

Regional Fit Awards



We are the champions: All the winners pose with their prizes at the second annual FIT Awards.

Pictures: Joseph Capellari/Sport360

Winners



► **GCC Fitness Event of the Year:**
Train Yas

► **Corporate Wellness Initiative of the Year:** Dubai Holding & DHL Express

► **Health Marketing Campaign of the Year:** Fitness First

► **Teacher/Coach of the Year:**
Liz Marshall, Real Pilates

► **Group Exercise Instructor of the Year:** Marija Nikolic, Ishape ME



► **Sports Medicine/Rehab Facility of the Year:** UPANDRUNNING Integrated Medicine Centre

► **Fitness Club Manager of the Year:** Edward Elliot, Fitness First

► **Ladies Only Facility of the Year:**
Exhale Fitness Studio

► **Yoga/Pilates Studio of the Year:**
Real Pilates

► **Functional Fitness Facility of the Year:** Fit Republik



► **Facility of the Year (3,001+ members):** Fitness First Mirdif City Centre

► **Emirati Fitness Leader of the Year:** Saud Said Salem Al Shamsi

► **Personal Trainer of the Year:**
Jarred Lawson, SMART

► **GCC Recreation & Leisure Facility of the Year:** Talise Fitness

► **Facility of the Year (up to 3,000 members):** SMART Fitness



Some serious gains

Fitness First and SMART Fitness among the winners at successful FIT Awards

By Jay Asser

Fitness First continued to set the standard at the second annual UAE FIT Awards as the company again earned the honour of being named the Facility of the Year 3,000+ Members.

The Mirdif City Centre branch was recognised during the gala event at the Els Club, Dubai Sports City, where the FIT Awards commended the leaders of the fitness industry in not just the UAE, but the GCC. Organised by Sport360°, in partnership with FitnessLink and Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) UAE, the ceremony saw both first-time and returning winners.

"It the second year in a row we're achieving this award and in addition to everything we were doing last year, we've also launched nutri-

tion. It's a nice 360 of wellness now where we not just do fitness, but also nutrition," said Edward Elliott, senior general manager of Fitness First Mirdif City Centre.

Elliott was also awarded one of the individual awards on the night, Fitness Club Manager of the Year, while SMART Fitness mirrored Fitness First by winning Facility of the Year Up to 3,000 Members for a second consecutive year.

"It's just validation for all the hard work that we do," said Alison Ramsay, general manager of SMART Fitness. "We're so passionate about providing the very best customer service, treating our staff like they're family and it just makes us so proud."

In total, 15 categories were recognised, including the introduction of two new categories, GCC Fitness Event of the Year and GCC

"It's validation for all the hard work that we do"

- Ramsay

Recreation & Leisure Facility of the Year, which were open to all GCC entrants to further expand the reach and competition.

The latter of the two GCC awards was won by Talise Fitness, with Tim Dorrington, general manager of the Jumeirah Beach Hotel branch, saying: "It's something we've been working towards for the last couple of years now. We've made so many changes to the gym, made so many programmes for the members and made better facilities, so it's an awesome award for us but also for the entire team as well."

The rigorous judging process

for the FIT Awards involved two rounds and over 20 hours of judging by 20 highly professional and experienced industry leaders, facilitated by Deloitte and Touche. The shortlisted finalists were revealed in October.

Following another successful year, the event only gains traction in holding the fitness industry in the region to a higher standard.

"With the second edition of the FIT Awards, our objective was to build on the strong momentum created by last year's inaugural event," said Didier Brun, publisher and deputy CEO of Sport 360°.

"The response has been nothing short of spectacular. A total of a 26,173 public votes were recorded.

"It's a strong indication that these awards are fast becoming the benchmark of the health & fitness industry."

EAFL

Barracudas happy as defensive effort provides a platform

By Jay Asser

Neither the Dubai Barracudas nor the Abu Dhabi Wildcats looked like the finished article in the Emirates American Football League (EAFL) season opener.

Both teams were without key contributors in the Barracudas' 15-0 win at Dubai Sports City on Saturday. In the Barracudas' case, however, the players on the field filled the void left by the ones off it as the defence surrendered just 32 yards in total, sacked Abu Dhabi quarterback Perry Blackburn five times and forced three turnovers –

all without last year's EAFL Defensive MVP Alex Rodriguez.

The dominant defensive effort afforded Dubai quarterback Zavier Cobb and his unit more room for error. "There's a saying I've learned in football, 'offence wins games, defence wins championships'. Today, the defence played like champions," Cobb said.

Cobb was operating without his top target from last season, wide receiver and kicker Michael Andersen.

In his place, Suliman Gaouda stepped up to grab a 30-yard bomb before booting a 28-yard field goal.



Winning start: Barracudas' Rich Stead.

Though the Barracudas' vertical attack broke off large chunks of yardage on several players, the damage could have been more if not for dropped passes and miscommunication.

"We've got to get more in sync with one another," Dubai coach Kyle Jordan said.

"We're also running a little bit of a different system, offensively speaking, and we're missing some players we're used to having out there.

"When we don't have the guys that were here last year that were our consistent starters, you have to break in new starters."

The Wildcats, meanwhile, couldn't overcome their widespread absences, which included star running back Vivaldi Tulyse.

Without their playmaker in the backfield, the offence sputtered out of the gates and never recovered. Injuries on the offensive line only exasperated the problem.

"I had to put a back-up quarterback on the offensive line and that just almost never happens," said coach Tony Robinson, also making a coaching debut in the UAE.

"We had a lot of people play out of position and were just short some numbers at some key positions."