



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sport BC Celebrates 18 Community Sport Heroes from Across the Okanagan Region

Vancouver, BC — July 20, 2026 — Sport BC is proud to recognize 18 outstanding volunteers from across the Okanagan region as recipients of the 2026 Community Sport Hero Awards. Presented by Sport BC, these awards celebrate the individuals whose passion, leadership, and dedication make amateur sport possible in communities throughout British Columbia.

The recipients were honoured at a regional celebration on July 20th in Vernon, bringing together volunteers, families, community leaders, Provincial Sport Organizations, and local sport organizations to recognize the remarkable people who are the foundation of community sport.

Collectively, this year's recipients represent more than 265 years of volunteer service, contributing as coaches, officials, mentors, administrators, board members, organizers, and community leaders. Their efforts have shaped thousands of athletes, strengthened local sport organizations, expanded opportunities for participation, and inspired future generations to experience the lifelong benefits of sport.

"Volunteers are the backbone of sport in British Columbia," said Rob Newman, President and CEO of Sport BC. "The Community Sport Hero Awards recognize the remarkable individuals who dedicate their time, energy, and expertise to creating positive sport experiences in communities across our province. Whether coaching a first practice, mentoring officials, leading organizations, or creating opportunities for athletes of all abilities, these volunteers make an extraordinary difference. Sport BC is proud to celebrate their contributions and the lasting impact they have on amateur sport in British Columbia."

The Community Sport Hero Awards are presented by Sport BC in partnership with its Provincial Sport Organization members and regional sport partners. The awards recognize volunteers whose commitment has strengthened amateur sport in communities throughout British Columbia and whose leadership continues to inspire athletes, coaches, officials, and fellow volunteers.

2026 Community Sport Hero Award Recipients – Okanagan Region

Aly Bradford – Sport Cheer (Kelowna)

For more than 15 years, Aly has been a driving force behind the growth of cheerleading in British Columbia through coach development, athlete pathways, and volunteer leadership, helping create a stronger and more inclusive future for the sport.

Bill Rublee – Canoe Kayak / Alpine Skiing (Kamloops)

Bill has dedicated decades to amateur sport as a coach, official, mentor, and volunteer, supporting athlete development from the grassroots to the international stage while earning some of Canada's highest volunteer honours.

Bryan Shore – Wheelchair Basketball (Kelowna)

A passionate advocate for inclusion, Bryan has spent more than a decade leading, mentoring, and growing wheelchair basketball in the Okanagan while serving on the BC Wheelchair Basketball Society Board of Directors.

Carson Dorward – Freestyle Skiing (Vernon)

Carson's leadership with the Silver Star Freestyle Club has transformed opportunities for athletes through officiating, club leadership, and the development of a world-class freestyle training facility in the Okanagan.

Darcey Woods – Equestrian (Barriere)

With more than 40 years of involvement as an athlete, coach, official, and volunteer, Darcey has been instrumental in developing equestrian sport while mentoring riders and strengthening her local community.

Hashan Sirisena – Cricket (Vernon)

Hashan has played a pivotal role in expanding cricket throughout the Interior, growing leagues, developing facilities, launching new tournaments, and creating opportunities for athletes across the region.

Jake DeWitt – Softball (Sicamous)

As a coach, administrator, and volunteer leader, Jake continues to grow softball in Sicamous by creating welcoming opportunities for athletes of all ages and helping strengthen the sport throughout the region.

Janna Brown – Snowboard (Sun Peaks)

Janna has helped build the Sun Peaks snowboard community from the ground up through years of volunteer leadership, event support, and a passion for creating opportunities for young athletes.

Jocelyn Carter – Softball (Kelowna)

Jocelyn has inspired athletes through her exceptional leadership as a coach, mentor, administrator, and volunteer, helping young people build confidence, resilience, and success both on and off the field.

Kaleb Hutchinson – Softball (Kamloops)

As District 11 District Umpire-in-Chief, Kaleb has strengthened officiating across the Thompson–Nicola region through mentorship, leadership, and volunteer service while also contributing as a respected volleyball official.

Karen Deans – Figure Skating (Vernon)

For more than 43 years, Karen has dedicated herself to figure skating as an official, mentor, and volunteer leader, supporting athletes and officials throughout the Okanagan while helping grow the sport.

Lori Moger – Volleyball (Kelowna)

Lori's unwavering commitment to coaching and mentoring has helped generations of athletes develop confidence, resilience, and a lifelong love of volleyball in a positive and inclusive environment.

Lucas Crosby – Softball (Kelowna)

Lucas has devoted countless volunteer hours to supporting softball across one of Softball BC's largest districts by recruiting, mentoring, and developing officials while strengthening competitions throughout the Thompson–Okanagan.

Marc Renairz – Sailing (Vernon)

Marc has spent nearly 20 years growing sailing opportunities through leadership, instruction, and mentorship, helping expand programs and inspire a new generation of sailors.

Michelle Schmidt – Gymnastics (Kelowna)

Michelle's leadership as Vice-Chair of the Okanagan Gymnastics Club Board, combined with her tireless volunteer service at competitions, has strengthened gymnastics opportunities for athletes across the region.

Rodney Hobson – Karate (Kelowna)

For more than two decades, Rodney has transformed the lives of thousands of athletes through coaching, mentorship, and volunteer leadership, building one of British Columbia's premier karate development programs.

Doug Ross – KidSport Greater Vernon (Vernon)

Doug has championed access to sport for more than 40 years, leading the KidSport Greater Vernon chapter since 2002 and helping more than 3,000 children overcome financial barriers to participation.

Penticton Triathlon Club – Dave Michael & Drew Mitchell (Penticton)

Through their volunteer leadership, Dave Michael and Drew Mitchell have helped transform the Peach Classic Triathlon into one of British Columbia's premier multisport events while creating lasting opportunities for athletes and volunteers alike.

About Sport BC

Sport BC is the not-for-profit federation of amateur sport in British Columbia, representing close to 80 Provincial, Disability, and Multi-Sport Organizations. For nearly 60 years, Sport BC has championed the growth of amateur sport through leadership, collaboration, and programs that strengthen communities across the province.

Through initiatives including KidSport BC, BC Women & Sport, the BC Amateur Sport Fund, and the Community Sport Hero Awards, Sport BC helps remove barriers to participation, supports volunteer excellence, and ensures more British Columbians have access to meaningful sport experiences.

To learn more, visit www.sportbc.com.

Stay connected: @SportBC | #PoweringSport

Media Contact

Allison Mailer

Vice President, Operations

Sport BC

allison.mailer@sportbc.com

778-839-8576

Event Contact

Stephanie Rudnisky

Manager, Programs

Sport BC

stephanie.rudnisky@sportbc.com