



YJA honour for Jim Saltonstall MBE

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The Yachting Journalists' Association has paid its own tribute to Jim Saltonstall MBE Photo © Barry Pickthall

The Yachting Journalists' Association has paid its own tribute to Jim Saltonstall, who for more than 30 years has been responsible for training many of Britain's elite sailors to racing success.

In a ceremony at a lunch at the Royal Lyminster Yacht Club, YJA chairman Bob Fisher presented Jim with a silver salver to mark a lifetime devoted to training Britain's youth sailors and putting Team GBR in the top flight of international sailing. Bob Fisher said the award by the Association was made on behalf of the many young people he had coached so well.

Without his influence many of Britain's sailing gold medals in successive Olympics and world sailing competition would not have been achieved. In their very formative years in the sport, Saltonstall, from Warsash, has been responsible for the coaching of Britain's youth, and the inspiration with which he instilled his charges, which he affectionately termed his ferrets, has been measured in their future progress.

Joining key figures among yachting journalists at the lunch were two of those he has coached that have gone on to win Olympic glory, Ben Ainslie and Sarah Webb.

"I was very fortunate in having so much sailing talent in Britain to work with and it was an honour to work with them and bring the best out of them," said Jim, a Yorkshire-man by birth who was sailing coach for the Royal Navy before being headhunted by the RYA in 1977. For the last eight years he has worked as Youth Coach to the International Sailing Federation (ISAF).

"I've had a fantastic life as a coach. To be involved with them and to watch them progress through the sport to the apex of the game has been very gratifying. Long may it continue. There is a lot of talent in the UK, and through the RYA, we will continue producing Olympic medals, world and European champions. Indeed, with Team GBR finishing the top team to win the Volvo Trophy at the 2008 ISAF Youth Worlds, things are looking good for 2012, 2016 and beyond", he said at the award.

Honoured by the International Sailing Federation with a life-time achievement award in 2007, Jim was also awarded an MBE in 1997 for his services to the sport, and voted Yachtsman of the Year in 1984.

Among those to have passed through his hands is four-time Olympic medallist Ben Ainslie and double gold medallist Sarah Webb, who attended the lunch, as well as fellow Olympic champions Iain Percy (gold medals in the Finn class in 2000, and Star class in 2008) Nick Rogers and Joe Glanfield (two-time Silver medal winners in the 470 class) and a host of world champions. The roll of honour also includes double Etchells world champion Stuart Childerley, and fellow youth world champions Jason Belben, Andy Hemmings, Lawrence Crisp, Andy Beadsworth, Chris Draper, and Sally Cuthbert - the only person to win four Youth World championships in succession.

Following his retirement from international coaching, Jim has now embarked on advanced management training and speaking engagements, imparting his considerable knowledge on motivation and reaching the highest levels of performance to business schools and managers.

Ben Ainslie says of Jim Saltonstall: "I just want to say a huge thank you from me and my generation of sailors like fellow Olympic medalists Iain Percy and Nick Rogers. You were the guy that got us into international sailing, You got us on the road." Appreciation indeed.