



Press release

25th November 2019

Donna Kunyo from Club 3000 is crowned champion of the National Bingo Game Caller of the Year 2019!

The iconic competition, National Bingo Game Caller of the Year, is back and better than ever. The Final which brought the bingo industry together was held on Sunday 24th November at Buzz Bingo Club Great Park in Birmingham. The event opened its doors to circa 500 people and Donna Kunyo from Club 3000 was crowned the lucky winner, receiving £1000, a trophy, and the prestigious title as National Bingo Game Caller of the Year for 2019. All Runners-Up each received £500 and their trophy to commemorate their achievement in participating in the Final.

The nationwide competition whittled down from over 200 entrants to just six finalists, with Donna fighting off the competition to be crowned as the champion. In preparation for the game all of the customers, supporters and finalists who travelled from around the country in support were welcomed with a glass of bubbly and a sit-down meal. The electric atmosphere throughout the day encouraged the finalists to put on their best performance yet.

The event saw great performances from all the finalists, including an enviable Elvis impersonation, three professional quality singing performers and two natural crowd entertainers. However, it was Donna who stole the show with a rendition of Dame Shirley Bassey's song, 'This is my Life'. Whilst stage presence and showmanship were judged, finalists were also marked on criteria such as their knowledge of the game, presence and stage personality, their skills as a caller and their ability to enhance the customer experience. This year's judging panel consisted of Miles Baron, CEO of The Bingo Association, Blake Robson, winner of Bingo Caller of the Year in 2007, Lyn Staunton, Variety representative, and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party - Tom Watson.

Donna comments on what it means to her to be crowned the winner: *"I'm so overwhelmed right now. I still can't believe that I've won and I'm National Bingo Game Caller of the Year! This day has been incredible from start to finish. I want to thank everyone who came and supported me and I can't wait to celebrate with my club. The whole atmosphere today has been electric and it's really what bingo is all about."*

This year's finalists were: Jason Davies from Mecca Wrexham, Michael Farley from Beacon Cricklewood, Rhys Evans from Castle Merthyr Tydfil, Christopher Graham from Carlton Stirling, Donna Kunyo from Club 3000 Middleton and Bob Manwaring from Buzz Middlesbrough.

CEO of The Bingo Association, Miles Baron comments: *"We are delighted to run the National Bingo Game Caller of the Year competition again as it's a great chance to recognise the talent, dedication, and the skill of Bingo Callers. This year's finalists didn't disappoint either, making it a tough decision to choose the winner but all judges were agreed that Donna deserved to be crowned the champion. From start to finish the atmosphere was amazing and really captured what bingo is all about, it brings people from all walks of life together to play the game and enjoy themselves."*

To find out more about the National Bingo Game and participating clubs visit www.nationalbingo.co.uk or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NationalBingoGame) and Twitter.com @nationalbingo.

All players must be aged 18 or over. The National Bingo Game is played under the provisions of The Gambling Act 2005 and played under National Bingo Game Players' Rules. Players should always gamble responsibly. For more information and advice visit www.BeGambleAware.org

-ENDS-

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Images are available

About The National Game

- The National Bingo Game started in 1986, with the current format launched on 30th April 2018
- The new National Bingo Game is a Full House only game and offers players the following prizes:
Club Prize – won in every club, on every game
Jackpot Prizes of £50,000, £1,000 and £100
- To win a Club Prize a player must be the first in their participating venue to successfully complete a full house.

- To win a Jackpot Prize a player must be the first in their participating venue to successfully complete a full house as follows in the following number of calls:
 16 numbers or less to win £50,000
 20 numbers or less to win £ 1,000
 24 numbers or less to win £ 100
- Tickets for the National Bingo Game are £1 for 2 tickets OR £2 for 5 tickets
- Total prize money paid to date by the National Bingo Game is over £1BILLION!
- The National Bingo Game is the UK's second largest computer controlled game in the UK, the national lottery being the largest
- The National Bingo Game is played twice a day, every day, 364 days a year
- Around 270 clubs across the UK offer the National Bingo Game, including Gala, Mecca, Majestic, Castle, Carlton and Beacon, in addition to a wide range of independent clubs
- National LIVE is a linked interval game also provided the National Bingo Game Association.
- Over three million people play bingo regularly in the UK (at least twice a week)
- A night out at the bingo can cost as little as £15-25 each, including game books, duty, food and drink
- Most common reasons for playing bingo are because it's fun: it offers companionship and the chance to socialise as well as winning cash prizes
- Celebrities love bingo! Catherine Zeta Jones can thank bingo for her career after her dad won enough to afford to send her to theatre school; other celebrity fans include: Denise Van Outen, Scott Mills and former President Barrack Obama's step-mother!
- A number of celebrities started their careers in bingo, including Chris Tarrant, Simon from boy band Blue, East Ender's Shane Richie, Russell Crowe and Kian from West Life.