

Mills' magic year capped with Don award, Goolagong Cawley claims inaugural Dawn award



Australian basketballer Patty Mills has been awarded the Don.

By Roy Ward
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Patty Mills has capped off an unforgettable year, becoming the first basketballer to win the Don award for his inspirational performance at the Tokyo Olympics.

Mills carried the flag and then lifted the Australian Boomers to the nation's first medal in men's basketball, scoring 42 points in the bronze medal game in a win over Slovenia. The Don, named after Sir Donald Bradman, is an annual honour from the Sport Australia Hall of Fame selection committee which is given to an athlete or team who inspires the nation and Mills' efforts in Tokyo certainly met that requirement.

Mills accepted the award from the US where he is continuing to impress with his new NBA club, the Brooklyn Nets who lead the eastern conference with a 15-6 record.

"I go about my craft as a professional and learn ways to get better, trying to carry myself in a way that I think can inspire others," Mills said.

"Being recognised in this way to me isn't about who I sit alongside, it's about how I can inspire others with my journey.

"The honour isn't necessarily about me, it's about the impact on unity, identity, being proud of who you are and expressing that passionately."

Australian tennis legend Evonne Goolagong Cawley was named the first winner of the newly created Dawn award, named after swimming legend Dawn Fraser, for an athlete or team in a current or past generation who was courageous, brave and changed sport for the better.

World No.1 Ashleigh Barty praised Goolangong Cawley, who has been a mentor in her rise to the top of the tennis world, and an inspiration for her triumphant Wimbledon campaign.

“Evonne was an incredible athlete but more than that, she has been an enormous inspiration to generations of Australians, and to me, as a mentor and a friend. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of winning the inaugural The Dawn award,” Barty said.



Australian tennis great Evonne Goolangong Cawley was awarded the inaugural Dawn award.

“She played her career with courage, she played it with passion and with grace, and she challenged the status quo in what was a really challenging time for women in sport and the way that she was able to provide a path for others to dare to dream is absolutely remarkable.”

Another Australian basketballer has claimed an award overnight, with rookie NBA guard Josh Giddey claiming his first honour in the US league after he was named rookie of the month for the western conference.

Giddey, the No.6 pick in this year’s NBA draft, has averaged 10.4 points, 7.2 rebounds and 5.8 assists for the Oklahoma City Thunder across the late October and November award window.

Cleveland centre Eric Mobley won the eastern conference honour as rookie of the month.