



MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release – Wednesday March 6, 2024

Lethbridge Sport Council Achievement Awards - Announcement of Winners

Lethbridge, Alberta: The Lethbridge Sport Council is honoured to announce 18 exceptional recipients of the annual Lethbridge Sport Council Achievement Awards for their significant achievements and contributions to the Lethbridge community in 2023. These awards celebrate excellence and fair play on and off the field and are a testament to the hard work and dedication of each recipient.

Lethbridge Sport Council Executive Director Susan Eymann said, "We are thrilled with this year's winners who are excellent role models for aspiring athletes, coaches, officials, and leaders. Their dedication underscores the spirit of sport, inspiring others to get involved and do their best in their own activities."

We are pleased to announce the 2023 Lethbridge Sport Council Achievement Award winners.

- Junior Female Athlete - Amalia Yavitu
- Junior Male Athlete - Owen Parker
- Senior Female Athlete - Jamie Brown
- Senior Male Athlete - Cooper Williams
- Master Athlete - Michael Wagner
- Athlete with a Disability - Braeson Schacher
- Special Olympics - Moriah Van't Land
- Amateur Team - U13 AA Lethbridge Hurricanes
- Coaching Excellence Community Coach - Jennifer Cochrane
- Coaching Excellence High Performance - Caroline Reimer
- Officiating Excellence - Francis Rankin
- Volunteer in Sport - Kurt Parks (co-recipient)
- Volunteer in Sport - Gord Cox (co-recipient)
- Dr. Gary Bowie Sport Event Excellence - Lethbridge Curling Club and General Manager Kirk Mearns
- Shaun Ward Sport Champion - Alan Hansen
- Sport Administrator - Angela Mann
- Servus Credit Union Outstanding Sport Citizen - Zane Chief Moon
- Knud Petersen Spirit in Sport - Kamryn Sandberg

Award ceremony information:

- Tuesday April 16th, doors open 6:00 PM, program 7:00 PM
- ENMAX Centre, Canadian Western Bank Lounge
- Tickets: \$20.00 (youth \$10)

To purchase tickets visit

<https://lethbridgesportcouncil.ca/events/achievement-awards>

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Recipient Biographies

Junior Female Athlete - Amalia Yavitu

Amalia Yavitu is the Level 5 all-around gymnastics provincial champion. 10-year old Amalia shines as a dedicated leader in artistic gymnastics. Amalia recently made history as her club's first provincial champion since 2009. Amalia's work ethic extends beyond the gym; she excels academically, earning straight A's and serving as a role model for her peers.

Junior Male Athlete - Owen Parker

Owen Parker, a junior high multi-sport athlete has demonstrated exceptional sportsmanship and podium placings in football, basketball, badminton, and athletics. His achievements include Bantam football - silver medal, basketball city championship - gold, badminton city championship - bronze, athletics at the city level - shot put - first place, 100m, and 200m - second place, at the zone level - 100m - second place, and shot put - third place.

Senior Female Athlete - Jamie Brown

Jamie Brown, a fifth-year standout in volleyball, has been recognized as the women's Kodiaks Athlete of the Year and All-Conference outside hitter. She played a key role in her team's successful season, contributing to their highest finish in program history during the ACAC championships. Jamie's leadership and dedication make her a standout athlete in collegiate volleyball.

Senior Male Athlete - Cooper Williams

Cooper Williams is a cross country and track athlete. His impressive performance, including All-Conference Team honours, bronze at the cross-country championships, and gold at the indoor track championships, highlights his dedication and talent. Cooper's leadership on and off the track, coupled with his outstanding academic achievements as a CCAA Academic All-Canadian, make him a role model in collegiate athletics.

Master Athlete - Michael Wagner

Michael Wagner is a founding member and current treasurer of the Lethbridge Pickleball Club. Michael's achievements in provincial, national, and international competitions have earned him numerous accolades, including multiple gold medals in national and international competitions. His leadership and mentorship within the club have further solidified his legacy as a dedicated athlete and community leader.

Athlete with a Disability - Braeson Schacher

Braeson Schacher is an athlete, mentor, and volunteer, who achieved podium finishes in the CrossFit Open and represented Team Canada at the World Disabled Waterski Championships. This past year, Braeson was named the recipient of the 2023 Water Ski and Wakeboard Canada Male Adaptive Development Athlete of the Year.

Special Olympics - Moriah Van't Land

Moriah Van't Land is an athlete in both figure skating and rhythmic gymnastics. In 2023 Moriah competed at the Special Olympics Alberta Winter Games in the Level 1 Women's Singles figure skating event, winning gold. As a result, Moriah was selected for the Team Alberta 2024 Training Squad and selected to compete at the 2024 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games held recently in Calgary, where she earned a gold medal.

Amateur Team - U13 AA Lethbridge Hurricanes

The U13 AA Lethbridge Hurricanes were crowned provincial champions and even more impressive is the character of the team and the positive impact they made in the community. Their participation in the Bison's Day fundraiser, where they showed their support for a teammate's family member battling cancer, exemplifies their values.

Coaching Excellence Community Coach - Jennifer Cochrane

Jennifer Cochrane is a skating coach with over 2 decades experience. In addition to being an NCCP Provincial Coach coaching STARSkate and CANSkate with the Lethbridge Skating Club, Jen is also former competitive skater, and a registered nurse. Jen has been an asset to the club and athletes for many years and has recently been appreciated for her work to adapt the core programming and events to meet the evolving needs of the club, but also to ensure it is fun and functional for the athletes.

Coaching Excellence High Performance - Caroline Reimer

Caroline Reimer is the head coach of two Team Canada Junior Roller Derby teams. Through her leadership and dedication, Caroline has guided her athletes to much success, including third and fourth-place finishes at the Junior Roller Derby World Cup. Her contributions to roller derby in Lethbridge continue to inspire athletes and coaches alike.

Officiating Excellence - Francis Rankin

Francis Rankin, a hockey official for over 50 years, is a tireless advocate for young officials, nurturing their talents and helping them grow into confident and skilled referees. His integrity and inclusivity set the standard for sportsmanship, ensuring that everyone feels valued and respected on and off the ice.

Volunteer in Sport - Kurt Parks

Kurt Parks has served on the Lethbridge Ringette board for eight years as the Director of Officials and Director of Player Development. His commitment to equitable team formation policies and mentorship of young officials has been instrumental in fostering a positive environment.

Volunteer in Sport - Gord Cox

Gord Cox has served on the Lethbridge Ringette board for six years. As the Director of Ice Allocation his efforts have optimized ice allocation and strengthened partnerships within the community. As a coach and official, Gord's integrity and fair-mindedness have earned him the respect of players and colleagues alike.

Dr. Gary Bowie Sport Event Excellence - Lethbridge Curling Club & General Manager Kirk Mearns

The Lethbridge Curling Club, under the leadership of General Manager Kirk Mearns, have successfully bid for and hosted many high-end events including 13 provincial events, the 2017 World Seniors and World Mixed Doubles, the 2019 World Mens, and the 2022 Tim Hortons Brier. This past December, Kirk and 50 club member-volunteers, hosted a very successful Best Western Alberta Mixed Doubles Provincial Championship.

Shaun Ward Sport Champion - Alan Hansen

Alan Hansen's contributions to wrestling and rugby in the Lethbridge community span many decades. Alan serves as a coach of three programs, member of two boards, and advocate for grassroots sport. Alan was a founding member of the newly formed Lethbridge Pronghorns Wrestling program and was chair of several bid and host committees including the 2023 ASAA Provincial Wrestling Championships.

Sport Administrator - Angela Mann

Angela Mann became the administrator for the Lethbridge Skating Club in 2021. With over 30 years of experience as a trained Skate Canada coach Angela brings immense knowledge to her current role always willing to jump in where needed, assisting the coaches and the board of directors, significantly impacting the club's success.

Servus Credit Union Outstanding Sport Citizen - Zane Chief Moon

Zane Chief Moon is being recognized for achievements on and off the field. He is a Spirit North Youth Program Leader and Assistant Community Program Leader. His efforts have been particularly remarkable introducing young Indigenous players to the game of lacrosse. Zane is a multisport athlete, participating in lacrosse, baseball, and cross country, winning a bronze medal with his U19 lacrosse team at the 2023 North American Indigenous Games.

Knud Petersen Spirit in Sport - Kamryn Sandberg

Kamryn Sandberg, the Lethbridge Sport Lead for the Alberta Sports & Recreation Association For The Blind formed the first local dragon boat team of athletes with vision impairments. They named themselves 'Blind Ambition'. Kamryn's passion coupled with the team's camaraderie sure made a presence at the dragon boat festival, challenging stereotypes and inspiring the community with their determination to overcome barriers.