



MEDIA RELEASE

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It's Time to Thank Our Coaches

Nominations now being called for the 2008 Wattie's Volunteer Coach of the Year

With over 70,000 volunteer coaches around New Zealand the Wattie's Volunteer Coach of the Year Awards allow people to ensure their coach receives the recognition he or she deserves.

SPARC's Chief Executive Peter Miskimmin is coaching both the men's Junior Black Sticks and a secondary schools hockey team. Miskimmin says the coaching support particularly at the grassroots level is invaluable.

"It is our volunteer coaches who power New Zealand sports ensuring all codes have the support they need. Hundreds of thousands of hours are donated annually and the Wattie's Volunteer Coach of the Year awards enables everyone to show their coach some thanks for this contribution. SPARC really appreciate the support that Watties give to New Zealand's coaches," says Miskimmin.

"Every single one of our Olympic athletes will have a story to tell about the contribution their earlier coaches have had on where they are today. It is also these volunteer coaches who ensure our young people have the chance to enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle and learn about healthy eating," he said.

Held in conjunction with SPARC, the awards programme not only recognises volunteer coaches who have made an outstanding contribution to sport, but also ensures every individual coach is thanked. The awards programme will:

- Thank each volunteer coach who is nominated with a letter of appreciation.
- Acknowledge the outstanding efforts of individual regional coaches.
- Identify national finalists who will be eligible to win the national award in their category and go on for selection for the Supreme Wattie's Volunteer Coach of the Year title.

Nominations can be made by visiting www.watties.co.nz or picking up an entry form from your local regional sports trust, Stirling Sports store or sports club.

The Wattie's Volunteer Coach of the Year awards are open to all non-paid, volunteer coaches including club coaches, school coaches and anyone coaching at a non-representative level.

Coaches can be nominated in either the student, general or lifetime category. The student category is open to school aged or beginning coaches while the general and lifetime categories are for all other eligible community coaches.

The 17 SPARC regional sports trusts will be encouraging local sports clubs, schools and communities to nominate their coaches and regional finalists will be selected. The efforts and achievements of these highly regarded coaches in each region are then considered by a panel of well-known judges who select the national finalists.

National finalists join together at an awards event in Auckland where the category winners receive up to \$3,000 funding for coaching development or equipment. Every person who makes a nomination is also in the draw to win one of 30 \$100 Stirling Sports vouchers!

Kids! – visit <http://www.bebo.com/Volunteer-Coach> to check out the Volunteer Coach of the Year Bebo page where you can add photos and comments about your own Volunteer Coach online! Ask your teacher for more information and stay tuned to Pukana, Studio 2 and What Now? for more coverage of this year's awards.

Key facts:

- The Wattie's Volunteer Coach of the Year nominations are open from June 3 to July 10.
- Instant nominations can be made online at www.watties.co.nz. There are three categories in which to nominate:
 - Student (student coach who attends intermediate or high school)
 - General (coaching for a while but not yet a lifetime)
 - Lifetime (coaching for a very long time, 25 years+)
- Entry forms are available to download on both Wattie's and SPARC websites or from regional sports trusts.

ENDS – 2007 Winners' information and fact sheet attached

Released by Network PR (Simon Clark) on behalf of Heinz Wattie's Ltd and SPARC

For further information, visuals or to get in touch with past winners or regional finalists, please call Simon Clark at Network PR on 09 379 3154 or 021 636 504 or email: simon.clark@networkpr.com