



Ultimate NL recognizes 2022 Annual Award recipients

For Immediate Release

St. John's, NL - Ultimate Newfoundland and Labrador presented their 2022 Ultimate NL Awards to elite athletes, dedicated coaches and passionate volunteers recently at an annual Volunteer Appreciation and Awards celebration on Saturday, March 11, 2023 at the Alt Hotel.

"After the last few years of celebrating our awards virtually, it was great to be able to gather with this year's nominees and invited guests to share all the ways that our athletes, coaches, and volunteers have stepped up to grow the sport of Ultimate in our province," said Ultimate NL Director of Finance, Eric Ouellette, who also had the honour of being the emcee for the event. "As a member-based organization, each recipient has contributed to the growth of the sport in our community and we are very proud and grateful for their hard work over the last year."

Every year Ultimate NL honours the exceptional individuals in our community because their skills, knowledge, and passion for the sport are so invaluable. The awards recognize not only the athletic excellence of those in the ultimate community, but also their leadership within the sport.

"These awards highlight the superb achievements and incredible contributions of members of the ultimate community in this province.", shared Cameron Penney, Ultimate NL Community Outreach Director. "Considering that we have seen the highest volume of nominations in recent years, with each nominee being well-deserving of their respective award, shows the rapid progression of ultimate on the island, and reflects the hard-work and commitment of our athletes, coaches, and volunteers towards building the sport."

There are nine awards which incorporate the Ultimate NL Annual Awards. Eight of the nine awards were given at the discretion of the awards committee this year. The awards recognize achievements in the 2022 calendar year.

The winners are:

Junior Male Athlete of the Year Award: Cameron Coles

Junior Female Athlete of the Year Award: Gracie Beattie

Justin Frampton Spirit of the Game Award: Rachael Fitkowski

Female Athlete of the Year Award: Stefanie Walsh

Male Athlete of the Year Award: Andrew Workman

Joe Coady Award: Nicholas House

Kristine Cadigan Award: Melissa Wheeler

Coach of the Year: Michael Walsh

Biographies of each of the recipients can be found in the attached backgrounder.

"I would like to say a huge thanks to the league representatives on the awards selection committee who voted on the awards. Deciding the recipients was not easy, as there were close races across all categories, said Penney."

Ultimate, as a sport, is a phenomenal way to get in shape while being socially interactive. Ultimate Newfoundland and Labrador, the provincial sport organization for ultimate frisbee, continues to grow across the province. The junior and adult programs, tournaments, and skill development clinics offer something for everyone at all skill levels, from a player who has never held a disc to those who have never held a disc.

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About Ultimate Newfoundland and Labrador

Ultimate Newfoundland and Labrador is the provincial sport organization for ultimate frisbee with about 1,200 athletes participating each year in schools, youth leagues and adult leagues across the province.

For more information about Ultimate Newfoundland and Labrador, visit www.ultimatenl.ca.

BACKGROUNDER:

Junior Male Athlete of the Year

The Junior Male Athlete of the Year is presented annually to a male-matching athlete who has achieved individual results and contributed to team results. This individual must have proven leadership skills and contributed significantly to their team.

Recipient: Cameron Coles

Cameron was nominated for his role on the Holy Spirit High ultimate team, his leadership as captain of Storm at CUCs last summer, and spirit captain for Memorial at CUUC in the fall.

Junior Female Athlete of the Year

The Junior Female Athlete of the Year Award is presented annually to a female-matching athlete who has achieved individual results and contributed to team results. The recipient must have proven leadership skills and contributed significantly to their team.

Recipient: Gracie Beattie

Grace was nominated for her performance as player and captain of the Holy Heart ultimate team, her role as team captain for Storm Women's Ultimate at CUC, and as rookie of the year on the first Memorial Women's ultimate team to compete at CUUC.

Justin Frampton Spirit of the Game Award

As the foundation of ultimate, Spirit of the Game (SOTG) is the guiding principle of fair play and respect that allows the game to function smoothly, even during disputes. SOTG takes many forms and may be demonstrated both on and off the field. In 2016, this award was renamed to honour Justin Frampton, a long-time Ultimate NL player and Mile Zero Ultimate board member who lost his battle with cancer that year. This award recognizes an individual who supports fair play through mentorship or organizes events that encourage spirited play.

Recipient: Rachael Fitkowski

Rachael was nominated for always leading respectful and thoughtful spirit circles over many leagues, even in thornier situations, for always bringing her commitment to the spirit of the game to her role as captain of Tempest Ultimate, and for her encouragement in incorporating new players and helping them learn the game

Female Athlete of the Year Award

Presented annually to a female-matching athlete who has achieved team and individual results, the Female Athlete of the Year has proven leadership skills and contributes significantly to their team or sport.

Recipient: Stefanie Walsh

Stefanie was nominated for her strong play in every MZU league she plays in, her competitive play as a member of Tempest, and although did not impact this award selection, her dominance in the most recent SWURL parity league.

Male Athlete of the Year

Presented annually to a male-matching athlete who has achieved team and individual results, the Male Athlete of the Year has proven leadership skills and contributes significantly to their team or sport.

Recipient: Andrew Workman

Andrew Workman, known as “Moose” was nominated for his performance at the Canadian Ultimate Championships playing for Regiment, his invitation to participate in U24 national team tryouts, and his dominance in every league game he plays in MAUL or MZU.

Joe Coady Award

Joe Coady, one of the founding enthusiasts of ultimate in St. John’s, died in 2008. He worked tirelessly behind the scenes volunteering in many capacities and his enthusiasm made him invaluable to the ultimate community both on and off the field. This award honours a male-matching or female-matching Ultimate NL volunteer who has shown great commitment and dedication in giving their time to advance the development of ultimate in Newfoundland and Labrador. This award recognizes exemplary service to the ultimate community.

Recipient: Nicholas House

Nick was nominated for his long-time involvement on the Ultimate NL Board, currently in his role as president, guiding the direction and strategy of UNL to ensure the long term success and growth of ultimate in NL. Beyond having a hand in almost every aspect of UNL, Nick has coached countless clinics, he is a founder and captain for Regiment since 2017, a long-time president for MAUL, and a great role model for ultimate in the province.

Kristine Cadigan Award

Kristine Cadigan was a devoted and energetic ultimate player who passed away suddenly prior to the start of the 2005 summer league. She was passionate about sport and saw the future of ultimate involving youth and youth programs. Ultimate NL created this award in her memory to honour a female-identifying player who demonstrates outstanding ability, spirit and commitment to the sport of ultimate. Typically, this award is given to an individual who is not only a solid player but has also contributed in some way to the sport through competition, volunteering and/or mentoring.

Recipient: Melissa Wheeler

Melissa was nominated for her role as team captain for Tempest Ultimate, first ever coach for the MUN women's ultimate team, and Vice President of the Ultimate NL board, bringing forth many policies and initiatives that have pushed for greater Gender Equity in the sport in our community.

Coach of the Year Award

This award is presented to an individual who has made a difference to an organization and its programs and who seeks innovative ways to improve the quality of ultimate in the province. The Coach of the Year contributes personally to the sport of ultimate and athlete success, has proven leadership skills and has contributed significantly throughout the season.

Recipient: Michael Walsh

Mike was nominated for his role as coach to the Storm Women's program, who were finally able to make it to Nationals in his third year of coaching the team, for successfully guiding the Memorial Men's Ultimate team in their participation at CUUC this year, and for his many roles as coach and mentor for ultimate school programs.