

16th
annual

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

hall of Fame

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2019



HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

YEAR	ATHLETE	BUILDER	COACH	TEAM	OFFICIAL
2019			Ron Thomson		
2018	Katrina von Sass	Bruce Edwards			
2017	Suzette Cooke	Wes King-Hunter			
2016	Tracy Mills				
2015	Bonnie MacRae-Kilb Murray Grapentine				
2014	John Paulsen		Greg Ryan	FOG Masters Women	
2013		Jan Patterson			
2012	Christy Hansen	Bob Gabruck	Dave Johnson		Harold Mori
2011	Jenny Cartmell	Dave Ross Doreen Ross			
2010	Kevin Boyles	Don Saxton		MRC Cougars Men (1991-99)	Glen McKay
2009	Kent Greves	George Tokarsky	Howard Rasmussen	Red Deer Kings (1999-2007)	Marilyn Bratton
2008	Randy Gingera	Al James	Keith Hansen	FOG Senior Men	
2007	Errol Miller	Myrna Empey	Calvin Aubin	Red Deer Queens (1982-1989)	Lynda Ward
2006	Kathy Tough	John Pierre Baudin	Lance Adamson	Canuck Stuff Senior Men (1991-98)	Basil Barnes
2005	Terry Danyluk	Bob Bratton	Cor Ouwerkerk	NAVC Gold 18U Men (1995-2001)	Larry Lerbekmo
2004	Barb Broen Al Taylor	Hugh Hoyles Theresa Maxwell	Lorne Sawula Brian Watson	U of A Pandas (1994-2000) Older but Wiser	Bill Ward



ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
& HALL OF FAME BANQUET

Saturday, June 22, 2019

Westin Hotel

Reception.....6:30 pm

Dinner.....7:00 pm

Awards Ceremony8:00 pm

volleyball alberta

VOLLEYBALL ALBERTA 'TEAM'

VOLLEYBALL ALBERTA STAFF

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Terry Gagnon

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Jim Plakas

COACH DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
Ian Halliday

PROGRAM DIRECTOR
OFFICIALS
OPEN

PROGRAM DIRECTOR
Derek Hemsley

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Raynell Prince
Aaron Heinemann
Travis Rott

2019 AWARD RECIPIENTS

MIKASA achievement awards

2018 Beach Athletes

.....Avery Kelly
.....Sam Elgert

2019 Indoor Season

VolunteerWendy Trifunov
Referee (Development)Evan Labonne
Referee (Performance)Jared Mathes

Development Coaches

.....Jen Telfer
.....Stefan Filip

Performance Coaches

.....Janelle Rozema
.....Jason Evans

16U Athletes

.....Mary Thiessen
.....Aaron Elser

18U Athletes

.....Parker Austin
.....Chris Byam

HALL OF FAME AWARDS

CoachRon Thomson

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beach

MALE ATHLETE

Sam Elgert

The ultimate teammate and leader, Sam Elgert has been displaying his volleyball IQ on the beach since 2013 and made his first high-performance appearance as an underage athlete on a Team Alberta Beach 16U Team in 2015. In his first year with Team AB, he and his partner did very well at Nationals, losing a hard-fought match in the quarterfinals.

Named Volleyball Alberta's 18U Indoor Player of the Year in 2018, Sam continues to embody the drive and commitment of a premier athlete. His leadership both on and off the court creates a level of camaraderie that is crucial to the success of any great team. Without the leadership and dedication he demonstrates towards the game of volleyball, teams he has been a part of may not have realized the amount of success and sportsmanship shown in various competitions (indoor and on the beach) throughout the years. Wrapping up his final beach season in 2018, Sam has taken home Silver at Sr. High Beach Provincials, Gold in 18U Youth #2, Bronze 18U Provincials, Gold 18U Tier 2 Nationals, and served four years as a representative of Alberta on the provincial beach team.

Having been with Sam since the beginning of his beach career, Coach Raynell Prince reflects on his coachability, drive, and ability to make everyone around him better: "Sam is still rocking it on the beach, and I was ecstatic to have the pleasure of coaching him in his Final Team AB Beach season! Getting another opportunity to work with an athlete like Sam was very exciting. There is no doubt in my mind that if Sam wanted to pursue a career on the beach he would be very successful."

In the words of Raynell, "No one is more deserving to receive this honour!" Congratulations Sam, on being selected as 2018's Male Beach Athlete of the Year.



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Like a sponge absorbing any feedback, strategies, or information available, Avery Kelly embodies a complete growth mindset, making her a natural leader not only through her exceptional skill but also by example and heart. In 2017, a year younger than her teammates, Avery played on one of the Team Alberta Beach 16U Teams; she worked hard then and continues to push herself and her teammates to become better beach players while being fuelled by a passion for success.

Having turned down the possibility of being selected to the indoor provincial team program to focus on beach, and choosing only to attend the indoor training camp, Avery continues to set a high standard for Team AB Beach. As is evident by her playing up in 18U youth tournaments, Avery always wants more reps and more challenges and, as a result, her successes over the 2018 Beach season have been numerous, including Silver 16U Youth 1, Gold 16U Youth 2, Gold 16U Provincial, fifth place 16U Tier 1 Nationals, fourth place 18U Youth 2, Silver 18U Youth 4, and an Alberta Summer Games (Zone 2) Gold.

"She has been extremely coachable and a joy to teach," says Coach Whitney Follette. "I believe, with her work ethic and tenacity that she'll be able to achieve pretty much anything on or off the court," including this milestone achievement as being named the 2018 Female Beach Athlete of the Year.



beach

FEMALE ATHLETE

Avery Kelly



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

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indoor

VOLUNTEER

Wendy Trifunov

A mainstay for Volleyball Alberta, Wendy Trifunov has been involved in the volleyball community since her high school years in Saskatchewan. Wendy notes that while her own experiences felt very competitive at the time, it is a far cry from the competition young athletes face today, and she now experiences the sport from the perspective of parent and volunteer.

For a combined 12 years, Wendy supported her sons during their time with the Canuck Stuff Volleyball Club, Team Alberta, and the University of Calgary. Like many parents before and after her, she supported the teams through management, food—which she says is “imperative for boys’ teams!”—transportation, and, of course, financially.

After her sons had finished with Club Volleyball, Wendy turned her efforts to “keeping the ball rolling” for other children and focused her volunteer efforts on the larger picture with Volleyball Alberta and Volleyball Canada, primarily through volunteering for provincial and national tournaments. In the early days of the Canadian Open, Volleyball Alberta relied on approximately 150 volunteers who

handled the scorekeeping, information booth and admissions. Wendy was one of the lead volunteers who seemed to be everywhere making sure the event ran smoothly for the participants but more importantly ensured that everyone including parents and grandparents had a great time when they visited the Olympic Oval and Calgary for Nationals.

Wendy has also volunteered on the Board of Directors for the Canuck Stuff Volleyball Club, and she continues to work tirelessly during Championship events wherever they may be in Alberta.

Executive Director Terry Gagnon reflects fondly on Wendy’s friendly personality and willingness to help while also providing detailed feedback to help improve the event year after year. He notes that “Volleyball Alberta has been fortunate to have volunteers like Wendy work with us over the years. She is a tremendous asset to the organization, and we are so grateful to have her experience, friendliness and work ethic at our events to ensure every tournament is memorable for competitors and spectators.”

In Wendy’s own words, “It has been wonderful to support, in my own small way, the volleyball movement in Alberta and watch it grow. I have met wonderful people that give an enormous amount of time to develop athletes and the sport, and it has been inspirational. I can honestly say that this is the first time I have been recognized with an award—which is a true honour.” The honour is ours, Wendy, to present you with this year’s volunteer of the Year award.



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Residing in Sherwood Park, Evan Labonne is an up and coming referee that exemplifies dedication to improving his abilities. His background as a player, willingness to learn, and ability to adapt made Evan a standout in his clinic; it was apparent to his clinicians from the beginning he would be a promising official.

In the fall of 2017, Evan took his level 1 certification in the Edmonton Zone while completing his grade ten studies. As he was still in high school, his participation as an official proved to be a delicate balance between his education, commitment to his school and club teams, and fitting in matches whenever time allowed. On his rare weekends off from his own athletic endeavours, Evan could still be found on the court, albeit on the stand.

Evan gives back to the game not only as an official, often spending his weeknights off officiating at nearby junior highs where coverage and officials are often scarce, but spent his summer as a Junior Coach at the Sylvan Lake Volleyball Camp—a position he will continue with through the 2019 season. The combination of being a dedicated athlete, knowledgeable coach, and an adaptable official has been beneficial to Evan's overall understanding of the game, creating a balance that assists with his overall contribution to all his teams, whether that be to his teammates, co-coaches, and official crews.

After just one year of officiating, Evan signed up and completed his Level 2 Certification and, in the 2017-18 season, Evan's ability was noticed by coaches, players, and fellow officials: "His calm demeanour on the stand, the ability to understand the game from a player's perspective, and maturity have allowed Evan to progress quickly through the ranks," writes Zone Chair, Shawn Shepherd.



indoor DEVELOPMENT REFEREE

Evan Labonne

This past season, Evan was utilized consistently as a minor official in ACAC and USport league matches and nominated as a minor official for the ACAC Men's Provincials held at NAIT. He has also been selected as one of 24 minor officials who will do lines and score at the FIVB 3 Star Beach event held in Edmonton this summer.

A nomination of this calibre for a young official is proof of the dedication Evan has made to officiating and is truly an accomplishment he should be proud of, and we are beyond proud to name Evan the Referee of the Year – Development.



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

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indoor PERFORMANCE REFEREE

Jared Mathes

Since 2010, Jared Mathes has invested his time and efforts into volleyball. He started with coaching, founding the Calgary Sparks Volleyball Club (together with his wife) for the benefit of their two daughters and the larger community for three years acting as club coordinator and coach. After he coached for other clubs and schools in the Calgary Area (Canada West, Cougars, SAVC, West Island College, and Ernest Manning) until 2016, including his role as head coach of the Zone 3 Women's team for the 2014 Alberta Winter Games.

Having sat on Volleyball Alberta's Athlete Development Committee from 2012-2017, Jared started transitioning to refereeing in 2013. A natural fit for refereeing, he appears tireless in his interest. His passion for the sport and his leadership led him to achieve his Level 3 (Regional) certification in 2017, and he has enthusiastically sought opportunities to challenge himself beyond the ACAC, receiving many opportunities to referee USport this past year.

An extremely active referee—officiating over 100 matches a year, typically working 3-5 days a week during the season at all levels of the sport and in all minor and major responsibilities—he is professional at all levels and works well to educate other participants in the game (parents, volunteers, and more). Always willing to accept last minute matches and changes, Jared is almost always involved with ACAC, and USport matches every week. As a result, he has been nominated to many major national club events.

Jared is always willing to share his knowledge and collaborate with others. In fact, when he is not refereeing a game of his own, Jared commits his time back to the sport in other ways. His interests led him to coordinate the Level 1 development program for new referees and he has been responsible for certifying over 50 new referees in the last two years (even bringing three family members through certification).

Always the first to volunteer, Jared's willingness to help has impacted the association in immeasurable ways, including introducing a modern accounting system and practices, improving financial reporting, introducing direct deposit to the zone, and building and maintaining a website (calgaryvolleyballofficials.com).

To Jared, refereeing is not about the certification or prestige, but instead contributing to our sport. He is passionate about the technical aspects of being a referee, interested in detailed scenarios, rules and their interpretation concerning gameplay, and interested in providing an excellent experience for all athletes. For these reasons and more, we are proud to recognize Jared as this year's Referee of the Year – High Performance.

MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

As one of the founding coaches of the Pandas Volleyball Club, Jennifer Telfer has coached a range of teams through the years from 14U to 18U. Additionally, she has been an essential part of the Team Alberta program as the Assistant Coach of the Canada Games Team that earned a silver medal in the last Games. Most recently, Jen served as the head coach of the Pandas 16U club team, successfully balancing the needs of individual players with the needs of the team which colleague Laurie Eisler notes is “incredibly tough as 16U is the first year the athletes (and parents) are exposed to adult volleyball with no fair play restrictions.”

Patient and demanding of her players, her 16U team won the provincial championship having incorporated the whole team in crucial situations en route to the win. A sentiment echoed by parents of her athletes, Laurie adds, “Jen is true to her personal and club philosophy and ensures that every athlete is developed and given opportunities to compete, regardless of the criticality of the competition,” including a hard-fought three-set match in Div. 1 Tier 1 Nationals quarter-final and resulting top-eight finish after a loss to the eventual National Champions.

Assistant coaches, players, and parents alike attest to Jen’s phenomenal mentoring skills and technical abilities, as well as her honesty, patience, and consideration for her young players. Despite the “win at all costs” culture that seems to permeate Club culture, Jen refuses to sacrifice individual and team development solely for the sake of an extra tally on the stats page. Though a fierce competitor herself, Jen maintains a calm and composed presence, and is respectful of all the constituents within the sport and has an excellent relationship with her colleagues across the province and country, within both the coaching and officials’ communities.



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DEVELOPMENT COACH

Jennifer Telfer

Athletes Ella and Evie sum it up best: The effort that Jen puts into our team is more than just showing up at practice... she expects a lot from her athletes, but she truly believes in us more than anyone else. She provides constant reminders to assist with skill improvement, never makes a rash decision, and provides us with the opportunity to set goals (individually and as a team) which has been notably important in creating team unity before a competition.

Volleyball is a journey and Jen is a fantastic guide in helping her athletes reach their full potential, and we are pleased to recognize her potential as one of this year’s recipients of the 2019 Development Coach of the Year awards.



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

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DEVELOPMENT COACH

Stefan Filip

Stefan Filip has had a lifelong passion for volleyball, having begun playing at a young age in Europe, progressing through club teams in Romania to university competition and professional leagues, including those in Sweden and the top league in Italy. Having moved to Calgary six years ago, Stefan began his coaching with young children in the Volleymen Dome Club program and had them assist him with his English skills while he helped them with their sports skills.

Since arriving in Calgary, Stefan has coached every age group of boys and girls, and usually several teams in multiple programs at the same time. Presently, he is working as a fulltime coach with the Volleymen and Canuck Club, and coaches everything from physical literacy, to athletes as young as nine, to a One Volleyball Premier League team, and everything in between. Indeed his drive and passion shine through as in this past season, Stefan was listed as Coach or Assistant Coach on nine different Jr. Canuck rosters, from 13U through 16U.

His passion for coaching is evident as he spends tireless hours developing athletes of all ages in private sessions, positional group sessions, serving and passing clinics, and coach's teams at practice and in competition. Canuck coach and colleague, Brian Gullekson, notes that "while Stefan is a very competitive individual, he is at the same time extremely patient and deliberate in his process... helping as many kids as possible to learn to play and love the game."

It is clear how much Stefan loves the game and how much he enjoys teaching, and by teaching them to play and compete without fear now, they will learn to succeed, and the wins will soon follow. With the dedication that Stefan shows day in and day out, it is only suiting that he be named one of this year's recipients of Development Coach of the Year.



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

A devoted and passionate coach, Janelle Rozema always looks for ways to help her athletes improve. She is fully invested in the growth and development of the young women on her team and supports them in their journeys, whether they be mentally, physically, or skill-specific, and this dedication to their improvement shows in the fantastic athletes she has coached over the years.

While Janelle has been a coach for many years, this season was particularly special in that she has been working with a group of young women for the past four years and, without question, was the most successful season for the group as they rebounded from a disappointing loss in their provincial final to advancing through Nationals, earning a berth in the gold medal final. Coming away with a National medal—and best ever finish by a team representing the Pandas Club with a Div. 1 Tier one silver medal—Janelle's coaching consistency and support of her athletes is evident on and off the court.

Through her work with the varsity program and Pandas Leadership team as Club Manager, Janelle has been exposed to the advanced level of the game, yet takes these ideas to the age class level in a way that is both age and developmentally appropriate. As a result, her team plays as a unit and with tactical knowledge that often far exceeds their opponents.

"A great quality of Janelle's coaching is the wisdom she shows in her decision making... from being able to take a player out of the game to regain their confidence, to working around the multiple injuries our team has had this year, Janelle stays composed and always figures out a way to succeed," notes athlete Delaney Patrick. "She goes through the same emotions as her athletes do after a win or difficult loss, but always finds a way to help her players grow through the process and always sees that there is more to be done and achieve."



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PERFORMANCE COACH

Janelle Rozema

An intense and respectful competitor herself, Janelle is a tremendous role model for her young female athletes. Extending herself beyond the court as someone they can always rely on, she allows her players to have a voice both on and off the court resulting in the utmost trust of parents and the growth of the young women on her team into strong, respectful individuals in sport and life.

In the words of Pandas Club player, Jayce Day, "Providing her players with purpose, tough love, compassion, and endless amounts of support is why Janelle Rozema is truly coach of the year." Congratulations, Janelle, on being named this year's High-Performance Coach of the Year.



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

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PERFORMANCE COACH

Jason Evans

An NCCP Certified Development Coach with club experience at the 13U, 14U, 15U and 16U levels, Jason Evans has an incredible ability to create an energy and direction with his instruction and is an absolute expert in creating a team atmosphere and bonding large groups together. Jason uses his experience as a teacher to understand his young athletes and is fair, knowledgeable, and appreciative of what challenges his players may be facing outside of the gym.

A positive role model, Jason makes practice a fun environment full of learning, where (instead of raising his voice) he speaks softly, prompting his players to truly lean in and listen. He has worked tirelessly to provide the ultimate experience for everyone who works alongside him, and his organizational skills extend well beyond what is usually expected from a coach. This is evident in his coaching of four teams in two age groups for the Canuck Club this year, all of whom excelled and brought home Provincial medals (14U Girls Canuck Black, Provincial Champions; 14U Girls Canuck Red, Provincial Bronze Medal; 16U Boys

Canuck Red, Provincial Silver medal) and National Medals (16U Boys Canuck Red, National Champions; 16U Boys Canuck Black, National Bronze; 14U Girls Canuck Black, National Bronze, Div. 1 Tier 1).

Further, Jason demands excellence not only of his athletes but of himself (having won Excellence in Teaching Awards and five consecutive city championships coaching for his school). Co-coach, Kevin Young has observed Jason's "energy and enthusiasm that is applied to everything he does, whether explaining a technical skill, designing practice, or even pre-practice chats," acknowledging that "these attributes and his drive for excellence are why Jason's teams were successful this year and will continue to be."



A calm and humble leader, Jason connects strongly with all his athletes and "always asks the opinions of not only his fellow coaches but his athletes. He makes everyone feel a part of the decision, which is a huge part of what makes him a great coach and leader," notes co-coach Jordan Leong. Taking on whatever challenge in front of him with confidence, he continues to learn and adapt to help his athletes get the most out of their time on the court and is why he is deserving of this year's High-Performance Coach of the Year award.

MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

A dynamic athlete and well-rounded person, Mary Thiessen is someone that any teammate or coach would love to have on their team, and she has distinguished herself as one of the leading 16U athletes in Alberta. National Team Setter, Megan Cyr, has observed that Mary's "quiet confidence makes others around her comfortable on and off the court. She leads by example and by her sincere ability to communicate and connect with her teammates and friends."

In the 2018/2019 season, Mary started her school season playing as a setter for the Senior team at Edmonton Christian School. She won Division 1 Provincials with the Pandas Volleyball Club as a right side, after she started the club season as a left side. Her club also finished in the top 8 at Division 1 Nationals, the highest result for any 16U girls' team from Alberta. Mary played for Team Alberta last summer where Coach Kacey Otto aptly predicted her volleyball exploits in 2019 when she said that Mary's "skill and dedication will take her far," which proved true figuratively and literally as she also participated in the AIA Volleyball Mission Trip to Honduras.

All of Mary's nominating coaches commend her skill and versatility. Her ability to find



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16U ATHLETE

Mary Thiessen

success on the court while building her skillset in multiple positions speaks to her work ethic, coachability, and dedication to the sport. Where many athletes at the 16U level are starting to hone their skills in one position, Mary is showing that she can learn to dominate in three, as a setter, left-side, and right-side. Her enthusiasm, effort, and apparent desire to learn are putting her on the right track to achieve her goal of playing for Volleyball Canada's Senior National team.

Beyond her athletic prowess, one of Mary's most noted qualities is her leadership and her ability to build relationships with her teammates. Pandas Club Coaches, Carolyn O'Dwyer and Aimee Schubert say that "Mary plays with a sense of confidence, instills trust in her teammates and makes others around her better," and "her love for the game is evident and contagiously motivating." With her humble attitude, relentless nature, and work ethic, Mary certainly has a bright future in the sport of volleyball, and we are so pleased to present her with this year's 16U Female Athlete of the Year award.



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

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16U ATHLETE

Aaron Elser

Five years ago, Canuck Coach Jordan Leong met 11-year old Aaron Elser. He remembers looking Aaron eye-to-eye and experiencing the firmest handshake he'd ever felt from a young athlete. "Like many great athletes, Aaron exhibits the physical performance and intangible qualities that make him very deserving of this award. Fast forward to today, Aaron still exudes the same infectious energy and confidence."

In his five years with the Canuck Club, Aaron has accumulated a significant number of awards and accolades. In his young playing



career, he's earned two gold, one silver, and one bronze medal with the club at VC Nationals. He has also won gold, silver, and bronze Provincial medals and a gold medal at the Alberta Winter Games. In his 15U season, he was a Tournament All-Star at Provincials, Nationals, and the Best of the West competitions. This past season, in his 16U year, he was named Tournament All-Star at Best of the West.

Coach Jason Evans notes that "Aaron's leadership qualities are multifaceted: first, by his uplifting attitude and outgoing personality, secondly by his love and knowledge for the game, and lastly by his outstanding level of play as one of the top athletes on our team."

Coach Leong echoes Jason's sentiment, stating that "if we were to nominate based on skill and ability alone, there would be a long list of names on our roster that are deserving of this honour". Aaron's leadership ability is the trait that separates him from the other stand out athletes in the program. Off the court, Aaron is a kind-hearted, genuine, and positive individual; on the court, he clearly rises above Canuck's group of skilled athletes as a true leader.

His passion, work ethic and determination inspire and cultivate respect from both his coaches and teammates. Aaron's workhorse attitude and commitment rubbed off on everyone; it didn't matter if it was a game or practice; he worked hard every time he stepped on the court. Despite his achievements, Aaron continues to treat all his teammates with the same level of respect and consideration, making them feel welcome and valued.

It is with this humble and hard-working nature that Aaron continues to strive for excellence and grow as a player and why he is being recognized as the 2019 16U Male Athlete of the Year.

MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

In the words of her coach Janelle Rozema, "Parker Austin is a top level, elite athlete that is the complete package from physical capabilities to mental toughness ... she is an unstoppable force."

A three-time Metro Athletics All-Star for Harry Ainlay Composite High School, Parker has played for the Pandas volleyball club throughout her club career. "Parker's fierceness and competitiveness breathe life through our team and is credited for much of the success we have had," says Rozema.

Since we last saw Parker at the 2017 Mikasa Achievement Awards banquet (when she was named the 16U female athlete of the year), Parker's Pandas team have captured 4 Premier medals, 2 Provincial Silvers, a fourth-place finish at Nationals in 2018, and a silver medal at Nationals in 2019. Her individual accomplishments also include Provincial All-Star awards in both 2018 and 2019 as well a National All-Star in 2019.

Despite her early successes in our sport, Parker has worked tirelessly to recognize her potential. Parker has a "strong personality with an attribute of determined stubbornness ... (she is) very coachable, aspiring to be not only a fantastic athlete but an inspiring leader and teammate."

The summer of 2017 saw Parker represent Canada on our Youth National Development team. The team attended the USAV HP



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18U ATHLETE

Parker Austin

Championships where they finished 10th in the International Junior Division. In July of 2018, Parker donned the red-and-white once again as part of the Junior National Team, this time finishing 3rd at the USAV HP Championships in the same division.

Parker is also an accomplished student, achieving Honours with Distinction status for the last three years. Her coupling of on-and-off court success led to an early signing to her top choice university (University of North Carolina) with plans to study Sport and Exercise. "Parker Austin is going to be an important piece for the future of our program," stated North Carolina head volleyball coach Joe Sagula.

Volleyball Canada appears to also echo Sagula's comment as Parker was recently named to the Women's National team NextGen squad.

Already one of the top young athletes in the province and the country, we are excited to be a part of Parker's journey— she is a commendable recipient of the 2019 17U/18U Mikasa Female Athlete of the Year.

MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

volleyball alberta



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18U ATHLETE

Chris Byam

The recipient of Player of the Year should be an individual who demonstrates high levels of leadership, commitment, and performance; someone who exudes confidence, charisma, humility, and respect for their fellow players and all those around them. According to Lethbridge Volleyball Club 18U Kodiaks head coach, Andrew Hemmerling, athlete Chris Byam personifies all that is worthy of this special recognition.

Hemmerling describes Chris as having the physical and technical ability to over-power other teams and recalls times when coaches of opposing teams would approach him after matches and admit that they had no response for Chris' physicality and overall level of play. In his 18U club season with the Kodiaks, Chris led his team to a silver medal at Volleyball Alberta Provincials, was recognized as a tournament All-Star. As such a dominant player, it's no surprise that Chris represented Alberta on the Youth National Team in 2018 and will again in 2019.

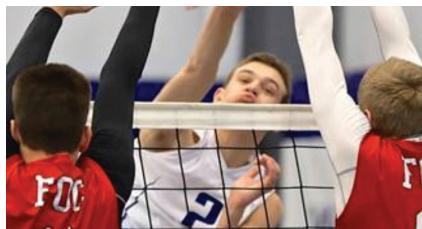
Unanimously voted captain of the 18U Kodiaks, Chris' dominance on the court is backed up by his commitment, inclusivity,

and his leadership both on and off the court. Lethbridge Volleyball Club President, Shelley Boras, conveyed the thoughts of another parent, noting that "Chris loves the game and is equally passionate about the well-being of his teammates and team."

Described as respectful, caring, and honest, he is a poised leader and role model to younger players and his peers. "Chris is such an encourager," says nominator Sandra Lobdell, "... an amazing young man off the court who is always willing to help his teammates." Through the energy and encouragement Chris brings to his team, he creates an exciting, competitive environment that his whole team benefits from.

Looking to the future, Chris has been one of the most sought-after recruits in the country. Congratulations are due to Chris as he continues his volleyball career with the Mount Royal University Cougars where he has become the second-ever men's volleyball player to be awarded Mount Royal's President's Scholarship. Sources say that the MRU Cougars are one step in the journey towards Chris' goal of playing in the Olympics for the Canadian Senior National Team, but wherever his path may take him, Chris will no doubt continue to leave a legacy of excellence throughout his volleyball career.

Congratulations Chris, on your continued successes at MRU and for your selection as the 2019 18U Male Athlete of the Year.



MIKASA ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



Hall of Fame



2019 inductee

COACH

Ron Thomson





2019 inductee

COACH

Ron Thomson

Like many other leaders in the Volleyball Alberta ranks, Ron Thomson began his career as a player, where his intensity and determination led to a high school provincial championship. He continued as a player even as he pursued other career opportunities, displaying the same commitment and drive in helping his teams to several regional and national achievements.

Ron's first foray into coaching came as part of his academic program in pursuit of his Bachelor of Physical Education degree at Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) where a practicum experience whetted his appetite for coaching. When he moved to the University of Alberta (U of A) to complete his degree, he accepted his first head coaching job with the Edmonton Volleyball Club Juvenile Girls team (1986-1988). During this period, he also served as an assistant coach with the U of A Golden Bears under Pierre Baudin, as well as assisting the U of A Pandas under coach

Suzi Smith. He continued to expand the range of his coaching credentials by working for the Jasper Volleyball Camp as assistant director and then as Technical Director for the Alberta Volleyball Association.

As Technical Director, Ron was instrumental in developing the Premier Tournaments, a vital element of the club volleyball system in the province. He maintained his active coaching role by serving as the head coach of the Team Canada Youth Men's program. Later that summer, Ron served as the head coach of the Team Alberta Women's 18U team that represented Canada at the first ever World Youth Volleyball Championship (1989) in Brazil. As part of this busy coaching year, he started his post-secondary head coaching career with the Grant MacEwan Griffins men's team in the ACAC where they won a silver medal and placed 5th at Nationals.

After a brief one-year stint with BC Volleyball, he returned to Alberta and took on the head coaching job for the GPRC men's team. During his 12 years as the head coach of this program, Ron was named ACAC Coach of the Year four times (1991-92 to 1995-96) in a span of five years. During this time, he was also recognized by the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) with Coaching Excellence Awards in 1991-92 and 1993-94. Over the 12-year span, Ron's team won nine ACAC Medals, including one gold, four silver, and four bronze and never finished lower than 5th in that time frame. The team made six National Championship appearances, winning two silver and two bronze medals. Then, after a short hiatus from coaching, Ron returned to GPRC to coach the Women's program leading them to three ACAC medals and one CCAA medal in the six years under his mentorship. In that time, he was recognized as the ACAC Coach of the Year for the 2010-11 season.

HALL OF FAME AWARDS

2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Besides coaching at the post-secondary level, Ron has found time to coach in the Volleyball Alberta club system, guiding teams from 13U to 18U. Ron coached and won a VA Provincial Championship and silver medal at Nationals with an 18U boys' team. More recently in 2017-18 and 2018-19 Ron guided a 16U and 17U Girls team to back to back VA Provincial Championships and 5th place finishes at VC Nationals. He has also been a two-time guest coach with the Canadian National Men's team but is perhaps best known for trying to get the best out of his players and working extremely hard to get determined, talented players to be the best they could be. This is reflected in the number of players who have moved on to higher levels of competition.

One of his players - Jason Haldane - was named to the Canadian National Team, played professionally in Europe for several years and an Olympian at the 2012 Games in London. Another of his players - Ryan Pomeroy - was named to the Canadian National Jr. Team and also played professionally overseas in addition to two other athletes Ron coached. Fourteen other athletes have gone on to careers in various CIS institutions across the country. On the women's side, Jenice Wardentin played for Team Canada, as well as seven other players who also had CIS careers at various institutions.

Not only does Ron believe in acquiring coaching knowledge—having achieved a Level III NCCP certification, and partially achieving a Level IV—he believes in sharing that knowledge. He does this through presentations at seminars, clinics, and workshops as a Learning Facilitator for the NCCP, and through the mentoring of grass-roots coaches. In fact, a number of coaches at both the club and post-secondary level have been mentored by Ron as they moved through their coaching careers, including

Lee Carter (Head Coach – Brandon University), Shawn Sky (Head Coach – Mount Royal University), Rod Durrant (Head Coach – U of C), Jon Goldie, John Slauenwhite, and Chris Dahl.

Moreover, while Ron continues to be active in the Alberta Volleyball scene through his coaching at the club level and continued mentorship of those wishing to work in the coaching arena, his accomplishments to date have been plentiful, memorable, and have certainly earned him a position in the Volleyball Alberta Hall of Fame.



HALL OF FAME AWARDS

volleyball alberta

MIKASA AWARD RECIPIENTS

2019

BEACH

Athlete (F) **Avery Kelly**
Athlete (M) **Sam Elgert**

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Mary Thiessen**
16U (M) **Aaron Elser**
18U (F) **Parker Austin**
18U (M) **Chris Byam**

DEVELOPMENT COACH

Jen Telfer
Stefan Filip

PERFORMANCE COACH

Janelle Rozema
Jason Evans

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Wendy Trifunov

REFEREE OF THE YEAR

Development **Evan Labonne**
Performance **Jared Mathes**

2018

BEACH

Athlete (F) **Kenzie Vaandering**
Athlete (M) **Carson Brennan**

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Scarlett Gingera**
16U (M) **Bryce Neuls**
18U (F) **Nyadhali Thokbuom**
18U (M) **Sam Elgert**

DEVELOPMENT COACH

Rachel McKellar
Rick Boyes

PERFORMANCE COACH

Ron Thomson
Scott Miller

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Sue Mohler

REFEREE OF THE YEAR

Development **Travis Rott**
Performance **Scott Miller**

2017

BEACH

Athlete (F) **Journey Flewell**
Athlete (M) **Jesse Elser**

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Parker Austin**
16U (M) **Carter Hills**
18U (F) **Madison Marshall**
18U (M) **Mitch Newman**

DEVELOPMENT COACH

Andre Turgeon
Taylor Marra

PERFORMANCE COACH

Jon Goldie
Nathan Kern

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Nicole Mathews

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Jenna Nichol

2016

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Kara Crittall**
16U (M) **Hunter Stewart**
18U (F) **Sara McCreary**
18U (M) **Max Elgert**

DEVELOPMENT COACH

Grachella Garcia
Michele Hunt

PERFORMANCE COACH

Greg Elgert
Tracy Keats

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Trish Holterhus

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Pat Chizek

2015

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Lexi Peart**
16U (M) **Jaxson Thys**
18U (F) **Natasha Gordey**
18U (M) **Jacob Kern**

16U COACH

Suzi Cooke
Nathan Kern

18U COACH

Rhonda Schmuland
Ian Halliday

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Denis Delemont

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Shawn Shepherd

2014

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Hilary Howe**
16U (M) **Shane Verkland**
18U (F) **Ciara Hanly**
18U (M) **Tanner Greves**

16U COACH

Rod Hebert
Greg Elgert

18U COACH

Sandra Lamb
Kerry MacDonald

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Mary Beth Meeuwisse

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Everette Dionne

2013

ATHLETE

16U (M) **Carter McIntyre**
16U (F) **Tessa Hill**
18U (M) **Levi Wolthuis**
18U (F) **Mariah Walsh**

15/16U COACH

Allan Coulter
Raynell Lavertu

17U/18U COACH

Jace Barros
Lindsay Jones

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Karl Hiebert

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Janet Kawchuk

2012

ATHLETE

16U (M) **Derek Meeuwisse**
16U (F) **Beth Vinnell**
18U (M) **Brett Walsh**
18U (F) **Alexa Gray**

15U/16U COACH

Jace Barros
Reid Brodie

17U/18U COACH

Mark Maris

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Laura Vaillant

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Pam Rintoul

2011

ATHLETE

16U (M) **Ryan Nickifor**
16U (F) **Courtney Yoo**
18U (M) **Blake Hinchey**
18U (F) **Alissa Coulter**

15U/16U COACH

Candace Greves
Dusty Freimark

17U/18U COACH

Howard Gelderman
Rob Ellis

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Brenda Jones

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Mike Malowany

2010

ATHLETE

16U (M) **Brett Walsh**
16U (F) **Kacey Otto**
18U (M) **Zach Brown**
18U (F) **Carly Hamilton**

16U COACH

Mark Maris
Linda Richter

18U COACH

Tyler Myroniuk
Tracy Keats

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Sai Wong

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Ashley Fox

2009

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Kyjsa Brkich**
16U (M) **Jackson Maris**
18U (F) **Camille Saxton**
18U (M) **Jarron Mueller**

16U COACH

David Jones
LeAnn Kinvig

18U COACH

Jeremy Deeks
Reid Brodie

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Heather Wishlow

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Arch Beck

2008

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Jordhynn Guy**
16U (M) **Branden Schmidt**
18U (F) **Kaylene Ehret**
18U (M) **Jeremy Potter**

16U COACH

Steve Weinbeer
Tracy Keats

18U COACH

Brad Poplawski
Don Saxton

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Candice Sylvester

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

JP Desaulniers

2007

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Dione Lang**
16U (M) **Jarron Mueller**
18U (F) **Jamie Thibeault**
18U (M) **Ciaran McGovern**

16U COACH

Howard Gelderman
Pat Pyne

18U COACH

Ian Bennett
Gisele Kreuger

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Don Hutton

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Neal Konowalyk

2006

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Camille Saxton**
16U (M) **Jarrod Offereins**
18U (F) **Tiffany Proudfoot**
18U (M) **Tanner Nault**

16U COACH

Dale Gullekson
Alex Melnyk

18U COACH

Gord Bocock
Chris Wandler

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Terry Noble

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Tammy McNally

2005

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Jaryn Ruether**
16U (M) **Paul Lindemulder**
18U (F) **Raynell Lavertu**
18U (M) **Thomas Jarmoc**

16U COACH

Darryl Tetz
Bob Gabruck

18U COACH

Ryan Marsden
Rob Lindberg

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Matt Stayner

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Sherri Weed

2004

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Jackie Gagnon**
16U (M) **Ben Saxton**
18U (M) **Lauren Perry**

16U COACH

Art O'Dwyer
Grace Scott

18U COACH

Tyson Waters
Linda Merrick

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

John Findlay

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Glenn Johnston

2003

ATHLETE

16U (F) **Kristy Anderson**
16U (M) **Colin Bell**
18U (F) **Carolyn Macdonald**
18U (M) **Mark Thibeault**

16U COACH

Ian Kulmatycki
Heather McIntosh

18U COACH

Mike Lauzon
Craig Gattinger

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Kathy Van Humbeck

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

Scott McLean



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