

# East end racks up hardware at Ottawa Sports Awards

By Dan Plouffe

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Kevin Frost and Dick Coleman already shared one thing in common – they spent much of their lives as sports officials. And following last week's banquet at Algonquin College, the Orléans residents now have another – they both are winners of major awards from the Ottawa Sports Awards.

Frost received a Special Recognition for Achievement in Sport, while Coleman earned a Lifetime Achievement Award for a technical official.

Frost was rewarded for his accomplishments at the November Paralympic Open Blind Cup in Russia, where the former hockey referee set four new world benchmarks for speedskaters with a visual impairment, setting personal-best times in all four distances as well.

For Frost, the significance of the award wasn't so much the personal satisfaction associated with it, but rather the hope that it might help encourage further development of Paralympic speedskating.

"It's recognizing that I'm moving my sport farther," says Frost, who has Usher's Syndrome – a degenerative condition that gradually reduces sight and hearing.

While Frost views his accomplishments in Russia as the biggest of his career, the 42-year-old's driving quest remains to see speedskating included as a Paralympic sport.

"It's the highest I can go with my dream now," notes Frost, who attended the first edition of the event that hopes to set the stage for speedskating's inclusion in the 2014 Sochi Paralympic Games as a demonstration sport.

"I have great people behind me, and that's the secret to a lot of things," Frost adds, saluting his coach Mike Rivet. "I can't thank the community of Orléans enough, and Ottawa."

For Coleman, meanwhile, the honour was his second in as many months. The umpire-in-chief for the Orléans Amateur Fastball Association and the Eastern Ontario region was named Softball Canada umpire-of-the-year this past November.

"To get an award nationally was something else," Coleman explains. "It was probably the highlight of my umpiring career, so this one is sort of like icing on the cake."

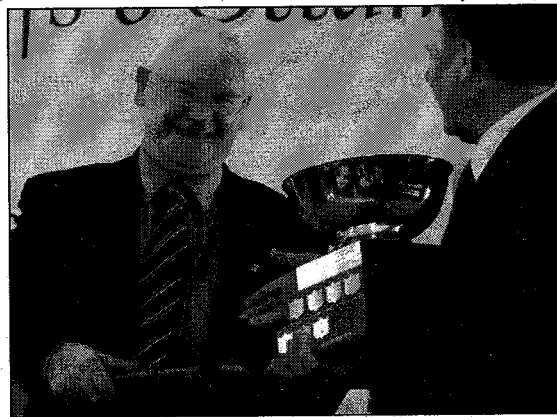
Coleman started his umpiring duties 22 years ago at the urging of his

son, who played softball in Orléans as a teenager.

"A lot of people say, 'Why the hell do you do that?'" laughs the 69-year-old who plans to continue helping develop young umpires once his days behind the plate eventually come to an end. "I just like being on the diamond. I obviously can't play any more, but over the years, I also found it was something I was reasonably good at."

Coleman wasn't the only one from Orléans to be recognized for softball accomplishments at the Ottawa Sports Awards – Jenny Allen, a national bronze-medallist with the Orléans Rebels, took home softball player-of-the-year honours.

Others from the east end chosen as the best in their sports included: Ivanie Blondin (short-track speedskating), Jérémie Lortie (volleyball), Chris Bisson (baseball), Courtmay Pilypaitis (basketball), Rachel Homan (curling), Marc Rancourt (hockey) and Ryan Fournier (lacrosse).



Dick Coleman, accepting a lifetime achievement award above, has been a softball umpire in Orléans for 22 years. Photo by Dan Plouffe