

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **NOVA SCOTIA SPORT HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES INDUCTEE CLASS OF 2023**

The Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame is pleased to announce its 2023 inductee class. Four athletes, one team and two builders will be celebrated for their outstanding contributions to Nova Scotia sport.

Stanley Cup winner, 3-time NAIG Gold Medalist, women's soccer trailblazer, and Vanier Cup champion are all accolades that can be used to describe this year's athlete inductees, and the 2023 class will also include two incredible builders as well as one team that achieved a milestone Canadian championship win.

The athletes who will be enshrined are Stanley Cup and Calder Cup winner Joe DiPenta, 3-time NAIG Gold Medalist and 2006 Open World Taekwondo champion Sara-Lynne Knockwood, former Canadian Women's National Soccer Team member Suzanne Gerrior, and 3-time AUS MVP and 1973 Vanier Cup Champion Bill Robinson. The Hall will also welcome the 1993 Acadia Axemen CIAU Championship-winning men's hockey team. In the builder category, legendary women's soccer coach John Kehoe and longtime sport journalist/promoter/volunteer Joel Jacobson will be inducted.

Induction Night 2023 will take place on Saturday, November 25 at 7pm, at the Lighthouse Arts Centre in Halifax.

For the 23rd consecutive year, the ceremony will be hosted by Hall of Fame CEO and CBC broadcaster Bruce Rainnie, and, thanks to a continuing partnership with Eastlink Community TV, this will be the fourth year that the ceremony will be broadcast live.

Tickets are available for purchase online through Eventbrite and [nsshf.com](http://nsshf.com)— \$50 for adults, \$20 for students, and children 12 and under are free.

Here is a closer look at the Nova Scotia sport heroes who comprise the class of 2023:

#### **Athletes**

**Joe DiPenta, Hockey, Cole Harbour:** A Stanley Cup winner (2007) and Calder Cup winner (2002), DiPenta played his minor hockey in Cole Harbour and represented Nova Scotia at the 1995 Canada Winter Games. He also represented Team Atlantic at the World Under-17 Championship in 1995. He was drafted by the Florida Panthers 61st

overall in the 1998 NHL draft, and played a season of major junior hockey with the Halifax Mooseheads in 1999, where he was named a QMJHL All-Star. DiPenta played more than 600 games of professional hockey, 174 of those coming in the NHL.

**Suzanne Gerrior, Soccer, Halifax:** A soccer prodigy, Gerrior played for every Nova Scotia provincial team and the Nova Scotia Canada Games team (1989) all before the age of 16. This led to her playing on the Canadian National Senior Women's team in 1990 at 17 years old. At the time, she was the youngest player, and the first player from Atlantic Canada, ever to be named to the program. She represented Canada 10 times in international competition, including at the 1995 FIFA Women's World Cup in Sweden.

**Sara-Lynne Knockwood, Taekwondo, Sipekne'katik First Nation:** Knockwood is a 3-time gold medalist at the North American Indigenous Games, having won two golds in 2002 (Winnipeg) and one in 2006 (Denver). Also in 2002, she won Pan American Gold and the Open World Championship in Miami in the Under-16 lightweight division. In 2016, Knockwood became the first Indigenous woman to be inducted to the Mi'kmaq Sports Hall of Fame. She continues her work within Indigenous sport by being the Director of Sport and Venue for NAIG 2023.

**Bill Robinson, Football, Toronto:** In 1973, as quarterback of the Saint Mary's Huskies, Robinson led his team to the 1973 Vanier Cup, the first in the school's history. He played for SMU for four seasons (1970-1973), and was named league MVP in '71, '72, and '73. In every year he played for SMU, he was named a league all-star and led the conference in every major passing category. After winning his second Vanier Cup with Western in 1974, Robinson was a third-round draft pick of the Ottawa Rough Riders and was a member of the 1976 Grey Cup champion team.

**Acadia Axemen Hockey Team 1992-93:** One of the most dominant university hockey teams to ever play in this country, the Axemen became the first Nova Scotia school to ever win the CIAU University Cup National Hockey Championship, steamrolling the University of Toronto 12-1 on March 21, 1993. Axemen players received 10 awards of MVP or All-Star at either the conference or national level during the season, and four of these were awarded to Nova Scotia-born members of the team. Coach Tom Coolen was named CIAU Coach of the Year and captain George Dupont was named a CIAU All-Canadian. **Team Members:** Sean O'Reilly, Scott Gallant, Rob Ryan, Mark Pound, Colin Gregor, Ken Cullihall, Denis Sproxtton, Paul Sutcliffe, Malcolm Cameron, Norm Batherson, Morgan Mann, Jeff MacLeod, Sean Rowe, Kevin Knopp, George Dupont, Duane Dennis, Milan Dragicevic, Mark McFarlane, Craig Fraser, Arnie Caplan, Derek Kletzel, Brent Presswood, Darren Burns, Scott Farrell, Tom Coolen (Head Coach), Mark Hanneman (Assistant Coach), Mike Alcoe (Assistant Coach),

**Jan Hooper (Therapist), Mike Smith (Manager), and Dave Beech, Rocky Randall, Pete Sheehan (Equipment Managers).**

### **Builders**

**Joel Jacobson, Media, Halifax:** Joel Jacobson spent a lifetime building sport in Nova Scotia as a volunteer, promoter, writer, producer and emcee. He produced the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony for more than 40 years. He was the chief media liaison for the CIAU Final 8 Basketball Championship for decades. He was a primary leader for the Canadian Progress Club in developing its annual celebrity dinners. And for many years he was the host of the annual Bill Stanish and Friends luncheon for Special Olympics NS. He received recognition several times as Volunteer of the Year from numerous organizations including the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame (1990 and 2004), NS Special Olympics (1991), and the CIAU Basketball Championship in 2001. Joel passed away in the summer of 2022 and will be represented on Induction night by his wife, Cathy, and children, Debra and Jason.

**John Kehoe, Soccer, Dartmouth:** Kehoe was the driving force in the development of high-performance girl's and women's soccer in Nova Scotia from 1985 to 2015. Highlights of his coaching career include 11 provincial championships, 11 Atlantic championships, 13 appearances at national championships, a silver medal at the 1993 Canada Games, and a silver medal at the Canadian U16 Girls Soccer Championships (the first-ever medal for an Atlantic Girls squad at any age level). He played an integral role in the development of NS soccer legends Suzanne Muir, Suzanne Gerrior, Mary Beth Bowie and Cindy Tye.

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