



**Vancouver, BC — April 22, 2026** — Sport BC is proud to recognize the outstanding volunteers who make sport possible across the province through the Community Sport Hero Awards. These awards celebrate individuals who demonstrate exceptional dedication, leadership, and commitment to strengthening their communities through sport.

The Sport BC Community Sport Hero Award recipients in Northwest British Columbia will be honoured at a regional celebration in Smithers, BC. This event highlights the incredible impact of volunteers who continue to grow participation, create inclusive opportunities, and foster positive sport experiences throughout the region.

Sport BC extends its sincere congratulations to this year's recipients and thanks them for the countless hours they dedicate to supporting athletes, building community, and advancing amateur sport. We also thank our member organizations and local sport groups for their role in recognizing these exceptional individuals.

**Of the Awards and the recipients, Rob Newman, President and CEO of Sport BC, says:**

*"Volunteers are the backbone of sport in British Columbia. The Community Sport Hero Award recipients in the Northwest region exemplify the passion, leadership, and commitment that make sport accessible and meaningful in communities of all sizes. Sport BC is proud to celebrate their contributions and the lasting impact they have across the region."*

**Of the event, Sport BC member Sarah Saunders, Executive Director of Engage Sport North, shares:**

*"Thank you to Sport BC for working with Engage Sport North to recognize amateur sport volunteers in the Northwest regions. Together we are celebrating sixteen volunteers from ten different sports and saying thank you to the individuals that make sport possible for our Northwest communities."*

## 2026 Community Sport Hero Award Recipients – Northwest BC

### **Eric Arpin – Volleyball - Houston**

Eric has been a driving force behind the growth of volleyball in the Bulkley Valley, building programs, mentoring athletes, and helping teams achieve success at the provincial level while fostering a strong sense of community.

### **Kristina Stefanek – Volleyball - Smithers**

Kristina has been a passionate coach and leader for nearly three decades, creating a supportive environment where athletes can grow while helping expand opportunities for youth volleyball across the region.

### **Benjamin Weinstein – Soccer - Smithers**

Benjamin has dedicated over a decade to coaching and developing athletes, guiding teams to provincial competition while promoting respect and sportsmanship.

### **Colin Vandergaarg – Soccer - Smithers**

Colin is a committed youth coach who creates a positive and inclusive environment while mentoring other coaches and strengthening the local soccer community.

### **Heather Cosman – Soccer – Smithers**

Heather has played a key leadership role in expanding participation and strengthening athlete pathways through her work in soccer administration and development.

### **Ryan Willman – Soccer - Smithers**

Ryan has been instrumental in referee development across Northern BC, mentoring officials and improving the quality and consistency of officiating.

### **Stacy Dupuis – Gymnastics - Smithers**

Stacy has provided strong leadership as Board President, guiding organizational growth and supporting long-term sustainability for athletes in her community.

### **Gail Tendall – Gymnastics - Smithers**

Gail has dedicated more than 25 years to supporting athletes and families, offering steady leadership and commitment that has impacted generations.

### **Gerard Dolan – Swimming – Prince Rupert**

Gerard is a dedicated official and mentor who ensures competitions run safely while supporting the development of new officials.

### **Sue Hokanson – Softball – Prince Rupert**

Sue has spent nearly 40 years coaching and developing athletes at all levels, inspiring generations through her passion and expertise.

### **Peter Krause – Cross Country Skiing - Smithers**

Peter is a lifelong athlete, coach, and mentor whose dedication has shaped both athletes and the culture of sport in his community.

### **David “Dave” Bobb – Alpine Skiing - Smithers**

Dave has demonstrated exceptional leadership through coaching, event delivery, and infrastructure development that will benefit future athletes.

### **Richard Haley – Squash – Prince Rupert**

Richard has been a driving force behind the growth of squash in Prince Rupert, supporting athletes and strengthening community access through leadership and facility development.

### **Ali Howard – Triathlon - Smithers**

Ali has created a meaningful community event through the Tyhee Lake Triathlon, bringing athletes and families together while showcasing the region.

### **Cynthia Medeiros – Figure Skating - Kitimat**

Cynthia has supported athletes and competitions across Northern BC for nearly three decades, ensuring strong and successful programming.

### **Chris Steenhof – Multi-Sport - Smithers**

Chris has contributed more than 30 years as a coach, official, and leader across multiple sports, impacting generations of athletes.

## **About Sport BC**

Sport BC believes in the power of sport to build stronger, healthier communities. Through support of close to 80 member organizations, and programs such as KidSport BC, BC Women & Sport, and the BC Amateur Sport Fund, Sport BC works to ensure that all British Columbians have access to meaningful sport experiences.

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