

**2022**  
**2023**

**BC  
SCHOOL  
SPORTS**

**AWARDS  
PROGRAM**



# 2022-2023 BCSS AWARDS DINNER

*May 12, 2023 • Hilton Whistler Resort & Spa*

Cocktail Hour: 6pm • Dinner: 7pm

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BCSS Staff and Board of Directors are pleased to  
present the following awards:

**HONOUR AWARD**  
**MEDIA PERSON OF THE YEAR**  
**WOMEN IN SPORTS & LEADERSHIP**  
**INSPIRATIONAL SCHOOL**  
**CITATIONS OF EXCELLENCE**

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## **STARTER**

*Cured Artisan & Deli Meats*

## **SALADS**

Artisan Mixed Greens  
& Assorted Garden Vegetables

Caesar Salad

Greek Salad

Shrimp & Pasta Salad

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## ENTRÉES

Thyme & Rock Salt Roasted Potatoes

Wild Rice Pilaf

Seasonal Market Vegetables

West Coast Seafood Bake

Prosciutto Wrapped Chicken,  
Roasted Herb Baron of Beef

## DESSERT STATION

Maple Pecan Streusel

Spiced Carrot Cake

Vanilla Cheesecake

Chocolate Brownie

Coffee

Tea

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# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - COACH

**DEAN FRANCKS**

**KALAMALKA SECONDARY**



Dean Francks is a basketball and volleyball coach at Kalamalka Secondary in his hometown of Vernon played in the Battle of Vernon in basketball and competed at BCSS provincial championships for volleyball.

Dean decided to get into coaching due to his love of sport and the substantial role it played in his life. He yearned to give back and encourage students to get involved - especially at a young age - so that they could develop valuable life skills.

Dean's school sport coaching career started in his early 20's at HD Stafford. He took a hiatus after his kids were born but returned to coaching when they entered high school. He has been through some incredible experiences alongside them that he will remember forever.

Dean has coached the girls' volleyball and basketball teams at Kalamalka since 2015 and 2019, respectively. This season, Dean led his senior girls' volleyball team on an incredible run, winning the Thomson-Okanagan Zone Championships, before the crowning achievement of winning the 2022 BCSS 'AA' Girls Volleyball Championship last December. The moment was very special for Dean as he got to both coach and witness his daughter winning a provincial banner after coaching her throughout her high school journey.

In girls' basketball, Dean helped coach the Kalamalka team to a 5th place (2022) and 11th place (2023) finish at the last two BCSS 'AA' Girls Basketball Provincial Championships. The goal this season was to qualify for the provincial tournament with a young team and gain beneficial experience.

Dean is recognized as a coach that utilizes positive reinforcement to support girls on and off the court while making their athletic experiences fun and memorable. He is patient, understanding, and supportive. He is constantly giving words of encouragement to his student-athletes. These characteristics stem from Dean's coaching philosophy: collective accountability. He encourages students to operate as a team and play their roles the best they can to achieve positive results. He aspires to lift young people and make them feel good about themselves. Dean volunteers taking many of his vacation days each year to support his student-athletes and their teams.

Through this, Dean has become a role model for not only his team but other coaches and teachers. He would like to thank his family for always being supportive of him amidst coaching commitments, the administrators and athletic directors at Kalamalka for welcoming him as a community coach, and lastly, the student-athletes for making his job fun to do.

Congratulations Dean on becoming a recipient of our Citation of Excellence in Coaching Award!

# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - COACH

**TIM MURDY**

**SHAWNIGAN LAKE SCHOOL**



Tim Murdy has coached high school rugby for 34 years including the last 17 at Shawnigan Lake School.

His involvement in school sports first began as a student-athlete playing rugby, football, basketball, and cross country. Tim's coaching career started at Carson Graham Secondary in the late 1980s coaching rugby. After obtaining a teaching degree at UBC, Tim went on to coach at numerous high schools in the province (Hillside, Rockridge, Carson Graham, West Vancouver, and Balmoral Jr. Secondary) before obtaining a job at Shawnigan Lake School.

Although Tim stepped aside from the head coach position for Shawnigan's rugby program last year, he still oversees the entire rugby program, and serves as a mentor and coach to Shawnigan's nine rugby teams and often as a guest coach to other secondary schools on the island. Tim offers an annual free rugby coaching clinic to support other coaches in the growth and promotion of rugby across the province.

Tim's career as a rugby coach has resulted in a long list of successes, both in and out of school sport. He is one of very few coaches, in any sport that can claim to have led programs at three different schools to a BCSS Provincial Championship (Carson Graham, Rockridge, Shawnigan Lake). Outside school sport, Tim has coached BC Rugby teams to 6 National Championships and was the Head Coach for Rugby Canada for 11 years. These achievements have led him to be recognized by the BC Rugby Hall of Fame.

Tim's love for sport and competition drives him as a coach, and he believes it is important to give back to provide opportunities for the next generation. He considers sport crucial in teaching students important life lessons and building special relationships that cannot be experienced within the confines of a traditional classroom.

When asked about his favourite coaching memory, Tim recalls winning the Rugby Provincial Championship with Shawnigan Lake in 2009. He vividly remembers the whole school watching the game and celebrating the win together.

Beyond coaching, Tim has also been an executive for several Athletic Associations in BC for over 15 years and is the current Director of Athletics at Shawnigan Lake School. He puts forth his best work into anything he does, and his long-time devotion to coaching rugby and being involved in school sports has led many of his fellow coaches and students to view him as a role model.

Congratulations Tim on becoming an inaugural recipient of the Citation of Excellence Award!

# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - COACH

**TESSA KUBICEK**

**OAK BAY SECONDARY**



Tessa Kubicek began her school sports journey competing in cross country, track, and soccer for Lambrick Park Secondary. Her love for working with youth led her to begin coaching for Oak Bay High School in 2011 after mentoring under Keith Butler and Michael Sheffer from the Cross Country and Track and Field Programs.

During her coaching career, Tessa has coached cross country, track and field, and soccer. She considers the cross country program her main passion, coaching it for more than a decade. Although some view it as an individual pursuit, Tessa works to construct her programs with a focus on team building. Tessa cherishes the opportunity to coach school sport, providing the opportunity for athletes of all abilities to develop a love for running. In her time coaching Cross Country at Oak Bay, the team has won 7 BCSS Provincial Championships and 2 junior titles.

A lasting memory for Tessa was when her cross country team competed in the 2012 BCSS Cross Country Provincial Championships in Prince George. The snowy conditions made for a grueling race, but Oak Bay pulled through to win the senior boys' provincial title. Beyond winning, the moment that stood out most to Tessa was seeing the entire team wait at the finish line to cheer on their final teammate across the line despite cold and miserable weather conditions. It was a demonstration of how those athletes had formed a lasting connection together.

In Tessa's time coaching the Track and Field team, Oak Bay has won 5 BCSS Provincial Championships: 3 while an assistant coach, and both the Senior Girls and 'AAA' Combined titles in 2022 in Tessa's first season as a head coach. A feat she notes comes from the resilience of her student-athletes and the team environment her coaches create to come back from a 2-year hiatus due to COVID.

Apart from her considerable coaching commitments, Tessa finds the time to serve as the LVISSAA Cross Country Commissioner, the Vancouver Island Cross Country Zone Rep, a member of three BCSS committees, and was a co-chair of the hosting committee for the 2022 Cross Country Championships. In the local community, she coaches youth soccer and the Oak Bay Operation Trackshoes team, a track meet for athletes with developmental disabilities.

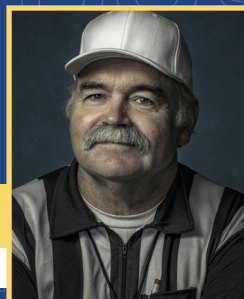
Tessa's firm belief in volunteerism and giving back to the community drives her constant involvement in school sport. In receiving this honour, she would like to thank her husband, Alan, her kids Declan, Logan, and Josephine, parents Ian and Paddy, mentor coaches Keith Butler and Michael Sheffer, athletic director Richard Fast, and co-coaches Mya Kinnear and Megan Johnston.

Congratulations Tessa on becoming an inaugural recipient of our Citation of Excellence in Coaching Award!

# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - OFFICIAL

**WALTER BECKER**

**FOOTBALL**



Walter Becker, or 'Sarge' as he is known to virtually everyone, first started his officiating career in 1970 at a basketball game at John Oliver Secondary. He would referee grade 8 and junior basketball games at least three times a week. After his graduation, Walter joined the Vancouver District Basketball Officials' Association and refereed high school basketball for 8 seasons.

Walter has an admirable character trait of being the person always willing to step up during unplanned situations, and it has led to many of his officiating experiences. At the Fraser Valley Senior Field Hockey Championships in 1980, there were no carded officials available for the final game, so Walter voluntarily came forward to referee the final. In 2003, Walter was pulled out of the stands at a BC Lions game to join the sideline stick crew when the assigned official could not make it. This led Walter to join the BC Football Officials Association (BCFOA) in the same year. He has been on a crew at the BCSS Football Championships every year since.

Walter's dedication to officiating stems beyond his time on the field. Having served as a Vice President of the BCFOA for four years, Walter took on the responsibility of mentoring newer and younger officials on his crew, such as helping them with rule interpretations. He also helped recruit and gather high school officials, developing the next generation.

Apart from officiating, Walter is heavily involved in the school sports community in various ways. He has coached high school football for 35 years and basketball for 6 years, along with other sports like wrestling and tennis. Walter served as the Department Head of Physical Education at North Delta Secondary for 31 years and in addition served as the Athletic Director for 20 years. He was also the President of both the Delta Secondary Schools Athletic Association and the Fraser Valley Secondary Schools Athletic Association for a combined 18 years. Beyond the realm of school sport, Walter has been appointed as the CFL Communications Coordinator for BC and was even assigned to three Grey Cup Championships.

Walter's dedication to officiating comes from his passion for building impactful relationships and getting the chance to witness and be a part of many memorable moments. Walter officiated the 800th football game of his career this year, the majority of those high school games. Walter has given a lifetime of service to high school sports that is worthy of not just recognition but celebration of the lasting legacy he has created.

Congratulations Walter on receiving the BC School Sports Citation of Excellence in Officiating.

# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - OFFICIAL

**KARN DHILLON**

**BASKETBALL**



Karn Dhillon began his officiating career when he was a student-athlete at Sir Winston Churchill Secondary. Starting with intramural games, he realized there were not many professional officials available, so Karn asked to officiate interschool junior boys games as well. At the end of Karn's grade 12 season, he went to thank the officials and they told him he was a good referee, suggesting that he should stay involved and return as an official for the next year. These experiences in high school encouraged Karn to continue a career in basketball officiating.

Karn started his officiating career in 1979 with the Greater Vancouver Basketball Officials Association. He is considered one of the top officials in BC Basketball, having refereed in numerous BCSS Provincial Championships over an impressive 44-year officiating career. This includes being selected 5 times to officiate BCSS Boys Basketball Provincial Championship Gold Medal games in all four tiers and twice to officiate BCSS 'AAA' Girls Basketball Provincial Championship Gold Medal games.

Karn views the officials as the "3rd team on the court" who are essential in ensuring our contests happen fairly. Karn values refereeing with integrity above anything else. Karn's tenure in officiating goes beyond what he does on the court. As someone who has witnessed the game of basketball evolve drastically throughout time blowing the whistle, he consistently finds ways to not only better himself but the officials around him to match the current state of gameplay. After games, Karn often meets up with other referees to break down plays, take notes, and discuss game circumstances and patterns to find ways to improve their job.

Karn has heavily contributed to the development of officials. For 20 years, he has spent time off the court to evaluate and grade younger referees, providing feedback both verbally and through footage. He holds a passion for guiding and helping the next generation of officials reach their highest potential so that they can one day also referee at the provincial championship level.

Apart from his time as an official, Karn is well-known and highly respected for his dedication and volunteerism to spearhead the BCBOA Pink Whistle Legacy Fund, a campaign dedicated to cancer care and research that has raised over \$210,000 since its launch in 2009. The fund has united coaches, fans, and referees in BC together over the past decade in a joint fight against cancer. It has made substantial waves within the basketball community and media, with now over 600 referees around the province wearing pink whistles in support. Karn's dedication to officiating on and off the court has made a great impact on the basketball referee community across BC,

Congratulations Karn on receiving the BC School Sports Citation of Excellence in Officiating.



# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - OFFICIAL

## FIRST 3-WOMAN OFFICIATING CREW AT A PROVINCIAL FINAL

This year's BCSS Girls Basketball Provincial Championship saw a historic moment occur as the first ever 3-woman officiating crew was selected to officiate the 'AAA' Girls Basketball Provincial Championship Gold Medal game. The three members, Darcy Williamson, Gilda Moore, and Mareesa Kelly have been heavily involved in basketball officiating in BC for numerous years.



### DARCY WILLIAMSON

Darcy started her career as an official in 2012 through a highschool sports leadership program and deciding to pursue it further by joining the Victoria Basketball Officials Association during university. From 2014-2017, Darcy continued to work high school and club basketball games and officiated her first Provincial Championship in 2017. Since then, she has worked crucial games at both BCSS Boys and Girls Provincial Championships. These include the 'A' Boys

Basketball gold medal games in 2019 and 2020, the 'AAAA' Girls Basketball Provincial Championship final in 2022 and becoming a part of the three-person female officiating crew for the 'AAA' Girls Basketball final this March.

Outside her time on the court, Darcy is a member of the BC Basketball Officials Committee, a freelance sport photographer, the Athletics Coordinator at a school in West Vancouver, and volunteers in off-season initiatives to educate and encourage women to become basketball officials. She takes pride that the milestone marked at the 'AAA' Girls Provincial final this year can be seen as a new normal and is appreciative to the assigning team and referee coaches in BC who have played a huge part in making the achievement possible.

### GILDA MOORE

Gilda Moore was first drawn to officiating after watching a basketball game with a female official taking the lead during it. She began her officiating career in 2005 in Surrey, moved to the Fraser Valley Basketball Officials Association in 2012, and has now been refereeing for almost 20 years.

Gilda has faced numerous challenges in her time as an official but continues to motivate herself to keep going. She values the community and personal aspect that come from officiating, such as developing resilience, confidence, and staying involved in basketball. Gilda has officiated many BCSS Girls and



# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - OFFICIAL

## FIRST 3-WOMAN OFFICIATING CREW AT A PROVINCIAL FINAL

Boys Basketball Provincial Championship playoff games, including four gold medal games: the 2016 'AAA' Girls final, 2019 'AA' Girls final, 2023 'A' Boys final, and 2023 'AAA' Girls final as part of the all-female crew.

Outside of officiating on the court, Gilda has been serving as an observer and evaluator of officials since 2016, a member of the FVBOA executive since 2018, obtained certification as a 'Referee Coach' in 2019, and even helped develop the BCBBC "New Officials Training Program" in 2021.

Receiving the opportunity to be a part of the first 3-woman officiating crew at a Provincial final this year was a special moment for Gilda as it was a chance to face a new challenge and help establish a new standard for officiating in BC.



### MAREESA KELLY

Mareesa Kelly's involvement in BC School Sports began as a basketball and volleyball player at Caribaldi Secondary. Participating in sports gave her joy and taught her valuable life skills.

In Mareesa's senior years in high school, she officiated the grade 8 and junior teams in both basketball and volleyball with the help and guidance of her coach at the time. Once she graduated and entered post-secondary; Mareesa

looked for a way to stay involved in the game of basketball. She spent time coaching with a youth sport group and her previous high school, but eventually fell back on to officiating as the best way for her to stay involved in the sport. This led Mareesa to join her local basketball officials' group where she was immediately welcomed and taught how much she could enjoy the game from the 'dark side'. All these instances and experiences have led Mareesa to being a part of the historical 3-woman female officiating crew at this year's BCSS 'AAA' Girls Basketball Provincial final.

In receiving this award, Mareesa reflects on the countless amazing people who have pushed her and supported her journey, including the two ladies receiving the distinct honour alongside her.

This crew not only broke barriers in their achievement, but performed exceptionally well, handling a very competitive championship game in front of over 2200 people. They never lost control of the game but also never were the center of attention or impacted the game significantly. It was a terrific performance by this crew under the brightest of lights.

Congratulations to the first 3-woman crew to officiate a BCSS Basketball Championship final on their receiving the BC School Sports Citation of Excellence in Officiating.

# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - ADMINISTRATOR

**CHRIS KENNEDY**

**WEST VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT**



Chris Kennedy has had a distinguished career in education. After teaching in Richmond and being a school vice-principal and principal in Coquitlam, he began as a district administrator in the West Vancouver School District in 2007. Throughout his journey, Chris has consistently exhibited an immeasurable dedication to building and improving school sport. Coming from a family with a history in coaching, Chris fully understands the value of school sports. At a young age, he fell in love with coaching, starting to do so in grade 9. Chris is now in his 36th year of coaching and has worked with various sports such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, cross country, and track and field. As his kids got involved in sports, he coached their teams as well.

One of his most memorable school sport experiences was the 1998 BCSS Boys Basketball Championships at the Agrodome where his young team made an improbable run to the semi-finals. Other special memories were the opportunity to coach basketball with his dad, coaching with his wife and as an assistant coach to his daughter.

Throughout his time as Superintendent of the West Vancouver School District, Chris has been a constant advocate for athletic directors and coaches. He regularly attends games in every sport, campaigns for financial resources, works to attract coaches to consider employment with West Vancouver schools, and has taken a very keen interest in the success of all school athletic programs. Under Chris' leadership, the school district has covered the costs of all coaches receiving NCCP Certification. He has also led a physical literacy program aimed to get younger kids active to develop skills to play sports that have made headlines within the province. Chris is considered a thought leader in Education and often shares the impacts of school sport throughout his writing and speaking engagements. Advancements in school sport around the province stem from Chris' belief that administrators need to be present in school sports. He believes school sports have the power to reflect how schools are seen in the eyes of the public and are also a place where students can connect and share values.

Despite the demands of his Superintendent role, Chris still makes time to coach multiple sports and assist at various Provincial Championships. He has also been a member of the BC School Sports Boys and Girls Basketball Championship Planning Committees since 2000 and 2013, respectively, and is the long-running emcee of the Championship Awards Ceremonies.

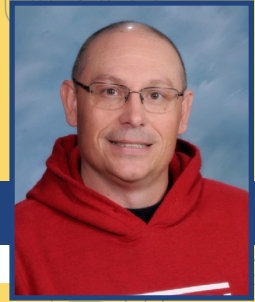
Chris sets the bar for district leadership in his support for school sport. He is an advocate with members of the government and his colleagues around the province. His dedication and incredible service will only be outweighed by the legacy that he will leave on school sports in Richmond, West Vancouver and across BC.

Congratulations Chris on receiving the BCSS Citation of Excellence in Administration.

# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

**JODY VOSPER**

**SA-HALI SECONDARY**



Jody Vosper is the Athletic Director at Sa-Hali Secondary School in Kamloops, a role he has held for 15 years. He took on the AD role in 2008 after being mentored by the outgoing Athletic Director for a year.

Jody is involved with athletics in every aspect, always going the extra mile to be there for coaches and student-athletes to provide whatever they need. He continuously gives students more opportunities to train, play, and celebrate their athletic experiences. Some of the ways Jody puts these values into practice are opening the gym for students outside practice times, encouraging non-athletes to get connected with athletics through volunteering, streaming home games for the Sa-Hali community to stay engaged, and much more. He methodizes his core belief that athletic programs are not just about sports but developing students to become better people by establishing positive life skills.

In addition to his athletic administration experience, Jody has 26 years in coaching, having coached both girls' and boys' volleyball, basketball, senior boys' rugby, and ultimate. He continuously finds and mentors others and has built positive relationships with community groups that have in turn supported the Sa-Hali athletics program. Additionally, Jody has sponsored nearly every sport offered at his school during his career.

Jody's time as the Athletic Director at Sa-Hali has seen him overcome numerous challenges and responsibilities to create a deep and long-lasting impact within the Sa-Hali athletics program. The school now offers more teams and sports than ever before and is continuously growing.

Apart from his Athletic Director position, Jody currently serves as a member of the BCSS Legislative Assembly, BCSS Basketball Advisory Committee, and has been a commissioner for volleyball and basketball with the Kamloops Local Athletic Association (West Zone) and OVSA (Okanagan Zone) for more than 15 years. Jody has spent his entire career serving his school community, student-athletes and coaches in his program. He is a constant presence in Sa-Hali and gives far more than he is ever asked. He is a servant leader in the truest sense that excels as a leader of an athletic program in BC.

Congratulations Jody on receiving the BCSS Citation of Excellence as an Athletic Director!

# CITATION OF EXCELLENCE - ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

**GERALD LAMBERT**

**SOUTHRIDGE SCHOOL**



Gerald Lambert has served for nearly 20 years as an Athletic Director. He began his education career as a teacher in northern Manitoba before moving to BC in the Fall of 1991. Throughout the years, Gerald's knowledge, dedication, and generosity toward high school sport in BC has brought an immeasurable impact on school athletic programs, leagues, and student-athlete experiences, especially during his time as an Athletic Director for Crofton House School.

Gerald faced various challenges when he first began leading Crofton's athletics program in the early 2000s. One of his primary challenges was as the Athletic Director, building a culture and trusting it to take as part of the program. Within a few short years, Crofton House developed into one of the most respected and well-organized athletic programs in BC. Gerald's tireless devotion to the school has provided the necessary continuity and leadership to progress the infrastructure of Crofton's athletic program for years to come. Some of the initiatives he launched include new athletics awards, First Responders Club, an athletic council, and various in-house sports programs.

Crofton has also seen great competitive progress, achieving numerous firsts such as winning Provincial Championships, league playoffs, hosting memorable events, and more. Gerald has inspired and motivated Crofton's students and community to take pride in their athletic program.

Gerald has always been a strong advocate for student-athletes and their well-being. His commitment to them has resulted in healthy season schedules and healthier student-athletes and coaches. He also strongly believes that all sports should be treated equally so that students can have the same opportunities for success, and in turn, has worked tirelessly to host tournaments and events. Crofton House, with Gerald as Athletic Director and Tournament Director has hosted 'AAA' Girls Volleyball, 'AA' Girls Soccer, 'AAA' Tennis, and 'AA' Girls Field Hockey Championships on several occasions; there are few ADs with more championships hosted than Gerald.

Beyond his duties as an Athletic Director, Gerald also finds time to serve as the LMISSAA President, Zone Executive Member of the Vancouver Sea-to-Sky zone, and on BCSS committees.

With the demands of the Athletic Director position constantly growing, Gerald continues to rise to the challenge and exceed any reasonable expectation with the time he gives. He strongly encourages other educators to also get involved in school sport and extracurriculars, as there is no greater experience than being a part of students' lives outside the classroom.

Congratulations Gerald on receiving the BCSS Citation of Excellence as an Athletic Director!

# WOMEN IN SPORTS & LEADERSHIP AWARD

**ASHLYEN SINGH**

**RICK HANSEN SECONDARY**



Sports has played an unmeasurable role in Ash Singh's life. Ash played basketball throughout high school and comes from a family with a rich background in teaching and coaching. Growing up witnessing firsthand how their father, mother, and uncle coached and constantly involved themselves in school sports inspired them to do the same.

Ash began coaching in grade 11 with their sister and soon realized that the benefits they had gained from playing sports were far more accessible to some families than others. Specifically, youth from families experiencing financial or other social barriers resulted in them being less likely to enrol in sports.

As a result, Ash co-founded a not-for-profit called the Abbotsford Basketball Association (ABA). Through the ABA, they have worked with a team of community leaders and coaches to help address issues such as financial inaccessibility, lack of female coaches and officials, lack of participation in sports by girls, and more.

Today Ash has been coaching for 12 years, in both the community and in schools. They began teaching at in 2019, where they focused on promoting sports, particularly basketball, to female student-athletes in their school community.

Ash believes basketball to be a great vehicle for increasing the confidence, sense of community, and leadership skills of students. In their time at Rick Hansen, Ash has worked to develop a basketball program aimed at building up young female athletes at a school where female athletics has not traditionally received as much fanfare as some boys programs. This included establishing a morning program for girls to work on skills as individuals, as well as recruiting and supporting fellow coaches to become strong female role models.

Ash consistently encourages female student-athletes and has shifted the program's culture towards a growth-mindset so that all girls feel empowered to participate and contribute. Ash's proudest moments come from watching student-athletes walk through the hallways with a renewed sense of confidence and taking risks that they have never had before prior to playing basketball.

Outside of Ash's school-based coaching commitments, they continue to be heavily involved in external skills programs and club teams, and training other coaches. Ash goes beyond standard responsibilities as a coach and educator to give back and has especially brought an immeasurable value to the female basketball teams at Rick Hansen.

Ash is a true embodiment of what it means to be leader towards the growth of women's sports.

Congratulations Ash on being named the BC School Sports 2023 Women in Sports and Leadership Award recipient.

# MEDIA PERSON OF THE YEAR

**HOWARD TSUMURA**

**VARSITY LETTERS**



Howard Tsumura first began his journalism career in 1983 as a general and sports reporter for the Houston Today newspaper. Over the last 41 years, Howard furthered his reach to become the preeminent amateur sports reporter in BC, working for multiple newspapers throughout BC, including The Province (1990-2017). In 2017, he became the sole content creator and editor of Varsity Letters, BC's only high school and university sports coverage website. Today, Howard reaches a large audience through Varsity Letters by covering high school sports.

Howard was first drawn to journalism through the art and potential of storytelling. He pursued a career as a sportswriter because he wanted to make stories relatable, capture athletes' emotions, and give athletes validation by having their stories told and opinions heard.

Howard believes that community is the critical distinction in the coverage of high school sports that often professional sports coverage falls short of. The impact of writing about high school sports has greatly impacted local communities, especially those that are often not seen on front covers. Howard describes BC to have a unique sports landscape and emphasizes how important it is for the media to be highlighting the school sports stories within the province. He particularly enjoys covering BCSS Provincial Championships as there is a sense of finality in senior events and finds those moments exciting to be part of and tell the stories of the teams and athletes competing.

After having explored every plotline in sports, a particular story Howard likes to recall is when Lord Tweedsmuir won the 2019 AAAA Boys Basketball Provincial Championships at the LEC – a story full of inspiration through tragedy.

In his 41st year as a journalist, one of Howard's favourite moments that come to mind is the connectedness that can be felt throughout the high school community. He feels that school sport brings mental health awareness, positivity, and helps student-athletes find a sense of belonging within their school community.

After more than four decades, Howard is slowly easing away from the 24/7 grind of sports journalism but can still be found telling stories while having a major presence at BCSS Championships.

His work this year, and for the past forty-plus years telling the stories of school sports, make him the ideal recipient for this award. His exemplary coverage and dedication to elevating the status of high school sports in the province have left an enduring impact.

Congratulations Howard on receiving the 2023 BC School Sports Media Person of the Year Award.



# INSPIRATIONAL SCHOOL AWARD

## CLAREMONT SECONDARY



Claremont Secondary is the recipient of the 2023 BCSS Inspirational School Award. With support from an enthusiastic administration and the leadership of an experienced and respected athletic director, Claremont works hard to ensure positive experiences, high participation, advancement, and success.

Claremont ensures its athletics program provides quality experiences for student-athletes. They run 35 teams each year, covering nearly every BCSS activity and even some other non-BCSS activities. Annually, Claremont sees 500 students participate in their athletics program, an impressive 50% of their total student body.

The school provides an extensive catalogue of extracurricular opportunities, strongly encouraging the staff and students to get involved. One-third of Claremont's teaching staff are involved with coaching a sports team, taking the time outside of their many teaching commitments to provide opportunities for student-athletes. One of the traits that makes Claremont special is its push for volunteerism and giving back to the community. Staff and students can be seen volunteering at elementary and middle schools, summer camps, coaching local youth during in-house events, and holding fundraisers for their athletic programs.

Claremont is also an active member of BC School Sports. The school is always keen to host numerous sporting events every year, ranging from BCSS Provincial Championships to middle school tournaments. Events such as these help expand the exposure and connections between the school and the surrounding community.

Claremont's pride and dedication toward its athletic program have also led them to achieve great success over the past few years. Since 2019, the Spartans have won 22 Island Championships (3 so far in 2022-2023), becoming a strong contender in their zone in multiple sports. On the Provincial Championships level, some of their best achievements over the last five years include their golf team winning the 'AAA' Provincial Championships in 2019, and finishing in the top 3 in 2021 and 2022. In volleyball, their senior boys' team has placed 3rd, 4th, and 2nd in BC consecutively throughout the last three seasons, and their senior girls' team finished 5th in the province each of the past two seasons. In other sports, Claremont's teams regularly contend at the Island Zone Championships with many moving on to qualify for the BCSS Provincial Championships every year.

Claremont believes in the value and purpose of school sport. They provide resources for their athletics program and encourage members of the school to constantly be involved. Claremont continues to establish a positive and committed culture at their school where faculty, students and the community want to be involved. The valuable experiences and support they give to student-athletes inspire them to also give back, creating long-lasting impact throughout their school and community.

Congratulations to the leadership, staff and students at Claremont on receiving the BCSS Inspirational School Award!



# HONOUR AWARD

## **ANNEMARIE WATTS**

### **VALLEYVIEW SECONDARY**



School sports have been a significant part of Annemarie Watts' life for 35 years. After starting a Physical Education degree at UBC and taking a volleyball course where she was required to either coach or run a tournament, Annemarie began coaching volleyball at Prince of Wales Secondary in 1988. Since then, she has coached volleyball, basketball, and track and field for numerous high schools across the province (Prince of Wales, Killarney, Holy Cross Regional High, and Westsyde Secondary). In 2003, Annemarie moved to Valleyview Secondary and has coached volleyball there for 20 years.

Annemarie's leadership and involvement in school sports go far beyond coaching. In 1998, she became the AA/AAA Girls Volleyball Commissioner for the Kamloops Schools Athletic Association (West Zone) and served as the President from 1999-2005 and 2011-2023. Additionally, Annemarie has also been a member of the SD 73 Athletic Council (2003-2023) and served a term on the BC School Sports Board of Directors (2019-2022).

Annemarie's characteristics are just the beginning of the long list of exemplary qualities that make her a worthy recipient of the Honour Award. Annemarie is someone who has gone above and beyond to establish positive and lasting relationships with those around her in the school sport community. Having been a coach, commissioner, association president, and board member, she has found countless opportunities to learn and share her wealth of knowledge freely with those around her and is always willing to take charge and help in necessary situations.

Annemarie's devotion to school sport comes from her personal experiences. When she was new to the country, school sports gave her an instant sense of belonging and friendship. The focus on building team chemistry and forming strong relationships has also positively impacted her life.

Annemarie has broken many barriers for women within her district, zone, and province. An example of this is her developing courses for female students such as Girls in Motion and Girls Group. Throughout her time at Valleyview Secondary, there have been over 50% of their senior girls taking some form of a PE class, which is more than any other school in the district.

The work Annemarie has done for the school sport community in BC is immeasurable and has led her to become a crucial mentor and role model to many, leaving enduring impacts on those around her. She finds immense value in giving back and encourages other educators (especially fellow women) to also do the same.

In receiving this award, Annemarie would like to thank her husband for his constant support, athletic directors within the West Zone and Okanagan Association for their robust contributions, BCSS Executive Director Jordan Abney and Assistant Director of Membership Services, Karen Hum, for the immense work they put into their roles.

There is no more deserving recipient of an award recognizing a lifetime of distinguished service than Annemarie. Congratulations on receiving the BC School Sports Honour Award.

# HISTORY OF THE HONOUR AWARD

1986	DON MCINTYRE, VAN MORRISON
1987	DAN DOYLE, HUGH MARSHALL, RON VAN DOLAH, RUTH WILSON
1988	DON HARTWIG
1989	JACK ARMOUR, VERNA CHERNOFF, BOB GAIR, CHANDRA MADHOSINGH
1990	JACK BUCKHAM, BARRY CALLAGHAN, MATT PHILLIPS, DOUG HARSHBARGER
1991	BOB FERGUSON
1992	DAVE GIFFORD, BOB JACKSON, VERA WILLIAMSON
1993	ED CARLIN, STAN LAWSON, JIM STEWART
1994	MARTY CROSS
1995	BILL MCNULTY, CLIVE HUGHES
1996	GARY HAENSGEN, EARL HENDERSON, ED PEDERSEN, MIKE SMITH, BOB STEBBINGS
1997	DARLENE CURRIE, STAN GILL, ROGER KRONQUIST
1998	JACK MAY, MARION MCNEILL

1999	GAYLE GUEST, BILL PARNELL, BARRY STEWART, DOUG STURROCK, JACK TASAKA
2000	LEN CORBEN, BARRY KINGSLEY
2001	VIC BIFANO, MOE WILLIAMS
2002	NEIL MURRAY, ROD VANCE
2003	MIKE CHARLTON
2004	DAVID BINGHAM
2005	BRIAN OLTHUIS
2006	WALTER BECKER
2007	JOE MOREIRA, JO ANN WARD
2008	PHILIP CIZMIC
2009	BRIAN LAVIOLETTE, BRIAN LYNCH
2010	BOB MATLOCK
2011	JO-ANNE LOADER
2012	RANDY SEMENOFF, RAJ PURI
2018	JILL VOROS
2019	WENDY HYER
2020	TOM DINSDALE
2021	SUE THORNE
2022	KERRY TAYLOR



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