



Daryl Thompson Award Goes to Triathlon's Leslie Buchanan

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Leslie Buchanan recalls the day she stood on a street corner waiting to cheer on a high school friend competing in a local triathlon. The West Vancouver teen's life changed when a race official asked if she could help by handing out water at the race aid station.

"The following weekend they asked me to point the athletes one way, and the cars the other way," she recalls. "The next weekend they gave me a start watch and asked me to start it when the horn went off. And over that summer I must have done every job associated with putting on a triathlon."

Some 40 years later there is no doubt Buchanan has truly done every job associated with triathlon, from those initial basic volunteer tasks in the mid 1980s to coaching and refereeing, to serving as an Olympic technical delegate to her current role as an executive board member with World Triathlon. The sport has benefitted mightily from her input but she is quick to note her life has been enriched because of her involvement in sport.

"Sports were just a part of our lives as a family," she says of growing up and dabbling in a variety of sports, particularly track and field. "I never wanted to do anything else. It made sense that when my competitive – and I use that term loosely – career was over that I would continue in some way in sports with coaching and officiating. I am very lucky that I have had the opportunity to go as far as I have in sport, including officiating at five Olympic Games."

Buchanan will be honoured with the Sport BC Daryl Thompson Lifetime Achievement Award at the 57th Annual Athlete of the Year Awards March 6 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. The award, named in honour of late 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.

Buchanan's impact on the sport is considerable. At the provincial level, she has been a member of Triathlon BC for decades and as a board member she oversaw the development of the sport at the community and provincial level. Internationally, she helped create the first Triathlon Competition Rulebook and was a key driver in the move to lobby the International Olympic Committee to include triathlon in the Games – a successful effort that saw the sport make its debut at the 2000 Games in Sydney.



Her resume includes a myriad of other responsibilities in sport. Buchanan has served on World Triathlon's medical and anti-doping, national coaches and technical committees. She served as triathlon co-technical delegate at the 2012 London Olympics and race referee at the 2016 Summer Paralympic Games.

Through the decades she also worked as an English teacher in West Vancouver and after class she could be found coaching basketball, field hockey and track and field.

"It is wonderful to be able to coach students in a sport and see them try new things and thrive in another learning environment outside of the regular classroom setting," she says. "I get just as much out of coaching as the kids do in participating. I really enjoy it."

The BC Athlete of the Year Awards is Sport BC's annual event celebrating the accomplishments of the province's best athletes, coaches, teams and officials.

Sport BC greatly appreciates the Athlete of the Year Awards' Sponsors



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Athlete of the Year Awards

Thursday, March 6, 2025

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