

Guardian takes team award and it's Stelling and Kimmage yet again



Everyone's a winner: some of Britain's top journalists celebrate their awards at the Sports Journalists' Association's big night out at The Brewery

a host of celebrity presenters. From small beginnings in 1976 the SJA awards have blossomed into the major event in the sports media business with record entries, up 10% in both writing and photographic competitions.

Collins, seldom out of the frame every year, acknowledged his near-veteran status when he quipped: "I suppose this proves that the SJA's youth policy is finally bearing fruit."

It was a great night for the *Mail on Sunday*. The Kensington-based paper had seven awards or commendations. Rob Draper featured twice: he won the Sports News Reporter category and shared with his colleague, Daniel King, the award for Sports Story, with their exclusive about Beijing-bound UK athletes being given contracts that included a ban on commenting on politically sensitive issues.

The citation said the story "showed a combination of forensic attention to detail, an example of first-class investigative journalism". King praised the British Olympic Association for its frankness in dealing with his investigations. "The BOA showed class," he said. "If it had been a football club we

DOUBLE FOR WHITAKER AS COLLINS MAKES IT FIVE

PATRICK COLLINS of the *Mail on Sunday* and Edward Whitaker of the *Racing Post* were the star turns at the SJA's British Sports Journalism Awards, winning Sports Writer and Sports Photographer of the Year respectively.

Collins was chosen by the votes of national newspaper sports editors, who concluded that he was "the best of his generation. He never talks down to his readers, but uses a polite nudge and a smile".

It was the fifth time he had lifted the John Bromley Trophy, which he received from double Olympic gold medallist Dame Kelly Holmes and Carole Ann Bromley, the widow of the SJA's first president, John Bromley.

IAN COLE



Whitaker's award, judged by a distinguished photographic panel, was the Ed Lacey Trophy, again presented by Dame Kelly. Whitaker, who also won the Phil Sheldon Trophy for Specialist Picture Portfolio for the second time, looked fondly at his prize and said: "This, to me, is what it's all about."

That sentiment echoed around the Porter Tun Room at London's Brewery venue as the SJA's fiercely contested awards, sponsored by UK Sport and Sky Bet and decided by specialist panels of judges, were handed out by

TRANSFERS, MOVES, GOSSIP

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would have been black-balled for a year." Draper's portfolio included stories as diverse as "the Big Brother Beijing Olympics" to Andrey Arshavin's transfer to Arsenal. He received his award from LOCOG chief executive Paul Deighton.

It was the *Guardian* which collected the prestigious Team of the Year title for its coverage of the Beijing Olympics. Judges said the sports pages "showed compelling journalism, authoritative writing backed by stunning pictures and graphics".

Sky Bet's arrival as an SJA sponsor was recognised by the award of Sports Betting Writer and the firm's sportsbook director, Ben Warn, was on hand to congratulate the first recipient, Steve Palmer of the *Racing Post*, who said his victory was bad news for Ladbrokes, which had opened a book on this category.

Sky Bet also gave each of the 384 diners a free £10 bet. A special £500 charity bet fell to Marc Aspland of *The Times* who, at the suggestion of Tony Cascarino, the former

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WRITER

Winner: Patrick Collins, *Mail on Sunday*, with Carole Ann Bromley and Dame Kelly Holmes, right

Citation: “The judges said the winner remains ‘the best sports writer of his generation’, adding he ‘never talks down to the reader, preferring the gentle nudge and polite smile as he informs and entertains’”

Second: Michael Atherton, *The Times*
Third: Paul Hayward, *Daily Mail* (now of the *Observer*)
Shortlisted: Oliver Holt, *Daily Mirror*, James Lawton, *Independent*, Martin Samuel, *The Times* (now of the *Daily Mail*)

Republic of Ireland forward, took odds of 3-1 that all four of England’s Champions League sides would reach the last eight. Some 48 hours later the designated charities, the British Heart Foundation and the Geoff Thomas Foundation, set up by the former Crystal Palace and England midfielder to raise funds to increase the availability of drug therapies to treat leukaemia, the illness from which he recovered, each collected £1,000 when Max Tonetto blazed high over Manuel Almunia’s bar to give Arsenal victory in a penalty shoot-out against Roma.

Coincidentally, Aspland won Sports News Picture for the second year, capturing from behind Edwin Van der Sar’s goal the moment when Chelsea captain John Terry missed the chance of winning the Champions League final shoot-out against Manchester United in Moscow last May. Aspland dedicated his win to recently deceased photographer Peter Jay.

Sports Columnist of the Year was Oliver Holt of the *Daily Mirror*, who saw off 26 rivals to step up to receive his award from Richard Caborn MP, an England ambassador for the 2018 World Cup bid. Holt shared the award last year with Simon Barnes of *The Times*.

The two broadcasting awards were decided by the votes of SJA members and produced familiar results. Sky’s Jeff Stelling won Broadcaster of the Year for the fourth successive year for his hosting of *Soccer Saturday*, while Garry Richardson’s *SportsWeek*, on BBC Radio 5 Live, was Best



TEAM

Winner: *Guardian*, Olympic Games coverage; head of sport Ben Clissitt, left, and some of his team receive the award from Jeff Stelling, right

Citation: “The winner was way out in front. It was called ‘compelling journalism, with authoritative stylish writing, great pictures and superb graphics’, by one judge, while another praised its combination of new media with ‘traditional newspaper strengths’.

Another said its ‘artists and page builders contributed to a daily flow of stylised pages bursting with ideas and stunning use of photographs’”

Highly commended: *Daily Telegraph*, Olympic Games
Shortlisted: *Daily Mail*, Olympic Games, *Guardian*, Munich 1958 Anniversary, *The Times*, Munich 1958 Anniversary, *The Times*, Olympic Games



PHOTOGRAPHER

Winner: Edward Whitaker, *Racing Post*, with Dame Kelly Holmes

Citation: “This was a unanimous decision from the judges”

Programme for the third-year running. Olympic double Yngling gold medallist Sarah Webb presented both awards.

Paul Kimmage of *The Sunday Times* was another who needed no guidance to the stage, winning Sports Interviewer for the fifth successive time. What’s so special about Kimmage? The judges said he shows “a unique combination of impeccable research and tireless questioning”.

A new name on the honours board was former England cricket captain Michael



YOUNG WRITER

Winner: Emma John, *Observer Sport Monthly*, centre, with Garry Richardson and Sarah Wooldridge

Citation: “By the tightest of margins, the winner was said to have ‘fun’ in her writing, with entries that read ‘as if she enjoyed conducting the interviews’”

Highly commended: Mark Hodgkinson, *Daily Telegraph*
Shortlisted: Oliver Brown, *Daily Telegraph*, James Ducker, *The Times*, Matt Hughes, *The Times*, Duncan White, *Sunday Telegraph*

Atherton, who moved into the Press Box on his retirement from the game in 2001 and was chosen as Specialist Correspondent for his cricket writing in *The Times*.

Atherton, who was also runner-up to Collins as Sports Writer of the Year, was away at England’s final Test in Trinidad but his sports



AWARDS PICS: STEVE ROWE

editor, Tim Hallissey, collected the award from the sports minister, Gerry Sutcliffe MP.

Sports Picture of the Year was an all-action sailing grab – you felt soaked just looking at it – from Clive Mason of Getty Images.

Matt Dunham, of Associated Press, submitted a winning Sports Portfolio of pictures which “showed a good grasp of news values, the aesthetics of photography, coupled with a sense of humour”.

Feature Writer of the Year, a category that had 36 entries, was presented by UK Sport chair Baroness Sue Campbell, and was won by Owen Slot of *The Times*, with an entry that included pieces on Rebecca Adlington, Joe Calzaghe and the Great Britain cycling team.

Now prepare for a shock... The Charlie Sale-Alan Hubbard duopoly in the Diarist category has been smashed. David Hills of the *Observer* is the new king of the diarists – well, for this year at least.

The SJA is proud to recognise youth and the regions in these awards and there was no more excited recipient than Emma John of *Observer Sport Monthly*, adjudged Young Sports Writer for the Ian Wooldridge Trophy, presented by Ian’s widow, Sarah. Emma revealed that, as a cricket-obsessed teenager, her bedroom walls were covered with the great Wooldridge’s reports.

The Young Photographer crown is now

ASPLAND WON SPORTS NEWS PICTURE FOR THE SECOND YEAR, CAPTURING FROM BEHIND EDWIN VAN DER SAR’S GOAL THE MOMENT WHEN CHELSEA CAPTAIN JOHN TERRY MISSED THE CHANCE OF WINNING THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

worn by Paul Gilham of Getty Images, who received the David Worthy Trophy from ace snapper Patrick Eagar.

Cumbrian Newspapers dominated the Regional Writer category. Jon Colman won, the judges praising his match reporting and interviewing, while his colleague, Amanda Little, was highly commended. The long journey was well worth it for these two stars of the future. SJA events chairman David Welch presented the award.

Top cartoonist is Nick Newman of *The Sunday Times* for the third time in four starts. The judges said he “takes the skills of a news cartoonist and applies them to sport”. John Hopkins, of *timesonline*, was a popular winner of Sports Internet Writer.

DOUBLE-BOOKED: The SJA shared facilities at The Brewery with a rival function attended by the prime minister, Gordon Brown. Both events laid on a drinks reception and at least one SJA member was well into his first free drink at the PM’s bash before he realised something was amiss.

BETTING WRITER

Winner: Steve Palmer, *Racing Post*, with Ben Warn of Sky Bet, right

Citation: “The first winner of this new award was said to have a ‘unique style, with high-quality writing and a passion for the subject’. Another judge said his column was a ‘retrospective journey through betting hell’. A third admitted he could not resist the writing of a journalist whose intro to one story started: ‘After partaking of a night of wild sexual intercourse at a Premier Travel Inn (as you do), I was struggling to focus on the day’s betting business’”

Highly commended: Derek McGovern, *Daily Mirror*

Shortlisted: Gary Boswell, freelance, John Curle/Kevin Price, *Daily Mirror*, Kevin Pullein, *Racing Post*, Dan Roebuck, *Guardian*



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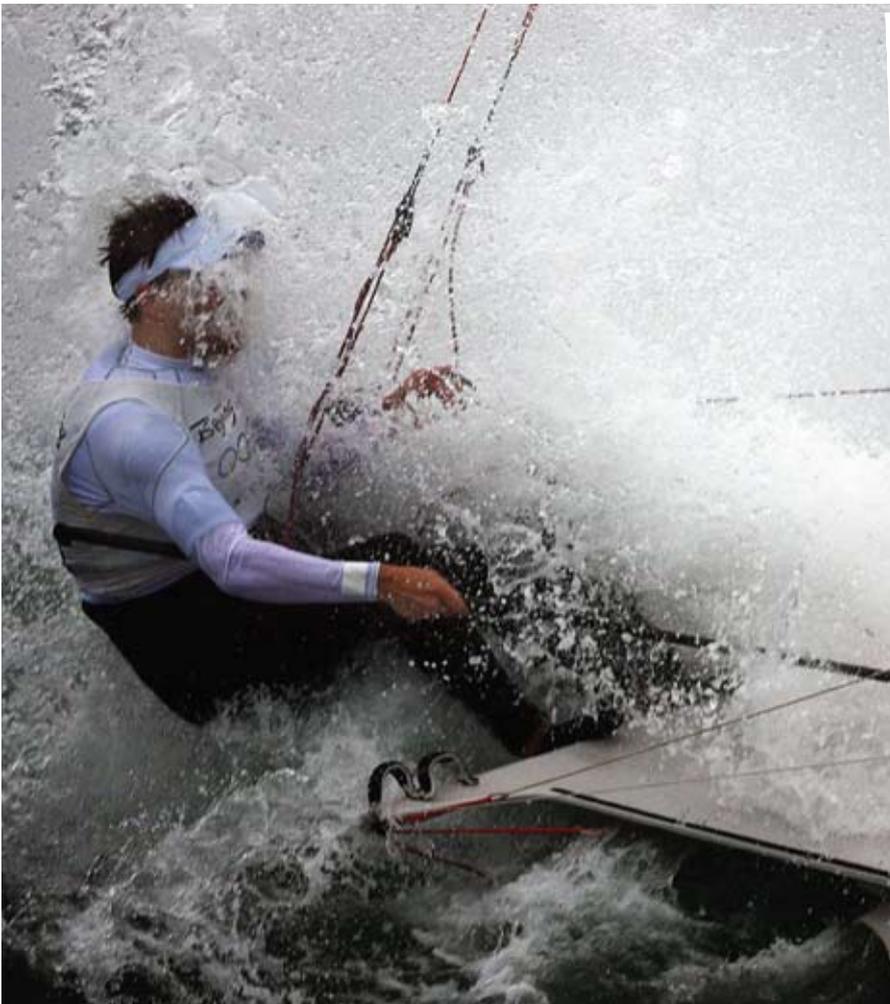
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SPORTS PICTURE

Winner: Clive Mason, Getty Images, above right, with Jeff Stelling

Citation: “The winning picture, taken under difficult conditions captured the mood of the event beautifully”

Highly commended: Stu Forster, Getty Images, and Mark Pain, *Mail on Sunday*

Shortlisted: Paul Childs, Action Images, Dylan Martinez, Reuters, Toby Melville, Reuters, Paul Thomas, freelance



FEATURE WRITER

Winner: Owen Slot, *The Times*; sports editor Tim Hallissey with Baroness Sue Campbell

Citation: “The winner keeps it simple but interesting and could tackle any subject. Another judge praised his ‘originality and insight’, particularly on three of the performances of the year, those of Rebecca Adlington, Joe Calzaghe and the GB cycling team”

Highly commended: Matthew Syed, *The Times*

Shortlisted: James Corrigan, *Independent*, Donald McRae, *Guardian*, Alex Wade, freelance, Richard Williams, *Guardian*



NEWS STORY

Winner: Rob Draper, right, and Daniel King, *Mail on Sunday* (Olympic contracts controversy), with Robert Charles, head of sport, C5

Citation: “A ‘coup for forensic attention to detail’ and ‘high-class investigative journalism”

Highly commended: Derek Pringle and Nick Hoult, *telegraph.co.uk* (Pietersen/Moores crisis talks)

Shortlisted: Mihir Bose, BBC (39th game), Bob Cass, *Mail on Sunday* (Berbatov for United), Ashling O’Connor, *The Times* (Chinese torch row), Alex Spink, *Daily Mirror* (Corry/Henson row)



INTERNET

Winner: John Hopkins, *timesonline*, left, with Rob Bonnet

Citation: “The winner coupled ‘strong opinion with well-informed insight’. With integration, this leading correspondent ‘has taken the opportunities offered by the web and time zones to file tremendous, cogent commentary for his online audience in addition to his traditional reports’”

Highly commended: Andy Bull, *guardian.co.uk*

Shortlisted: Neil Ashton, *mailonline*, Jim Munro, *sunonline*, Matt Slater, *bbc.co.uk*, Bill Wilson, *bbcnewsonline*



NEWS REPORTER

Winner: Rob Draper, *Mail on Sunday*, right, with Paul Deighton

Citation: “In a very competitive category, with some of the nation’s top newshounds, the winner was said to have a superb catalogue of outstanding stories, from the Big Brother Olympics to Andrey Arshavin’s transfer to Arsenal”

Highly commended: David Conn, *Guardian*

Shortlisted: Shaun Custis, *The Sun*, Peter Jackson, *Daily Mail*, Charles Sale, *Daily Mail*, Paul Smith, *Sunday Mirror*



COLUMNIST

Winner: Oliver Holt, *Daily Mirror*, left, with Richard Caborn

Citations: “The winner ticked ‘all the right boxes’, debates topics ‘with a style of writing that stirs emotions and implores you to read to the last word’”

Highly commended: Simon Barnes, *The Times*

Shortlisted: Michael Atherton, *The Times*, Patrick Collins, *Mail on Sunday*, Tom English, *Scotland on Sunday*, Paul Hayward, *Daily Mail* (now of the *Observer*), Marina Hyde, *Guardian*, James Lawton, *Independent*



CARTOONIST

Winner: Nick Newman, *The Sunday Times*, left, with Martin Rowson

Citation: “The winner has the rest ‘trailing a long way behind’ and ‘takes all the skills of a news cartoonist and applies them brilliantly to sports’”

Highly commended: Steve O’Brien, *Mail on Sunday*

Shortlisted: Tony Husband, *The Times*, Kerber & Black, *Daily Mirror*



TOP CARTOONIST IS NICK NEWMAN OF THE SUNDAY TIMES FOR THE THIRD TIME IN FOUR STARTS. THE JUDGES SAID HE “TAKES THE SKILLS OF A NEWS CARTOONIST AND APPLIES THEM TO SPORT”



INTERVIEWER

Winner: Paul Kimmage, *The Sunday Times*, left, with Gerry Sutcliffe

Citation: “The winner has a ‘unique combination of impeccable research and fearless questioning’ and ‘he remains the king of the mountains – a genuine tour de force’”

Highly commended: Ian Stafford, *Mail on Sunday*

Shortlisted: Tim Adams, *Observer Sport Monthly*, Donald McRae, *Guardian*, Sue Mott, freelance, Matthew Syed, *The Times*

SPECIALIST SPORTS PORTFOLIO



Winner: Edward Whitaker, *Racing Post*, inset, with Gill Sheldon and Richard Caborn, right

Citation: “In a very competitive category, the winner gave an insight into an unfamiliar world, with pictures showing flair and imagination”

Highly commended: Stu Forster and Mark Thompson, both Getty Images

Shortlisted: Eddie Keogh, freelance, Laurence Lustig, freelance, Mark Robinson, *The Sun*



SPECIALIST

Winner: Michael Atherton, *The Times*; sports editor Tim Hallissey with Gerry Sutcliffe

Citation: “He was called ‘fluid, entertaining, with a point of view, but not missing the general picture”

Highly commended: Chris McGrath, *Independent*

Shortlisted: Bill Elliott, freelance, Steve James, *Sunday Telegraph*, Kevin Mitchell, *Observer*, Sam Wallace, *Independent*



BROADCASTER

Winner: Jeff Stelling, above with Sarah Webb

Citation: “The winner, who has finally found a day job, continues to bring enjoyment to SJA members, who vote for this category. His humour and sheer entertainment make him a four-time winner in this category”

Highly commended: Garry Richardson
Shortlisted: Clare Balding, John Inverdale, Adrian Warner



DIARIST

Winner: David Hills, *Observer*, with TV presenter Natalie Pinkham

Citation: “The winner’s column is a ‘brilliant Sunday barb to prick the pompous and over-blown. His acerbic and witty jabs succinctly bring sport’s wrongdoers to heel”

Highly commended: Charles Sale, *Daily Mail*, and Matt Scott, *Guardian*
Shortlisted: Steve Anglesey, *Daily Mirror*, Alan Hubbard, *Independent on Sunday*, Martyn Ziegler, PA

YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER



Winner: Paul Gilham, Getty Images, right, with Patrick Eagar

Citation: “The judges said the future is in good hands. This portfolio showed a good variety of subjects and an excellent choice of camera angles”

Highly commended: Julian Finney, Getty Images, and Dan Matthams, *Nottingham Evening Post*

Shortlisted: Gareth Copley, Press Association, Carl De Souza, AFP, Simon Stacpoole, Offside Sports Photography

PRESS OFFICER COLE MAKES THE NEWS

IAN COLE, who has had two spells as chairman of the Sports Journalists' Association, received the Doug Gardner Award, for outstanding service to sports journalism and the SJA, at the British Sports Journalism Awards at The Brewery.

Cole has served on the SJA committee since 1986, with his two spells as chairman, in 1991-93 and 1998-99. He is the SJA's press officer, although the only story he missed on the big night was that he would win one of the major awards, which is decided by the officers of the association.

Barry Newcombe, the SJA chairman, made the presentation, saying: “Our Doug Gardner Award, for services to sports journalism and the SJA, goes to a man who retired last year after a 42-year career that started at the *Ilford Recorder* and which included time served on



Thank you Mr Chairman: Ian Cole, right, receives the Doug Gardner Award from SJA chairman Barry Newcombe

the *London Daily News*, the *Daily Express* as well as the *Mail*.”

Cole, who spends much of his time watching West Ham and Essex CCC, retired as night sports news editor at the *Daily Mail* last year. He was also at the *Watford Evening Echo*, although it was at Robert Maxwell's short-lived *London Daily News*, where he was sports news editor, that his enthusiasm in signing up colleagues to become members of the SJA took root. At least one future chairman was to be a victim of his smooth tongue.

He is also the co-author of *Memories of George Best*.

The Doug Gardner Award is named after the colleague who spent 28 years on the SJA committee, with spells as chairman and secretary, an office he held when he died. Guests at the awards again showed their generosity when they raised £2,200 for the Liam Ross Foundation. Liam Ross was the 13-year-old nephew of Doug Gardner's nephew, Trevor, and collapsed and died after playing a game of football at the end of last year.

Editorial

Where will it end?

2009

(with apologies to Pastor Niemöller's 1938)

'First they came for the cartoonists
And I did not speak out –
Because I was not a cartoonist

Then they came for the photographers
And I did not speak out –
Because I was not a photographer

Then they came for the sub-editors
And I did not speak out –
Because I was not a sub-editor

Then they came for the correspondents
And I did not speak out –
Because I was not a correspondent

Then they came for me –
And there was no one left –
To speak out for me'

BROADCASTING

Philip Barker

■ FA Cup final week will be a busy time for ITV, the Wembley showpiece coming this year three days after the Champions League final. The domestic game is the bigger operation for ITV and working alongside presenter Steve Rider there will be a team not far short of 100 at Wembley, although as yet no decision has been taken on whether Clive Tyldesley or Peter Drury will be behind the microphone. Setanta's coverage will no doubt be led by Angus Scott, a former ITV man. Relations between the channels are friendlier than the 1969 Cup final. After Manchester City had beaten Leicester, the real battle was on the pitch as BBC and ITV came to blows over who should get the first interview. The dignitaries waited to present the Cup as the mayhem continued on the pitch. Both stations were summoned to Lancaster Gate to explain themselves to the FA.

■ We take satellite television for granted now but a reminder that it was not always

so came with 20th anniversary celebrations of the launch of Eurosport. Originally produced under the Sky umbrella at Osterley with much of its staff ex-BBC or ITV, it went on air in 1989 with Davis Cup tennis, and gave more airtime than ever before to sports such as Nordic skiing and table tennis. Early highlights included Italia 90 with commentary in a choice of languages. The station changed ownership in 1991 and is operated by French broadcasters TF1. Forty of the original production team met recently to raise a glass in celebration. They included SJA member Adrian Metcalfe, who was director of programmes for Eurosport.

■ With four-time SJA broadcaster of the year Jeff Stelling settling into his new role on *Countdown*, surely it can only be a matter of time before he is joined in Dictionary Corner by Chris Kamara.

Philip Barker is a freelance broadcaster and works for Sky Sports News

wwwwebsite corner

■ The Sports Journalists' Association and Hockey Writers' Club have teamed up online at sportsjournalists.co.uk. The HWC, which already has its own website – www.hockeywritersclub.com – now has a "landing page" on the SJA website, providing basic contact information on its activities, a listing on the website's navigation column and a special section for all its latest announcements in the news blog, offering a quick reference resource for journalists keen to discover more about the sport and its coverage. The hockey writers join the British Athletics Writers' Association and British Equestrian Writers' Association in similar collaborations. Talks continue with the rugby writers and other specialists about joining together in an effort to develop the definitive sports journalism portal online.

■ Oliver Miller, who is studying sports journalism under SJA member Rob Steen at Brighton University, is working hard at updating the SJA website's Training and Courses section. Ollie would welcome any input from members with direct connections to journalism-related degree courses. The SJA is also offering special advertising rates in the section, starting from just £100 for a year's enhanced listing. He can be contacted at olliemiller2212@hotmail.co.uk.

■ sportsjournalists.co.uk attracted more than five million hits in 2008, with traffic peaks coming in March as people sought out the latest news about the SJA's British Sports Journalism Awards, and August, when chairman Barry Newcombe was blogging from Beijing. The website has more than 20,000 page hits every weekday, from about 2,000-plus unique visits.

■ Greg Hadfield, the former *Sunday Times* news editor who became a dotcom millionaire, has been appointed by the Telegraph Media Group to oversee its online sports coverage. Hadfield left Wapping more than a decade ago to launch the soccer website, which he sold to Disney-owned cable sports channel ESPN in 1999 for £15 million. "Greg has a track record as a top-class journalist who is also a tremendous innovator," says Ed Roussel, Telegraph Media Group's digital editor.

■ SJA member Ian Stafford has gone all virtual, with new website sportsvibe.co.uk. Filled with features, interviews and columns written by Stafford, the site aims to "get inside the head of sport". According to Korova Media, which has created the site, sportsvibe "focuses on the information and details that you won't normally find on the back pages of a newspaper or on television and includes interviews, insightful features plus loads of sports trivia and fun items. It is the nation's first general sports magazine on the internet".

Go to www.sportsjournalists.co.uk



PROGRAMME

Winner: *SportsWeek*, BBC Radio 5 Live; presenter Garry Richardson, above, with Sarah Webb

Citation: “The winner continues to set the agenda for the week ahead. SJA members, who vote for this category, find it a crucial listen”

Highly commended: *Olympic Grandstand*, BBC

Shortlisted: *Inside Sport*, BBC, *Soccer Saturday*, Sky, *Test Match Special*, BBC Radio

SPORTS PORTFOLIO

Winner: Matt Dunham, Associated Press, with Baroness Sue Campbell

Citation: “This portfolio shows that the photographer has a good grasp of news value as well as the aesthetics of photography, plus a sense of humour”

Highly commended: Shaun Boterill, Getty Images, and Mark Pain, *Mail on Sunday*

Shortlisted: Tommy Hindley, Professional Sport, Eddie Keogh, freelance, Clive Mason, Getty Images



REGIONAL

Winner: Jon Colman, *Cumbrian News & Star*; left, with David Welch

Citation: “Two judges praised the winner’s ability ‘to spot local stories of a national magnitude’, while another praised his match reporting and interviewing”

Highly commended: Amanda Little, *Cumbrian News & Star*

Shortlisted: Mike Aitken, *The Scotsman*, Philip Buckingham, *Hull Daily Mail*, Neil Farrington, Newcastle *Sunday Sun*, John Gibson, Newcastle *Evening Chronicle*



SPORTS NEWS PICTURE

Winner: Marc Aspland, *The Times*, above right, with Konrad Bartelski

Citation: “They say every picture tells a story. This one certainly did”

Highly commended: Matt Dunham, Associated Press, and Tom Main, freelance

Shortlisted: Philip Brown, freelance, Paul Childs, Lee Mills and Michael Regan, all Action Images



John Jackson

A little local difficulty down Mexico way

When pioneering the news side of sport I often became the story. Veteran football writers still hail me as “Ring of steel” or “Dead dog Jacko”, referring back to my exclusives at the 1974 and 1982 World Cups.

The latter, when I found a dead dog amid the squalor on the beach outside the hotel chosen for the England squad near Bilbao, prompted then manager Ron Greenwood wittily to suggest I was the only person to travel by air with “excess doggage”.

But this Spanish spat could not compare with the aggravation that came after my innocent look-ahead piece before the 1962 World Cup in Chile. At one point the tournament was threatened as the Mexican team delayed its departure, then talked of withdrawing altogether because of my predictions.

An Associated Press correspondent, I was assigned to the plum group based at the coastal holiday resort of Vina del Mar. I had reigning champions Brazil, an aged, but still star-studded Spain (Di Stefano, Puskas, Santamaria, et al), Czechoslovakia, who reached the final with Brazil, and Mexico.

From the wonderfully named Hotel O’Higgins I filed my preliminary piece suggesting that Brazil, even without an injured Pelé, should retain their title, the Czechs were strong outsiders, Spain had the big names but elderly tired legs, while Mexico...

I had canvassed local opinion, including the well informed Austrian manager of the O’Higgins, where the Mexicans would be staying, who agreed, as I reported, that Mexico could not win an egg cup.

But I stressed they would be striving on the PR front to impress Fifa and all officialdom, because they were desperate to be awarded the 1970 World Cup.

In international newsagency jargon I was told “you scoring well in South America” – with major splashes in Brazil, Argentina and, rather differently, Mexico. A very worried hotel manager showed me local reports of Mexico’s anger. Three words stood



out: “John Jackson idiota”. I was front page news in Mexico City. Finally the Mexicans, a day late, decided to travel. Prominent English sportswriters Brian Glanville and Desmond Hackett watched as the local media watched me. A soothing pisco sour, the local jungle juice, was necessary.

The Mexican team bus arrived, but only three men alighted – the manager, the captain and the suave, English speaking Mexican FA vice-president Peter Pons. My name was shouted, the captain muttered in Spanish: “Jackson is a dirty name in Mexico.” Pons, or Mr Ponce as he soon became because of his aggressive attitude, said a few words – then they threw me, with little ceremony, into the hotel fountain.

They never forgave me. A man pulled a knife in the O’Higgins lift; in Santiago another approached as I hailed a taxi, and shouted: “You are John Jackson. I am a Mexican and you can go to hell.” When the Mexicans surprisingly beat Czechoslovakia 3-1 the players celebrated – by throwing me in the fountain again.

Two years later at the Tokyo Olympics I covered the Fifa meeting when Mexico was awarded the sought-after 1970 tournament. I approached a happy Peter Pons: “Mr Ponce, you owe me a pisco.” He smiled, held out his hand and agreed.

There were absolutely no hard feelings when I covered the 1968 Mexico City Olympics and 1970 World Cup.

TRANSFERS MOVES GOSSIP

The Bulletin’s inside man, Chopper, looks at the movement around the nation’s sports desks

● The four News International titles at Wapping are losing 65 staff jobs and a raft of regular casual shifts after recommendations by a group of American time-and-motion consultants. Sports news editor **Mal Butler** is taking voluntary redundancy from the *News of the World*. He is to be joined in his departure from the sports desk by reporter **Geoff Sweet** and two graphics specialists. *Sunday Times* football correspondent **Joe Lovejoy**’s job was reported to be under threat, while the deputy sports editor of the Scotland edition, **Andrew Baillie**, and **Richard Wilson**, a former SJA young sportswriter of the year, are two of four Scottish redundancies from the 20 cuts being made at the paper overall.

● **Les Snowdon**, the editor of *Scotland on Sunday*, is to become sports editor of the *Daily Mail*, effectively No 2 on the sports desk to head of sport **Lee Clayton**.

● The *Financial Times* has axed its sports coverage. While features sub **Charles Morris** – who has edited the paper’s sports coverage – keeps his job, the space dedicated to the subject will be cut as pagination is reduced. The cuts will mainly affect about a dozen freelancers. **Simon Kupar** will continue to write a weekly sports column.

● **Niall Sloane**, just weeks after announcing his resignation as BBC Sport’s head of football and Formula 1, is to be ITV’s new head of sport. He denied his departure was linked to **Barbara Slater** being named as BBC head of sport.

● **Oliver Kay** has been promoted by *The Times* to football correspondent. The appointment comes after the departure to the *Daily Mail* of **Martin Samuel**. Meanwhile, **Patrick Barclay** has left the *Sunday Telegraph* after more than 12 years to join *The Times* as chief football commentator.

● Also part of Fleet Street’s equivalent of the transfer window, **Dean Morse** and **Dominic Hart** have both received promotions at the *Daily Mirror*. Morse has been sports editor since 2001, having

previously worked as Des Kelly's deputy. He is being given a senior executive role as head of sport at the Mirror Group, with Hart promoted to sports editor at the daily paper.

● **Martin Johnson**, one of the many cuts made at the *Telegraph* last year, has been hired by *The Sunday Times* to write columns on Test match cricket.

● **Ian Chadband** has been signed up by the *Telegraph* as its new chief sports correspondent. Chadband had held a similar post at the London *Evening Standard* until late last year. Telegraph Media Group also announced the signing of **Jason Burt** as its deputy football correspondent across all three "platforms". Burt had previously worked at the *Independent* for more than a decade. **Gavin Mairs** has been appointed as the *Telegraph's* rugby news correspondent. Mairs was formerly rugby correspondent at the *Belfast Telegraph* and *Yorkshire Post*.

● **Alan Rowan**, the sports editor at the Trinity Mirror-owned *Daily Record* in Glasgow, is among 13 staff at the Scottish tabloid and the *Sunday Mail* to have their applications for voluntary redundancy accepted. **Jim Traynor** has been appointed executive sports editor of both papers as part of the restructuring. The *Record's* deputy sports editor, **Austin Barrett**, has become sports editor and *Sunday Mail* sports editor, **George Cheyne**, his deputy.

● **Stephen Brenkley**, cricket correspondent at the *Independent on Sunday*, has been confirmed in the role for the group's daily title. He succeeds Angus Fraser, who has returned to Lord's to work for Middlesex County Cricket Club. Indy head of sport **Matt Trench** is among more than 30 staff on the two titles taking redundancy.

● **Andrew Shields**, sports editor at London listings title *Time Out* since 1991, has been made redundant. The magazine is to go without a sports and fitness section editor for the first time in three decades. Shields is working for LOCOG as editorial services manager on a one-year contract.

● **Neil Wilson**, the honorary treasurer of the SJA for the past two years, is picking up his pension after 17 years as athletics correspondent of the *Daily Mail*. He plans to be back in harness – and covering the sport – before the end of the summer working on a freelance basis.

● **Gary Payne** has left *The Sun* to join the Guardian group as deputy sports news editor.

AGM on April 22 at UK Sport

THE SJA's 2009 annual general meeting will be held at UK Sport from 12.30pm on April 22. To attend, you must be a fully paid-up member, and for security reasons must advise secretary Steven Downes by email (see Contacts) by noon on April 20. UK Sport's office is at 40 Bernard Street, London, WC1N 1ST, opposite Russell Square Tube station.

This year there will be committee elections. The following are standing as officers – chairman: Barry Newcombe; vice-chairman: Stuart Robinson; secretary: Steven Downes; treasurer: Randall Northam.

There are eight places available on the committee. Seven current committee members are standing again: Philip Barker, Ian Cole, Mary Fitzhenry, Leo Mason, Jim Munro, David Walker and David Welch. Three new

candidates have been proposed: Ben Clissitt, Ian Stafford and James Toney.

The meeting will be asked to consider a motion proposed by the committee that will see the existing annual reports from the chairman and secretary merged into a single report delivered on behalf of the committee. The existing financial report from the treasurer is unaffected by the proposal that "The general committee of the SJA proposes to change 8/2/i of the constitution, which currently reads: 'Receive the reports of the Chairman and Secretary of the work of the previous year.' This would change to: 'Receive the report of the general committee of the work of the previous year.'"

After the business of the meeting, there will be a buffet lunch for members.

DAVID WELCH

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 <small>Patrick BARCLAY Sunday Telegraph</small>	 <small>Stuart BARNES Sunday Times/Sky</small>	 <small>Mihir BOSE BBC Sport</small>	 <small>Will BUCKLEY Observer</small>	 <small>David GONN Guardian</small>
 <small>Lucinda GREEN Freelance</small>	 <small>Paul HAYWARD Daily Mail</small>	 <small>Mark HODGKINSON Daily Telegraph</small>	 <small>Ben JACOBS Freelance</small>	 <small>Martin JOHNSON Freelance</small>
 <small>Stephen JONES Sunday Times</small>	 <small>Martin KEOWN BBC/Freelance</small>	 <small>Paul KIMMAGE Sunday Times</small>	 <small>James LAWTON Independent</small>	 <small>Hugh McILVANEY Sunday Times</small>
 <small>Sue MOTT Freelance</small>	 <small>Sarah STIRK Setanta/Freelance</small>	 <small>Tom WATT Freelance</small>	 <small>Jim WHITE Daily Telegraph</small>	 <small>Laura WILLIAMSON Daily Mail</small>

FIS ● Elena BALTACHA former GB Tennis No. 1 ● John TAYLOR Freelance ● Sam WALLACE Independent

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DOUBLE TOP COPY FROM TAYLOR AND HOWLEY

PHIL TAYLOR, the 14-time darts world champion, and Wales and British Lions assistant rugby union coach, Rob Howley, are two of the top personalities to be invited to speak at the Sports Journalists' Association's working lunches in Fleet Street this year (double Olympic swimming gold medallist Rebecca Adlington was due to be our next guest as the *Bulletin* went to press). Taylor, top, seen being presented with an exclusive Kevin Macey cartoon by lunches organiser Mary Fitzhenry, made headlines when he told the lunch, which included the *Daily Star's* Brian Woolnough, Alan Hubbard of the *Observer* and Gary Payne, then of *The Sun* but now at the *Guardian*, that he would ban players from drinking alcohol during competitions. Speaking of his physique, Taylor added: "Imagine what I'd be worth if I went up on the stage looking a million dollars; if I looked the business like Beckham." Howley, pictured with members of the SJA's politbureau past and present, Trevor Bond, Barry Newcombe and Steven Downes, spoke the day after Bath and England prop Matt Stevens was revealed to have failed a drugs test. Howley, who won 59 caps for



Pics: Steve Rowe



Wales at scrum half, said the case highlighted the responsibility the sport's stars have to the game and their clubs – as well as to themselves and their families. "It's sad and I genuinely feel very sorry for Matt Stevens," said Howley. "But he has been irresponsible."

SJA subs now overdue

SJA subs for 2009 were due on January 1. If you have not paid them by April 30, the general committee has the right to end your membership. Subs are £30 for members living or working in London, and £20 for those in the regions.

Also, if you have not paid your subs in advance of the event, you may not attend or vote at the annual general meeting on April

22, nor receive further SJA *Bulletins*, *Yearbooks* or other membership benefits, such as discounted entry to our working lunches and awards ceremonies.

If you have not paid yet, please send a cheque immediately, payable to the SJA, to Bill Colwill (see Contacts).

If you have any queries, please e-mail: BColwill@aol.com.

Dates for your diary

■ **Thursday, April 16:** British Olympic Association/Andy Hunt lunch

■ **Wednesday April 22:** SJA AGM, UK Sport (12.30pm), with buffet lunch

■ **Tuesday May 5:** SJA Spring Golf Day, Surrey Downs Golf Club

■ **Monday September 7:** SJA Autumn Golf Day, Muswell Hill Golf Club, London

■ **Wednesday December 9:** SJA's 61st Annual British Sports Awards, The Brewery, London

• For lunches contact Mary Fitzhenry (see Contacts); for golf days, Trevor Bond at trevjanbond1@aol.com