

Media Release

For Immediate Release

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LOTTO Sport Maker Finalists win the Ultimate Team Experience

It's official our LOTTO Sport Maker Finalists Debbie and Steve Hitakahiwai have won the ultimate team experience in the nationwide vote. The LOTTO Volunteers campaign set up by LOTTO and Sport NZ to recognise and give back to the nearly one million sports volunteers in New Zealand.

Steve and Debbie were originally nominated last year by current players and parents, with both of them being described as dedicated and passionate people for whom "softball is life". They were selected from over 750 nominations as one of the 10 finalists, to go through to the public vote and win the ultimate team experience.

In early March, voting opened nation wide for the ten Sport Maker finalists, to win the ultimate team experience. Sport Waitakere asked all West Aucklanders to vote for Steve, Debbie and their U15 Girls Waitakere Bears Softball team to win the ultimate team experience. After an overwhelming start that saw the whole website crash, Steve and Debbie took the lead and managed to take the win by over 200 votes!

Nominated by current players and parents, Steve is described as having a "passion for Softball that shows at every training." Alongside Debbie his 'manager extrodinair,' their combined effort is an asset to their club. Steve and Debbie have worked with many different teams throughout the years and have continued coaching and managing at Waitakere Bears Softball Club after their own children have finished playing.

Steve, Debbie and the team now have the task of planning to their ultimate team experience to take place during the next school holidays, and we will keep you updated on what this will look like.

Lotto Sport Maker programme is continuing – with the next round of nominations open now. It's your chance to thank someone in your life who makes sport happen in our community

Sport Volunteers are the lifeblood of sport in New Zealand and without them sport would simply not happen. There are nearly one million volunteers in New Zealand who give up their time for sport so Lotto NZ and Sport NZ have teamed up to reward them for the work that they do.

Prizes of \$2,000 worth of Lotto Volunteers sports gear is given to ten deserving Sport Makers three times a year, with one of these Sport Maker finalists winning the ultimate team experience like Steve, Debbie and the Bears U15 Girls Softball team, so make sure you nominate them at

www.lottovolunteers.co.nz

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About Sport Waitakere

Sport Waitakere is a regional sports trust making a difference in West Auckland through sport and recreation. We do this by providing sport & recreation programmes, events, training and support. We believe in the value of sport and that everyone deserves the opportunity to participate.

For more information, please contact:

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Debbie and Steve Hitakahiwai, Waitakere Bears U15 Girls Softball Manager and Coach. Photo Credit Julie Bennett