

OCS 'Crowns' OCS Young Sports Person 2008

Leading property support services provider OCS was proud to name 15 year old gymnast Sam Oldham from Nottingham as the OCS Young Sports Person 2008 at the star-studded annual awards ceremony hosted by TV presenter and sports journalist Clare Balding on 27 November at the Brit Oval in London. Sam received his award from Beijing Olympic Gold Medallist kayaker Tim Brabants. OCS Young Sports Person Awards regional winner for the Midlands, Sam, was named overall winner for 2008 beating off stiff competition from 8 other regional finalists and a Disabled Athlete and Young Star category winner. In partnership with charity SportsAid, the Awards aim to give financial assistance and encouragement to young British sporting talent.

Through the partnership with SportsAid, OCS has been able to increase the number of awards it makes through the awards scheme from 11 to 31. "Whilst helping young athletes through financial support and encouragement will always be the main aim of the awards, our support for the event and our new partnership with SportsAid is a clear demonstration that we are keenly aware of the responsibilities to the wider communities within which we operate. This is very important to us and fits in with our strong family values," said OCS Chief Executive Chris Cracknell.

The OCS Young Sports Person Awards is now in its 11th year and has made some £250,000 awards benefiting over 100 young sports people in the early stages of their career. Eight previous winners of the OCS Young Sports Person Awards were part of Team GB competing in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

SportsAid, the charity responsible for funding emerging sporting talent for over 30 years, supports in excess of 1,500 able bodied and disabled young sports people every year and is at the heart of the talented athlete sponsorship scheme (TASS). Tim Lawler, Chief Executive of SportsAid, commented, "This is the first year SportsAid is joining forces with OCS, a company already committed to funding talented youngsters through the Young Sports Person Awards. We are delighted that by working together we can offer even more awards to talented young athletes."

Award winner Sam began gymnastics at the age of 7 on his school teacher's recommendation as a way of channelling his hyperactivity. He is the British Men's U14 Gymnastic Championship, English All Round Junior Champion and a member of the British World Class 2010 Squad. Sam visited Beijing as part of the Olympic Ambitions initiative run by the British Olympic Association, fuelling his ambition to be part of the 2012 Olympic Team GB in London. Home schooled so that he can carry out a minimum 26 hour a week training regime, Sam still finds time to play golf as a hobby. Sam prides himself on his strong mental ability to focus on his sport through difficult times. He takes part in pommel horse, rings, parallel bar and high bar and most enjoys artistic floor work. "Winning this award will really help with all the travel I have to do," says Sam, "and it will also help to put my sport into the spotlight. Over a number of years, Sam balanced gymnastics with football and was a registered player with Notts FC Centre of Excellence until its closure.

