



Gymnastics BC Awards

Names of Awards - Why are the Awards Named as They Are?

Many of the WAG and MAG Awards have been named after members of the GymBC Community. Please see below for more information on why the awards were named as they were and a brief history of these amazing gymnastics participants.

WAG Awards

Karen Kelsall Provincial Stream Athlete of the Year – *Presented to the highest ranked Aspire 2 athlete at Western Canadian Championships.*

Named in honour of Karen Kelsall, this award is in recognition of her outstanding career nationally and internationally while representing Flicka Gymnastics. In 1976, she was the youngest competitor at the Montreal Olympic Games and in 1978, she helped Canada win gold at the Pan American Games.

Karen's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- Karen Kelsall led Canada's emergence into world gymnastics prominence in the late 1970s.
- She was the youngest competitor at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, and was one of the first Canadian gymnasts to attract attention from the international gymnastics' community.
- She was the junior Canadian National Champion in 1976, the senior National Champion in 1977 and 1980, and the British Columbian champion in 1977.
- She represented Canada at various international competitions from 1975 through 1980, including the 1975 Pan Am Games, where she placed thirteenth in the all-around; the 1977 American Cup, where she was the all-around bronze medalist; the 1978 World Championships and the 1978 Commonwealth Games, where she was a member of the gold medal-winning Canadian team.
- Canada participated in the Olympic boycott of 1980, and as such, Kelsall did not have the opportunity to attend a second Olympic Games.
- Although she was born in Canada, Kelsall spent a fair amount of her gymnastics career training in the United States.

Sandra Hartley National Stream Athlete of the Year – *Presented to the highest ranked L9 and/or L10 at Canadian Championships.*

This award was donated by Sandra Hartley, the five-time BC Senior Women's Champion between 1965 and 1970. She also represented Canada at the 1968 Olympic Games, won the



1968 Canadian Senior Women's Championships and won silver at the 1967 Pan American Games.

Sandra's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- She was a key member of Delbrook High's gymnastics team which raised the profile of school gymnastics in the province during the early 1960s.
- She became the most dominant Canadian university female gymnast during her four years at U.B.C. (1966-70).
- She led the Thunderbirds to four consecutive Western Canadian university team championships, twice as the meet's individual champion; and two Canadian titles (1969 and 1970), both times as the meet's individual champion.
- In the last Western Canadian University Championships she was on the top of the standings in each of the event's four disciplines: vault, uneven parallel bars, balance beam and floor exercise. In her graduating year, she was the recipient of U.B.C.'s 1970 female athlete of the year trophy, the first time the award was made.
- At the same time, she was competing in Pacific Northwest meets, at the B.C. and Canadian Championships (1966-70) where she would always be on the podium for her all-around performance, and for Canada in the North American Championships (1966-69) and the Cup of the Americas in Mexico (1970).
- She joined the Flicka Gymnastics Club at age 14 – she became a world traveler early on, competing for Canada in the World championships in West Germany (1966), World Summer Universiade in Japan (1966), Pan-American Games in Winnipeg (1967), Summer Olympics in Mexico City (1968), World Student Games in Portugal (1969), Pre-World championships in Yugoslavia (1970), and again at the World Summer Universiade in Italy (1970). Canada's best performance in these competitions was the team silver medal at the Pan-Am Games when Sandra placed ninth in the individual all-around standings.
- After undergraduate and master's degrees in Physical Education at UBC, she spent 15 years as women's head gymnastics coach at the University of Alberta (1971-86), obtained her Doctorate in Education and continued as a professor at the UofA until retiring in 2006.
- She was inducted in the second edition of the North Shore Sports Hall of Fame (1971) and in the UBC Sports Hall of Fame (1993).

Kate Richardson High Performance Athlete of the Year – *Presented to the highest ranked HP SR and/or JR.*

Named in honour of Kate Richardson, this award is in recognition of her outstanding career representing BC at 2 Olympic Games, 2-World Championships and numerous other international events including the 2002 Commonwealth Games where she won the All-Around title.

Kate's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- Kate Richardson, born June 27 1984, is undoubtedly one of Canada's greatest gymnastic talents ever.



- Richardson's initial 16th place all-around finish at the 2000 Olympic Games tied her for the all-time highest ranking for a Canadian. However, after the disqualification of Andrea Raducan due to a positive drug test, Richardson was officially ranked 15th, giving the highest-ever Canadian Olympic finish in artistic gymnastics.
- In May of 2001, Richardson achieved a long-time goal by winning her first senior All-Around title at the Canadian Gymnastics Championships in St. John, New Brunswick by two full points. She went on to nearly sweep the event finals, taking first place in vault, beam, and floor and finishing second on the uneven bars.
- In January 2002, Richardson underwent back surgery. She had been dealing with back problems for the latter part of 2001. Richardson remained determined in her recovery, proving naysayers wrong by coming back to lead Canada to the 2002 Commonwealth Games. In a fitting end, Kate won the All-Around gold in Manchester.
- Richardson returned home to Canada for only a short while, moving down to Los Angeles in August to begin her collegiate career for UCLA. In her freshman year she helped her team to a first-place win at the 2003 NCAA Championships.
- Still determined, Richardson set her sights on the 2004 Olympics in Athens.
- Richardson's performance in Athens was quite remarkable. In the All-Around final, Richardson went on to finish 18th All-Around on the uneven bars, finishing seventh in the floor final. With that, Richardson joined the ranks of Kelly Brown, Larissa Lowing, Stella Umeh, and Yvonne Tousek as the only Canadian women to compete in an event final at a World Championships or Olympic Games.

Gladys Hartley Provincial Club of the Year – *Presented to a club based on the number of provincial level athletes (up to L8 + Aspire) winning their categories at BCs and placing highest for BC at Western Canadian Championships.*

As the head coach of the Flicka Gymnastics Club, and as a judge, choreographer and interpreter of world and Olympic compulsory routines, Gladys Hartley rapidly advanced her athletes to National and International prominence at Pan American, World and Olympic levels from 1963 - 1978.

Gladys' history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- She was born in Winnipeg in 1921. Her young life as a dancer, roller skater, and figure skater established her future excellence in artistic sport.
- Moving to Vancouver in 1952, Gladys would change the artistic landscape on the West Coast from the 1950's to the 1980's.
- She was one of the builders of the Flicka Gymnastics Club, as well as a head coach, judge, and choreographer.
- She was inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame in 2002.
- As a head coach, judge, choreographer, and interpreter of world and Olympic compulsory routines, Gladys rapidly advanced athletes to National and International prominence at Pan American, World, and Olympic level from 1963 - 1976.
- In 1975, Gladys was named a Lifetime Member of the Canadian Gymnastics Federation for her enormous impact on the sport.



- The wealth of knowledge and leadership Gladys brought to the sport enhanced its development not only in BC, but across Canada.

Sev Heiberg National Stream Club of the Year – *Awarded to a club based on the number of national level athletes (L9-10) winning their categories at BCs and placing the highest for BC at Western Canadian Championships and Canadian Championships.*

This award is named in honour of Sev Heiberg, who is one of the founders of gymnastics in BC. He came to BC from Ontario where he had started the Ottawa Gymnastics Club and once in Vancouver, became the founder of the Phoenix Gymnastics Club. He was also a member of the original group who developed the first constitution for Gymnastics BC.

Sev's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- Born in Norway, Sev immigrated to Kingman Alberta with his family in 1926.
- In 1968 he traded Ottawa and physics, for the higher mountains of BC to concentrate on his two passions gymnastics and mountaineering.
- From his mother, Sev gained a lifelong love for gymnastics, first as a competitor and then as a high-level coach.
- In 1960 he founded the Ottawa Gymnastics Club and in 1969 the Phoenix Gymnastics Club in Vancouver.
- Sev was a man of high ideals and great personal generosity. He built the Phoenix Gymnastics Club on traditions and values of generosity, sportsmanship, work ethic, honor and love of gymnastics.
- He was a founding member of Gymnastics BC and a Life Member of both Gymnastics BC & Gymnastics Canada.
- His influence on the gymnastics world continues to be felt throughout the MAG community.

Shallon Olsen Award - *Presented to the top combined All-Around Novice athlete at the Canadian Championships. Previously known as HP Novice Award.*

Shallon's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- She started gymnastics at the age of three, and did it to channel her energy in a healthy way.
- Shallon began her gymnastics career at Omega Gymnastics and then moved to Flicka Gymnastics in June 2020.
- In 2012 she was named Sport British Columbia [Sport BC] Female Athlete of the Year
- She was the youngest Canadian athlete from any sport to compete at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.
- She became the first female artistic gymnast representing Canada to win a medal on vault at the 2018 World Championships in Doha, Qatar, when she took silver in the event.



- In 2018 at the Commonwealth Games, she became a gold medalist on the vault and a bronze medalist on floor.
- In 2019, Shallon won silver with Team Canada and bronze on vault at the Pan American Games and Led Canada to a historic fourth-place team finish at the World Championships in that same year.
- In 2021, she was inducted into the Coquitlam Sports Hall of Fame
- She competed at the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games, reaching event finals on vault for the second Olympiad in a row.
- Shallon was awarded the Penney Hauschild Award for competitive consistency for the 2022 season.
- Shallon won the gold medal on the vault at the RomGym Trophy event in August 2023.
- All-SEC 2019, 2021, 2023
- SEC Academic Honor Roll 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022
- Scholastic All-American 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022
- Quote: Don't tell people your dreams, show them.

MAG Awards

Owen Walstrom Outstanding Athlete of the Year – *Presented to the highest ranked JR or SR athlete.*

This award is named in honour of Owen Walstrom who spent numerous years representing Canada in events including the World Championships from 1977-1979. He was also named to the 1980 Canadian Olympic Team.

Owen's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- Helped Canada win a silver medal in the team All-Around at the 1979 Pan American Games in San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Stunt performing
- Commonwealth games 1978 – member of Canadian National Team – team competition
- Coach at PGSAG (Prince George School of Artistic Gymnastics)
- Member of BC's Junior Men's team – 1968-1969
- Helped the MAG team win a gold medal at the Gymnastics Artistic Team Competition in Edmonton in 1978

Bill Mackie High Performance Athlete of the Year – *Presented to the highest ranked Elite 3 or Elite 4.*

The award is named in honour of Dr. Bill Mackie who was a member of Canada's National Team from 1967 - 1972 and won the Senior Men's title in 1972. His international career included the 1967 Pan American Games, 1970 and 1974 World Championships as well as qualification for the 1968 & 1972 Olympic Games.

Bill's history and gymnastics accomplishments:



- From 1967 – 1976 Dr. Bill Mackie was a member of the Men's National Team and captured the Canadian All-Around title in 1972.
- Internationally, he competed at the 1967 Pan Am Games, as well as the 1970 and 1974 World Championships.
- He attended the University of Michigan and with his teammates captured the 1970 NCAA Championship.
- He twice qualified for the Canadian Olympic team, 1968 and 1972 but was unable to compete due to injury.
- Following the completion of medical school, Mackie participated in the 1976 Olympics as a doctor.
- Mackie served as the President of Gymnastics BC from 1990 -1991 and was named a Life Member of the association in 1999.
- Today, Mackie practices sport medicine, helping others live active lives and is the father of three successful National Gymnasts: Owen Mackie, Gael Mackie and Charlotte Mackie who have successfully followed in their father's footsteps competing in the National Artistic competitions.

Richard Ikeda National Level Athlete of the Year – *Presented to the highest ranked male gymnast in Level 4, Level 5 or National Open.*

One of Canada's best ever male gymnasts, Richard Ikeda attended the 1996 Olympic Games and won the Senior Men's Canadian Championship 3 times. In 2003, he helped Canada to a 9th place finish at the World Championships. Upon his retirement in 2005, he had attended 20 Canadian Championships.

Richard's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- For over a decade, Richard had been one of Canada's very best male gymnasts.
- A 1996 Olympian, he traveled the world to represent his country in more international competitions than any other active Canadian gymnast.
- A few highlights include 7 top three All-Around finishes at Elite Canada at the High-Performance (HP) level between 1992 to 2001; three 1st place finishes at the 2001, 2002 and 2003 Canadian Championships, a 2nd place finish at the 2000 Canadians and a 3rd at the 1999 Canadians.
- He also helped Team Canada win 3 team medals in the Commonwealth Games between 1994 and 2002.
- Richard was coached by his father Mits and helped his younger brother Ken and Team Canada to its best-ever ninth place finish at the 2006 World Gymnastics Championships in Anaheim.
- He is not only a triumphant gymnast but he is a true sportsman and ambassador of the sport, giving kids of the future a genuine role model to exemplify within the Canadian and BC gymnastics community.



John Tutte – *Awarded to an athlete who has demonstrated exemplary leadership in coaching and judging.*

John Tutte was a founding member and coach of the North Star Gymnastics Club in Surrey prior to the amalgamation into one club - Surrey Gymnastic Society. He was also a FIG judge who represented Canada internationally.

John's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

- John's journey in gymnastics began as a competitor when he represented the Hamilton Germania Club in Ontario. His athletic endeavors took him head-to-head with the narrator at the time when they both trained at different clubs.
- John's expertise in the sport led him to become an International judge, an honor that eventually led to his involvement in the prestigious 1976 Olympic Games as a judge.
- From 1972 to possibly 1975, John held the crucial role of National Judging Chairman, overseeing the evaluation and assessment of gymnastic performances at the national level, further cementing his influence within the sport.
- In recognition of his remarkable contributions, John was inducted as a Life Member of the Canadian Gymnastics Federation in 1976, a testament to his dedication and service to gymnastics.
- In British Columbia, John served as the Men's Technical Chairman from 1978 to 1982. His dedication to the role was evident, even in the face of personal tragedy when his wife passed away suddenly in 1979. During this difficult time, the narrator stepped in to support, highlighting the mutual respect and trust within the gymnastics community.

Mits Ikeda National Level Coach of the Year - *Awarded to a club based on club's success of National level athletes throughout the season.*

Mitsugu (Mits) Ikeda competed in gymnastics at the national level in Japan. After completing his bachelor's degree in physical education from Chukyo University in Nagoya, he moved to Canada, beginning his coaching career in Kamloops, BC. After nearly a decade, Mits relocated his family across Canada, coaching both MAG and WAG at various levels before returning to BC in 1988.

At Twisters Gymnastics Club, Mits started the MAG program with just a handful of athletes. Through patience, trial and error, and his exceptional leadership, he built a legacy of producing Provincial, National, and International athletes. Mits believed every athlete could achieve their dreams, often guiding them to surpass their own expectations—reaching National Team status and competing internationally.

Mits's knowledge, calm demeanor, and vision have significantly influenced gymnastics in BC and across Canada. Representing both the province and country, he traveled the world as a coach at prestigious events, including the Pan American Games, Commonwealth Games, University Games, and Olympic Games.

Mits also pioneered a special relationship between BC and Japan. For decades, he brought athletes and coaches to gyms in Japan to share ideas, build connections, and strengthen ties between the two gymnastics communities.



Throughout his career, Mits found purpose in mentoring the next generation of athletes and coaches. His profound gratitude for the path that led him to become a coach shines through his legacy as a guiding force in the lives of those he inspired and trained.

Stan Wilkes Provincial Level Coach of the Year – *Awarded to a club based on club's success of Provincial level athletes throughout the season.*

Stan Wilkes was a leader in the BC Men's Artistic Gymnastics Program with gymnasts at all Provincial and National levels. He also helped shape BC's men's artistic gymnastics system and its committee organization.

Stan's history and gymnastics accomplishments:

Stan Wilkes was an integral member of the Men's gymnastics community from the early 1970s until his retirement from the sport in the late 1980s.

The city of Richmond did not have a boy's gymnastics program until Stan Wilkes began one at the West Richmond Recreation Centre. In September 1973, with 10 boys and only him as the coach he started to form one of the formidable competitive programs in BC for its time. The club began as recreational club for the first couple of years, but expanded into a competitive program after watching members on another club compete. At their first BC Championships in Kamloops, the club won many medals in the categories they entered.

The program outgrew the confines of the West Richmond Recreation Centre and subsequently joined the Richmond Girls' Gymnastics Club at the RCA Forum near the Vancouver airport in the 1977. The club changed its name to the Richmond Boys' Gymnastics Club when it moved.

Stan Wilkes was also involved at the Provincial Level of gymnastics administratively as well. He became a member of the BCGA Men's Technical Committee starting out as a Member-at-Large and moving up over the years to become the Coaching Chairman. By the mid-1980s Stan had mentored many Richmond area gymnasts into Provincial Champions for their various categories.

In the early 2000s, Gymnastics BC wanted to put meaning behind their annual awards and asked each Technical Committee to name each of their awards after prominent coaches and athletes from the past. With his large and continuing contribution to Provincial level gymnastics it was a unanimous decision at the time to put his name behind the "Stan Wilkes Provincial Stream Coach of the Year". In its first year it was also fitting that the recipient was one of his former provincial level athletes.