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Namoi Valley Independent
Sport



Thursday, November 12, 2009

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TRIATHLETES TRIUMPH

Awards: Jack Hickey, Lauren Robertson



TRIATHLETES Jack Hickey and Lauren Robertson are Gunnedah's supreme sports stars of 2009.

They carried off the Male and Female Sports Person of the Year awards at the fourth annual Gunnedah Shire sports awards presentation dinner at Gunnedah Services and Bowling Club.

Their outstanding performances at the World Championships, in triathlon and aquathlon, on the Gold Coast in September secured their recognition as Gunnedah's best for the year.

More than 6000 athletes from 42 countries took part in the age-group world titles.

Jack Hickey recorded the second fastest time of all the competitors when he took the silver medal in the 16-19 years age group, completing the 750-metre swim, 20km bike ride and 5km run in 57 minutes 25 seconds.

During the year, Hickey won the NSW Pro Tour triathlon series of six events across NSW, winning two of these races.

He also won the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges' triathlon at Penrith.

He was second in the NSW All Schools triathlon and then came second in the Australian All Schools championship in Devonport, Tasmania.

Other contenders for the major award were young rugby league star Reece Jaeger and archer Matt Wittman.

Jaeger was captain of the Group 4 premierships-winning Gunnedah under 18 side and played in the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges side which was beaten in the final of the Australian Schools championship.

He also won selection in the Australian Institute of Sport rugby league team which is about to leave on a tour of France and England (see separate story).

Matthew Wittman won gold medals at the Australian ABA and 3D championships in Mildura and the IFAA titles at Hervey Bay.

He has also been selected in the Australian team for the world IFAA championships in Dahn, Germany, next year.

Female winner Lauren Robertson came home from the world titles on the Gold Coast with a gold and a silver medal.

She won her gold medal in the

world aquathlon (swim, run, swim) titles in the 30-34 age group and backed up two days later to finish second in the world triathlon titles.

Lauren was one of three Gunnedah gold medallists - Cath Murray won the 45-49 years age group and Donna Hickey the 50-54 years (see separate story).

Last year's winner of the award, Alexa Wilkinson, was also a finalist for her achievements in netball.

She was co-captain of the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges team which won the Australian CCC carnival for the third year in a row.

She was also selected in the Australian merit team for the third year in a row.

Official guest at last night's function was former international Test cricket umpire Darrell Hair, who gave insights into his 15-year career as an elite umpire.

Hair stood in 79 Tests, 139 limited-overs internationals and 146 first-class matches all over the world.

There was a late surge in numbers for the evening, with the final count reaching 170.

FURTHER COVERAGE on inside pages and in next Tuesday's Independent.



OFFICIAL guest Darrell Hair speaking at last night's Gunnedah Shire sports awards presentation. Hair umpired Test and one-day international matches around the world over a 15-year span.

OFFICIAL guest, former international Test cricket umpire Darrell Hair, centre, with Gunnedah sport's major winners, Jack Hickey and Lauren Robertson, at last night's sports awards presentation dinner.

SPORT HONOUR ROLL

Male Sports Person of the Year: Jack Hickey (triathlon). Highly commended: Reece Jaeger (rugby league).

Female Sports Person of the Year: Lauren Robertson (triathlon, aquathlon).

Junior male sports person of the year: Sam Pryor (bowls).

Junior female sports person of the year: Megan Isbester (athletics).

Sub-junior male sports person of the year: Charlie Crawford (swimming).

Sub-junior female sports person of the year: Gabrielle O'Gorman (tennis).

Sporting team of the year: Gunnedah rugby league under 18s.

Coach of the year: Damien Connor (rugby league).

Official of the year: Mike Silver (cricket).

Volunteer of the year: Maryanne Perkins (Little Athletics).

Junior sport role model: Sam Schubert.

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