

# RAF SPORT AWARDS

7 November 2024

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**Royal Air Force Halton**

By permission of  
Station Commander, Wing Commander Peter Seanor





# WELCOME

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The RAF Sport Awards are held every year to celebrate the exceptional endeavours and achievements of our people, across the world of RAF Sport and beyond. We celebrate them as individual athletes, in teams, as officials and as administrators, and, for the second time as Civilian Volunteers as part of the Whole Force, along with the RAF Central Fund Unit Award, for the station that has done most to promote physical activity and sport.



To present the Awards, I am delighted to welcome both the Air and Space Commander, Air Marshal Al Marshall OBE, and the Head RAF Sport, Air Vice-Marshal Ian 'Cab' Townsend CBE. Hugely experienced and accomplished aviators with operational experience on Harriers, Typhoon, Sentinel and Shadow between them, they also oversee the varied challenges of delivering the RAF's operational effect today and ensuring we can continue to do this in the future. Champions of sport, Air Marshal Al is President of RAF Rugby League, while the Air Vice-Marshal is the Chair of UKAF Rugby Union and huge proponents of all forms of physical activity, adventurous training and sport available to all our people, exemplified by their making the time in their incredible schedules to be with us today.

Of course, not everyone can get an award and those you will hear about today are genuinely just the tip of the iceberg of all of those who were nominated and many others. I thank them all, on our collective behalf, for all they all do in inspiring and supporting the safe delivery of our physical activity and sport, at each and every level, across the Whole Force, with family members and others. And I also want to thank our wider range of supporters, from the RAF Central Fund especially, to so many others, some of whom we welcome here today. Together we drive on, making us 'Fit for Service – Fit for Life through RAF Sport'.

***Air Cdre Rich Fogden***  
***Director RAF Sport***

# PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

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- 1130** Guest arrival
- 1200** Lunch
- 1400** Awards ceremony
- 1405** ASC opening address
- 1555** AOC 22GP closing address
- 1600** AM Marshall and AVM Townsend depart HHOM followed by attendees





# SPORTSMAN

## Nominees

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This award recognises a sportsman who has achieved excellence in his performance, participated at the highest levels or had an outstanding achievement in his chosen sport.



### CT Peter Ellis - Triathlon

CT Ellis “Oz” has demonstrated exceptional prowess and dedication in the sport of duathlon over the past year. His achievements have not only brought him personal accolades but have also significantly contributed to the sport’s prominence both nationally and on the global stage.



### Cpl Michael Cutler - Olympic Weightlifting

Cpl Cutler’s success in competition in the last few years has risen to the fore in 2024. He won both British Master’s Champion titles in the same year, leading to his selection as the first aviator to represent GBR in Weightlifting. Mike was nominated by both his Association and his Station, RAF Brize Norton, recognising the work he does to bring weightlifting to as many people as possible and making him an excellent role model.



### FS Martyn Ledbury - Tennis

An RAF Tennis stalwart for over two decades, FS Ledbury has successfully grown grass roots participation, diversity, and performance whilst creating a thriving tennis community. The RAF men’s team won their first Inter-Services Championship title at Wimbledon for 13 years, with Martin leading the team to earn points in both singles and doubles. He’s also been instrumental in coaching young players and pivotal in bringing on the UK Invictus wheelchair tennis squad.

# SPORTSWOMAN

## Nominees

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This award recognises a sportswoman who has achieved excellence in her performance, participated at the highest levels or had an outstanding achievement in her chosen sport.



### **Fg Off Natalie Marsh - Martial Arts**

Fg Off Marsh has experienced what can only be described as a meteoric rise in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ), achieving unprecedented success in a sport that is notoriously difficult to master quickly. Her achievements over the past year are nothing short of remarkable.



### **AS1 Darcie Muggeson Proud - Table Tennis**

AS1 Muggeson Proud has had a phenomenal year in RAF Table Tennis. Selected for her first Inter-Services, she remained unbeaten, claiming the Ladies Singles, Ladies Doubles, and Mixed Doubles titles. She's also been involved with several RAF Table Tennis Academies in 2024, providing coaching and mentorship for developing players and delivering the first tri-service all-female training camp to increase participation and playing standards across all three services.



### **Flt Lt Olivia Henderson - Waterski & Wakeboarding**

Flt Lt Henderson completely dominated the 2023 Inter-Services, taking the top position in all three of the competition disciplines. Olivia's been the Captain of the Ladies Wakeboard team for the past three years, and it's no coincidence that during that time the team's had unparalleled success. She leads by example through her competition results, and her organisational and training skills.

# SPORTS TEAM

## Nominees

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This award recognises individual teams who have either had outstanding success over the past year or had sustained achievement over several years.



### Coarse Angling Team

The RAF Angling Association's Coarse (Match) Team are the three-time Inter-Services Champions, having successfully defended their title in June. In addition to competing, the Coarse (Match) Team is also dedicated to the development of angling skills across the RAF and has seen a huge rise in participation at all levels.



### Motorcycle Road Racing Team

The RAF Motorcycle Road Racing Team is made up of multiple trades and ranks, which over the years has bonded personnel together, creating and enhancing a strong team ethos. During the 2024 season, riders have secured many personnel achievements by gaining pole positions, numerous podiums and race wins in the NO LIMITS Racing UK series. Although they ride in several different classes on several different bikes, and on a variety of tracks, they compete and win as a team.



### Esports Rocket League Team (Stormshadows)

Earlier this year, six members of the team took part in Insomnia72 at the NEC and placed fourth in the highly competitive competition. In addition to their achievements this year, the team has also been incredibly active in weekly Rocket League matches, expanding their outreach through live streaming and routinely attracting big weekly audiences.

# SPORTS COACH / OFFICIAL

## Nominees

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This award recognises someone who has gone above and beyond in the delivery of sport either through the organising of events, managing activities, or coaching.



### **Cpl Andrew Rourke - Ice Hockey**

Two years ago, Cpl Rourke took on the role of programme lead and head coach of the RAF Ice Hockey Association women's representative team, the RAF Pumas. In that time he's used his in-depth knowledge and understanding of the game as a player himself to transform a keen community of mixed-level players into a focused and highly skilled team. In June, the inaugural women's Inter-Services game was played against Army Fury. The Pumas proudly won a hard-fought game, cementing in history Andrew's contribution to women's Ice Hockey.



### **Flt Lt Keith McLaughlin - Bobsleigh**

Flt Lt McLaughlin was deeply involved in every facet of the season's planning to ensure the teams were not just prepared but positioned to dominate. Keith's profound understanding of the sport has been instrumental in assembling teams that are now recognised as some of the most formidable at Inter-Service level.



### **Gp Capt Ray Morley - Boxing**

With more than two decades of international level experience as a boxing official, Gp Capt Morley has continually represented the RAF and UK Armed Forces at boxing tournaments around the globe. This year he was selected to officiate at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Throughout his international appearances he has remained committed to Service Boxing, regularly providing mentoring and guidance to Service Officials and giving up his free time to assess UKAF Championships.

# SPORTS ADMINISTRATOR

## Nominees

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This award recognises someone who has gone above and beyond in the delivery of sport at an administration level.



### **Sqn Ldr Darren Berris - Motorsports**

For more than 20 years, Sqn Ldr Berris has shown tireless commitment to the delivery of RAF Motorsports. His passion on the track has been mirrored by his passion off it, taking on the role of competition secretary for Motor Car Racing which he delivered with meticulous attention to detail. Stepping up his role to Deputy Chair, Darren works relentlessly to ensure the sport remains compliant, whilst also developing e-Motorsport using his 20-year experience in his primary role in synthetics.



### **Cpl Ben Law - Table Tennis**

Cpl Law is the current RAF No 1 Men's player and has contributed a phenomenal amount to RAF Table Tennis as the Men's Team Manager, British League Manager and Academy Manager. Ben leads from the front, not only demonstrating his playing ability but with his exemplary management of all responsibilities.



### **FS Mark Collinson - Course Angling**

FS Collinson has represented the RAF and UK Armed Forces (UKAF) at the highest levels for the last 23 years, achieving remarkable results. His commitment goes beyond personal achievements, regularly offering support and guidance to new or younger team members, fostering a strong team spirit and ethos within his sport. As the current team manager, his responsibilities also include the coordination, planning, and administration of over 25 team events.

# CIVILIAN VOLUNTEER AWARD

## Recipients

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These awards recognise civilian volunteers who have dedicated their time to the delivery of RAF Sport from outside the service.



### **Mr Steve Smith - Table Tennis**

Steve Smith continues to be an ever-present force in the RAF Table Tennis Association (RAFTTA), having given over 10 years of selfless service. His infectious charisma and professional work ethic impacts everyone, from the most senior of players to the newest members of the team. Steve's advice and guidance on both playing matters and management of the sport has been invaluable to the RAFTTA Committee.

As an International Table Tennis Referee, some of his personal achievements include being an Assistant Umpire at the 2012 London Olympics and Para-Olympics, representing the RAFTTA at the North America Teams Tournament in Washington and as a recently appointed Vice-President of Table Tennis England.



### **Mr Ian Jennings - Hockey**

Ian Jennings MBE has transformed the Royal Air Force Men's Senior Hockey team since taking over in 2009. His meticulous planning and vast knowledge of Service hockey, combined with his developmental education of players and robust conditioning, have embedded an elite performance approach and winning culture within the Association.

Ian has consistently built a cohesive team, propelling the RAF to their highest performance level and achieving the best results since the inception of the Inter-Services. Ian is a truly inspirational leader, mentor and coach.



# THE RAF CENTRAL FUND UNIT AWARD

## Recipient

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Recognising that RAF Sport encompasses all sport across the RAF from individual endeavours to Station sports clubs and events, the RAF Central Fund Unit Award acknowledges an inspiring initiative that encourages and enables serving personnel to get physically active.



### RAF Honington - Wellness Wednesdays

RAF Honington's Wellness Wednesday initiative was set up to encourage personnel to take time out of their working environment to alleviate stress and help their work-life balance. A range of opportunities were set up for the community to engage in, from accessible low impact activity such as dog walking groups, through to challenging functional fitness sessions and a swimathon attracting around 500 individuals.

Their initiative has proactively supported and positively impacted the physical, social and mental wellbeing of personnel on Station, reaching an additional cohort of around 100 personnel that weren't previously engaged in regular physical activity.

The fundamental change in their approach to the mental and physical wellbeing of personnel has enabled closer bonds to form between individuals and in teams, creating a noticeably more positive environment for people to work in.

With lots of ideas in the pipeline of how to evolve and grow the reach of this initiative across resident and neighbouring units, we are excited to see what the future holds and wish RAF Honington the best of luck in the continued development of this initiative.



# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

## Recipients

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These awards recognise those who have made a major contribution to RAF Sport during their employment with or in support of the RAF.



### **WO Peter Clowes - Basketball**

WO Clowes first represented RAF Basketball in 1987 and was ever-present as a player, coach, manager, and leader in the sport until his passing in March. With an awe-inspiring presence and an all-encompassing desire for people to enjoy basketball, he delivered exceptional results both on and off the court. His indomitable spirit and unbounded energy drove innovation and significant improvement of the game over the decades. His loss has left a gaping void in the sport but his legacy will remain.



### **WO Andrew Kutcha - Football**

As a player, administrator and coach, WO Kutcha has been pivotal to the success of RAF Football for more than 25 years. Establishing a legacy through his professionalism and unrivalled enthusiasm for the game, Andrew has inspired and developed hundreds of players and coaches in both Service and professional football.



### **WO John Wilding - Rugby Union**

A pioneering coach and mentor, WO Wilding has played a critical role in elevating the sport within the RAF and beyond. His legacy is defined by groundbreaking achievements, particularly his influential tenure with Wasps Women and his historic leadership of the RAF Women's team.

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

## Recipients

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### **FS Laurence Ramm - Athletics**

Over the decades, FS Ramm's contribution to athletics has stretched from world international level to grassroots. This year, he guided new athletes through the technical aspects of their chosen events, helping with new techniques to build confidence and morale.



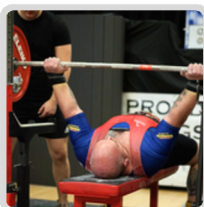
### **Sqn Ldr Tim Ellis - Rowing**

Sqn Ldr Ellis (Retd) has been more than a stalwart in RAF and UKAF Rowing, competing, organising and driving on the sport alongside his 36-year Service career as an Aerosystems engineer. Over the years, Tim has held a variety of roles at high profile events and four years on from retirement, he continues to show his commitment as Secretary of UK Armed Forces Rowing.



### **Wg Cdr Neil Hope - Football**

Wg Cdr Hope's contribution to Service football and the game at a national level is outstanding. Neil has been involved in virtually every aspect of the sport, from grassroots to Board level. His full citation detailed over 20 examples of his commitment, from player and manager, to establishing the women's game in the Service, and his membership of the FA National Game Board as the first military representative.



### **Sqn Ldr Neil Thomas - Powerlifting**

Sqn Ldr Thomas has been the driving force behind the establishment and development of Powerlifting as a sport in the Services for 22 years. Critical to its success, he has been an athlete, coach and administrator during his time in the Army and since joining the RAF, he has also led the sport's National Governing Body. Simply put, Powerlifting in the Services would not exist without Neil's dedication.



# RAF SPORTS LOTTERY

## THE VITAL LIFELINE FOR RAF SPORT

**DID YOU KNOW?** Your membership helps to provide the majority of the much needed funding for sport in the RAF.

Show your support by joining or increasing your tickets today. Now hold up to **6** tickets and still only **£1** per ticket!

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**£500**
- PLUS 15xPRIZES**  
**£100**



# WITH THANKS

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**BAE SYSTEMS**

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ALCOHOL FREE WINE



We would like to thank all supporters of RAF Sport for their contribution in enabling RAF personnel to access sport and physical activity throughout 2024.



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