



Chris Woakes presents the NatWest Lifetime Achiever OSCA to Ernie Brabbins of Appleby Eden Cricket Club at Lord's

Oct 14, 2019 19:07 BST

## Volunteers honoured at NatWest OSCAs

The annual NatWest Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards (OSCA) were staged at Lord's on Monday to highlight the significant contribution volunteers have made to cricket across England and Wales over the past year.

Following a memorable summer highlighted by the ICC men's World Cup victory, the enormous value and contribution of volunteers has a sharpened focus as cricket aims to capitalise on a once-in-a-generation opportunity to grow the game at all levels.

World Cup winner Chris Woakes revealed his gratitude for the role volunteers have had on his own career after he presented the NatWest Lifetime Achiever OSCA to Ernie Brabbins, who has dedicated almost 60 years to various volunteering roles in Cumbria.

Woakes said: “Every one of our World Cup squad has benefited from passionate people and coaches that have put in so many hours to make us better cricketers and better people.

“My only dream when I was a kid was to play cricket with my friends and for it to lead to what it has done makes me feel very privileged. It is because of volunteers at clubs who put in the true graft, for the love of the game, that give kids like me the chance to begin that journey.

“I can only thank them for what they do.”

The NatWest OSCAs were established in 2003 to reward the valued contribution of volunteers to cricket as a part of the ECB’s programme, which gives cricket clubs advice on educating, recruiting and rewarding volunteers.

Nominated volunteers from across England and Wales were in attendance at the Lord’s Nursery Pavilion luncheon with awards presented across seven categories.

Woakes presented the final award of the day to Mr Brabbins following his long service to the game, most significantly at Appleby Eden CC, where he helped raise over £800,000 to repair the club’s facilities after they were devastated by floods in 2015.

Mr Brabbins has been an unsung hero in the north-west as a player, scorer and club officer, while he umpires each week, and began the All-Stars programme at the club.

“I think the thing that gives me the greatest satisfaction is coaching,” he said.

“It is fantastic to see kids come down to the club who have never had a cricket bat in their hand in their life and to then see them playing the game we love.

“To emphasise that we found a photograph this year of the Appleby Eden Under-11s from 2008 and eight of them this season played in our first XI. That is why we do what we do.”

Young England Women’s bowler Freya Davies presented Ian Guppy (Aldwick CC, Sussex) with the Heartbeat of the Club award while the Young Volunteer OSCAs were won by Alicia Smith (Ages 14-18; Illingworth St Mary’s CC, Yorkshire) and James Thompson (Ages 19-25; Berwick CC, Northumberland).

Phil Lucas won the Outstanding Contribution to Disability Cricket honour for his service to Derbyshire Disabled Cricket.

Lucas’ enthusiasm for his role resonated with all in attendance as he spoke passionately about his journey after he was a founding member of Derbyshire Disabled Cricket some 14 years ago.

“This award isn’t about me, it is about the club,” he said.

“There’s so much that goes into our club – there’s probably 20-30 people who deserve to be up here but it is my name that is on the award and I’m so proud of what our club has done.

“When I started there were just seven players and now I can’t get into the Second XI.”

Richard Langdon (Falkland CC) was honoured for the Most Inspiring and Diverse Cricket Offer after helping double participation amongst the Berkshire club’s juniors, women’s and All Stars programmes while also conducting weekly disability cricket sessions.

The Pro-active Leadership OSCA was won by Martin Croucher who helped ensure the futures of St Ives Town & Warboys CC as the clubs merged, dedicating over 50 hours a month of his time.

ECB Director of Participation and Growth, Nick Pryde, said: “Today is a really important day for cricket. We reflect on the amazing summer we had and the crucial role that volunteers play in our game.

“Our volunteers help us to ensure that the hundreds of thousands of kids who have been inspired by this summer’s events remain in our great game.

“Our role as a governing body is to lead the growth of cricket and our volunteers are fundamental to that ambition and we thank them for all of their efforts.”

NatWest has been a proud sponsor of Cricketing Communities in England and Wales for 38 years with the NatWest CricketForce programme - which helps thousands of clubs to upgrade their facilities - the United Kingdom’s largest annual sport volunteering programme.

To find out more about NatWest’s involvement in cricket at all levels of the game, head to: [natwest.com/cricket](http://natwest.com/cricket)

**NatWest OSCAs 2019 winners:**

Lifetime Achiever: Ernie Brabbins – Appleby Eden CC, Cumbria

Outstanding Contribution to Disability Cricket - Phil Lucas, Derbyshire Disabled Cricket

Heartbeat of the Club: Ian Guppy – Aldwick CC, Sussex

Most Inspiring and Diverse Cricket Offer: Richard Langdon, Falkland CC, Berkshire

Pro-active Leadership in Cricket: Martin Croucher – St Ives Town & Warboys CC, Cricket East (Huntingdonshire).

Young volunteer 14-18: Alicia Smith – Illingworth St Mary’s CC, Yorkshire

Young volunteer 19-25: James Thompson – Berwick CC, Northumberland

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