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**MEDIA RELEASE
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**56th ISPS HANDA HALBERG AWARDS NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCED**

The [Halberg Foundation](https://www.halberg.co.nz/) has announced a record 93 nominations received for six categories at the 56th [ISPS Handa Halberg Awards](https://www.halbergawards.co.nz/) – New Zealand’s pre-eminent event to celebrate and honour sporting achievements from 2018.

The Awards, held annually since 1963, are the brainchild of Olympic athletics champion Sir Murray Halberg (ONZ) to honour sporting excellence and as a major fundraiser for the Halberg Foundation – his charity which aims to enhance the lives of physically disabled young New Zealanders by enabling them to participate in sport and recreation.

43 sporting codes are represented in the nominations, submitted by National Sporting Organisations and an independent [Nominations Board](https://www.halbergawards.co.nz/about/nominations-board/), recognising achievements in 2018 up to 30 November. Accomplishments in December will be put forward for the 57th ISPS Handa Halberg Awards.

The evolving international feats of females in sport has been recognised with 22 nominations from 15 sports for **High Performance Sport New Zealand Sportswoman of the Year** - the most of any category.

2017 winner and 2016 supreme Halberg Award winner Lisa Carrington is in the running again. The canoe racing champion is joined by; Abby Erceg (football), Alana Barber (athletics), Caitlin Ryan (canoe racing), Eliza McCartney (athletics), Evie Corrigan (powerlifting), Jo Edwards MNZM (bowls), Joelle King (squash), Jonelle Price (equestrian), Julia Ratcliffe (athletics), Kendra Cocksedge (rugby union), Lydia Ko (golf), Marquita Gelderman (orienteering), Michaela Blyde (rugby union), Olivia Eaton (surf lifesaving), Rushlee Buchanan (cycling), Ruth Croft (athletics), Sarah Goss (rugby union), Stacey Michelsen (hockey), Suzie Bates (cricket), Valerie Adams (athletics) and Zoe Sadowski-Synnott (snowboarding).

World champion shot putter Tom Walsh, the 2017 winner, heads the 18 nominations from 12 sports for the **ISPS Handa Sportsman of the Year Award.** The hotly contested category also includes; Brodie Retallick (rugby union), Codie Taylor (rugby union), David Andrew Liti (Olympic weightlifting), David Nyika (boxing), George Bennett (cycling), Michael Venus (tennis), Nico Porteous (freeskiing), Paddy Chapman (croquet), Patrick Bevin (cycling), Richie Mo’unga (rugby), Ross Taylor (cricket), Sam Gaze (cycling), Sam Webster (cycling), Scott Dixon (motorsport), Scott McLaughlin (motorsport), Steven Kent (surf life saving) and Tim Robertson (orienteering).

Five time winner, Sophie Pascoe has again been nominated for the newly named **ISPS Handa Para Athlete/Team of the Year**, with support from Paralympics NZ**.** The Para swimming champion is joined by nine others;Adam Hall (para alpine skiing), Aotearoa NZ Para Waka Ama V12 (para waka ama), Commonwealth Games Para-Triples – Barry Wynks, Bruce Wakefield, Mark Noble (para bowls), Corey Peters (para alpine skiing), Holly Robinson (para athletics), Michael Johnson (para shooting), Nicole Murray (para cycling), Rachel Maia (para climbing) and Scott Martlew (para canoe racing).

There are 14 nominations from 10 sports for the **ISPS Handa** **Team of the Year** award comprising; All Black Sevens (rugby union), Black Ferns Sevens (rugby union), Women’s Doubles - Joelle King and Amanda Landers-Murphy (squash), Men’s Double Scull - John Storey and Chris Harris (rowing), Men’s Team Sprint – Eddie Dawkins, Ethan Mitchell and Sam Webster (cycling), NZ Indoor Cricket 17 years and under boys (indoor cricket), NZ Junior Black Fins (surf life saving), NZ Underwater Hockey Men (underwater hockey), NZ Underwater Hockey Women (underwater hockey), NZ Football Under 17 Women (football), NZ Women’s Kayaking Team (canoe racing), Vantage Black Sticks Women (hockey), Women’s Double Scull - Brooke Donoghue and Olivia Loe (rowing) and Women’s Pair - Grace Prendergast and Kerri Gowler (rowing).

Nominees for the Para Athlete/Team, Sportsman, Sportswoman and Team categories will all be eligible for the supreme **Halberg Award** – the country’s highest accolade for sporting excellence.

Carrington’s coach Gordon Walker will be considered for a third straight honour in the **Buddle Findlay Coach of the Year**, nominated among 14 coaches from nine sports. The nominations comprise Allan Bunting (rugby), Chris Waller (horse racing), Clark Laidlaw (rugby union), Dale Stevenson (athletics), Eugene Bareman (mixed martial arts), Jason Pocock (surf life saving), Jeremy McColl (athletics), Joe Schmidt (rugby union), Kiwi Campbell (waka ama), Leon Birnie (football), Marcelo Lopes (mixed martial arts), Raylene Bates MNZM (para athletics) and Roly Crichton (para swimming).

The developing international reputation of our stars of tomorrow is recognised in the **Sky Sport Emerging Talent** category, designed to assist a young athlete in their quest to reach the pinnacle in their sport, and hopefully in the future they will be candidates for the supreme Halberg Award – as previously shown by Lydia Ko.

There are 15 nominations this year, all from different sports, including: Amelia Kerr (cricket), Anna Leat (football), Dylan McCullough (triathlon), Gaibreill Wainohu (waka ama), Hamish McLean (para swimming), Jocelyn Hong (ice figure skating), Josh Armit (yachting), Kanah Andrews-Nahu (Olympic weightlifting), Kyle Glogoski (baseball), Lewis Clareburt (swimming), Maddison-Lee Wesche (athletics), Maxwell Darling (basketball), Rebecca Jones (archery), Risaleaana Pouri-Lane (rugby union) and Zac Reid (surf life saving).

The Halberg Awards judges will now review the nominations to shortlist into finalists who will be announced in January 2019.

The **56th ISPS Handa Halberg Awards** will be held on **Thursday 21 February 2019** at Spark Arena in Auckland and televised live on SKY SPORT from 8.00pm. Other awards presented during the ceremony include; New Zealand’s Favourite Sporting Moment (public vote category), Sport New Zealand Leadership, Lifetime Achievement and inductees into the Sports Hall of Fame.

“It is impressive that we have received the highest number of nominations to be considered by the judges, once again a testament to the hard work and achievement of our elite sporting teams, athletes and coaches,” said Shelley McMeeken, Chief Executive of the Halberg Foundation.

“While we look forward in honouring the performances, it is also important to always consider the vision of our founder Sir Murray Halberg and the reason behind this wonderful celebration of New Zealand sporting excellence.”

The core work of Halberg Foundation includes a team of Advisers around the country who connect physically disabled young people to sport and recreation opportunities. The Halberg Advisers also deliver an inclusion training course on adapting physical activity and assist clubs, schools and organisations to provide inclusive events and programmes. The Foundation also hosts the [Halberg Games](http://www.halberggames.co.nz/) – an annual national three-day sports competition for physically disabled young people.

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**For more information please contact:**

Bonnie Smail, Halberg Foundation, 09 579 9931, bonnie@halberg.co.nz

Go to [www.halbergawards.co.nz](http://www.halbergawards.co.nz). Search ‘Halberg Awards’ on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HalbergAwards/?fref=ts) or [@Halberg\_DSF](https://twitter.com/Halberg_DSF) on Twitter or [HalbergFoundation](https://www.instagram.com/halbergfoundation/) on Instagram. Use the keyword **#HalbergAwards.**

**About the Halberg Awards**

Named after Olympic champion Sir Murray Halberg (ONZ), the Halberg Awards is the country's pre-eminent event to honour and celebrate New Zealand sporting excellence. It also provides the Halberg Foundation with a flagship fundraising opportunity for Sir Murray's charity, which aims to enhance the lives of physically disabled New Zealanders by enabling them to participate in sport and recreation.  For more information go to [www.halbergawards.co.nz](http://www.halbergawards.co.nz).