

Canada's golden Olympians receive athlete-of-the-year honours for 1984

Three Canadian groups — the Canadian Press, representatives from *The Toronto Star* and the Sports Federation of Canada — have each presented their annual athlete-of-the-year awards for 1984 and all the recipients were winners of gold medals at either the winter or summer 1984 Olympic games.

The Canadian Press, the newsgathering co-operative of sports writers and broadcasters, selected swimmer Alex Baumann as its male athlete of the year and diver Sylvie Bernier as its female athlete of the year. Both won with narrow margins over speed skater Gaetan Boucher and swimmer Anne Ottenbrite. Hockey star Wayne Gretzky, who has won the award for the last four years, placed third.

Gaetan Boucher was selected winner of *The Toronto Star* Lou Marsh Award and athlete of the year by the Sports Federation of Canada. Shooter Linda Thom was named female athlete of the year by the federation while Alex Baumann was named junior male athlete; Sylvie Bernier, junior female athlete; and the rowing eight team with Mark and Mike Evans, Pat Turner, Grant Main, Dean Crawford, Paul Steele, Blair Horn, Kevin Neufeld, coxswain Brian McMahon and coach Neil Campbell, were selected as the team of the year.

Canadian Press winners

Alex Baumann, 20, of Sudbury, Ontario, who established two world and Olympic records at the Summer Games in Los Angeles in 1984, received the Lionel Conacher Trophy, named after Canada's athlete of the century as the Canadian Press athlete of the year. He is the first amateur to win the Canadian Press award since the 1978 selection of Graham Smith of Edmonton, Alberta, who was the only other swimmer to top the poll in its 52-year history. He's also only the third amateur chosen in the past 20 years.

Selected as Canada's flag-bearer at the Summer Games, Alex Baumann established a record in the 200-metre individual medley, at 2:01.42 and in the 400-metre individual medley, his record time was 4:17.41. He was the first Canadian to win an Olympic swimming gold medal since 1912.

Some of the more recent honours Alex Baumann has received include: recipient of government of Canada World Champion

Award in 1982 and 1983; recipient of government of Canada Sports Excellence Award in 1984; and the province of Ontario's male athlete of the year for 1984. He was recently appointed an officer in the Order of Canada, the country's highest distinction.

Sylvie Bernier, 21 of Ste Foy, Quebec received the Bobbie Rosenfeld Trophy as the Canadian Press female athlete of the year. At the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles she became Canada's first female diving gold medallist when she won the women's 3-metre springboard event. Irene MacDonald of Hamilton, Ontario, who won a bronze medal in 1956, is the only other female to win an Olympic medal for diving. Sylvie Bernier has placed within the top three in most



Sylvie Bernier

of the 3-metre springboard diving competitions she has entered over the past few years. In 1983 she was first in a Canada-US-Mexico meet and in 1984 she was first at the Fort Lauderdale International.

She has received many awards for her success in diving including 1984 top athlete honours from the Aquatic Federation of Canada, the City of Quebec and the Canadian Amateur Diving Association. She has been appointed 1985 ambassador for International Year of Youth by Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport Otto Jelinek.

Runner-up for the Canadian Press award, Anne Ottenbrite of Whitby, Ontario captured the Olympic gold medal at the 1984 Summer Games in the 200-metre breaststroke and became the first Canadian woman swimmer to take an Olympic gold. She also won a silver in the 100-metre breaststroke and a bronze as a member



Anne Ottenbrite

of the Canadian women's 4x100-metre relay team at Los Angeles. She is the first Canadian to win a set of gold, silver and bronze medals in a single Olympics.

Among the many awards Anne Ottenbrite has won for her excellence in swimming are the Canadian government Sports Excellence Award in 1983 and 1984 and an Ontario Award of Excellence in 1984.

She has been appointed a member of the Order of Canada and will receive her insignia on April 10, 1985.

Lou Marsh award

Gaetan Boucher, double gold medallist at the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics, narrowly edged



Gaetan Boucher

out Alex Baumann to win the Lou Marsh athlete-of-the-year trophy. The Marsh award, first presented in 1936, is named for the former sports editor of *The Toronto Star* and is open to all Canadian athletes — male or female, amateur or professional. Wayne Gretzky who finished third in the balloting, won the award the previous two years.

Canada's greatest Olympic year was started by Gaetan Boucher, 27, of St. Hubert, Quebec when he won gold medals in the 1 000- and 1 500-metre speedskating races and a bronze medal in the 500-metre race at the Winter Games in Sarajevo. He was the team's flag bearer and became the first Canadian male to win a gold Winter Olympics medal since 1952.

Combined with the silver medal he won at the 1980 Games, Gaetan Boucher's four medals make him the most decorated Canadian Olympian of all time. He was inducted into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame upon his return from Europe, where he capped his Olympic triumphs with a world sprint championship. He was made a member of the Order of Canada in 1983.

As the Sports Federation of Canada's outstanding athlete for 1984, Gaetan Boucher received the Norton Crowe Award.

Ottawa's Linda Thom, who won Canada's first gold medal of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles on the opening day, received the Velma Springstead Award as the top female athlete of the year from the Sports Federation of Canada. In a dramatic



Linda Thom

one-point shoot-off, she won the gold medal in the women's sports-pistol event, a new event in Olympic competition. Linda Thom's gold was the first won by Canada at the Summer Games since 1968 and the first by a Canadian woman since 1928.