

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **16U Male Athlete of the Year**

**Brett Walsh**

**Canuck Kaizen**

Brett Walsh was an extremely busy athlete during the 2010 club season- during the course of the year he participated in events with three different Canuck teams.

Labeled the “undisputed leader of the Canuck Kaizen team,” by his coach Don Saxton, Brett was a huge part of the team’s success this year. The 16U Kaizen team began the year by placing first at Premier 1; they followed up with a silver medal at Premier 2, before claiming the gold again at Premier 3. Their season was capped off with a Silver medal at Provincial Championships followed by a Gold Medal in Tier 2 at the 16U Canadian Open.

“As our captain, he was an excellent leader - I believe all of our players learned a very healthy attitude towards competition and sportsmanship from Brett,” stated his coach.

Brett also traveled with the 17U Canuck Contact team that represented Canada at the U19 NORCECA Championships in Guadalajara, Mexico in April. The team finished a very respectable 7<sup>th</sup> at the event.

The Canuck Stuff 18U Men’s team also benefitted from having Brett on their roster. He both played and practiced with the team all season, splitting court time with a teammate who was two years his senior. The Canuck Stuff team also had a successful showing with at Top 4 finish at two Premier events along the way to a 9<sup>th</sup> place finish in Tier 1 at the 18U Canadian Open.

Brett has “grown a great deal in size, physical abilities, and confidence this year,” explained coach Saxton. “He could have been a star player in any position he was put in... but I believe as a setter he was clearly in a class of his own in the province.”

Brett’s volleyball experiences extend further than just the 2010 season; last year, Brett was the starting setter on the top 16U Canuck team that finished second at Provincial Championships. The summer of 2009 found Brett playing for the 16U Men’s Team Alberta Program, a program that finished with a Silver Medal at Western Elites.

“If Brett continues to learn and grow...there is no doubt that Brett will end up becoming one of Canada’s best setters ever... or he could follow his passion onto the beach,” where his is already a very proficient player. Along with his partner Jeremy Davies, Brett won the AVA Provincial Beach Championships as a 14U player in 2008. Since that time he has continued to improve and will head down to California this summer to train and play with an experienced group of athletes.

Brett has a “bright future” in our sport and he will likely represent Alberta and Canada in some capacity for years to come.

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **16U Female Athlete of the Year**

**Kacey Otto**

**Dinos 16**

“Heart, work ethic and leading by example are just a few of Kacey Otto’s character strengths that have built her into a teammate that everyone respects,” comments her Dinos coach LeAnn Kinvig. “Kacey is a tremendously special athlete.”

In 2009, Kacey belonged to the Dinos 15 team that swept the entire 15U age class- winning all three AVA Premier tournaments and the Provincial Championships by going undefeated all season. In fact, the only blemish on the Dinos perfect season came at the 2009 Canadian West Open when the Dinos suffered a heart breaking loss in the National semi-final to perennial Ontario powerhouse, the Durham Attack Black team. The Dinos finished the National Championship event in fourth place.

The 2010 season began eerily similar to 2009; Kacey’s Dinos 16 team went undefeated at every AVA event that they participated in. Over the course of the season, Kacey’s natural athleticism gave her the versatility to compete at multiple positions- she has played Middle, Right-side and Left-side for the Dinos. Ultimately, her passing and defense earn her a spot on the floor. Kacey’s “ability to read the play and react with athletic quickness and control make her a dynamo in the back row,” stated her coach.

The Dinos 16 team was bestowed with the honor of representing Team Canada at the NORCECA Youth Girls Volleyball Championships in Guatemala. Kacey was a starting power for the Dinos at the event and was one of the teams most consistent all around players, She held her own against some incredible international teams and contributed to her teams 7<sup>th</sup> place result.

When the Dinos team returned to Canada, they also returned to their winning ways, posting yet another undefeated record... this time at the 2010 Canadian West Open where they claimed the National Championship Banner. In fact, the only set the Dinos lost all tournament came in the quarter-final against the same Durham Attack Black team who defeated them in the 2009 semi-final. As a starter for the Dinos at the event, “Kacey’s ...ability to terminate plays made her an impact player - she was a trusted player when the game was on the line.”

Kacey’s contributions to her Dinos teams have been countless. “She is the ultimate teammate who never ceases to work hard. She leads by example and teammates follow her because she is approachable and kind to everyone. She is a very focused athlete who builds up those around her as she learns”.

Kacey has also been successful on the Beach, winning the Junior High School Provincial title in 2009. She is also a member of her school’s basketball and track and field teams.

Although she has already achieved a lot of success, Kacey’s career is sure to go far in our sport, as her abilities and work ethic are a foundation for a stellar career.

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **18U Male Athlete of the Year**

**Zachary Brown**

**NAVC Gold Bears**

Zachary Brown has been the Captain of almost every team he has ever been a part of; he has been repeatedly given this role by earning the respect of his coaches, teachers, and peers with his strong communication skills and acceptance of everyone he deals with.

Zachary is a multi-talented individual; he was named the Captain and MVP of his high school basketball team two years in a row and also plays for his schools' golf team. However, his abilities extend far beyond the athletic realm. Zachary is also a recipient of the Alexander Rutherford scholarship for achieving Honors standing in his Grade's 10, 11, and 12 classes.

Originally named to his high school Senior Boys Volleyball team in Grade 10, Zach was named team captain by his Grade 11 year. By Grade 12, he was leading his Bev Facey team to a Bronze medal at the 2009 ASAA Provincials. His individual efforts throughout the high school year were recognized as he was selected to the Edmonton Journal All-Star team.

Zach has already spent a number of years representing Alberta in our Provincial team program. In 2008, he was the Captain of the 16U team who finished 2<sup>nd</sup> at Western Elites. In 2009, he bested that result by winning Western Elites as Captain of the Team Alberta 17U Men. This summer, he will yet again represent our province as a member of the 19U Men's Provincial team.

In the 2010 club season, Zach led his NAVC Bears 18U team to three AVA Premier Gold medals, the Provincial Championship Title, and a Quarterfinal berth at Nationals. Zach had the opportunity to show his versatility during the Provincial Championship event when he was asked to make the switch from the Left-side to the Right-side to help his team. He proceeded to lead the team in kills in each match of the day; Zach's efforts at Provincials garnered him an All-Star Selection.

Zach is "always striving to get better," commented his Bears coach Brad Poplawski, he is "always seeking out more information so that he may improve as a volleyball player... (He) displays excellent ball control and attack proficiency... and has such a love for the game."

Zach is already finding ways to give back to the volleyball community. He earned his Local Officials certification and has officiated multiple high school and junior high school matches in his community. He also played an integral role as an assistant coach with the Park 15U Girls team this season. Zach has "proven that he can take his skill on the court and transfer that knowledge to other players... under Zach's instruction, the girls thrived."

A heavily touted recruit, Zach has chosen to complete his post-secondary education at MacEwan University where he is sure to excel as a Griffin.

Congratulations on the well-deserved honor of being Alberta Volleyball's 18U Male Athlete of the Year!

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **18U Female Athlete of the Year**

**Carly Hamilton**

**Dinos 18**

Carly Hamilton “has not only learned immense passion for the game, she has also has learned how to draw that same passion out of others,” reflected her Dinos coach Tracy Keats. Carly “is a leader in practice, games, and social situations.” She is the “heart and soul” of her teams and is a “verbal motivator on-and-off the court (who)... easily supports her words with consistently impressive performances”.

When you look at what Carly has accomplished in her volleyball career, it is easy to see how valid these statements are.

In 2007, Carly’s high school team won the City of Calgary High School Championships; later that season, her Dinos club team won both the 2008 16U Provincial Championships and the Canadian West Open. When Carly joined the Team Alberta Program later that summer, her team brought home more hardware, winning the Bronze medal at the Western Elite Championships.

In 2008, her William Aberhart high school team won the ASAA Provincial Championships. When she re-joined her Dinos Club team, they picked up where they left off, once again bringing home the AVA Provincial Championship. Carly’s Dinos17 team fell just short of repeating as National Champions in 2009, falling in the Gold medal final to the Brandon Storm. Another summer with the 17U Team Alberta Program brought home another Bronze medal- this time from the National Team Challenge Cup Event.

An honor roll student each year at William Aberhart high school, Carly finished off her High School Volleyball career in 2009 by once again winning the City of Calgary High School Championships before falling to Harry Ainlay in the Provincial Championship final. Switching back to the Club season, Carly’s Dinos 18 team earned three Gold Medals at the Premier Events along with the 2010 Provincial Championship title and a Top-8 finish at the Canadian Open.

Carly “consistently displays greatness with aggressive and reliable jump spin serving, solid serve receive passing and dynamic and powerful attacking...(she has) repeatedly been placed in high-pressure situations and handled them with poise,” stated her Dinos coach.

These attributes will serve her well in her future career as Carly plans to study Business at Trinity Western University.

"Carly is a fantastic player who has had a tremendous amount of success on and off the floor. She is a dynamic player who can play the left side and right side equally well. She possess the other intangibles that coaches are looking for; Strong leadership, great court presence, fiercely competitive, work ethic and a tremendous ability to help others play better around her," commented Ryan Hofer, her future coach at TWU. "She is known as the teammate who others want to play with."

These attributes have earned Carly the Alberta Volleyball 18U Female Athlete of the Year Award.

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **15U/16U Male Team Coach of the Year**

**Mark Maris**

**NAVC Green Bears**

Twice a week Mark Maris hits the road for the 2-hour drive from Edson to Edmonton- an act that is definitely appreciated by his athletes & parents' group. Mark "has done everything a parent wants when we register our kids for sport". He "treats his players with respect and in return his players show him a lot of respect."

A member of the Red Deer College Kings Men's Volleyball team from 1983-1986, Mark also played for the Junior National team in that same time period. He is still actively involved as an athlete, participating as a Masters' athlete when time permits. In 2005, his Masters' team earned a Silver medal at the World Masters Games. Mark has over 20 years of coaching experience and has coached at all levels including Senior High School, Junior Varsity, Junior High, 16U, 14U, 13U, and Mini-Volleyball.

In the last four years, Mark's teams have won four Provincial Championship Titles, 2 Bronze Medals at the 14U Canadian Open (2007 & 2009), and the 15U Men's Canadian Open Division 1 Banner in 2010. Mark has also volunteered his time to coach the last three cycles of the Alberta Winter Games; leading his Zone 5 team to three podium finishes- one Silver (2006) and two Gold medals (2008 and 2010)

"Mark demands not only a hard work ethic at practices and tournaments, but he also teaches outstanding sportsmanship and responsibility," commented a parent of one of Mark's athletes.

Mark is considered a "Wonderful mentor & role model" to his athletes. He "does not tolerate anything less than full respect of the facilities that we stay in and play in." Mark is a "firm father figure to (his team) in the best way, and it rubs off on the boys in a way that makes them as close as brothers."

Mark prides himself on his straight forward and transparent communication style- all of his athletes know what to expect from the start of their time with his program, "at the beginning of the year, all players get court time, as close to equal as possible- as the season progresses (Mark will) narrow down to his starters but will always play everyone whenever possible." This philosophy is followed through in every situation. Every athlete contributed to their National Championship Banner - on day one of the competition, all athletes received equal playing time. By day two, he still received contributions from every member of the team. By day three, the starters had been selected and led them to victory.

"Mark always gives the players choices and lets them chose the path that is right for them... he has created a team that wants to work hard and become successful." This is a commendable feat that is the basis for his selection as the Tachikara Coach of the Year Award.

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **15U/16U Female Team Coach of the Year**

**Linda Richter**

**Lacombe Dynamite**

Linda Richter has been a prominent figure in the Lacombe area sports scene for many years. In fact, the Central West Alberta Junior High Athletic Association named their Girls' Volleyball Trophy the Linda Richter Trophy in 2008 to honor her contribution to the sport of volleyball in Central Alberta. Linda created the club volleyball organization in Lacombe in the early 1990's and has managed it ever since for girls of every age level.

Tonight, she is being recognized for the work she has done coaching her 15U club team.

Linda began working with her current athletes three years ago. Their first year as a club team they won only a single game. By 2009, the team had shown such improvement that they finished fourth at the 14U Division 1 Provincial Championships. This year, the team progressed from 13<sup>th</sup> place finish at Premier 1, to 8<sup>th</sup> at Premier 2, to 3<sup>rd</sup> at Premier 3. They capped off their season with a Bronze medal performance at the 15U Provincial Championships.

What makes this journey more impressive is the fact that the Lacombe Dynamite 15U team only had 13 athletes tryout for the team- and all 13 players made it.

"Many other teams have pondered how a small town team could beat out so many city teams who have much more intense training and who have many more girls to pick from. They all came to the conclusion that it is because we play as a team," stated one of Linda's Dynamite athletes.

Linda continuously balances the fine line between winning and playing every member of her team. She demonstrates belief in every single one of the athletes on her team by ensuring they receive playing time. In fact, as was the case in most games throughout the season, Linda made sure that every one of 'her girls' was on the floor during their bronze medal match.

"Individually we aren't that strong but (Linda) has taught us that teamwork goes a lot further than skill and I believe that is why we have been successful," added another Dynamite teammate.

Linda is now coaching the children of students that she taught in her first years of teaching... and she has continued to model and teach with the same values of integrity, honesty, and sportsmanship. These lessons have resonated strongly with her current and former athletes alike. "I have often seen full grown women come up to give my coach a hug, because she was once their guide in a sport. (These women) have continuously had the same great experience in sports as I have had and (they) have carried it on throughout their life," reflected yet another player.

Other comments from her athletes include statements such as:

- "We have all been inspired by Mrs. Richter,"
- "When I am on the floor I can hear her voice in my head,"
- "She is more energetic and encouraging than some of the young coaches," and finally,
- "She has shown us that any team can beat any other team- you just have to believe you can".

This positive coaching style has obviously resonated with her athletes and their parents alike as more than a dozen letters of recommendation were received in Linda's nomination package. Thank you for all your hard work and congratulations on your Coach of the Year honor!

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **18U Male Coach of the Year**

**Tyler Myroniuk**

**NAVC Gold Bears**

As an athlete, Tyler Myroniuk has put in a lot of work improving and refining his skills. He spent the first two seasons of his post-secondary career at Grant MacEwan College where he played as both a Left-side and Libero. In his first season at the college (2004-05) his team won a Silver medal at the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference's Provincial Championships. In 2005-2006, the MacEwan team finished fourth in the province. Tyler is a multi-talented individual as he was also named an ACAC Academic Athletic Award Recipient in 2005-2006 for maintaining honors standing in his coursework.

Tyler transferred to the University of Alberta in 2006. In 2008 he was the Golden Bears back-up libero and regular serving sub; the team won the CIS National Championships that season. Tyler continued to keep his academic standards high as he collected an Academic All-Canadian award. In 2009, Tyler earned the starting role as Libero, helping to team to an undefeated 23-0 season and their second straight National Championship.

Most recently, Tyler has turned to perfecting his skills on the beach. Tyler and his partner, Tim Gourlay won the Silver Medal in the 24U Division at the 2009 Canadian Open

Tyler's playing experience has given him the technical knowledge to enable him to give back to the sport. In 2006, he was the head coach of the Zone 6 Alberta Summer Games Men's and Women's Beach Volleyball teams. He took on more responsibility in 2007 when he was named the Head Coach of the Women's Team Alberta Beach Program. Finally, he took on the entire Team Alberta Beach program in 2008 as the Head Coach for both teams.

Tyler began coaching with the NAVC Club program in 2007. His initial role was as an assistant coach to Brad Poplawski when they took their Bears team to a Silver medal finish at Provincials and a top-8 performance at Nationals. Tyler took over the 18U Men's Head Coach position this season- Tyler put a lot of time and energy into planning practices for the team. He worked hard with his players to improve their skill level and the hard work paid off. The NAVC Gold team had an extremely successful year winning the Gold medal at three of the Premier events before going on to claim the Provincial championship banner. At the Canadian Open, the NAVC Gold Bears earned a quarterfinal berth in Tier 1 before falling in three sets to finish the event tied for fifth.

Although it is still early in his coaching career, and Tyler will surely continue to grow and develop as a coach, he has demonstrated that he has all the prerequisites to be an exceptional coach and has earned the title of Coach of the Year.

Tyler is still balancing Volleyball with school as he is currently working on his Master's Degree in the department of Sociology at the University of Alberta. This work has taken him to Malawi in southern Africa to do some fieldwork for his thesis. However, he is still giving back as he is coaching a local team and will be playing in the Malawian National Championships. Unfortunately, this work has prevented him from attending tonight's event.

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **17U/18U Female Coach of the Year**

**Tracy Keats**

**Dinos 18**

Tracy Keats has only coached with the Dinos Volleyball Program for seven years... and yet she has already racked up an impressive amount of hardware.

In her time with the Dinos program, the teams that she has coached have earned 7 AVA Provincial Championships Medals including 4 Gold (2006, 2008, 2009, and 2010) and 3 Silver Medals (2003, 2005, 2007). Her teams have been in the Canadian Open Finals twice- earning Silver in 2009 and Gold in 2008.

She has been a part of the Provincial Team program three times. In every case, the team that she worked with earned a medal at their respective championship. In 2006, she was the assistant coach with the 16U team who brought home National Team Challenge Cup (NTCC) Silver. In 2007, she was the head coach of the 16U team who brought home Western Elite Bronze. Finally, in 2009 she was the head coach of the 17U Women's team who brought home the NTCC Bronze medal.

Tracy also has two ACAC Championship Banners on her resume, as she was an assistant coach with the Mount Royal College Cougars between 2007 and 2009. The 2008 MRC team also earned a Silver medal at CCAA Championships.

Tracy is extremely dedicated to our sport... there are multiple years where she has coached teams' almost year round. She would coach at either a high school or college in the fall, work with a club in the winter, and then coach a Provincial team in the summer.

In the 2010 Club season, Tracy's Dinos 18 team earned three Gold Medals, and 1 Silver Medal at the Premier Events along with the 2010 Provincial Championship title and a Top-8 finish at the Canadian Open.

She has earned the respect of all of her athletes by making "each person feel valued". Her athletes are a very driven group of players, which is a tribute to the coaching they have received. What is potentially more impressive that Tracy's winning record is "her ability to create a competitive environment for each athlete to reach their full potential". Eight athletes from her 2010 team will continue on to play for CIS schools with 3 athletes moving on to play in the CCAA

Tracy is "loyal, attentive and willing to progress and learn from others". Her commitment to excellence exists in all that she does. These invaluable traits make Tracy extremely deserving of 17U/18U Female Coach of the Year award.

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **Official of the Year**

#### **Ashley Fox**

Ashley Fox is an up-and-coming official from Peace River who exemplifies hard work and dedication. Her goal is to not only improve her own abilities as a referee, but to establish a strong base of officials in the Northern region.

For the 2009-10 season, Ashley took on the role of educator for the Northern part of the province. She put countless miles on her vehicle as she conducted referee clinics and training opportunities in communities such as Chetwynd, Athabasca, Whitecourt, Mayerthorpe and La Crete. These efforts will be felt for years to come, as the people she trained will now be able to give back to their respective communities – and have confidence in the role they play as they are doing so.

When she was not traveling to teach, Ashley was traveling for her own personal development. She made numerous trips to Grande Prairie and other northern communities to officiate throughout the high school and club season. Every match was viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve. Ashley also made an impact on the ACAC and CIS by working both exhibition and regular season matches. This introduction to post secondary volleyball will serve Ashley well in the coming year as she starts working towards her level 3 certification.

Off the court, Ashley's commitment does not stop at conducting clinics. She is also the acting Vice President of the Peace Volleyball Officials Association. Through countless volunteer hours, Ashley is a role model for all officials in her zone. She is known as someone who is always willing to assist another officials in any way that she can.

Ashley has certainly had a very busy season in 2009-10. For her endeavors, it is only fitting that she is acknowledged as Alberta Volleyball's Official of the Year.

## **2010 Tachikara Achievement Award**

### **Volunteer of the Year**

**Sai Wong**

**South East Alberta Volleyball Club**

Sai Wong has volunteered his time in almost every aspect of our sport for the past two decades.

Growing up in Medicine Hat, Sai played his first year of college volleyball for Medicine Hat College (1982-1983) before joining the Lethbridge Community College team (1984-86). His years at Lethbridge were extremely successful as he was a two-time ACAC all star and was a CCAA All-Canadian in 1985-86.

Sai made a quick transition from playing to coaching, as he was the Assistant Coach at Lethbridge Community College in 1987-88 before taking over the reins as the Head Coach from 1988-1990.

Sai re-defined himself again in 1990, as he became a local official. He quickly moved up the ranks in the officiating world, becoming a Provincial Official in 1991, and then obtaining his Regional badge in 1995. In 1997, he got involved behind the scenes as the ZOC (Zone Officials Chair) and Treasurer for the newly formed South East Zone. He has held the role of Treasurer in the zone for more than 10 years. As a Regional Volleyball Official, Sai has played a significant role in developing and maintaining a great relationship between officials and the volleyball community. He played a key role in getting the Medicine Hat officials to volunteer their time to officiate the local high school All-Star Games, as well as to donate the All-Star medals awarded to the athletes. Sai has also been an active proponent of athletes learning to officiate and has volunteered his time to teach high school, club and college athletes the rules of the game.

A volunteer coach with the South East Alberta Volleyball Club (SEAVC) since 1999, Sai has coached both genders and every age group from 14U -18U, some years coaching multiple teams. During this time, Sai also volunteered as an assistant coach at junior and senior high schools, with both boys and girls teams. Sai has served as a mentor and builder of the sport of volleyball for not only SEAVC, but for Medicine Hat and the entire South East area of the province. Throughout the years, he has been a volunteer/guest coach for Alberta Volleyball, Alberta Games zone identification and selection camps held in Medicine Hat, and frequently assisted in ID/selection camps for other coaches and teams of various age groups for SEAVC. Sai has also served as a mentor coach for new coaches within the SEAVC program and has frequently been an alternate coach for teams when other SEAVC coaches have been unable to attend a tournament. He has been actively involved in hosting 14U tournaments in Medicine Hat, and along with his wife Darcee, has been instrumental in planning and hosting the club's annual Year-end BBQ and Beach Volleyball Bash.

Sai has been an advocate and role model for the sport of volleyball for many years. Despite both of his children having finished playing Volleyball in Medicine Hat, Sai has continued to serve as a volunteer with the South East Alberta Volleyball Club. For his dedication to the sport, Sai is well deserving of the title "Volunteer of the Year".