championships. Her meet was also highlighted with two 5th place podium finishes (400 Free and 800 Free), an 8th place finish in the 200 Back and a 10th place finish in the 400 IM.
- Finished with a gold medal in the 200 Back, silver medals in 400 IM and 1500 Free, and bronze medals in the 400 Free and 800 Free in the 35-39 age group at the 2017 Canadian Masters Swimming Championships, swimming against participants from five countries. She also broke short course provincial records in the 800 and 1500 Free.
- Jennifer finished 2017 ranked first in the 35-39 age group in Canada in total combined points in the Top 20 total rankings in all 18 swimming events.
- Won gold medals in the 50 Free, 50 Fly, 100 IM, Women 200 Fly, 200 Breast and 200 IM in the 35-39 age group at the 2017 Pop Sidwell Masters Swim Meet, competing against participants from four provinces.
- Won gold medals in the 400 Free, 800 Free and 50 Breast in the 35-39 age group at the 2017 Regina Masters Invitational Swim Meet, competing against swimmers from five swim clubs.
- Awarded gold in the 100 Free, and silver in the 100 Back and 400 IM events in the 35-39 age group at the 2017 Goldfins Skills Master #2.

The other finalists were:

- Ashley Baerg, 28, Dalmeny, Para Waterski
- Terry Livingstone, 58, Regina, Special Olympics – Speed Skating

Review their bios and feature stories at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards/master2017.html>.

The following award recipients were determined by the Sask Sport Inc. Awards Committee:

2017 COACH OF THE YEAR:

Cyril Dorgigné | Regina | Water Polo

Nominated by: Water Polo Saskatchewan

Cyril came to Canada in 2007 with a goal to elevate Saskatchewan's Water Polo program to be one of the best in the country. Following 10 years as the coach for Water Polo and High Performance programs, and steady improvement each year, Cyril's club has produced over 30 National Team athletes (who attended 10 World Championships) and accumulated 12 medals. Cyril's 2017 club achievements, include: gold in the Senior Women National Championship League, bronze at Western Nationals 19U Men, gold at the Western Nationals 16U Girls, gold at Western Nationals 19U Women, silver at Western Nationals 16U Boys, silver at Nationals Finals 19U Women, and fourth at Nationals Finals in both 16U Girls and Boys. Cyril was also awarded the Most Valuable Coach Award of the Canadian Water Polo National Club Championship League Championship.

2017 FEMALE COACH DEDICATION AWARD:

Sheila Parker | North Battleford | Synchronized Swimming

Nominated by: Synchro Saskatchewan

Sheila is the North Battleford Water Doves Synchro Club Head Coach (1996 – present) with a NCCP Level 3 certification. Sheila started coaching in 1986, directly after retiring from 12 years of competitive synchronized swimming, and worked on a joint project between Synchro Swim Alberta and Alberta Special Olympics. She then went on to instruct out-reach programs throughout the province to increase awareness, programs and participation of the sport, and she revised the Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) synchronized swimming rules to include Special Olympic athletes. In 1995, Sheila joined her North Battleford club as assistant coach for the first year, then spent 21 years as head coach. With Sheila's years of experience and knowledge, the club is now producing more podium finishes and its swimmers are performing difficult routines with improved artistic impressions.

2017 MALE COACH DEDICATION AWARD:

Dean Bertoia | Saskatoon | Athletics

Nominated by: Saskatchewan Athletics

Dean is a veteran coach of 17 years with the University of Saskatchewan Track & Field Throws (since 2000). During his time, he has developed many nationally-decorated athletes (over 68 medals), been Head Coach for Saskatoon Track and Field Club (2009-2015) throughout various Canada Games, Western Canada Games, and First Nation communities, and also represented Team Canada as the Throws Coach for North America Central Americas and Caribbean Games in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010. In past, Dean has been recognized as Coach of the Year (2005), a Level 4 Coach at the Sask Athletics Awards Dinner (2011), and the 2001-2002 University of Saskatchewan Track and Field Team was inducted into the Saskatoon Sport Hall of Fame (2010).

2017 FEMALE OFFICIAL AWARD:

Susanne Mitchell | Yorkton | Taekwondo

Nominated by: Saskatchewan WTF Taekwondo Association Inc.

Susanne started refereeing Taekwondo locally in 2000, nationally in 2003, and internally 2005. She is now a 2nd Class WTF International Referee and the Chair for Saskatchewan World Taekwondo Association Referee Committee (since 2006). She annually conducts provincial referee certification seminars and evaluates and mentors developing referees at all Saskatchewan Taekwondo Sanctioned events, as well at most Taekwondo Canada sanctioned events. In 2017, Susanne was appointed to the National Referee Committee as the Vice Chair for Western Canada. Susanne has traveled the world refereeing, and has received multiple awards, including best referee at: the 2010 and 2013 Conseil International du Sport Militaire World Military Taekwondo Championships; the 2014 1st Junior World Cadet Championship in Azerbaijan; and, the 2016 Pan American Open in Mexico.

2017 MALE OFFICIAL AWARD:

Gary Thronberg | Moose Jaw | Swimming

Nominated by: Swim Saskatchewan Inc.

For over 20 years, Gary has been an active, experienced official in Saskatchewan and Canada. He is dedicated to his role as Master Official (blue pin)—the highest officiating level achievable—and regularly referees local and national swim meets, mentors and evaluates officials, and teaches officiating clinics. As Director of Officials on the Swim Saskatchewan Board of Directors, Gary ensures that swim officiating in Saskatchewan is advancing, being maintained to current standards and policy, and also planning for the future—ensuring Saskatchewan has quality referees advancing. At the grassroots level, he remains a valuable member of the Swimming community, refereeing 12 competitions in nine months in 2017 (including provincial championship meets, the Jeux du Canada Summer Games, and International competitions) and teaching nine clinics and two referee courses.

2017 VOLUNTEER AWARDS:

Sue Meyers | Prince Albert | Sport Medicine and Science

Nominated by: Sport Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan

Sue has been one of the longest-serving volunteers for the Sport Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan (SMSCS), serving over 29 years in various roles with great distinction, including: Board Member, Vice President, President, Past President, Medical Coverage Committee Chairperson, Sports Medicine Programs Committee Member, and as medical provider for numerous Saskatchewan events. She has provided leadership, professionalism, honesty and fairness, and was instrumental in determining the strategic direction and priorities of SMSCS—providing expert advice to the staff and other Board members during the developmental years. Sue was a major contributor to the SMSCS programs and services offered today and is considered one of the council's key organizational builders. Her outstanding 35-year medical, educational and sport first aid services for Saskatchewan athletes of all levels are of great value, especially in the Prince Albert and surrounding areas in northern Saskatchewan.

Pam Sanderson | Air Ronge | Special Olympics
Nominated by: Special Olympics Saskatchewan

Pam has volunteered with Special Olympics Saskatchewan for the nearly five years. She has been instrumental in introducing and bringing sport programming for people with intellectual disabilities to Northern Saskatchewan. Whether it is in the capacity of coach, committee member, fundraiser or community advocate, Pam is living and breathing Special Olympics at the local and provincial levels, and athletes are reaping the benefits of what sport has to offer to enrich their lives. Pam's official role with Special Olympics is Treasurer with Special Olympics La Ronge, however she takes on many roles to ensure the community programming functions at a high level.

All of the award recipients will be honoured and presented with their award on Thursday, March 22, 2018 at TCU Place in Saskatoon. Information on the 2017 Sport Awards finalists can also be found online at <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards>. Follow us on [Facebook](#) or on [Twitter](#).

Sask Sport Inc. would like to thank Global TV, our production partner for the Saskatchewan Sport Awards, and to acknowledge Saskatchewan Lotteries, the main fundraiser for amateur sport in the province.

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For more information contact Leah Laxdal at 306-975-0871 llaxdal@sasksport.sk.ca, or visit <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards>.