



### THREE NEW LORD'S TAVERNERS SPORTS ENDEAVOUR AWARD WINNERS 30-Nov-2009

The Lord's Taverners presented its Sports Endeavour Awards to three very special young athletes on Saturday 28 November at the annual WheelPower Sports Awards Dinner at Stoke Mandeville Stadium. The young recipients represented the three paralympic sports The Lord's Taverners Junior Development Programmes have initiated: wheelchair basketball, wheelchair tennis and boccia.

Rachel Edwards from Leicestershire was awarded the accolade for tennis; Karl Hassell from Newark received the basketball trophy; while Ramon Hansford from Dorset was presented with his award for Boccia. The three youngsters and their families attended the event for all those involved in wheelchair sports, hosted in the venue where the last Paralympic Games to be held on British soil took place in 1984.

The Lord's Taverners is one of the UK's leading youth sports and disability charities and will donate nearly £2.5 million this year to help give young people, particularly those with special needs, a sporting chance. The Sports Endeavour Awards recognise a young person's spirited determination and whose positive attitude is reflected in their sporting endeavours.

Actor Robert Powell, a Trustee and long-serving member of The Lord's Taverners, read citations for the winners after telling guests how impressed he had been with the quality and competitiveness of the youngsters he had seen take part in the recent Lord's Taverners National Junior Basketball Championships at Stoke Mandeville. Powell is a great supporter of disability sport which the Charity delivers through its Disability Sports Appeal, launched in 2007 with the aim of raising £1million to fund junior development in wheelchair sports.

Lady Taverner Jean Ratcliff, disability sports advisor for the appeal, said, "We are reaching out to so many young people through our programmes and selecting the winners is not easy but these three young people here tonight represent totally all that The Lord's Taverners is working to encourage. Congratulations to each of them. I am sure they each have the potential to become 'top of their game'."

13-year-old Karl Hassell, who is passionate about basketball, wrote, "My award is amazing and was a great surprise. I really enjoyed being at the dinner and having the opportunity to meet lots of lovely people, especially Robert Powell. I really hope that I can get better and better at basketball and know that I will always work hard at it and always love it."

16-year-old Rachel Edwards, who attained an ITF Junior Girl's Singles world ranking high of No 6 earlier in the year, said: "It was such a lovely evening, I really enjoyed meeting so many people and was so surprised when I won. People at the event were such inspirations and it was great to meet them."

Ramon Hansford's teacher Rob Belbin, Director of Specialism at Victoria Education Centre and Sports College, said: "Thank you for making Ramon's year so special with the Award. It has really focussed him on his Boccia and fingers crossed for some more good results from him!"

Elsewhere during the evening The Lord's Taverners disability sport ambassador Mickey Bushell received the Individual Male Achievement award in recognition of his recent achievements on the track. The Beijing Paralympic silver medalist, who received his first sports wheelchair from The Lord's Taverners, set a new World Record in the T53 100m on 18 June at the Ibach Track Meeting in Switzerland.

Bushell is one of six Lord's Taverners disability sports ambassadors, along with Joe Bestwick (Beijing bronze medalist with GB Men's wheelchair basketball team), Nicola Ewen (club cricketer for Huntz Howzatts), Louise Hunt and Jordanne Whiley (both GB women's wheelchair tennis players) and Eleanor Simmonds (double Beijing gold medalist and 2008 BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year). The ambassadors help represent and promote The Lord's Taverners work in disability sport, including presenting sports wheelchairs, accessible minibuses and other sporting equipment to schools and youth organizations.

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Front row: Sports Endeavour Award winners Ramon Hansford, Rachel Edwards and Karl Hassell  
Back row: Chrissie Colbeck, Ruth FitzSimons, Robert Powell and Jean Ratcliff



Karl Hassell shows off his Sports Endeavour Award with Jean Ratcliff