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Community Sports

## Sports

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### Serving to success; Mike Robinson named city's top sports volunteer

Posted By JOHN VESSOYAN

Posted 22 hours ago

Nobody needs to ask Mike Robinson to help. He's quite capable of knowing when to step in and lend a helping hand.

You can say that the Welland Tennis Club is Robinson's second home in the summer months. He's on the clay and hard court surfaces almost daily - practising his game and honing his skills.

But Robinson is not there just for himself, he also passes on his knowledge and expertise to the younger generation of players at the club, offering free, informal lessons.

And when those clay courts aren't in good shape, he does something about that, too.

Just like what he did last August after losing a match in a local tournament.

Having just played on one of the clay courts and noticing that the courts were too dry and too hard, he quickly got a wheel barrel, filled it with clay and calcium and started to resurface the courts so that players would have a better surface to play on.

So the tournament went on, and no complaints about the surface were uttered.

Those are just a few reasons Robinson won the Doc Brauweiler Memorial Award given annually to an outstanding sports volunteer in Welland.

Robinson joins Gord Stuart, Tim McKinnon, Jamie Colangelo and Tom and Maria Marshall as the recent winners of the award.

"I was surprised," Robinson said of winning the award in a recent interview at the Welland Indoor Tennis Club. "It 's quite an honour to receive it. For me to be nominated and win that, it's quite humbling. A very prestigious award. "

Robinson's volunteerism doesn't end at the Welland Tennis Club. The physical education teacher at St. Michael Catholic High School in Niagara Falls has run Zone tennis championships for the past 20 years, Southern Ontario Secondary Schools Association tennis championships for the last 15 years and been the man in charge of the high school provincial tournament for the last three.

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Welland's volunteer of the year Mike Robinson holds the volunteer plaque which he won at the Welland Sports awards night and a trophy he captured in an indoor tennis tournament.

STAFF PHOTO/John Vessoyan

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Robinson, 50, took up the sport at the age of 14. Only a year later he was teaching the sport to others, before accepting a scholarship to play tennis at the University of North Alabama, where he played NCAA Division II tennis for four years.

After his university days were over, he returned to Niagara and started to offer his services to the local tennis community.

Robinson said winning the volunteer of the year award would not have been possible without a special woman by his side - his wife Mary Jane. Robinson said Mary Jane is always assisting him at tournaments and events to ensure the y run smoothly for the competitors.

"She's the backbone behind this," he added.

Robinson is eager to get back on the outdoor tennis courts this spring. He plans to compete in the provincial men' s over 50 tournament in July and the eastern nationals in August.





He'll be gunning for more awards when he plays those tournaments - he would love to add to his hardware collection .

At his Welland home Robinson has lots and lots of trophies and plaques, which he has won over the years.

As for the Doc Brauweiler trophy, he said he has a special place for it.

"On a special wall I haven't created yet," Robinson said with a smile on his face.

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