

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **2018 Athlete of the Year Award Finalists Announced**

*Nominees include four Olympians and Paralympians from across the province*

Seventeen athletes and teams from across Saskatchewan have been announced as finalists for the 2018 Athlete of the Year Awards.

Each year, up to three finalists are selected in six Athlete of the Year Award categories based on their accomplishments from the preceding year. In the coming weeks, active and affiliate members of Sask Sport Inc. will conduct a vote to select the recipients, who will be honored at the Saskatchewan Sport Awards ceremony in Saskatoon in March. At the ceremony, awards will also be delivered to deserving coaches, officials and volunteers supporting amateur sport in the province.

“Congratulations to this year’s Athlete of the Year Award finalists whose hard work and determination make us all #SaskProud,” said Leslie Blyth, Chair of the Board of Directors for Sask Sport Inc., a volunteer-led non-profit organization and the federation for amateur sport in Saskatchewan.

“Whether competing at home or abroad, these athletes are inspiring and their accomplishments put a spotlight on the vast network of community organizations, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and families that enrich our province with the benefits of sport. Sask Sport is proud to champion this vibrant community each and every day.”

A list of the Athlete of the Year Award finalists is available below. Detailed profiles for all finalists are also available at [www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards](http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards).

#### **Athlete of the Year Finalists**

##### **2018 Youth-Female Athlete of the Year**

- Cassie Prentice, 17, Macrorie, Racquetball
- Danielle Skinner, 16, Regina, Baton Twirling
- Savannah Sutherland, 15, Borden, Track and Field

##### **2018 Youth-Male Athlete of the Year**

- Daniel McCullough, 15, Saskatoon, Kayaking
- Michael McGillivray, 15, Regina, Swimming
- Rylan Wiens, 16, Pike Lake, Diving

### **2018 Female Athlete of the Year**

- Brittany Hudak, 25, Prince Albert, Para Nordic Skiing
- Shelby Newkirk, 22, Saskatoon, Para Swimming
- Marie Wright, 58, Moose Jaw, Wheelchair Curling

### **2018 Male Athlete of the Year**

- Mark McMorris, 24, Regina, Snowboarding
- Kurt Oatway, 34, Regina, Para Alpine Skiing
- David Samayoa, 26, Regina, Weightlifting

### **2018 Team of the Year**

- Saskatoon Hilltops, Saskatoon, Football
- Sundown Optimist Buffalo Gals, Regina, Baton Twirling
- Team Sask Under-19 Women, Regina, Water Polo

### **2018 Master Athlete of the Year**

- Ted Rowan, 85, Martensville, Track and Field
- Women's Masters Relay Team 320-359, Regina, Swimming

The Saskatchewan Sport Awards is an annual awards program of Sask Sport Inc. designed to recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements of Saskatchewan amateur athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers.

Sask Sport Inc. would like to thank Global TV, its production and promotion 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 visit <http://www.sasksport.sk.ca/SportAwards/media.html> for Saskatchewan Sport Awards or contact:**

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# Saskatchewan Sport Awards

## 2018 Athlete of the Year finalist biographies

### 2018 Youth-Female Athlete of the Year Award Finalists

#### **Cassie Prentice | 17 | Macrorie | Racquetball**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Racquetball Association

- Won silver in the under-16 girls' doubles and 5th in the singles competition at the World Junior Championships against 14 participants from nine countries.
- Won gold in the under-18 girls' doubles and silver in the under-16 girls' singles competition at the Canadian Junior Championships. Finished 8th in women's open singles at the Canadian Championships.
- Currently ranked No. 1 among under-18 girls in Canada.

#### **Danielle Skinner | 16 | Regina | Baton Twirling**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Baton Twirling Association

- Finished 4th in junior pair, 5th in team and 15th in junior women's freestyle competition at the World Baton Twirling Championships against participants from 18 countries.
- Won four golds (solo, solo dance, duet and pair), two silvers (medley and freestyle), and one bronze (baton) at the Canadian Baton Twirling Championships.
- Won gold in junior pair and team competition and silver in junior women's freestyle at the Canadian Team Trials.

#### **Savannah Sutherland | 15 | Borden | Track and Field**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Athletics

- Won three gold medals (300 m, 80 m hurdles and 200 m hurdles), one silver (4 x 100 m relay) and one bronze (1,600 m sprint medley) at the Canadian Legion National Youth Outdoor Track and Field Championships, and set a new Saskatchewan Athletics records for under-16 women's 80 m and 200 m hurdles.
- Won three gold medals (200 m, 80 m hurdles and 200 m hurdles) and one silver (300 m) at the Caltaf Track Classic, which featured participants from seven provinces.
- Won four gold medals (200 m, 80 m hurdles, 200 m hurdles and 4 x 100 m relay) at the Sherwood Park Track Classic, an interprovincial meet between three provinces. At the same event, she won silver and set a new Saskatchewan Athletics record in the under-16 girls' 300 m.

### 2018 Youth-Male Athlete of the Year Award Finalists

#### **Daniel McCullough | 15 | Saskatoon | Kayaking**

Nominated by Canoe Kayak Saskatchewan

- Won gold in the under-16 K-1 1,000 m kayak, silver in the under-19 K-2 1,000 m kayak, and bronze in the senior K-4 200 m kayak at the Canadian Sprint National Championships.
- Won gold in the junior men's K-4 500 m competition as a member of Canada's National Development Team at the 2018 Pan American Canoe-Kayak Championship.
- Ranked as the top under-16 male kayak athlete in Canada and is ranked in the country's top six under-18 kayak athletes.

### **Michael McGillivray | 15 | Regina | Swimming**

Nominated by Swim Saskatchewan Inc.

- Represented Canada at the FINA World Junior Open Water Championships in Israel, which featured participants from 30 countries, placing 5th in the 4 x 1,250 m relay and 24th in the 7.5 km men's 16-17 division.
- Represented Canada at the Junior Pan Pacific Championships in Fiji, which featured competitors from 10 countries, placing 9th in the men's 1,500 m free and 800 m free in the 18-and-under category.
- At the 2018 Canadian Swimming Trials, which featured 104 clubs from across Canada, he set four provincial records while winning silver in the men's 1,500 m free open-age category and bronze in the men's 800 m free open-age category.
- Set a total of 12 male provincial records in 2018 (eight records in the 15-17 male category and four records in the senior male age category).

### **Rylan Wiens | 16 | Pike Lake | Diving**

Nominated by Dive Sask

- Placed 4th in the men's individual 10 m platform at the Junior World Championships in a field of 39 competitors from 22 countries.
- Placed 4th in the men's synchro platform and 13th in the men's individual 10 m platform at the FINA China World Cup.
- Placed 8th in the men's individual 10 m platform at the Commonwealth Games.
- Won gold and set a new national record as a partner in the men's synchro 10 m platform at Senior Nationals. As a junior, he also won bronze in the senior men's individual 10 m platform.

## **2018 Female Athlete of the Year Finalists**

### **Brittany Hudak | 25 | Prince Albert | Para Nordic Skiing**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Ski Association

- Won bronze in the 12.5 km biathlon, 8th in the 6 km biathlon, 5th in the 10 km biathlon, 6th in sprint cross country and 8th in the 7.5 km cross country at the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games.
- Finished 5th in cross-country middle distance at the International Paralympic Committee World Cup in Oberried, Germany, which featured participants from 16 countries. There, she also placed 7th in cross-country sprint classic, 6th in biathlon sprint, 6th in biathlon middle distance, 8th in biathlon long distance and 7th in cross-country long distance.
- Won bronze in biathlon long distance at the International Paralympic Committee World Cup in Canmore, Alta. At the same competition, she placed 5th in biathlon sprint distance, 5th in cross-country sprint distance classic, 4th in biathlon pursuit distance and 5th in cross-country middle distance.

### **Shelby Newkirk | 22 | Saskatoon | Para Swimming**

Nominated by Swim Saskatchewan Inc.

- Won gold in the women's 100 m back (S7) and bronze in the women's 4 x 100 m medley relay (S1-S10) at the 2018 Pan Pacific Para Swimming Championships.
- Set a new world record and captured silver in the 50 m backstroke (S7) at the International Deutsche Meisterschaften, which featured competitors from 24 clubs and 45 countries. In addition, she won silver in the women's 100 m back.
- Won bronze in the women's open 400 m free and women's 200 m medley at the World Para Swimming World Series in Copenhagen, Denmark, which featured participants from 25 nations. In addition, she placed 6th in the women's open 100 m back.

- Won gold and set a new world record in the women's 100 m back multiclass at the 2018 Canadian Swimming Trials, which featured participants from 104 clubs across the country. At the same event, she won silver in the women's 100 m free multiclass.
- Named the 2018 Swimming Canada Para Swimmer of the Year.

### **Marie Wright | 58 | Moose Jaw | Wheelchair Curling**

Nominated by CURLSASK

- Won a bronze medal as a member of Team Canada at the 2018 PyeongChang Paralympic Games, which featured teams from 12 countries.
- Won gold at the 2018 Canadian Wheelchair Championship, where she became the first female skip to win a national title.
- Named All-Star Skip at the 2018 Canadian Wheelchair Championship.

### **2018 Male Athlete of the Year Finalists**

#### **Mark McMorris | 24 | Regina | Snowboarding**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Snowboard

- Won bronze in men's slopestyle and finished 10th in the men's big air contest at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics.
- Won gold in men's slopestyle at the Burton U.S. Open, which featured 32 elite international competitors.
- Won bronze in men's slopestyle at Winter 2018 X Games Aspen.
- Finished 6th in the men's big air competition at 2018 X Games Norway.

#### **Kurt Oatway | 34 | Regina | Para Alpine Skiing**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Ski Association - Skiing for Disabled

- Won gold in the Super G competition at the 2018 PyeongChang Paralympic Winter Games, which featured 37 international skiers.
- Won gold in the downhill contest at the World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup in Kimberly, B.C., where he competed against 21 international skiers.
- Won silver in Super G sitting and finished 4th in the GS sitting competitions at the World Para Alpine Skiing US event in Mammoth Mountain, California.
- Won silver in Super G sitting and GS sitting events at World Para Alpine Skiing Canada in Mammoth Mountain, California.

#### **David Samayoa | 26 | Regina | Weightlifting**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Weightlifting Association

- Finished 11th in the 85 kg class at the IWF's 2018 Pan American Weightlifting Championships against 14 other international competitors.
- Finished 22nd in the 89 kg class at the IWF's 2018 World Weightlifting Championships against 30 other international competitors.
- Won gold in the 85 kg class at the Canadian Senior National Weightlifting Championships against 14 other competitors from eight provinces.
- Won gold in the 85 kg class at the Western Canadian Weightlifting Championships, which featured 12 competitors. At the event, which included participants from four provinces, he was named best overall male lifter.
- Won gold among 13 competitors at the Ogoogo Championships, which drew participants from three provinces and four American states.

## **2018 Team of the Year Finalists**

### **Saskatoon Hilltops | Saskatoon | Football**

Nominated by Football Saskatchewan

- Won the Canadian Bowl with players earning defensive and offensive Most Valuable Player in-game honours, one major national award winner and seven all-Canadian nods.
- Won the Prairie Football Conference Championship, finishing the season undefeated with 12 conference all-stars and nine individual conference major award winners.

### **Sundown Optimist Buffalo Gals | Regina | Baton Twirling**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Baton Twirling Association

- Finished 5th in team competition at the World Baton Twirling Championships, which featured 10 international teams.
- Won gold in team competition at the Canadian Baton Twirling Championships against three other teams from across the country.
- Won gold in team competition at the Canadian Team Trials against three other teams from across the country.

### **Team Sask Under-19 Women | Regina | WaterPolo**

Nominated by Water Polo Saskatchewan

- Won gold in women's under-19 competition at the National Championships, becoming the first Saskatchewan team to win the junior national title.
- At National Championships, team members won Most Valuable Goal Keeper, Most Valuable Player and Most Valuable Coach honours.

## **2018 Master Athlete of the Year Finalists**

### **Ted Rowan | 85 | Martensville | Track and Field**

Nominated by Saskatchewan Athletics

- Won two gold medals (decathlon and triple jump) and two silvers (high jump and long jump) in the 85-89 masters age category at the World Masters Outdoor Track and Field Championships, which drew competition from 196 countries. He set a world record in the decathlon and Canadian records in the long jump, 80 m hurdles and discus at the event.
- Won four gold medals at the Canadian Master's Track and Field Championships, with wins in pentathlon masters (85-89), 100 m masters (80-99), pole vault masters (85-89) and javelin throw masters (85-89). He set a world record in the pentathlon with the finish, and Canadian records in the pole vault, 100 m and javelin.
- Won two bronze medals in the masters' 85-89 category in long jump and shotput, as well as 6th in discus and javelin at the Saskatchewan Athletics Provincial Championships.

### **Women's Masters Relay Team 320-359 | Regina | Swimming**

Nominated by Swim Saskatchewan Inc.

- Won gold in the women's 4 x 50 m freestyle relay event in the combined 320-359 age group at the 2018 Canadian Masters Swimming Championship. At the same event, these four relay team members won 17 individual medals.
- Set two provincial records in 2018 for the women's master relay in the combined 320-359 age group.

- Won gold in the women's 4 x 50 m Individual Medley relay event in the combined 320-359 age group at the RMSC 2018 Invitational Swim Meet. At the same event, these four relay team members won 13 individual medals.