

Sport BC Announces In Her Footsteps and Bobbie Steen Foundation Award Recipients

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ProMOTION Plus is excited to recognize three deserving women that will be celebrated at the **56th Sport BC Athlete of the Year Awards** on **Thursday, March 7, 2024** at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. Two women will be honoured with the prestigious **In Her Footsteps . . . Celebrating BC Women in Sport** recognition program and one recipient will receive the **Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation Award**.

In Her Footsteps Honourees



The purpose of **In Her Footsteps...Celebrating BC Women in Sport** is to name and honour women who have made a significant contribution to sport in BC. The athletes, coaches, officials, builders, pioneers, teams, officials, and members of the media who have been selected for this honour have helped shape sport in BC. Their collective impact is felt across the BC sport sector and throughout the province. The honourees are celebrated at **Sport BC's Annual Athlete of the Year Awards** and are featured at the **In Her Footsteps . . . Celebrating BC Women In Sport Exhibit** at the **BC Sports Hall of Fame**. The exhibit tells the stories of the Honourees through interactive touch-screen component, artifacts, text, and photographs.



MELISSA SOLIGO

Melissa currently serves as High Performance Technical Director for Curl BC, bringing more than 40 years of experience and expertise to her sport as an athlete, coach, administrator and advocate. A level 5 Coach, she has been a leader on and off the rink and a staunch promoter of gender equity and sport participation opportunities for girls and women.

Four years ago Soligo spearheaded the creation of the Women in Curling Leaders' Circle, a network of women leaders in the sport that works to support and mentor present and future leaders via an annual WICL Conference, webinars, membership communication, Women in Curling summits and Girls Rock programs.

Soligo played third for the Julie Sutton rink that won the 1991 Scotties Tournament of Hearts and went on to earn a silver medal at the world championships. A year later the same rink represented Canada at the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, where curling was a demonstration sport, and came away with the bronze medal.

She has also enjoyed coaching success, leading Canada to a fifth-place finish at the 2016 World Mixed Curling Championships. In 2018 she coached the Camosun Chargers to the silver medal at the CCAA National Curling Championships.



MARNI ABBOTT

Marni's name has been synonymous with wheelchair basketball ever since she took up the sport in 1988. Since then she has been a force as an athlete, coach, administrator, mentor and role model. Few could match the impact she has had on the sport in British Columbia and Canada.

Throughout her career with the BC Wheelchair Basketball Society, Marni has been instrumental in the development of the Let's Play BC Program – helping children with mobility-related physical disabilities to become physically active. Let's Play provides age-appropriate size wheelchairs and resources to develop physical literacy skills, ensuring children can confidently participate in play, sport and physical education with their peers.

Over many years she has also enjoyed considerable success as a coach from local to the highest levels of international competition. In 2023 Abbott-Peter was assistant coach of the Team BC squad that won gold at the Canada Winter Games, also serving as head coach of the BC team that took silver at the CWBL women's nationals. In 2022 she was head coach of the Canadian women's team that finished fifth at the world championships. She currently serves as head coach of Canada's women's Under-25 team.

During her athletic career, Marnie earned three Paralympic gold medals (1992, 1996, 2000) and three consecutive world championships as part of the Canadian women's national team. She was honoured as Canadian team flag-bearer for the opening ceremonies of the 1996 Paralympics in Atlanta. In 2008 she was inducted into the Wheelchair Basketball Canada Hall of Fame.

Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation Award Recipient



STACY FOURNIER

Fournier was just five years old when she took up baseball and played all her youth years for Langley Baseball Association. She now brings considerable expertise and experience to her current role as head coach of the Simon Fraser University Red Leafs, Canada's only NCAA softball team, and as first base player for the Canadian national women's baseball team.

Fournier played four years of NCAA Division II softball at North Dakota's Minot State, becoming an assistant coach for the squad in 2015 and graduating Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree. In 2016 she was named head coach of the Under14 Team BC Selects, leading a young team through its first Western Canadian baseball championships experience. In 2017 and 2018 virtually the same team took the knowledge gained in and won consecutive championships.

She first joined the provincial team in 1995 and first played on the national team in 2013. In 2023 she was a member of the Canadian women's team that finished second to the USA at the Women's Baseball World Cup qualifier, advancing to the 2024 World Cup championship to be held July 28-Aug.3 in Thunder Bay, Ont.

Fournier has also served as Technical Director of the Baseball BC female high performance program and Fraser (West) regional coordinator for the BC Girls baseball program, where she works to facilitate the growth of girls' baseball around the province from grassroots to high performance levels.

"The Athlete of the Year Awards is a celebration of sport in our province, and we are looking forward to showcasing a wide variety of stories during the event. Our **In Her Footsteps Honourees and Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation Award Recipients**, are exceptional choices to be recognized by ProMOTION Plus," shares Sport BC's President and CEO, Rob Newman. "We look forward to learning more about their important gender equity work and celebrating their collective accomplishments at the **56th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards on March 7, 2024.**"

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About ProMOTION Plus

As a long-term non-profit society in the BC sport sector, ProMOTION Plus joined Sport BC in March 2019 as an operating committee of the organization. ProMOTION Plus has been committed to increasing opportunities for girls and women in physical activity and sport since 1990, supporting female athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and administrators reach their potential. Under the umbrella of Sport BC, ProMOTION Plus is able to strengthen its impact by delivering expertise in gender equity and recognition to Sport BC members and the community at large. Keep up to date @ProMOTION_Plus



About Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation

The Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation Award is a \$2000 grant, awarded to an emerging female leader in BC whose dedication to the women and girls of BC parallels that of Bobbie Steen and the Foundation. The Bobbie Steen Legacy Foundation has been created to provide financial support to charitable activities dedicated to advancing gender equity in physical activity and sport and/or the community betterment resulting from female involvement in physical activity and sport. Over 30 young women have been awarded this prestigious grant.

About Sport BC

Sport BC believes in the power of sport and is committed to building stronger communities through positive sport experiences. Our goal is to enhance and support sport participation in British Columbia ensuring everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Through our KidSport BC, BC Amateur Sport Fund, and ProMOTION Plus along with our services Sport BC Insurance, and Payroll and Group Benefits; Sport BC supports our sixty plus member organizations. Keep up to date @SportBC

Athlete of the Year Awards

Thursday, March 7, 2024

@SportBC

#SportBC56thAOY

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