



## **SRAM Night Awards 2019**

KUALA LUMPUR - Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Nafiizwan Adnan led the way as he claimed the Tan Sri Alex Lee Award for the Outstanding Men's Player of 2018 at the recent SRAM Night Awards.

The 32-year-old, fondly known as 'The Komodo' in the squash circle, had a truly memorable year as he capped a career best by taking the single bronze medal at Gold Coast, Australia last April.

The feat was made even more impressive as Nafiizwan even took out three-time world champion Nick Matthew of England in the quarter-finals, a personal achievement for the world No. 36.

Apart from the Commonwealth Games showing, Nafiizwan also enjoyed a strong run at the Asian Games in Jakarta as he also took bronze in the singles event before leading Malaysia to their first ever gold medal in the event, beating hot favourites Hong Kong 2-1 in the final.

That was enough for the Terengganu-born to pip the younger Ng Eain Yow to the award. Eain Yow, 21, also enjoyed a strong year as he played a crucial role in Malaysia's Asian Games gold medals success, chalking up impressive wins as the national No. 2 to earn himself a nomination.

As for the Outstanding Women's Player of the Year, there was only one nominee and it was a clear and deserving win for S. Sivasangari.

The 20-year-old started the year on a bang by winning the Under-19 title at the British Juniors - her last junior event. She was then crowned National Champion after beating former world No. 5 Low Wee Wern before settling for a runners-up finish at the Malaysian Open.

Sivasangari's biggest achievement was however a silver medal finish at the Asian Games in Jakarta. Then she scalped higher ranked players from Hong Kong and India and nearly toppled Malaysian legend Dato' Nicol David before losing in a nail-biting five-setter final.

Meanwhile the national juniors also enjoyed a highly successful 2018 and there was none more impressive than 17-year-old Aifa Azman who picked up the Tunku Tan Sri Imran Award for Outstanding Junior Girl's Player of the Year.

The Kedahan took the Under-17 title at the British Junior Open, helping Malaysia to a historic sweep of four titles in January, before collecting four titles on the Professional Squash Association (PSA) Tour.

In the process, Aifa, who was only 16 then, went on a run that saw her win 18 out of 19 matches and also set the record as the youngest ever Malaysian winner on the PSA Tour.

That was enough for Aifa to take home the award ahead of Federal Territories' Chan Yiwen and Negri Sembilan's M. Kiroshanna.

For the Outstanding Junior Boy Player of the Year, Melaka's Siow Yee Xian took the honours. The lanky 18-year-old won the Under-19 title at the Penang Junior Open and was a third place finisher at Asian Juniors. At the world juniors, he made it as far as the fourth round before falling in four close games to Egypt's Mostafa El Serty.

For their achievements, both Nafiizwan and Sivasangari also pocketed a cool RM1,000 while Aifa and Yee Xian took home RM500 each.

Besides that, SRAM also awarded long-serving junior coach Shahril Shahidan the Coach of the Year award. Shahril, who is attached to the Bukit Jalil Sports School (BJSS), has played an integral role in guiding players, both of senior and junior ranks, over the years. He is also responsible for many of his charges eventually winning top tier tournaments such as the British Juniors and the Asian Juniors.

SRAM also honoured long-serving referee and former committee member Leslie Ponnappalam for Distinguished Services in 2018 and also gave recognition to departing head coach Peter Genever.

Englishman Genever, who has been with SRAM since 2012, will leave the national setup at the end of February.

### **Roll of Honour**

#### *Tan Sri Alex Lee Award*

Outstanding Men's Player of the Year 2018 - Nafiizwan Adnan (Trg)

Outstanding Women's Player of the Year 2018 - S. Sivasangari (Ked)

#### *Tunku Tan Sri Imran Award*

Outstanding Junior Boy's Player of the Year 2018 - Siow Yee Xian (Mlk)

Outstanding Junior Girl's Player of the Year 2018 - Aifa Azman (Kdh)

### **Coach of the Year 2018**

-Shahril Shahidan (BJSS)

### **Coaches Certificate of Recognition**

- Shamsul Bahary (Kel)

- Zulfiqar Khan (Nse)

- Calvin Chang (Sel)

- Ifrahim Gul (Sel)

- Henry Tan (Sel)

### **Distinguished Services Award**

- Leslie Ponnappalam