

Sport BC Honours Water Polo Player with Harry Jerome Comeback Award

Christopher Vanjoff survived mountain biking accident to become water polo star, will receive the Comeback Award at the 43rd Annual Athlete of the Year Awards on March 24, 2009

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Richmond, BC - "Beating the odds" is what Sport BC's Harry Jerome Comeback award is all about. Water polo star Christopher Vanjoff is a courageous athlete who came back from an unfortunate mountain biking accident to not only play at an elite level, but to excel and in the process inspire others.

At Sport BC's 43rd Annual Athlete of the Year Award presented by TELUS on Tuesday, March 24 at the River Rock Show Theatre in Richmond, BC, Vanjoff will be celebrated for his achievements, along with recipients in 16 additional award categories.

"Christopher gives us an impressive start to our Athlete of the Year Awards event this year," said Sport BC's President and CEO, Paul Varian. "In Christopher we see how a young man took a devastating life event and transformed it into an opportunity to grow, get even better in his sport and inspire others to live life to the fullest every day. We are very lucky to have such an outstanding athlete in our community and we look forward to celebrating Christopher and the other award recipients who will be announced at the awards ceremony in March."

In September 2007, just weeks after returning home from the Youth Pan Am Games in Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic, Fraser Valley Water Polo's star player, Christopher Vanjoff had his left elbow sheared off in a mountain biking accident. At the time of the accident, Christopher was ranked in the top 30 U18 water polo players in Canada and preparing to compete at major international events in the 2007-2008 season.

Three weeks after the reconstructive surgery, Christopher was back training with his teammates. His challenge was not only to regain and retain the tremendous fitness that elite level water polo players require – the 'lefty' had to learn how to pass and shoot right-handed!

Vanjoff's journey exemplifies the spirit of the Harry Jerome Comeback Award. With the ongoing support of family, teammates, friends, coaches and his doctors, Christopher persevered and retained his ranking as one of the top players in the BCWPA. Today, he is ranked #19 in the men's water polo U18 national division after attending all 2008 national meets, including a gold medal win at the U18 Club Nationals.

Join us on March 24 as Sport BC celebrates Christopher's remarkable achievement and many others at the Annual Athlete of the Year Awards presented by TELUS. Tickets for this can't miss event are available at www.ticketmaster.ca. More information on the event can be found on www.sport.bc.ca.