



Maria has Star quality!

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Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Maria Tsaptsinos had an extra present to mark her 21st birthday when she was named TASS Star of the Year.

The Reading athlete was announced as the winner at the TASS Star Awards ceremony in London at the weekend. The Star of the Year award is presented to a TASS athlete as recognition of their outstanding achievement this year in their sport and/or study.

Maria could not attend the ceremony, which was part of the Muller Anniversary Games at The London Stadium, because she was otherwise engaged celebrating her 21st with family and friends.

Instead, TASS and the University of Nottingham teamed up to surprise her at her university graduation event earlier in the week, where she picked up her first-class degree in geography.

UoN Scholarship & Recruitment Manager, Phil Wood, presented the trophy to the shocked student in front of family, friends and a crowd of fascinated onlookers.

...and here's what happened when [@UoNSport](#) surprised [@MariaTsaptsinos](#) with the award at her graduation day! pic.twitter.com/naPScrAWil

— Sport England TASS (@TalentedAthlete) [July 23, 2018](#)

"It was a big surprise to win the award and I'm very grateful," said Maria. "Thank you to my TASS Delivery Site, University of Nottingham, who helped me through this difficult year academically and sporting-wise. Thanks to my parents and everyone who has supported me."

TASS – the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme – is a Sport England-funded initiative which helps athletes in

education and aged 16-plus to get the very best from their sporting and academic careers without having to choose between the two.

More than 400 TASS-supported athletes were eligible to be put nominated and Maria was one of 14 to be on the shortlists across five awards.

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