



Sport BC Announces Joe Higgins as the Daryl Thompson Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient

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Sport BC is pleased to announce Joe Higgins as the Daryl Thompson Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Joe will be celebrated at the **Sport BC's 56th Athlete of the Year Awards** taking place on **Thursday, March 7, 2024**. Joe was selected by Sport BC's Board of Directors in early 2024 and Joe for all his efforts to support sport for decades in our province.

Athlete, coach, volunteer, mentor, fan, community champion and builder -- there is no hat that Joe Higgins hasn't worn in his more than 35 years of involvement with wheelchair basketball in British Columbia, Canada and abroad.

"Joe has devoted so much of his lifetime to this sport, to help train many athletes, coaches and referees." notes Amanda Pinheiro, athlete, and board member of the BC Wheelchair Basketball Society. "Prior to the pandemic Joe was working with the Red Cross and travelling to several countries to introduce the sport of wheelchair basketball. Not only has Joe helped spread awareness of the sport on an international stage, he has also educated those living with a disability on how one can lead an active lifestyle."

In recognition of his longtime commitment to wheelchair sports, Delta's Higgins will be presented with the Sport BC Daryl Thompson Lifetime Achievement Award at the 56th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards March 7 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. The award, named in honour of later former Sport BC Chair Daryl Thompson, is presented annually to an individual who has made a significant, long-term contribution to amateur sport in British Columbia.

Higgins' commitment runs deep. He has served as a BC provincial, junior and BC Games coach while also developing a recreational city league in the Lower Mainland. He has also worked as a coach volunteer with Bridging the Gap, which introduces newly-injured individuals to wheelchair basketball.

He served as an assistant coach with the Canadian women's national team – winner of Paralympic gold in 1992 – and head coach of the senior men's squad that earned a bronze medal at the 1994 world championships. His commitment to the game has also helped him make an impact around the world as a coach with an International Committee of the Red Cross program designed to encourage social inclusion while changing perceptions of persons with disabilities in countries affected by conflict.

His influence and inspiration have been felt by elite and recreational athletes alike.

“He made me a better player by teaching me how to be a better leader on and off the court,” explains Tara Llanes, named Wheelchair Basketball Canada Female Athlete of the Year for 2023. “There is no way I’d be the player and the person I am today without him.”

Higgins was inducted as a builder into the Wheelchair Basketball Canada Hall of Fame in May 2023. He was also a 2021 inductee to the BC Wheelchair Basketball Hall of Fame and awarded WBC’s Leadership Excellence Award in 2011.

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Sport BC gratefully acknowledges the support of the 56th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards sponsors:



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Athlete of the Year Awards

Thursday, March 7, 2024

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