

Sports Union Ball Awards Criteria 2023-24

The Sports Ball will take place in January 2024, and the awards presented will cover the 2023/24 academic year. This is generally considered the period between 1st August 2023 and 31st July 2024.

For each nomination, you will be asked to write a nomination statement (maximum of 4000 characters) and a social media caption of no more than 60 words for if the nomination is successful. The Awards Committee will only see the nomination statement. Please see below for details of what to include in the nomination statement.

Nomination statements may be written in paragraphs or bullet points, but please make sure that they are properly spaced out when submitting through the form. Achievements should be backed up with examples and statistics.

We recommend that outgoing 2023/24 committee members write the Sports Ball awards nominations or are at least consulted in the process.

The deadline for nominations is 27th October 2024, however we recommend writing and submitting nominations over the summer.

Athlete of the Year (Eva Baily and Vancouver Quaich)

Who is this aimed at? High performance student athletes, who may or may not receive performance support. This will be awarded to the most distinguished athletic performance between 1st August 2023 and 31st July 2024. Two awards will be given.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- International performances (e.g. European Championships, World Cup, World Champs, etc.)
- Domestic national performances (e.g. National Championships)
- International student performances (e.g. World University Games)
- Performances representing the University (BUCS, SSS etc.)
- Other relevant achievements (e.g. Awards, National Squads)
- How have they been a standout athlete/team member within the club?

Whilst detailing the above, please ensure you highlight the athlete's top achievements.

First Year Athlete of the Year (Captain S.T. Garner)

Who is this aimed at? High performance student athletes who began their studies in 2023, who may or may not receive performance support.

This will be awarded to the most outstanding first year athletic performance between 1st August 2023 and 31st July 2024.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- International performances (e.g. European Championships, World Cup, World Champs, etc.)
- Domestic national performances (e.g. National Championships)
- International student performances (e.g. World University Games)
- Performances representing the University (BUCS, SSS etc.)
- Other relevant achievements (e.g. Awards, National Squads)
- How have they been a standout athlete/team member within the club?

Whilst detailing the above, please ensure you highlight the athlete's top achievements.

Note: only performances that occurred since the student matriculated at university (most likely September 2023) should be included.

Services to Sport (formerly Executive Committee) and Volunteer of the Year

Who is this aimed at? Exceptional students who have made a notable impact on their sport and/or the Sports Union in the 2023/24 academic year.

Winners will have typically done something beyond their usual committee position. This could include notable contributions to Sports Union, SSS/BUCS, or NGB committees or groups, stepping up in a period of adversity, leading on a step-change and sustained improvement in their club or sport, leading on novel initiatives or projects, or other major achievements.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- The positions held by the individual up to and including 2023/24. This could include committee positions (club and Sports Union), coaching and officiating roles (please specify if paid or voluntary), and other volunteer roles (i.e. SSS).
- How did the individual go above and beyond what was expected of them in their role(s) in 2023/24? Detail their notable contributions and achievements. (Referring to the paragraph on typical winners)
- How did the nominee motivate, inspire, and mentor others?
- What has been their impact on the club and the wider student sport community? (Use examples)
- Any activity prior to 2023/24 that laid the foundations for the nominee's achievements that year (however, please ensure activity in 2023/24 is the main focus of the statement).

Nominations should relate to the period between 1st August 2023 and 31st July 2024. Please remember to illustrate your nominations with specific achievements and examples.

For the Volunteer of the Year award, nominees will not be given credit for contributions as a paid coach, so please ensure you distinguish between their paid and voluntary contributions. Contributions as a coach that were unpaid, such as volunteer coaching at community sessions, will be credited even if the nominee is registered as a paid coach.

Note: our main way of recognizing our student volunteers is via Colours, which are awarded in June each year to standout students who, over their entire time at University, have gone above and beyond their committee role in club development, coaching/officiating, and encouraging new

members. We typically award 55-65 Colours, and 6-8 Services to Sport (formerly Executive Committee) awards each year, out of over 800 committee members.

Club of the Year (Lillywhite Shield)

Who is this aimed at? The all-round best performing member club, on and off the field of play. Intramural teams should instead apply to the Vice President's Trophy.

This will be awarded to a club that can demonstrate impact in the 2023-24 season. Increasing memberships, upping participation, innovative projects, developing volunteers, promoting the role of officials; fundraising, community links and involvement in institution activity are just certain elements that would demonstrate excellence.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- A general overview of the club's activity, achievements and performances
- How was the club outstanding in its management over the 2023/24 academic year, developing volunteers, coaches, officials etc. How do you ensure the club continues to develop?
- Membership recruitment, including activity for new members
- Ways in which the club ensured a high-quality experience for members, keeping an active membership.
- Engagement with SU campaigns and programmes, as well as the club's own initiatives
- Engagement with the wider community, both within and outside the University
- How the club was publicized, and represented the University to a good standard.
- Specific projects from 2023/24 that the club is proud of.

Team of the Year (Presidents' Trophy)

Who is this aimed at? Teams within clubs that have had an outstanding competition season, whether within SSS/BUCS competition or further afield.

Intramural teams should instead apply for the Vice Presidents' Trophy. The level of performance will be taken into consideration, however we still invite applications from non-1st teams that have had an outstanding season.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- The leagues, cups, and other competitions that the Team competed in (specify division if applicable)
- The results achieved by the team in these competitions
- What steps did the team and coaches take to achieve good performances
- Ways in which the team maintained a positive culture
- The team's most notable achievement

Most Improved Club (Colonel R.B. Campbell)

Who is this aimed at? Clubs that saw significant and sustained improvement in 2023/24.

Intramural teams should instead apply for the Intramural Committee Award or the Vice Presidents' Trophy.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- Membership growth and specific initiatives to recruit more members
- Improvement of offering to members
- Improvements in club management and administration, including club development plans
- Examples of improvement in competition performance and participation, and specific steps the club took to achieve this
- Improvements in engagement with campaigns, Sports Union programmes (i.e. EDex), wellbeing resources for members, or club inclusivity
- New community initiatives or events that will continue beyond 2023/24.
- How will improvements made in 2023/24 have a lasting impact on the club? What steps have you taken to ensure this?
- Any other relevant improvements
- Any work in previous years that laid the foundation for the 2023/24 academic year.

Unless specified the nomination statement should refer to the 2023/24 year only.

Note that winners of the award may have seen sustained improvement over a number of years, with 2023/24 being a standout year, or a significant improvement over one academic year. The committee are looking for evidence that work to improve the club in 2023/24 will have a lasting impact.

Participation Sport Club of the Year

Who is this aimed at? Clubs that have had a standout year for participation and inclusion.

Intramural teams should instead apply for the Intramural Committee Award, however clubs that enter teams to the intramural league may refer to this within their application to this award. You may submit a nomination based on the club as a whole, or a programme within a club.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- Examples of efforts to increase participation in your sport in 2023/24, including but not limited to underrepresented groups. This could include both internal initiatives and also outreach and community projects.
- Demonstrate the ways in which your club is inclusive and accessible to all, using examples from 2023/24.

- Description of club's recreational offer, including examples of how this was developed in 2023/24.
- Ways in which the club supported volunteers delivering participation sessions to ensure high quality.
- Involvement in SU programmes (EDex, Stressbusters, International Sports Club, Broughton High School sessions, etc.), or any other events or campaigns the club has run in relation to participation, inclusion, or recreational sport in 2023/24.
- In 2023/24, how did you ensure beginners are able to progress and get fully involved with club activity?
- Participation or inclusion highlight of 2023/24.
- How the club plans to maintain and build on all the above in 2024/25.

Unless specified the nomination statement should refer to the 2023/24 year only.

Pavilion Association Cup (Publicity Award)

Who is this aimed at? Clubs that achieved a consistently high standard of publicity across the 2023/24 academic year

Intramural teams should instead apply for the Intramural Committee Award or the Vice Presidents Trophy.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- How did you communicate club success, fixtures, results, stories to your public audience.
- The channels that the club utilised.
- Steps taken to maximize reach of this communication.
- How did you ensure material produced by the club was of consistently high standard
- Campaigns or events the club participated in or initiated, please provide specific examples of how the club got involved.
- Features of the club (or any individuals, with reference to the club) in governing body publicity materials, the news, or student publications external to the Sports Union
- How the club informed the Sports Union of its achievements.
- Publicity highlights from 2023/24.

Please use specific examples and provide engagement statistics where applicable. You will also be asked to provide social media handles and external links when submitting your application.

Unless specified the nomination statement should refer to the 2023/24 year only.

Ian Stevens Alumni Award

Who is this aimed at? Clubs that achieved high levels of alumni engagement in 2023/24.

Intramural teams should instead apply for the Intramural Committee Award or the Vice Presidents Trophy.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- Details of how often you communicated with alumni, the information you provided, and the channels of communication
- Details of any events, training sessions, or socials held for alumni. Please give specific examples and figures.
- Improvements in engagement with alumni compared to previous years
- Benefits provided to your alumni for staying engaged
- Any utilization of the Sports Union, Development and Alumni, or engaged alumni for support.
- Ways in which the club fundraised through your alumni in 2023/24, what any alumni funds were used for, and how alumni were communicated to about this spending.
- Proudest achievement when engaging your alumni

Please use specific examples and provide engagement statistics where applicable. You will also be asked to provide social media handles and external links when submitting your application.

Unless specified the nomination statement should refer to the 2023/24 year only.

Livingstone Trophy (Expeditionary Achievement)

Who is this aimed at? Clubs, or individual club representatives, that have undertaken an expedition in the 2023/24 academic year.

This award is not for clubs that have gone on a tour or a holiday with no expedition element.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- A brief overview of the expedition, including location, length of time, numbers involved, transport used etc.
- The purpose of the expedition, and if this was achieved
- Challenges encountered and how these were overcome
- How the expedition was funded
- Ways in which the club documented the expedition and shared it with a wider audience. Was it featured by any external sources?
- How the club and wider community benefited from the expedition

Unless specified the nomination statement should refer to the 2023/24 year only.

Vice Presidents' Trophy for the Intramural Team of the Year

Who is this aimed at? Intramural teams that had an all-around excellent season in 2023/24.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- A brief overview of the team's performance in the 2023/24 season (including league position/points./goal difference)
- How the team demonstrated high levels of organization and ensured correct procedures were followed.
- What measures have you put in place to ensure the continuation of the club's structure and growth e.g. committee positions, player retention, memberships and finances.
- Ways in which the team ensured that all players had the best experience and were able to meet their full potential as players in 2023/24.
- Notable activity outside fixtures in 2023/24, such as any publicity, charity, or alumni events (give examples and figures)

Unless specified the nomination statement should refer to the 2023/24 year only.

Intramural Committee Award

Who is this aimed at? Up and coming Intramural teams that are committed to building a community and developing their team.

We particularly invite applications from recently established teams or those that have not previously been shortlisted for an award, however all teams are welcome to submit a nomination.

In your nomination statement (max. 4000 characters), please cover as many of the below points as you can:

- For context, a brief overview of the team's history. Detail of how and when it was founded.

Within the 2023/24 season:

- How did you build a community within the team and ensure players had a positive experience?
- Strategies to recruit and retain players
- Partnerships with clubs/societies/other communities
- Ways in which the team was innovative and inclusive (Give examples)
- Steps taken to develop your team in 2023/24. What were the results? This could include efforts to improve performance, organization, or similar.

Unless specified the nomination statement should refer to the 2023/24 year only

FAQ's

What makes a good awards application?

- Use paragraphs or bullet points to make the statement easy to read.
- Be specific – who, where, why, what, when, how.
- Focus on the highlights – what will make this application stand out? How did the club or individual make a tangible contribution?
- Back up your points with statistics and evidence.

Can I add links? Links may be added as evidence, but are not a replacement for information being

included in the statement.

Are these the only awards available? We also have our Blues and Colours Awards dinner in June, where Blues, Half Blues, Colours, Coach of the Year, Ewan Malcolm Student Coach of the Year, Student Official of the Year, Alex Currie Trophy for the Most Inspirational Sporting Performance, and the Alan Chainey Long Service Award are awarded. Nominations for these awards are due in semester 2. These awards will be based on the 2024/25 academic year.

Who decides the winners? The awards committee consists of the President, Vice President Inclusion, Vice President Intramural, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Director and/or Head of Sport, and the Sports Programme Manager. Individuals on the committee who are nominated for an award will not be present for the discussion relating to that particular award.

Will the committee consider evidence other than that presented on the awards nomination form? The committee will only consider information presented on the nomination form, so please make sure you include all relevant information.

Can the club be put forward for multiple awards? Yes, however we recommend focusing on the awards that you think the club has the best chance at being shortlisted for.

Can a club put multiple individuals forward for the same award? Yes, but we recommend only submitting your top one as it is extremely unlikely both will be shortlisted. The exception for this is Athlete of the Year where two awards (male and female) will be awarded.

Can I write my own nomination? You may write the nomination but it should be written in the third person and two other members must be your nominators.

Can nominations be submitted by outgoing committees? Yes, we actually recommend that outgoing committees write the nominations. However, if this is not possible, incoming committees should still try to consult them.

Can past winners receive the same award again? Yes, but we will not reward the same set of achievements twice.

Will achievements prior to 1st August 2023 be considered? It depends. For performance awards (Athlete/First Year Athlete/Team of the Year) this is a strict timeframe. For other awards, achievements prior to 1st August 2023 may be considered at the committee's discretion, provided they took place in summer 2023 and were initiated entirely by the 2023/24 committee after handover. When detailing these achievements, please specify this. However, we will not reward clubs for the same achievements twice. The 31st July 2024 is a hard deadline for all awards.

When will shortlists be released? Shortlists are planned to be released in December.

What happens if I submit the form twice? We will by default consider the final submission only, however please contact sports.union@ed.ac.uk if you would like a different version to be considered.