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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Finalists announced for the Sport BC 50th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards,
presented by Canadian Direct Insurance**

Winners will be honoured at a ceremony on March 10th, 2016

RICHMOND, BC (January 19, 2016) — Sport BC, on behalf of the BC Sport community, has proudly announced the outstanding amateur athletes, coaches, and officials, named as finalists for 14 of the 18 award categories to be presented at the upcoming Athlete of the Year Awards presented by Canadian Direct Insurance. We are proud to be the longest standing sport recognition event in Canada and this year signifies a historic achievement for sport with our 50th anniversary milestone.

The 50th Annual Awards Ceremony and Gala dinner is set for Thursday, March 10th, 2016 at the Vancouver Convention Centre East. The ceremonies will recognize BC's best in amateur sport including athletes, coaches, and officials for outstanding performances in their sport over the 2015 season. Each finalist was nominated by their Provincial or Multi-Sport Organization, High School, College or University. The Selection Committee, chaired by Bernie Pascall, included 20 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. This year’s nominees in all of the award categories are certainly a testament to the strength and depth of sport development in our province over the last 50 years. In addition, we are appreciative of the outstanding support that we continue to receive from our volunteers, sport and business partners.”

Finalists for the 2016 Sport BC Athlete of the Year Awards represent 23 sports from 22 various cities and are noted below. An additional four awards will be presented at the ceremony including the Best of BC, KidSport BC Community Champion, Harry Jerome Comeback and the Daryl Thompson Lifetime Achievement Award.

Athlete with a Disability

Darren Douma (Creston) – Blind Golf

Trevor Hirschfield (Vancouver) – Wheelchair Rugby

Nathan Stein (Maple Ridge) – Swimming

College Athlete of the Year

Justin King (Kamloops) – Basketball

Graydon Robb (Nanaimo) – Badminton

Shayna Cameron (Chilliwack) - Basketball



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Female Coach of the Year

Ariana Van Der Starre (Burnaby) – Speed-Skating
Brit Townsend (Coquitlam) – Athletics
Carolyn Murray (Victoria) - Triathlon

Male Coach of the Year

Gerry Dragomir (Vancouver) – Athletics
Bob Heyes (Shawnigan Lake) – Lacrosse
Randy Bennett (Victoria) – Swimming

Female High School Athlete of the Year

Alexia Seal (Mission) – Wrestling
Callum Pilgrim (Abbotsford) – Athletics/Volleyball/Basketball/Soccer/Softball
Emma Johnson (Kelowna) – Basketball/Soccer/Volleyball

Male High School Athlete of the Year

Chase Claypool (Abbotsford) – Football
Torrey Toribio (Vancouver) – Wrestling
Graeme Hyde-Lay (Victoria) – Soccer/Basketball/Rugby

Female Junior Athlete of the Year

Michelle Kim (Surrey) – Golf
Emily Overholt (West Vancouver) – Swimming
Raquel Tjernagel (New Westminster) - Athletics

Male Junior Athlete of the Year

Khyber Barnett (Vancouver) – Karate
Michael Milic (Delta) – Triathlon
Markus Thormeyer (Delta) - Swimming

Master Athlete of the Year

Lenore Montgomery (North Vancouver) – Athletics
Allan Campsall (Williams Lake) – Archery
Siew Har Hong (North Vancouver) - Badminton

Official of the Year

Louise Kennedy (Brentwood Bay) – Synchronized Swimming
Howard Hum (Burnaby) – Volleyball
Michelle Pye (North Vancouver) - Soccer

Female Senior Athlete of the Year

Kim Gaucher (Mission) – Basketball
Sophie Schmidt (Vancouver) – Soccer
Christabel Nettey (Surrey) – Athletics



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Male Senior Athlete of the Year

Benjamin Thorne (Kitimat) – Athletics
Denny Morrison (Speed-Skating) – Fort St. John
Ryan Cochrane (Swimming) - Victoria

Team of the Year

Victoria Shamrocks (Victoria) – Lacrosse
UBC Thunderbirds (Vancouver) – Men’s Football
UBC Thunderbirds (Vancouver) – Women’s Cross-Country

University Athlete of the Year

Chris McLaughlin (Victoria) – Basketball
Quinn van Gylswyk (Vancouver) – Football
Maria Barnard (Vancouver) – Athletics

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:

Sport BC, as a member-based organization, supports the growth of amateur sport in BC and provides leadership through delivery of its programs and services for members.

Vision:

Sport in British Columbia is thriving through the leadership of Sport BC and our members.

Values:

Integrity, Transparency, Collaboration, Creativity and Innovation

Selection Committee Members

Bernie Pascall – Chair, Ajay Patel (Langara College), Allison Mailer (BC Sports Hall of Fame), Bob Mackin, Brian Dance (CBC), Charmaine Crooks (NGU Consultants), Gary Kingston (The Vancouver Sun), Judy Joseph-Black (Sports Reports Consulting Services), Karin Larsen (CBC), Kelly Mann (BC Games Society), Len Corben (North Shore Outlook), Marilyn Payne (Sport Consultant), Rob Gray (Team 1040), Tom Berridge, Wendy Long (Freelance Writer), Wendy Pattenden (CSI Pacific), Michelle Collens (City of Vancouver Sport Hosting), Lynda Cannell (Fortius Sport & Health), Carey Dillen (Sport BC Chairman)



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TICKET INFORMATION: For information on the purchase of a table or individual tickets for the 50th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards, please visit www.sportbc.com or contact:

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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:

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