

NEWS

ANDREESCU NAMED CANADA'S ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Laura Armstrong

Bianca Andreescu completed her historic 2019 season with another win Monday, Dec. 9 becoming the first tennis player to be awarded the Lou Marsh Trophy as Canada's athlete of the year.

She won in style, too, having been voted the recipient unanimously by a panel of Canadian sports media members.

The 19-year-old tennis phenom from Mississauga began the season ranked 152nd in the world. She finished 2019, having reached a career-high fourth in the global ranking - the highest a Canadian has ever stood in the history of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) rankings - after be-

coming Canada's first Grand Slam singles champion with an upset of Serena Williams in the U.S. Open final.

That victory, along with wins at the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, Calif. and the Rogers Cup in Toronto -- where she became the first Canadian woman to win the national tournament in 50 years -- helped propel her up the rankings, where she finished the season fifth overall.

Andreescu earned more than \$6.5 million U.S. in winnings on the season and lost just four completed matches, with a 48-7 record, including injury retirements.

She went on a 17-match win streak, the longest of the year, and was 8-0

against players ranked in the top 10.

Her impressive season, which also saw her battle shoulder and knee injuries, also earned her nominations for the WTA's player of the year and newcomer of the year awards.

Andreescu was the clear favourite in a group of five finalists that included golfer Brooke Henderson, St. Louis Blues goaltender Jordan Binnington, sprinter Andre De Grasse and Atlanta Braves pitcher Mike Soroka.

The Lou Marsh is handed out each December to Canada's top athlete - professional or amateur, man or woman, in any sport. That short list was whittled down from a group of about 20 athletes.

The list of nominations initially included Winnipeg Blue Bombers running back Andrew Harris - the first most valuable player and most valuable Canadian at the Grey Cup after he recorded 18 carries for 134 rushing yards and five catches for 35 receiving yards - but he was eventually removed from contention because he tested positive for a banned substance in August, for which he was suspended two games.

While the Lou Marsh award is usually accompanied by a spirited debate among the voting panel of sports media, the fact Andreescu would be crowned this year's victor seemed inevitable.

Andreescu's win shouldn't surprise last year's Lou Marsh winner, freestyle skier Mikael Kingsbury. Kingsbury predicted Andreescu would follow in his footsteps back in September after that historic U.S. Open win.

"Yo @Bandreescu_ any-



Bryon Johnson/Torstar

Bianca Andreescu was named the winner of the Lou Marsh Award as Canada's athlete of the year after a season in which she became Canada's first Grand Slam singles champion with an upset of Serena Williams in the U.S. Open final.

time you want to come take now," Kingsbury tweeted the #LouMarsh I have it in at Andreescu the time. Montreal.. its all yours He was right,