

Canadian Wins IRB Spirit Award

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The International Rugby Board has presented Canadian player Lindsay Hilton with the prestigious 2012 Spirit of Rugby Award for her remarkable achievement in playing the sport despite being born without any limbs.

Les Gilson, Atlantic High Performance Coach, Rugby Canada, made the presentation at the Rugby Nova Scotia Awards Banquet in St Mary's Boat Club in Hilton's hometown of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Spirit of Rugby Award recognises the incredible feats that can be achieved through Rugby both on and off the field, and those who through selfless action influence the lives of others, make significant contribution to their communities and demonstrate the force for good that sport can be in all areas of the world.

Despite being born without full arms or legs, Hilton took up rugby in high school and she carried on playing through university and now at her local club in Halifax.

Hilton said: "I play rugby because I love the sport. It's very social. It's more of a community than anything. We're all very close at our club; it is like having a second family. I like the fact it is a physical sport and having two practices a week and a game at the end of it helps keeps me in shape."

A scrum-half with Halifax Tars, Hilton has been an inspiration to those around her – not just on the field but off it as well through her current executive position as vice-president of the club.

Hilton's commitment to promoting women's Rugby as an inclusive sport for all has helped the Tars regularly field three teams, two adult and one junior, the only club to do so in the Nova Scotia area.

The 27-year-old is also manager of the senior women's provincial programme on a voluntary

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basis, undertaking a range of tasks from player recruitment, communications, organising fundraising events to day-to-day administration.

Her day job as a Community Sport Development Officer for the non-profit organisation, Sport Nova Scotia, enables her to spread the Rugby gospel still further.

“I am very passionate about Rugby and the development of the sport, especially on the female side of things. I’m very aware of making it a sport that anybody can play,” Hilton added.

“I’ve always tried to achieve what I want to achieve even though some people might think those goals are unrealistic. As I was born without any arms and legs I’ve never known any different and my parents and my family never treated me any differently.”

“Hopefully just by being on the team I can encourage other people to come and play.”

Previous Winners:

- 2011 - Wooden Spoon
- 2010 - Virreyes Rugby Club
- 2009 - L'Aquila Rugby Club
- 2008 - Roelien Muller and Patrick Cotter
- 2007 - Nicolas Pueta
- 2006 - Polly Miller
- 2005 - Jean Pierre Rives
- 2004 - Jarrod Cunningham
- 2003 - Michael & Linda Collinson
- 2002 - Old Christians Rugby Club
- 2001 - Tim Grandadge (India)