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## Simpsons' Golden Year Takes Top Honours at Scottish Sports Awards

Brothers Neil and Andrew Simpson have become the first winter sports athletes ever to be named Scottish Sportsperson of the Year at the 2022 Scottish Sports Awards.

A host of sporting stars, including medallists from the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Games attended the event which was hosted in partnership between Commonwealth Games Scotland and **sportscotland** for the first time. The evening was an inspirational celebration of their outstanding achievements, as well as the success of individuals, schools, clubs and teams across the whole of Scottish sport.

After being named Para Athlete of the Year, Neil and Andrew then put their names on the historic Lonsdale Trophy alongside past winners such as Sir Chris Hoy, Sir Andy Murray and Dame Katherine Grainger. The pair won Super Combined silver at the World Championships in Norway in January 2022 before claiming Britain's first male Paralympic gold on snow at the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing, triumphing in the men's Super-G competition and also picking up a bronze in the Super Combined.

"It's a huge honour to have been nominated for these two awards, never mind to actually win them, and a great way to cap off an amazing year for us both," said Neil.

"It's a fantastic way to end a fantastic year," added Andrew. "At the start of the year we could never have believed any of this would happen so we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who's supported us, especially GB Snowport, UK Sport and the **sportscotland** Institute of Sport."

The Team GB Olympic women's curling team of Eve Muirhead, Vicky Wright, Jen Dodds, Hailey Duff and Mili Smith took the Team award after defying the odds at Beijing 2022, winning their semi-final against defending champions Sweden before dominating the final to win a first Olympic curling title for Team GB in 20 years. A European title and top spot in the World ranking completed a season to remember.

David Murdoch took Coach of the Year having guided Scottish pairs to the Mixed Doubles World title in 2021 and 2022, Scotland's men and women to gold at the European Championships and overseeing Team GB's greatest ever Olympic curling success at Beijing 2022 as the women won gold and the men silver.

It was also a golden night for athletics as Jake Wightman and Laura Muir scooped the Male Athlete and Female Athlete of the Year titles respectively, with Eilish McColgan taking Sporting Moment of the Year for her memorable 10,000m victory at Birmingham 2022.

Jake's sensational 1500m gold at the World Championships in Oregon, followed by medals at both the Commonwealth Games and European Championships, gave him the nod, as did Laura's four medals from four major finals, including Commonwealth and European 1500m gold. Eilish won Sporting Moment of the Year, her incredible finish to hold off the challenge of Kenya's Irine Cheptai securing the majority of the public vote.

Four-time IndyCar Series champion and three-time winner of the Indianapolis 500, Dario Franchitti became the 99<sup>th</sup> inductee into the Scottish Sports Hall of Fame. Franchitti, who retired in 2014, is one of British motor sport's most successful drivers of all time. In contrast, at the start of her sporting career, Niamh Mitchell was the winner of the Sir Peter Heatly Trophy as Young Athlete of the Year following her historic win at the European Junior Boxing Championships, when she became the first Scottish female boxer ever to win gold at a major international event.

Individuals and organisations driving success at all levels of Scottish sport were also honoured, with Scottish Handball winning Sport Governing Body of the Year and Raza Sadiq named as Community Hero of the Year for his tireless work to promote diversity and inclusion with Active Life Club, while Falkirk Junior Bike Club took the Club Sport and Rosebank Primary School the School Sport Award. Driving a co-ordinated sustainability drive across a packed summer of golf, GEO Foundation were the inaugural winners of the Sustainability in Scottish Sport Award.

There was also a Special Recognition Award for Stewart Harris who retired this year after 16 years as Chief Executive of **sportscotland**.

Chair of Commonwealth Games Scotland, Paul Bush OBE, said: "This has been a fantastic celebration of, not only a remarkable year of sporting achievement, but the perseverance of our athletes, sports and wider supporters through the challenges we've all faced over the last few years.

"It has been great to come together with sportscotland this year to jointly host a combined awards evening for the first time - working in partnership to celebrate sport across Scotland, from the successes on the global stage to the many local heroes who continue to go above and beyond to help Scottish sport to flourish.

"A huge thank you to our partners and sponsors, whose support has made this fantastic event possible."

Chair of **sportscotland**, Mel Young MBE, said: "It has been another fantastic year for all levels of Scottish sport and we are delighted to once again celebrate the many successes of the past 12 months at the Scottish Sports Awards.

"Scottish athletes have continued to shine on the global stage including at the record-breaking Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games but these awards also pay testament to the incredible work being done in communities across the country to help create opportunities for as many people as possible to take part in sport.

"Each and every winner, and indeed the finalists, deserve to be recognised for their achievements."

Close to 600 people joined the celebrations at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, where the evening was hosted by highly respected sports broadcaster Andrew Cotter and award-winning TV presenter Jennifer Reoch, with funds raised for the Team Scotland Youth Trust.

## 2022 AWARD WINNERS

Scottish Sportsman of the Year – Lonsdale Trophy: Neil Simpson MBE with Andrew Simpson MBE (skiing)

Male Athlete of the Year – sponsored by Bruntsfield Sports: Jake Wightman, (athletics)

Female Athlete of the Year – sponsored by QTV Sports: Laura Muir (athletics)

Para Athlete of the Year – sponsored by Eden Mill: Neil Simpson MBE with Andrew Simpson MBE (skiing)

Young Athlete of the Year – Sir Peter Heatly Trophy, sponsored by the Team Scotland Youth Trust: Niamh Mitchell (boxing)

Team of the Year: Team GB Olympic women's curling team

Coach of the Year – sponsored by EICC: David Murdoch MBE (curling)

Sporting Moment of the Year: Eilish McColgan (athletics) Birmingham 2022 10,000m gold

Community Hero of the Year – sponsored by SAMH: Raza Sadiq (Active Life Club)

Governing Body of the Year – sponsored by Team Scotland: Scottish Handball

School Sport Award – sponsored by Young Scot: Rosebank Primary School

Club Sport Award – sponsored by **sportscotland**: Falkirk Junior Bike Club

Sustainability in Scottish Sport Award – sponsored by Commonwealth Games Scotland: GEO Foundation

Hall of Fame – sponsored by Commonwealth Games Scotland: Dario Franchitti (motor sport)

Special Recognition Award: Stewart Harris (**sportscotland**)

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