

## LAUREUS WORLD SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

*Awarded to the sportsman who best demonstrates supreme athletic performance and achievement - such as consecutive or multiple world, continental, international or national and major championship titles or the establishment of world records or best performances.*

### **Kenenisa Bekele (Ethiopia) Athletics, 27**

Ethiopia's Kenenisa Bekele established himself as one of the greatest distance runners of all time after another remarkable year in which he achieved the first ever 5,000 and 10,000 metres double in the World Athletics Championships, in Berlin. In a front line career of more than eight years, Bekele has never been beaten at 10,000 metres and he has won gold at that distance in four straight World Championships. His double success in Berlin followed an equally stunning Olympic Games in 2008 when he became the first man in 25 years to win the 5,000 and 10,000 in the same Olympiad. Also an outstanding cross-country runner, Bekele has won six long course (12km) and five short course world titles (4km).

### **Usain Bolt (Jamaica) Athletics, 23**

Usain Bolt followed his wonderful Olympic year with an equally spectacular 2009. At the World Championships in Berlin, Bolt won 100 metres, 200 metres and 4x100 metres relay gold medals, just as he had done in Beijing 12 months earlier. In the 100 metres, Bolt improved his world record with a time of 9.58secs, taking over a tenth of a second off the previous record, the biggest ever margin of improvement since the introduction of electronic timing. He also won the 200 metres gold medal in a new world record time of 19.19secs, breaking his own record by 0.11secs. He was also a member of the Jamaican team which won the 4x100 metres relay gold medal. Bolt won the 2009 Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award after his performance in Beijing.

### **Alberto Contador (Spain) Cycling, 27**

Spanish cyclist Alberto Contador won his second Tour de France in three years in 2009. Renowned as the best climbing specialist and stage racer in the world, Contador won Stage 15 by more than a minute from his closest rivals to take the yellow jersey. He extended his lead after finishing second in a breakaway on Stage 17, and the next day won the second time trial to increase the gap to more than four minutes, an advantage he never lost. He beat his Astana team-mate Lance Armstrong, who had returned to cycling after four years, into third place. It was an even more satisfying win for Contador than his first Tour de France victory in 2007, when he inherited the yellow jersey when the leader at the time, Michael Rasmussen, was withdrawn by his team. Contador, who won the Giro d'Italia and Vuelta a Espana in 2008, is the fifth man to win all three Grand Tours of cycling.

### **Roger Federer (Switzerland) Tennis, 28**

The year 2009 proved to be a historic one for Roger Federer as he passed many tennis milestones. His victory over Robin Soderling at the French Open made him one of only six men to have completed a career Grand Slam of Australian, French, Wimbledon and US Open titles. His sixth Wimbledon victory in July, in which he beat American Andy Roddick in a classic final, gave him a new record of 15 Grand Slam victories, overtaking the long-standing record of Pete Sampras. At the US Open, Federer reached his 21st Grand Slam final, another record, by defeating No 4 seed Novak Djokovic in the semi-final, during which he played what he described as 'the greatest shot I ever hit in my life' – a between-the-legs passing shot which gave him match point. However he lost to Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro in the final, breaking a streak of 40 straight wins at the US Open.



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### **Lionel Messi (Argentina) Football, 22**

Brilliant young Argentinian footballer Lionel Messi had his most successful season in 2008/09, scoring 38 goals and playing a crucial part in a glittering year for Barcelona in which they won three competitions - the UEFA Champions League, the Spanish League and the Spanish Cup. In the Champions League final in Rome, he scored the second goal to secure a 2-0 win over Manchester United, and in the Copa del Rey final he scored one goal and assisted for another two in the 4-1 victory over Athletic Bilbao. As Barcelona's successful Spanish League season was drawing to a close, Messi scored twice - his 35th and 36th goals – in a memorable 6-2 victory over arch rivals Real Madrid. In December he was named FIFA World Player of the Year.

### **Valentino Rossi (Italy) Motor Cycling, 30**

One of the greatest motor cycle racers of all time, Yamaha rider Valentino Rossi won his seventh senior MotoGP World Championship in 2009. Now he is only one senior world title behind Laureus World Sports Academy member Giacomo Agostini who won eight. It was Rossi's ninth world title in total, having also won at 125cc in 1997 and 250cc in 1999. In 2008 Rossi had overtaken Agostini's long standing career record of 68 500cc Grand Prix wins, and by the end of 2009 he had increased his total to 77 following wins in Spain, Catalonia, Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic and San Marino/Rimini. His win at Assen in the Netherlands was his 100<sup>th</sup> career victory.



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## LAUREUS WORLD SPORTSWOMAN OF THE YEAR

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### **Shelly-Ann Fraser (Jamaica) Athletics, 23**

One of the amazing Jamaicans who are currently dominating sprinting, in 2009 Shelly-Ann Fraser added the World Championship 100 metres gold medal to the Olympic gold medal she won in Beijing the previous year. She is the only female sprinter to hold both World and Olympic 100 metres titles simultaneously. In Berlin, Fraser held off a late surge from fellow Jamaican Kerron Stewart to win in 10.73secs, the third fastest time in the event's history and the fastest time ever run by a Jamaican woman. She also won a gold medal in the 4x100 metres relay.

### **Federica Pellegrini (Italy) Swimming, 21**

In front of a passionate Rome crowd, Italy's Federica Pellegrini became the first woman to break the four minute barrier in the 400 metres freestyle as she swam to the gold medal in the 2009 World Championships. Her time of 3mins 59.15secs turned her into the biggest star of the championships and on to the front cover of Vanity Fair magazine where she appeared painted head to toe in gold paint. She also won the 200 metres freestyle gold medal in a world record time. Her success in Rome was some consolation for her disappointment at the Beijing Olympics in 2008 where she arrived as favorite in the 400 metres but could only finish fifth, however she did take gold in the 200 metres. She is also the only Italian swimmer to have set world records in more than one event.

### **Sanya Richards (United States) Athletics, 24**

Sanya Richards has been the No 1 runner at 400 metres for five years, but was not able to win an individual gold medal in the Olympic or world competition, until 2009 in the World Championships in Berlin, where she crossed the line in 49.00secs to win the individual 400 metres title. She also anchored the US team in the 4x400 metres relay to take a second gold. Born in the same part of Jamaica as Usain Bolt, Sanya Richards moved to the United States when she was 12. In 2009, she ran the four fastest times in the world and won a share of the US\$1m Golden League jackpot for the third time in her career, going undefeated in the six Golden League meetings.

### **Britta Steffen (Germany) Swimming, 26**

The fastest woman in the world in a pool, Germany's Britta Steffen won two gold medals in world record times at the 2009 World Championships in Rome, including the blue riband 100 metres freestyle, in which she recorded a time of 52.07secs, beating her own record of 52.22 which she had set four days earlier. Two days later she won her second title in the women's 50 metres freestyle, again breaking the world record with a time of 23.73. Her amazing year followed her double Olympic triumph in 2008 when she won gold in the 50m and 100m freestyle.



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### **Lindsey Vonn (United States) Alpine Skiing, 25**

American Lindsey Vonn proved herself to be the dominant women's skier of 2009 and one of the greatest of all time after a second brilliant season in a row in which she won her eighth World Cup title and captured two gold medals in the World Championships in Val d'Isere in Downhill and Super-G. She also won World Cup titles in Downhill and Super-G disciplines. Her record-breaking year made her the most successful American women skier in World Cup history and the first American to win back-to-back overall World Cup titles. In the Super-G at Tarvisio in February, she skied to her 19<sup>th</sup> World Cup victory, surpassing Tamara McKinney's American record. By the end of the season she had taken her total of World Cup wins to 22.

### **Serena Williams (United States) Tennis, 28**

American tennis star Serena Williams won both the Australian Open and Wimbledon in 2009 to take her total of career Grand Slam singles victories to 11, putting her seventh on the all-time list. She regained the World No 1 ranking for the fifth time in her career in November. However her excellent year was somewhat spoiled at the US Open after a widely reported on-court row with a lineswoman who foot-faulted her at 5-6, 15-30 in the final set of the semi-final against Kim Clijsters. Williams will spend the next two years on a good behaviour bond.



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## LAUREUS WORLD TEAM OF THE YEAR AWARD

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### **Barcelona FC (Spain) Football**

Under coach Josep Guardiola, Barcelona won their third Champions League/European Cup final in May 2009, beating English club Manchester United 2-0 in Rome, to add to their victories in 1992 and 2006. Barcelona also won a Spanish domestic double in 2008/09 winning the La Liga Championship and the Copa del Rey. It was the first time a Spanish club had won the three competitions in the same season. Over the last two years nearly €90 million has been spent rebuilding the Barcelona squad, bringing in players such as Dani Alves, Martin Caceres, Aliaksandr Hleb, Seydou Keita and Gerard Piqué. The club has also produced many brilliant players through its youth scheme including Xavi Hernandez, Andres Iniesta, Carles Puyol, Victor Valdes and Lionel Messi who was named FIFA World Player of the Year in December.

### **Brawn Formula One Team (United Kingdom) Motor Racing**

The Brawn team amazed Formula One in 2009 by winning the drivers and constructors world titles in its debut year. Brawn was formed from the defunct Honda team in March 2009 when Ross Brawn, former technical director of Benetton, Ferrari and Honda, led a management buyout, following the Japanese manufacturer's withdrawal from Grand Prix racing. With engines supplied by Mercedes-Benz, Brawn won the World Constructors Championship and the individual World Championship with their driver Jenson Button. Button won six of the first seven Grand Prix to effectively secure his world title, while team-mate Rubens Barrichello added victories in Valencia and Monza. At the end of the year, a majority interest in Brawn was sold to Mercedes-Benz and the team will race in 2010 as Mercedes Grand Prix.

### **Germany Women's Football Team (Germany) Football**

Germany's women showed they were the most dominant national football team in the world by winning their fifth straight European Championship title, a feat which included an overwhelming 6-2 win over England in the final. Over the same period they have also won the Women's World Cup twice, in 2003 and 2007. Since the inception of the European Women's Championship, Germany have been winners on seven occasions. In 2009 in the finals in Finland, Germany, under coach Silvia Neid, beat Norway, France and Iceland in the group stage to advance to the quarter-finals, where they won 2-1 against Italy. After trailing Norway at half-time in the semi-final, the German team fought back for a 3-1 victory. Birgit Prinz and Inka Grings both scored twice in the 6-2 final win over England.

### **Los Angeles Lakers (United States) Basketball**

The Lakers won their 15th NBA title in 2009 in their record 30th play-off appearance. Only Boston Celtics have a better record with 17 titles. After losing in the 2008 play-offs, the Lakers came back to win the championship, beating Orlando Magic 4-1 in the final. Kobe Bryant was named Most Valuable Player in the finals for the first time in his career. At the end of the 2008/09 season, the Lakers held the records for having the most wins (2,970), the highest winning percentage (61.7%) and the second fewest non-playoff seasons (five).



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### **New York Yankees (United States) Baseball**

Thousands of Yankees fans came onto the streets of New York to celebrate the team's 27th - and record - World Series victory in November after beating reigning champions Philadelphia Phillies. The Yankees' World Series title was their first since 2000. In those nine years, owner George Steinbrenner has spent freely to put together a winning side, most recently bringing pitchers C.C. Sabathia, A.J. Burnett and first baseman Mark Teixeira into a team that already boasted the celebrated Alex Rodriguez. Yet the hero of the World Series victory was Hideki Matsui, who became the first Japanese-born player to be named Most Valuable Player in the World Series. He more than lived up to his nickname 'Godzilla,' hitting .615 (8 for 13) with three home runs and eight RBI, including a World Series record-tying six RBI performance in Game Six.

### **South African Rugby Team (South Africa) Rugby**

The Springboks were named International Rugby Board Team of the Year in 2009, edging out Six Nations winners Ireland. The year began with a closely-fought 2–1 series win over the British and Irish Lions, which they followed with a convincing win in the Tri Nations Series, beating the All Blacks twice and losing only to Australia in Brisbane. They also won the Freedom Cup, against the All Blacks and the Mandela Challenge Plate against Australia. Those performances took them to No 1 in the IRB rankings, although their year ended less successfully when they toured Europe in November, beating Italy, but losing to France and Ireland.



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## LAUREUS WORLD BREAKTHROUGH OF THE YEAR

*Awarded to the sportsperson or team whose performance as a newcomer suggests the greatest potential for an outstanding career, or to an established sportsman or sportswoman who produces a significant step-up in class to a considerably higher level of sporting achievement.*

### **Jenson Button (United Kingdom) Motor Racing, 30**

Following the withdrawal of Honda at the end of 2008, Britain's Jenson Button was left without a drive until former Honda technical director Ross Brawn stepped in and engineered a management buyout of the team. Button then found himself in a highly competitive Mercedes-Benz powered car for the 2009 season. He won six of the first seven races of the year, equaling the record of Michael Schumacher and Jim Clark and clinched the World Championship at the Brazilian Grand Prix in Sao Paulo with a race to spare. He and his team-mate Rubens Barrichello also clinched the Constructors Championship for Brawn. Button's wins were in Australia, Malaysia, Bahrain, Spain, Monaco and Turkey. With 169 starts, Button had made the second-highest number of race starts before becoming World Champion. He has now signed for Vodafone McLaren Mercedes for the 2010 season.

### **Mark Cavendish (United Kingdom) Cycling, 24**

Recognised as the fastest sprinter in the World, Mark Cavendish won six stages of the 2009 Tour de France – a record achievement for a British cyclist. This followed on from 2008 when he won four stages. He became the first Briton to wear the green jersey for two days in a row. Also in 2009 he won the Milan–San Remo Classic, known as one of the 'five monuments of cycling', and the Sparkassen Giro Bochum. In September he recorded the 50<sup>th</sup> win of his road racing career in a sprint finish in the opening stage of the Tour of Missouri.

### **Tom Daley (United Kingdom) Diving, 15**

In the 2009 World Championships, held in Rome, talented young Briton Tom Daley won the individual 10 metre platform gold medal. Daley, who started diving at seven, made his name at the Beijing Olympics in 2008 where he was the youngest competitor of any nationality outside swimming, and the youngest to participate in a final.

### **Juan Martin del Potro (Argentina) Tennis, 21**

Argentina's young prodigy Juan Martin del Potro beat Roger Federer, the dominant tennis player of the decade, in five sets at the US Open in September to win his first ever Grand Slam title. It was Federer's first defeat at the US Open since 2003 and del Potro showed remarkable resilience coming back to win from two sets and a service break down in the third. On his way to the final, del Potro also beat Rafael Nadal in straight sets. An attacking baseline player with a powerful serve and an excellent forehand capable of generating speeds of more than 100mph, del Potro also finished as runner-up to Nikolai Davydenko in the ATP Finals.

### **VFL Wolfsburg (Germany) Football**

In the 2008/09 season under Felix Magath, the former Bayern Munich manager, Wolfsburg, a relatively small club from Lower Saxony, broke into the big time by winning their first Bundesliga title. During the season, Wolfsburg equalled the longest winning streak in a Bundesliga season with ten successive victories after the winter break. They also became the only team in the Bundesliga to have had two strikers to score more than 20 goals each in one season with Brazilian Grafite (28) and Bosnian Edin Dzeko (26). As a result of their Bundesliga success, Wolfsburg qualified for the Champions League for the first time in their history.



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### **Ji Yai Shin (South Korea) Golf, 21**

Led the money list on the LPGA Tour in her first full year with winnings of US\$1.8 million, and also won the LPGA Rookie of the Year Award. Despite a slow start to the year, she won three times – the HSBC Women's Championship, the Wegmans LPGA and the P&G Beauty event. Ji Yai Shin had broken all existing Korean records when she won 10 events from 19 starts in 2007, and followed this up the following year with three victories in ten tournaments on the LPGA Tour including the Women's British Open and the ADT Championship.



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## LAUREUS WORLD COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

*Awarded to the sportsperson or team who has overcome injury, illness, adversity, disappointment or failure and risen back to triumph in the sporting arena. The Award may also mark a historic fightback by an individual or a team in a sporting event or series of sports events.*

### **Lance Armstrong (United States) Cycling, 38**

Record seven-time winner of the Tour de France, Lance Armstrong made his comeback to the race in 2009 after a four year absence. Even more remarkably he had broken his collarbone in March after a crash in one of his warm-up events, the Vuelta Castilla y Leon in Spain, and had needed corrective surgery, but he was still able to recover in time to take part in the Tour in which he finished third, behind the winner, his Astana team-mate Alberto Contador. Armstrong said that his comeback had been inspired by his desire to raise national awareness of cancer, which he had fought and beaten in the late 1990s.

### **Kim Clijsters (Belgium) Tennis, 26**

Kim Clijsters made a dramatic comeback to tennis in 2009, winning the US Open as a non-seeded wildcard in only her third tournament after a two year absence. It was a remarkable return to top level sport. Clijsters had announced her retirement in May 2007 at the age of 24 because of continuing injuries. After playing in two tournaments as a warm-up, she played at Flushing Meadows and beat World No 3 Venus Williams in the fourth round – only Clijster's 11<sup>th</sup> match since coming out of retirement - then she beat World No 2 Serena Williams in the semi-final and ninth seed Caroline Wozniacki in straight sets in the final. Her US Open win placed her in the top 20 in the world rankings, she became the first wild card champion in US Open history and the first mother to win a Grand Slam title in the Open era since Evonne Goolagong Cawley won Wimbledon in 1980.

### **Jessica Ennis (United Kingdom) Athletics, 23**

Having missed the 2008 Beijing Olympics with a stress fracture of the ankle, Jessica Ennis came back in style to win the heptathlon gold medal in the World Championships in Berlin. In a brilliant 2009, she produced a new personal best at the IAAF World Combined Events Challenge in Desenzano del Garda to win the event with a total of 6,587 points, and became World champion in Berlin with another personal best of 6,731.

### **Brett Favre (United States) American Football, 39**

Brett Favre came out of retirement for the second time and signed with the Minnesota Vikings in August 2009. One month later he created a NFL record with his 271<sup>st</sup> consecutive start as quarter-back with Minnesota Vikings overtaking the mark of Jim Marshall. He was the starting quarter-back for the Green Bay Packers between 1992 and 2007 and for the New York Jets in 2008. He was a member of the Packers 1997 Super Bowl winning team.

### **Blanka Vlasic (Croatia) Athletics, 26**

After a disappointing 2008 when she failed to win the Olympic gold medal and the US\$1m Golden League by the narrowest of margins – on countback of the losing due to the higher number of attempts she had made at the height - Croatia's greatest high jumper Blanka Vlasic stormed back in 2009 to win World Championship gold and record a personal best within the space of 11 days in August. At the Berlin World Championships on August 20 she cleared 2.04 metres to win gold, then in Zagreb on August 31 she cleared 2.08 metres – the second best high jump ever.



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### **Tom Watson (United States) Golf, 60**

Eight times major championship winner Tom Watson came within a putt of winning the British Open at Turnberry in July at the age of 59. He needed a par on the final hole to take his sixth British Open, but could only manage a bogey five, and lost the resulting play-off to Stewart Cink. During his eventful four days, Watson became the oldest man to have the lead after any round of a major Championship and the oldest player to lead a major going into the last round. In the 1970s and 1980s, Watson was one of the leading players in the world, winning five British Open championships, two US Masters and one US Open. He headed the US PGA Tour money list five times



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## LAUREUS WORLD ACTION SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR

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### **Chris Cole (USA) Skateboarding, 27**

Cole enjoyed a dominant 2009. He won his second Thrasher magazine Skater of the Year award for his ability to do anything he wants on a skateboard. Cole took the overall Dew Cup, thanks to several huge performances. His first place finish at the PlayStation Pro set him apart from last year's winner Chaz Ortiz by 62 points in the overall Tour rankings.

### **Stephanie Gilmore (Australia) Surfing, 22**

In 2009, Gilmore claimed her third consecutive ASP Women's World Title – making her the only surfer (male or female) ever to win the title each year they competed on the tour. Her overall title was highlighted by a win at the Roxy Pro Gold Coast, second at the Rip Curl Women's Pro Bells Beach, second at the Commonwealth Bank Beachley Classic, and second at the Movistar Peru Classic. In short, Gilmore spent 2009 cementing her position as the dominant female surfer in the world.

### **Greg Long (USA) Surfing, 26**

Surfers are rarely honoured for winning just one event. But they are when the event is the Quiksilver In Memory of Eddie Aikau. Long secured all four of his top scores by committing to a late, never-say-die attack, including several death-defying rides and one a perfect 100-pointer. This is all the more incredible given that he only rode Waimea for the first time that week. The Eddie Aikau is held only when surf is over 20 feet; surfers stand by all season to see if they get the call from organizers to compete.

### **Mick Fanning (Australia) Surfing, 27**

Fanning claimed his second World Surfing Championship in 2009, adding to the same title he won in 2007. Renowned not only for his incredible surfing, Fanning is also admired for his comeback from a complete hamstring tear in 2004, which required extensive surgery. Mick was also nominated for the Laureus World Action Sportsman of the Year in 2008, following his World Championship year of 2007.

### **Antoine Albeau (France) Windsurfing, 37**

Albeau successfully defended his PWA Slalom World Championship in 2009. He has held 11 eleven World Championships in different disciplines since 1994, and is best known for setting the world sailing speed record in March 2008. Driven by 50 knot winds, he reached 49.09 knots on a course in France. In October 2008 he completed a six hour, 75-mile open sea crossing between Cherbourg, France and Poole, UK.



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### **Danny MacAskill (United Kingdom) Trials Bike Rider, 24**

Once unheard of outside trials circles, a video of MacAskill's bike stunts has brought the rider to international renown, attracting more than 350,000 hits in its first 40 hours on YouTube. He is shown jumping off roofs, a tree and even riding along spiky railings. He says: "My mum used to get pretty sick of the police always being at the door with me because I used to jump onto people's walls with my bike. But since then I have even done demos for the police who are working with community projects to inspire youths."



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## LAUREUS WORLD SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR WITH A DISABILITY

*Awarded to the person who best demonstrates excellent athletic achievement and strong leadership qualities in a sport in the Paralympic programme*

### **Justin Eveson (Australia) Wheelchair Basketball, 29**

At the age of 12, Justin Eveson had his right leg amputated below the knee after a garden accident. He initially took up swimming, but in 2000 switched to wheelchair basketball. He began to play for Perth Wheelcats in 2001, made the Australian team in 2002 and has since played professionally in Spain, Italy and Turkey. In 2009, Justin was on the winning side in every tournament in which he took part. Among those were the Australian National Wheelchair Basketball League, the Turkish National Wheelchair Basketball League and the European Wheelchair Basketball Champions Cup.

### **Kurt Fearnley (Australia) Wheelchair Marathon, 28**

Born without the lower portion of his spine, Kurt took up wheelchair racing when he was 14. He is the reigning wheelchair marathon world champion and was undefeated over the distance in 2009 with victories in Chicago, London, Paris, Seoul and Sydney. It was the third year in a row Kurt had won the Paris and Seoul marathons, but it was his victory in London which was the most satisfying, after he had finished second in 2007 and 2008. In November, after 18 months preparation, he crawled 96km of the Kodoka Trail in Papua New Guinea to raise money and awareness for men's health issues.

### **Gizem Girismen (Turkey) Archery, 28**

Turkish athlete Gizem Girismen has been ranked No 1 archer in the world for Women's Ind. Recurve-W1/W2 since 2007. She confirmed her world-beater status by winning gold at the Para-Archery World Championships in August 2009. Having suffered a car accident at the age of 11 which left her paralysed, Gizem took up archery at 23, immediately following the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games. Within four years she had reached the summit of her sport and won the gold medal in Beijing. She is the first Turkish female athlete to have won a gold medal at the Paralympic Games.

### **Shingo Kunieda (Japan) Wheelchair Tennis, 26**

The world's No 1 player Shingo Kunieda from Japan enjoyed a second successive unbeaten year in 2009, ending the season as World Champion for the third year in a row. He finished the year more than 1700 points clear of his nearest pursuer in the rankings, winning 37 matches and eight singles titles, including all three Grand Slam events - Australian Open, Roland Garros and the US Open. At the end of the year Kunieda was unbeaten in 77 matches dating back to 2007. Shingo's dazzling record of success includes victory in the Beijing Paralympic Games and a career total of 11 Grand Slam titles. Shingo suffers from a lower back injury after spinal surgery.



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### **Michael Teuber (Germany) Cycling, 42**

As a result of a car crash in 1987 Michael Teuber became semi-paraplegic. Since 1998 he has competed successfully in cycle races, three times being nominated for the Laureus Disability Award. He had his greatest year in 2009, winning three gold and a silver medal in individual events at the UCI World Championships. Also, on the track in Manchester, he raced to the world title in 3,000 metres pursuit for the fourth time and took gold for the second time in the 1,000 metres time trial. He also set his ninth world record in the 'flying' 200 metres event.

### **Natalie Du Toit (South Africa) Swimming, 26**

History was made in 2008 when Natalie du Toit competed in Beijing in both the Olympic Games AND the Paralympic Games. She was the toast of South Africa after winning five gold medals. In 2009, she kept up her remarkable performances and continued to dominate able-bodied and disabled swimming in South Africa. She also managed to break achieve her goal in swimming, winning the 10km FINA women's marathon in under 1hr 57mins in Dubai. In December she was presented with the order of Ikhamanga In Gold, by President Zuma, the highest honour any South African athlete can receive.



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