SPORTS BOOK AWARDS 2023

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SUNDAY TIMES

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11pm WEDNESDAY 24TH MAY 2023

England Rugby World Cup Winner Steve Thompson does the double at The 21st Sports Book Awards in association with The Sunday Times

Beth Mead wins The Sunday Times Autobiography of the Year Award

Gary Neville secures the Pinsent Masons Sports Writing Award for 2023

England's 2003 Rugby World Cup winning forward, Steve Thompson, picked up two awards at the 21st Sports Book Awards in association with The Sunday Times. Thompson collected his awards at a glittering awards ceremony at the Kia Oval, in the presence of Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, Beth Mead, Sir Geoffrey Boycott, Christine Ohuruogu and Barry Hearn.

Once England's most capped hooker who played for Northampton Saints and the British and Irish Lions, Steve Thompson has been diagnosed with early-onset dementia as the result of endless collisions, concussions, and injuries. Since his diagnosis, he has been campaigning to improve the game and safeguard those who play it. In an emotional evening, Thompson picked up the Francis Clark Financial Planning Rugby Book of the Year Award, in association with the Rugby Union Writers' Club, as well as The Sunday Times Overall Sports Book of the Year for his book, ***Unforgettable: Rugby, Dementia and the Fight of my Life***.

Beth Mead, who led England's winning UEFA Women's EURO 2022 team and won Sports Personality of the Year 2022, won the Sunday Times Autobiography of the Year in a people's vote for her book, ***Lioness***: ***My Journey to Glory***, which recounts her journey to the top of the game and features an exclusive account of England's triumphant EURO campaign.

On accepting her award at the Kia Oval, Beth Mead said:

"I'm delighted to receive the Autobiography of the Year Award at The Sports Book Awards. After an amazing tournament and winning the Euros, it was brilliant to tell my story. A huge thanks to Katie Whyatt, Nick Walters and to my wonderful team at Orion books for their help and support in bringing this book to life."

Gary Neville's book, ***The People's Game***, was judged to be the best Pinsent Masons Sports Writing book. His latest work features interviews with those at the epicentre of football's biggest issues, from ownership and funding to racism and the growth of women's football. The category was judged by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, 400 metre Olympic Gold medallist Christine Ohuruogu, former Bath, Harlequins and England rugby player, Simon Halliday, ITV's sports host Mark Pougatch, Olympic rowing Silver medallist Annie Vernon, and Dame Katherine Grainger.

Christine Ohuruogu, the 400 metre Olympic Gold medallist, reflecting on the judging process for the Pinsent Masons Sports Writing Award, has said,

"It's been another brilliant group of books to read this year with special mention going to Everest 1922 by Mick Conefrey. Many congratulations to all of our nominees, with their admirable focus on athletics, the issues of racism, football, golf and to Gary Neville, our worthy winner for 2023."

The New Women's Sports Writing award was created in honour of the late Vikki Orvice – a brilliant sports journalist who did so much to champion female sports writing. The award is designed to be a platform for affirmative action, encouraging more women to look at sports writing as a vocation. The new prize was judged by Dame Katherine Grainger, Anya Shrubsole, Susie Petruccelli, Maggie Murphy, and Deputy Editor at Sunday Times Sport, Nick Greenslade. Suzanne Wrack's book, ***A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Football***, was the award's inaugural winner and ***A Delicate Game*** by Hana Walker-Brown was highly commended.

England's World Cup winning cricketer Mark Wood won the second people's award for the Socios.com Sports Entertainment Book of the Year with his book, ***The Wood Life: A Not so Helpful How to Guide on Surviving Cricket, Life and Everything in Between***, beating healthy competition from football pundits Peter Crouch and Micah Richards.

The LoveReading International Sports Book of the Year was won by ***So Help Me Golf: Why We Love the Game,*** written by American author Rick Reilly, in a category that featured books by Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimović, Liverpool assistant manager Pep Lijnders, and Chelsea forward Christian Pulisic.

The Sports Book Awards are delighted to have once again teamed up with the National Literacy Trust as a partner to the Children's Sports Book Prize. The National Literacy Trust is a charity dedicated to improving the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills of children who need it most, giving them the best possible chance of success in their school and working life. Over the past 20 years, the charity has improved the literacy skills of more than a million children through the power of sport.

BBC Sport's Gary Lineker and Marcus Rashford featured in this category alongside 12-year-old Rico Hinson-King, the youngest ever nominee at The Sports Book Awards in its 21-year history. ***The Funny Life of Football*** by James Campbell and Rob Jones won the award, which was sponsored by the JP Marland Charitable Trust.

The Geoff Neal Football Book of the Year, in association with the FWA elected ***1999, Manchester United, the Treble and All That*** by Matt Dickinson as their winner, while the Cycling Book of the Year was awarded to the William Hill Book of the Year winner and previous Sports Book Award winner, Jeremy Wilson, for his book, ***Beryl: In Search of Britain's Greatest Athlete.***

The Heartaches' Cricket Book of the Year, sponsored by close friend of the late Bob Willis and long-term supporter of the Sports Book Awards, Sir Tim Rice, was awarded to ***An Island's Eleven: The Story of Sri Lankan Cricket*** by Nicholas Brookes.

The Sports Book Awards were also delighted to appoint Bat for a Chance as their charity of choice for the 21st Sports Book Awards, just before the Ashes consumes the sporting nation.

The Rathbones Illustrated Book of the Year brings together the most beautiful and original visualisations of sport on an annual basis, and the 2023 winner was Grant Young's ***Heart of Midlothian, 51 Shirts.***

David Willis, the Chairman and Founder of the Sports Book Awards, has said,

"We celebrate the 21st annual presentation of the Sports Book Awards, in association with the Sunday Times newspaper at a time when reading and book sales have enjoyed a post-pandemic boom.

Tonight's event enjoys great support in both the publishing and sporting communities, and it has rightly won plaudits for being not only a highly enjoyable evening's entertainment, but also making an important contribution to highlighting a host of tremendous sporting titles.

We are grateful to our many and varied sponsorship partners and our hardworking and talented teams of judges, and to the profile and publicity we receive from our recent association with the Sunday Times."

The Sports Book Awards in association with The Sunday Times are grateful to our sponsors and partners, including The Sunday Times, Pinsent Masons, Rathbones, The Football Writers' Association, Rugby Union Writers' Club, Sir Tim Rice's The Heartaches, Geoff Neal, Francis Clark Financial Planning, Socios.com, LoveReading, Waterstones, The JP Marland Charitable

Trust, Jacquie Beltrao, Sky Sports, Surrey County Cricket Club at The Kia Oval, National Literacy Trust, Agile Ideas, and our charity partner Bat for a Chance.

The Sports Book Awards in association with *The Sunday Times* 2023 winners are:

The Sunday Times Autobiography of the Year
Lioness: My Journey to Glory, Beth Mead (Seven Dials, Orion)

The Children's Sports Book Prize, sponsored by the JP Marland Charity Trust, in association with the National Literacy Trust
The Funny Life of Football, James Campbell (Author) and Rob Jones (Illustrator) (Bloomsbury)

The Heartaches' Cricket Book of the Year
An Island's Eleven: The Story of Sri Lankan Cricket, Nicholas Brookes (The History Press)

Cycling Book of the Year
Beryl: In Search of Britain's Greatest Athlete, Jeremy Wilson (Pursuit Books)

Socios.com Sports Entertainment Book of the Year
The Wood Life: A Not so Helpful How-To Guide on Surviving Cricket, Life and Everything in Between, Mark Wood (Allen & Unwin)

Geoff Neal Football Book of the Year, in association with the Football Writers' Association
1999: Manchester United, the Treble and All That, Matt Dickinson (Simon & Schuster)

The Vikki Orvice Award for New Women's Sports Writing
A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall, and Rise Again of Women's Football, Suzanne Wrack (Faber & Faber)

Rathbones Illustrated Book of the Year
Heart of Midlothian, 51 Shirts, Grant Young (Pitch Publishing)

LoveReading International Sports Book of the Year
So Help Me Golf: Why We Love the Game, Rick Reilly (Headline)

Francis Clark Financial Planning Rugby Book of the Year, in association with the Rugby Union Writers' Club
Unforgettable, Steve Thompson (Blink Publishing)

Pinsent Masons Sports Writing Award
The People's Game, Gary Neville (Hodder & Stoughton)

The Sunday Times Sports Book of the Year
Unforgettable, Steve Thompson (Blink Publishing)

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For more information about this story or anything else related to the Sports Book Awards, Please contact Omar Khan on 07764 299902 or omar@sportsbookawards.com

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About The Sports Book Awards
The Sports Book Awards is the major annual promotion for sports writing and publishing. The awards exist to highlight the most outstanding sports books of the previous calendar year, to showcase their merits and to enhance their reputation and profile.

About Agile Ideas
Agile Ideas is an awards management and marketing agency that specialises in designing and delivering commercially sustainable prizes and promotions. Agile's services cover every aspect of campaign and event delivery, from securing sponsorship to project managing the ceremony itself.

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