

PEI Soccer Association Award Winners - 2008

Administrator of the Year

Bruce Matheson - Bruce is president of the Stratford Soccer Club, and has been for the past 6 years. He was instrumental in starting the annual tournament, and has seen it grow over the past 5 years. Bruce started with Stratford soccer coaching his sons in U-10 and continues with them as they are now Senior men's players. Before becoming president, Bruce was on the board and was given many tasks including re-writing the constitution, which was no easy job. He is a man who when called upon, will help out anyone, anywhere. His goal that every child can play soccer, be treated with respect is shown on a daily basis. He was instrumental in getting the fields in Stratford ready for the BMO nationals this fall, and he gave up the entire week to ensure that everything ran smoothly at the Stratford complex.

He is greatly admired in soccer circles, and his laid-back approach and common sense manner sees him a popular choice when the PEISA needs committee members for the difficult tasks of ruling on transfers or deciding on discipline.

Coach of the Year

John Diamond - Senior men's soccer has a great tradition on Prince Edward Island, and the main reason for that is because of our Coach of the Year for 2008 - John Diamond. Almost single-handedly John keeps alive a competitive presence at the senior level - without his input, it would be extremely unlikely that our better male players have a competitive environment in which to play.

He has worked tirelessly for an Island presence in the Nova Scotia Soccer League, and this year his Avondale Islanders team enjoyed another fine season, finishing 4th. The commitment, expense and time involved in playing in this competition is immense, but John continues to do it, so the players are well prepared when it comes to national competition.

Those that know John are aware of his competitive nature (to say the least!) and there is nothing he enjoys more than taking on the bigger provinces. He loves nationals and the opportunity to play against the best, and in 2008 he got what he finally deserved - a medal - when the Avondale Islanders came home with a brilliant bronze medal, only PEI's second ever medal at a national event. Nothing would have given John more satisfaction than defeating Nova Scotia in a shoot-out to advance to the bronze medal game, where they took on the champions from BC, and defeated them 3-2.

Even John would have to say he had help on the way, most notably from the likes of Bruce Norton and Lewis Page, but it is John's total commitment to competitive senior men's soccer that means he is in a class of his own for this award.

Volunteer of the Year

John Gallant - Mr. John Gallant of Winsloe West Royalty has been involved with the club seemingly forever (actually, it is 19 years) and in that time he has taken on many of the club's most important positions, including president and tournament director, and he has also been heavily involved in the youth league, both as club rep and league president. However for the last 8 years John has been the Fields and Equipment Director for the Club, and it is a role he has excelled in. He works tirelessly on maintaining the fields and keeping them looking as good as possible, and when asked why he continues to stay involved now his own sons have graduated to the senior men's league, he replies that it is purely so the kids can develop and have somewhere to play. He maintains one of the highlights of his volunteering duty is seeing the minis get their new jerseys for the first time every season. He is the best kind of volunteer - he gets on with the job with little fuss, and yet is reliable and takes pride in his work. If a pothole needs filling, he fills it; if a net needs tying, he ties it - no fuss, no bother.

Lowell Stewart Memorial Award

Justin Burt - has been involved with the Kensington & Area Soccer Association for a number of years, starting as a participant in the mini program and participating right through to premier league soccer. All through the years he has shown a desire for hard work and has a genuine love of the game.

As well as being a good team player, Justin is a major volunteer for the club. He has helped the club with the house league for 5 years and for the last two years he has coached his own U10 team. He never missed a night of house league this summer and his team of U10's enjoyed his enthusiasm and benefitted greatly from his knowledge of the game, and sportsmanship in general. In addition to coaching, Justin has also helped the club cut grass, line fields and put up nets.

In addition to playing and volunteering, Justin would unofficially referee games for the house league program and for competitive games when a scheduled referee did not show up for a game. This spring he decided to take the referee course and become a certified referee, where he took numerous assignments.

In addition Justin is a tremendous volunteer at school, sitting on numerous committees.

Junior Official of the Year

Cory Deagle - The PEI Soccer Referees Association has high hopes for Cory Deagle from Montague.

Cory has taken his game to another level over the last couple of years, and in 2008 he enjoyed an excellent season. He attended his first national championship when he went to all-stars, where he earned some positive assessments, and on his return his game elevated to a new level.

He enjoys the challenge of doing higher profile games, and is now comfortable at the senior women and AA high school levels. At the under-14 nationals Cory so impressed the CSA assessors that he was rewarded with lines for the boys final. He also took charge of the Midget AA girls final this fall, and was on lines for both AA high School games.

Not daunted by the challenge, it is easy to forget that Cory himself is still at school and he is officiating games of his peers, or older. He has a bright future and the PEI Soccer Referees Association is very pleased with the progress he is making.

Senior Official of the Year

Enes Alisic - Enes is every assignor's dream - no game is beneath him, he will go every night if necessary, and he is capable of handling the toughest games.

2008 saw Enes in some of the highest level games in the province - Nova Scotia Men's League, and UPEI men and women, and he handles them all in typical Enes fashion. His unique style of interaction with players and coaches ensures he also gains a high level of respect, and his knowledge and understanding of the game is without equal.

Enes is certainly at the top of his game right now and he is one of the first names to be considered for the big game. At under-14 nationals he was complemented on being the best referee from the Island by the CSA assessors, and he was rewarded with the middle of the girls bronze medal game.

Enes will certainly tell you he is the best referee - and there are very few that will disagree.

Team of the Year

Avondale Islanders - made Island soccer history in 2008 when it became the first men's team to win a medal at a national championship, after it won bronze at the Challenge Cup in Newfoundland.

It was an excellent all-round season for the Islanders, whose team consists of a number of UPEI Panthers and some seasoned veterans. The team enjoyed an excellent run in their second season in the Nova Scotia League, finishing in 4th place and providing an excellent caliber of soccer for Island fans to enjoy throughout the season.

It was at nationals however that the John Diamond/Roger Vessey team came into their own. A narrow 2-1 loss to future winners Alberta in the first game was forgotten when the team then tied Halifax City 1-1 before recording two excellent victories over Saskatchewan and Manitoba. With the team tied for second place with

Halifax, the two teams had a shoot-out where the Islanders came out on top, earning a right to play for bronze.

In an excellent final game, the islanders came through a nail biter 3-2 over the BC Gorge, earning a highly coveted and well earned, bronze medal.

Junior Female Athlete of the Year

Katie O'Brien - Many observers believe that Katie O'Brien of Winsloe West Royalty is one of the best players in the province.

A regular on provincial teams and an attendee at the Regional Training Centre, Katie is one of the team leaders on the Canada Games training squad. She can play anywhere, but her speed, agility, tackling ability and excellent passing skills mean she is likely to be playing in defense or midfield.

She has the ability to score great goals, and one of her most important was the one which came against Saskatchewan at the under-16 club nationals, a 25-yard free-kick which demonstrated her excellent technique. Her defensive strengths at the club nationals were a main reason why the Winsloe team finished in a credible 7th place and conceded just 8 goals in their five games, an outstanding statistic for an Island youth team at the national championships.

An expert at corners and free-kicks, she is a team-leader who prefers to lead by example. She is another player with a very bright future ahead of her.

Junior Male Athlete of the Year

Davor Alisic - has always been a very good player, but 2008 saw him perform at a level where he has really blossomed. It seems the higher the level, the better Davor plays.

A skillful, forward player, Davor really kicked his game into high gear in 2008. For the Winsloe Under-18 boys he was outstanding, leading the team in scoring in the senior men's league, and grabbing a hat-trick as Winsloe beat Summerside 3-0 in the Challenge Cup Final.

At nationals Davor kept up his goal scoring form, and he netted four times including both goals against Ontario which saw the team earn an excellent 5th place. Davor finished as the tournament's second leading scorer.

Where Davor really made his mark this year was at the varsity level. As a rookie at Laurentian his first goal was to make the squad, which he did, and then earn himself a starting place. By season's end he had become one of that school's most important performers, appearing in 10 games and scoring four goals.

He is an intelligent player with a very good work rate.

Senior Female Athlete of the Year

Kristina Weatherbie - Arguably the most talented female player ever produced in this province, Kristina Weatherbie ended her collegiate career with a flourish, becoming the record goal scorer at Cape Breton and adding another CIS honour to her collection.

It didn't take Krissy too long to break the Capers record, and by season's end she had tallied eight goals, taking her record to 44 in five seasons. Her haul for the season was good enough for second in the Conference, and she was named once again an AUS all-star, her third first team selection.

In addition, she was named to the CIS all-Canadian second team.

At the AUS Championships Kristina was instrumental in landing the Capers yet another title, their 4th in the five years that she was part of the team. She scored the winning goal in the final, and was named the MVP of the play-offs.

Senior Male Athlete of the Year

Paul Craig - Winsloe's Paul Craig is another young and exciting player who has enjoyed the best season of his life. With the Avondale Islanders Paul scored a number of crucial goals, none more than at nationals, when he scored an incredible 6 times in 5 games, including twice against BC in the bronze medal match. He finished as the top scorer at nationals, and he was tied also for the lead in the AUS, when he finished with 10.

A player with very quick feet, great close control and a powerful shot, nobody who was present will forget his fantastic 30 yard volley against St FX in the final home game of the season.

For his efforts he was named AUS 1st team all-star, and he received further recognition by being named CIS 2nd team all-Canadian. He is a player who at this moment is right at the top of his game.