

Liverpool welcomes sporting elite

The UK's best sportsmen and women arrived in Liverpool in December as the city hosted the 2008 BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards.

The crème de la crème of British sport were in attendance, including Formula One star Lewis Hamilton and Ricky Hatton, as well as the stars of the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics teams.

Live from the Echo Arena, Sue Barker, Gary Lineker and Jake Humphrey presented the highlights of a hugely successful year for British sport – watched on TV by millions.

It was the first time the event had been held in Liverpool in its 55-year history – and the historic evening ended with Scottish cycling hero Sir Chris Hoy being named Sports Personality of the year, following his triple gold medal haul in Beijing.

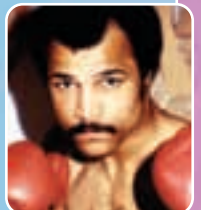
England and Manchester United legend Sir Bobby Charlton received a special 'Lifetime Achievement' award at the ceremony, watched by brother Jackie.

And a whole host of other sporting legends, including Sebastian Coe, Michael Johnson and Sir Steve Redgrave, watched on as the evening unfolded.

The BBC Sports Personality Awards was among the most prestigious, high-profile events to be held in Liverpool during '08, and further cemented the city's position as the UK's capital of sport.



There are so many good memories of last year I have, from the very beginning in January at the launch at St George's Hall to the many events I attended.



One memory that stood out for me in particular was the Alexi Sayle three-week documentary on Liverpool for the BBC, showing him interviewing the Duke of Westminster on site at the Liverpool One development, both with hard hats on and wearing safety clothing, a wonderfully inspiring image of how people come together to build a better future. Which for me sums up the spirit of Liverpool, when the work needs doing, they get it done.

John Conteh, World Champion