

Active Norfolk

AWARDS 2019



Eastern Daily Press

A CELEBRATION OF NORFOLK'S ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

It was a night to recognise those who, sometimes quite literally, go the extra mile to achieve great things in sport and physical activity. The **Active Norfolk Awards 2019** were a chance to celebrate the inspiring achievements of our active community.

Hundreds gathered at Open in Norwich on Thursday, November 21 to celebrate the sporting excellence and physical activity achievements of our county at the Active Norfolk Awards.

ITV Anglia presenter Becky Jago played host to the crowds, who came to cheer on and support the finalists in 11 sport and physical activity categories, in what was a truly inspiring night.

The evening kicked off with an upbeat performance by the all-male youth dance group, Legacy Dance Company, which sees 10-21 year olds from across

Norfolk and Suffolk perform in different styles of dance and theatre.

Three shortlisted finalists for each category and their supporters, plus VIP guests from organisations across the county, came together to celebrate their achievements and see the winners crowned.

Some of the evening's most inspiring stories came from the physical activity categories, which recognise the contribution that



Norfolk Sportshall Athletics received a Special Recognition Award for continuous outstanding achievement

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY



physical activity makes in improving the health and well-being of people and communities.

Other categories celebrated the volunteers, coaches, and clubs that make up the rich fabric of grassroots sport across our county.

Active Norfolk director Ben Jones said: "We continue to be inspired and motivated to do more by the incredible stories of perseverance, dedication, commitment, and passion that come to light through the Active Norfolk Awards. This year's finalists all beat off stiff competition to earn their place in

the shortlist following a record-breaking year with 400 nominations, and we congratulate all of the winners and nominees on their incredible and diverse achievements."

For more pictures from the night visit www.activenorfolk.org/ana-2019

Sportsperson of the Year & Winner of Winners: Sophie McKinna



Sophie McKinna and her trophies, with Active Norfolk Director Ben Jones Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Great Yarmouth shot putter Sophie McKinna took home two trophies following an incredible year of athletic achievements and intensive training, all while holding down two jobs.

Nine years after her first appearance at the Active Norfolk Awards, Sophie has scooped not only the Sportsperson of the Year but also the Winner of Winners trophies in recognition of her incredible achievements and her commitment while working part time for both Norfolk Police and Sentinel Leisure Trust.

Sophie's incredible year started with a string of wins which saw her crowned English Unified Champion. She represented Great Britain in the European Team Championships in Poland, where she finished third from a world-class field.

After a technical setback nearly lost her her place at the World Championships in Qatar, she went on to throw a personal best and Olympic-qualifying distance of 18.61m to make it to the finals. It was the first time a British woman reached the final in 36 years, and qualifying for Tokyo 2020 was the icing on the cake.

Sophie said: "It feels absolutely amazing - I didn't expect to be chosen from all these amazing nominees. It's a great honour and it's been a lovely evening celebrating all these sporting achievements.

"I'd like to thank all my family and all the people who've supported me through all the ups and downs along the way."

Runners up: Jessica-Jane Applegate and Todd Cantwell

Youth Impact Award: MAP Community Youth Work team

The MAP Youth Workers ensure that young people from deprived backgrounds can achieve mental and physical benefits from boxing.

The community youth work team from Norwich charity MAP are making a difference to young lives through a boxing project which gives able-bodied and disabled young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of physical activity in a safe and accessible place.

Young people from age 13 to 19 regularly attend weekly sessions at a boxing gym, where they are supported by youth workers from the MAP team, and the youth team's work is continuing to develop.

Taking part doesn't just have a positive impact on the young people's physical health, though.

Feedback from the young people that go to the sessions shows that they enjoy improved confidence, self-esteem, mental health and social skills, and they feel that they have something positive to do with their time.

Alisha Lewis from MAP said: "We were honoured to be finalists and really shocked to be the winners out of all these amazing nominees. It really means a lot to us.

"We'd especially like to thank Kingfisher Boxing Gym, who have worked with us since the beginning on this project which makes such a difference to young people."



Runners up: Able2B and Omnes Games

Members of the MAP Youth Work Team and Stephen Hulme from Active Futures Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY



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Young Sportsperson of the Year: Niamh Southgate



15-year old Niamh is a double British judo champion with a string of national and international titles under her belt. Niamh trains with Kumo Judo Club near Diss, following in the footsteps of double Olympian Colin Oates and Paralympian Jono Drane.

Since October last year, she's enjoyed a string of belting successes, including winning the Welsh Under-18 Open, Scottish Under-18 Open, English Under-20 Open, English Senior Open, and the Northern Ireland Under-20 Open.

In June she became the youngest member of the Great Britain team to compete in the European Cadet championships in Poland, and was also selected for the Commonwealth Judo Championships where she took silver in the under-16s, bronze in the under-20s, and silver in the senior final.

British Judo has recognised Niamh's talent by selecting her for its Futures Programme and will be sending her on an eight-day training camp to Japan.

Niamh said: "I'm so pleased to have been nominated and I really wasn't expecting to win!

"My mum has been a huge inspiration this year, she's taught me to always get on with it no matter what happens. Thanks as well to my coach, Howard, and Denise Oates who have helped me along the way."

Denise Oates collected the award on behalf of Niamh Southgate, with Adam Sturt from City College Norwich

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Runners up: Calvin Smith and Grace Anderson



SPONSORED BY CITY COLLEGE NORWICH

Unsung Hero: Denise Oates



Winner Denise Oates from Kumo Judo Club, with Anthony Isaacs from BBC Radio Norfolk

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Denise has been a driving force behind judo in the East of England for 25 years, and her contributions are still going strong.

Denise is a well-recognised figure in the judo community and has helped grow participation and widen the appeal of judo across age groups.

As competition controller, she gives up 20-25 weekends a year to run regional tournaments, and brings in national competitions.

As secretary of Kumo Judo Club, she's helped organise over 100 overseas competitions for elite and club players, and was instrumental in taking Colin Oates and Jono Drane to the 2016 Rio Olympics.

She was re-elected as Chairman of the Eastern Area Committee this year, too.

This year alone she's organised national judo events at Breckland Leisure Centre, an international trip to Belgium for the Eastern Area judo squad, and has just secured two of England's biggest judo tournaments to take place in Breckland in 2020 to boot.

Denise said: "I'm really shocked to have won - I can't believe it, as the other nominees were so good.

"I've been working with judo since 1991 and I really enjoy organising it and working behind the scenes to help other people take part in it. But this is the first time I've been in the limelight!"

Runners up: Christopher Forster and Matt Pyatt

BBC RADIO NORFOLK

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Community Club of the Year: Wymondham Town United Football Club

This friendly and inclusive club has been working hard to improve youth and girls' participation in football.

More children than ever are loving playing football thanks to the efforts of this volunteer-run club.

It's grown from 270 youth players in 15 teams to nearly 600 players in an amazing 27 teams.

The club prides itself on providing a safe and fun environment for children to learn in, and in a way that increases their social skills and confidence. Fair play and respect for others are at the core of the club's ethos.

In a bid to grow young female participation, last season the club introduced girls-only teams alongside boys' and mixed teams, and the club now boasts around 65 girls enjoying the sport each week.

There's a huge amount of work involved in running such a big club and the organisers make an incredible contribution to the community around Wymondham through their time, effort and enthusiasm.

Mark Walker from Wymondham Town United Football Club said: "We've had quite a lot of success this season, including achieving the FA Charter Standard for community clubs, and winning this award is just the icing on the cake - it's fantastic. It's all about giving the children a safe place to learn the sport and most of all, have fun."

Runners up: Norfolk Iceni Basketball Club and Thetford Town Cricket Club



Members of Wymondham Town United Football Club with Graham Plant from Great Yarmouth Sport & Leisure Trust Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

SPONSORED BY GREAT YARMOUTH SPORT & LEISURE TRUST



Coach of the Year: Paul Neary



Paul Neary, head coach at UEA, with Dave Randall from 4sports group

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

A seasoned football coach, Paul Neary has made a huge impact on all the teams that he coaches at the UEA.

Since joining the uea + sport coaching team in September 2018, Paul has been making incredible gains in both the men's and women's clubs.

The men's first team in particular have seen impressive results this 2018/19 season, including a win against the Manchester United Under 18 scholars, taking the Anglian Combination Division 1 Champion title, winning the Mummery and CS Morely Cups, reaching the quarter finals of the Norfolk Senior Cup, AND being named Anglian Combination team of the year.

Paul himself was also awarded Anglian Combination Manager of the Year for 2018/19.

Off the pitch, Paul has been developing international opportunities for players, supporting students into coach development programmes, and setting up community opportunities like Sportspark's two Wildcat programmes.

Paul has been described as not just a coach, but a role model to the players, an avid sport developer, and a true innovator of the sport.

Paul said: "I was really surprised to be nominated as there was a lot of tough competition! I'm lucky to have a great team behind me, like the fantastic office staff, and special thanks to my assistant manager Ray Harrison - I couldn't have got this without him. It's fantastic to see how far the team have come."

Runners up: John Allitt and Matt Pyatt



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Sports Team of the Year: Swardeston Cricket Club

This South Norfolk Cricket Club is one of East Anglia's longest running and most successful cricket clubs, and its successes keep mounting. Swardeston's First 11 have had a phenomenal year both regionally and nationally.

They won the Norfolk T20 competition and came runners up in the East Anglian Premier League by a narrow margin of just 26 points.

In September they became the first club in the country to do the national club double, beating Nantwich at Lords to take the Royal London National Club 40 overs competition, and winning the Vitality Blast National T20 with victory over Toft in the final at Derbyshire. They came top out of around a staggering 300 clubs in both contests.

The club's success is built on a strong foundation of local players who play for the love of the game, it's thriving social scene, and for the strong camaraderie within their team.

Lewis Denmark, cricket team member at Swardeston Cricket Club, said: "It's a privilege to win the Sports Team of the Year award and it tops off a great year for the club, winning two national awards and playing at Lords.

"Our success is all down to the team - we play well but more importantly we are great friends on and off the pitch."

Runners up: Norfolk Sportshall Athletics U13 Girls and UEAFc



Members of Swardeston Cricket Club, with Zoe Gusterson from Easton & Otley College

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY



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Active Workplace of the Year: Naked Wines



Colleagues from Naked Wines joined sponsor Katie Tierney from Active Workplaces

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Staff at this wine business are motivated to be active and seem to take up every opportunity for a fitness challenge.

Norwich-based Naked Wines demonstrated that physical activity in the workplace doesn't have to be just for those sporty types.

In addition to regular sports clubs, HIIT sessions and physio sessions; a six-a-side football team and a Couch to 5K programme, staff took part in a chilly January dip in the North Sea to raise funds for MIND, and also won a "Krypton Factor" style competition organised amongst local businesses.

Staff are offered free massages and yoga during busy periods to help keep mind and body healthy. Passionate about motivating everyone to be active, they also launched a STRAVA challenge where staff could earn an extra half day holiday by doing 5k walks, runs, and 10K cycle rides.

This year they also invested in additional bike racks to encourage more staff to cycle to work as part of an active commute.

Matt Buxton, commercial finance manager, Naked Wines, said: "It feels absolutely brilliant to have won this award. A big part of our ethos is to promote health and wellbeing in the workplace - it helps our staff to be happier in their jobs and in their outside lives. It's a great honour to celebrate what we do at this fantastic night."

Runners up: Flagship Group and YMCA Norfolk

active
workplaces

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Activity in the Community Award: IQ for Health

This Norwich-based health programme was recognised for its pioneering work in bringing physical activity to people who suffer from serious health conditions.

Led by Deniz Paradot, IQ for Health delivers community-based Qi Gong classes for people with chronic pain, Parkinson's, cardiac problems and other long-term health conditions.

The IQ programme delivers accessible exercise sessions for these otherwise 'neglected' patient groups for whom exercise is a real challenge, and often inaccessible for a range of health and social reasons.

Founder Deniz has recently introduced a new programme for cardiac patients in the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital, combining physical movement with breathing and mindfulness techniques.

Participants found the sessions hugely beneficial, with a high percentage reporting increased life satisfaction, confidence, and motivation to be active, and other benefits including stress management, improved sleep, and improvements in mental and physical health.

Deniz said: "Thank you so much for this award. I feel very privileged to be able to share something that's quite different and changes people's lives - tai chi and qi gong are a great way to keep active because they incorporate mental health and physical health and can be beneficial for everyone."

Runners up: AgeUK Norwich Community Outreach Service and uea+sport Navigate Norfolk Programme



IQ for Health founder Deniz Paradot, with Adam Garford from PROGRESS Sport Services

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

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Achievement in Disability Sport: Ruby Bishop



Gloria Woods and Alison Pawley from Independence Matters, with winner Ruby Bishop (centre)

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Ruby has cerebral palsy and chronic pain syndrome, but that doesn't stop her from persevering her ambitions as an international wheelchair tennis player.

Despite being in constant pain, 15-year old Ruby shows tremendous courage in overcoming it to maintain her gruelling training programme.

2019 has been an outstanding year for Ruby. She was picked to represent Great Britain in the World Team Junior Cup in Israel and after a stellar debut performance came home with a silver medal despite being seeded seventh.

She has started competing in other international tournaments representing Great Britain too, including at the inaugural Abingdon Futures international tournament in Oxford this October.

With her growing profile as a wheelchair tennis player, she is one to watch as she develops her confidence and skills in the international arena.

Ruby said: "It feels really good to have won the Achievement in Disability Sport Award. I'm proud of my achievements, especially playing in the World Team Cup and winning silver which was my highlight of the year. I'm looking forward to playing loads more tournaments in 2020, improving my performance, and achieving even more."

Runners up: Derek Perry and Rachael Hutchinson

Independence Matters

A social enterprise reinvesting in the people that matter

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The Active Inspiration Award: Rebecca Wicks

Rebecca's drive to become more fit has transformed not only her life, but that of her family, friends and colleagues too.

Late last year, Rebecca set herself a challenge to improve her health and lose weight and she hasn't looked back.

She discovered a passion for running that led her to smash 40 events in her 40th year and raise thousands of pounds for charity at the London Marathon and the Great North Run.

Rebecca's friends and family were so impressed by her transformation and dramatic 5-stone weight loss that they were inspired to get more active too.

She now runs regularly with groups of friends, she's got her colleagues jogging, and her mum and dad have taken on a daily step challenge.

And she's getting the next generation involved too, running with her two young nieces and showing them how much fun it is to be active.

Rebecca said: "All the finalists were great so I'm completely overwhelmed to have won the Active Inspiration Award. I couldn't have done it without all the support I've had from my friends, aunts, nieces, and all the rest of my family. I just think that if I can do it, anyone can!"

Runners up: Bashir Jabbarkhail and Joyce Irvine



Norwich runner Rebecca Wicks with Alex Bond from Sentinel Leisure Trust

Picture: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY

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SENTINEL LEISURE TRUST

Active Norfolk Awards 2019



1 Hundreds of people gathered at Open in Norwich to celebrate the sporting excellence and physical activity achievements of our county at the Active Norfolk Awards.
2 Swardeston Cricket Club celebrates winning Sports Team of the Year
3 All-male youth dance group, Legacy Dance Company kicked off the evening
4 ITV Anglia presenter Becky Jago played host to the crowds
5 Sheriff of Norwich Dr Marian Prinsley spoke at the awards

Pictures: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHY