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WALL, GOLLISH NAMED BLUES ATHLETES OF THE YEAR



Photo Gallery

Varsity Blues swimming standout Eli Wall and women's track and field MVP Sasha Gollish were named the 2015 T-Holders' male and female athletes of the year during the University of Toronto's annual athletic banquet awards ceremony on Saturday, March 28 at Chestnut Residence.

Water polo players Michael Chapman and Breanna Gadzosa took the inaugural Frank Pindar male and female athlete of the year awards, which will be given annually to those competing in a sport whose official season concludes with either an OUA or other university recognized championship event.

The Blues also honoured graduating seniors Mario Kovacevic (men's soccer) as the George M. Biggs Trophy award winner, as well as Vanessa Treasure (women's swimming) as the recipient of the Dr. Clara Benson Honour award, for their outstanding athletic achievement, scholarship and community service during their time at the University of Toronto.

In addition, swimmers Oliver Straszynski and Kylie Masse took home the fifth annual Varsity Blues male and female rookie of the year awards.

A PhD candidate in civil engineering, **Gollish** was named the CIS track female athlete of the year and the most outstanding female performer of the meet in leading the Varsity Blues to their first CIS title since 1998.

The CIS first team all-Canadian claimed three gold medals at the national meet, taking the top spot in the 1000m and 3000m, while also being a member of CIS and Canadian record breaking 4x800 relay team. A Toronto native, Gollish earned the silver medals in the 600m and 1500m, breaking the U of T record in the former, which was held by Olympian Sarah Wells.

She won the Dr. Wendy Jerome trophy as the OUA's overall most valuable performer after winning the 600m, in OUA record time, and the 1500m and 3000m. She and the 4x800 relay team also broke the OUA and Canadian record at the conference championships.

A second-year standout, **Wall** was named the CIS male swimmer of the year after a breakout performance at the national championships in Victoria. A CIS first team all-Canadian, Wall won two individual titles, claiming both the 100- and 200-metre breaststroke events, and helped U of T's men to a third-place finish in the 400 medley relay. Wall was instrumental in Toronto's CIS silver-medal team finish.

The Ottawa native won the 100- and 200-metre breaststroke events, setting a new OUA record in the latter, and won the 200 medley relay gold medal as Toronto claimed its 12th consecutive OUA title this season.

Chapman (North Vancouver, B.C.) earned OUA all-star honours in helping the U of T men's water polo team to an undefeated season and the OUA banner this season. He scored two goals, including the game-winner, in a 7-6 win over the Carleton Ravens in the OUA gold-medal match. The Blues also won the Toronto Invitational earlier in the year.

A fourth-year veteran, **Gadzosa** of Okotoks, Alta., earned her third career OUA most valuable goalie honours in 2014. She allowed only four goals against in two games, leading the Blues to their second straight OUA title. Gadzosa, who was also named a 2014 OUA all-star, was instrumental in the Blues success as the team went undefeated against Ontario competition for the second straight year.

Kovacevic has enjoyed a great career both on and off the field at U of T. The four-time CIS academic all-Canadian from Woodbridge, Ont., has received numerous scholarships, including the Rudolph Seidl and Frankie Kwok memorial awards, the Eric Miglin and Norman E Byrne scholarships as well as the Milligan graduate fellowship and the Frederic C. Hudd and Massey College bursaries.

On the field, Kovacevic is a three-time OUA all-star and represented Canada at the 2014 Summer Universiade. He helped the Blues win the 2010 OUA title and in 2014, was named the OUA and CIS men's soccer student-athlete community service award winner. He has captained the team for three years, serving as the Varsity Board co-chair in 2013-14.

Hailing from Mississauga, Ont., **Treasure** is a five-time OUA all-star and CIS all-Canadian, winner of two OUA Dr. Jenő Tihanyi awards for individual medley excellence, and was twice named the OUA female swimmer of the year. She was named U of T's female athlete of the year in 2012 and represented Canada at the 2011 FISU Games. She has co-captained the Blues for three seasons and has served as the co-chair of Varsity Board for two years.

As co-chair, Treasure is a member of the community service, Athlete Ally and Blues Supporting Blues sub-committees, and is also the Varsity Board rep on U of T's Council for Athletics and Recreation. She recently spoke at a Black History Month assembly at Dewson Street Public School and has volunteered for the Varsity Blues first-year athlete orientation for three consecutive years.

Masse was named the OUA female swimmer of the year, rookie of the year and received the Dr. Jenő Tihanyi award in leading the Blues to their second straight OUA championship banner this season. She won four individual gold medals, all in OUA-record breaking time, sweeping the backstroke events while also breaking three-time Olympian Joanne Malar's 20-year-old 200 IM record. She helped U of T break the 400 medley relay record and also won gold in the 200 freestyle relay.

Nationally, Masse garnered all-Canadian honours, winning four silver and two bronze medals. The LaSalle, Ont., native placed second in the 50 and 100 backstroke, as well as the 200 IM, while helping the 400 medley relay team to silver. Masse also claimed CIS bronze in the 100 butterfly, 400 freestyle relay and 800 freestyle relay.

Straszynski was named the OUA male rookie of the year after earning five medals at his first provincial championship. The OUA all-star from Toronto won the gold medal in the 200 freestyle, and was a member of U of T's winning 400- and 800-metre freestyle relay teams. He also claimed the silver medal in the 400 freestyle and bronze in the 100 freestyle events.

At the national championship, Straszynski earned all-Canadian status as a member of the Blues 400 freestyle relay team that claimed gold. He helped U of T to a silver medal in the 800 freestyle relay, while also placing third in the 200 freestyle event.

2014-15 Varsity Blues Major Award Winners

T-Holders' Athletes of the Year

Presented annually to the male and female student T-Holder - the U of T Athlete of the Year - for exhibiting the highest degree of excellence in athletics.

Male – Eli Wall (Swimming)

Female – Sasha Gollish (Track & Field)

Frank Pindar Athletes of the Year

Presented annually to a male and female varsity athlete competing in a sport whose official season concludes with either an OUA or other university recognized championship event, who exhibits the highest degree of excellence while representing the University of Toronto at competitions during the team's intercollegiate schedule for the current academic year.

Male – Michael Chapman (Water Polo)

Female – Breanna Gadzosa (Water Polo)

George M. Biggs Trophy

Awarded to the graduating male student-athlete who has contributed most to university athletics from the standpoint of leadership, sportsmanship and performance.

Mario Kovacevic (Soccer)

Benson Honour Award

Awarded to the female student-athlete in her graduating year for outstanding ability in athletics and scholarship.

Vanessa Treasure (Swimming)

Rookie of the Year Award

Awarded to a male and female Varsity athlete in their first year of post-secondary eligibility that exhibit outstanding athletic performance.

Male – Oliver Straszynski (Swimming)

Female – Kylie Masse (Swimming)

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