

A disabled campaigner is hoping to beat the likes of Ryan Giggs and Danny Boyle to become Mancunian of the Year.

Carl Tilson wants people to vote for him in the category in the Pride of Manchester awards.

He hopes a win will increase awareness of the difficulties he and other sufferers of muscle-wasting condition Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, are faced with.

Despite being wheelchair-bound, having to be fed through a tube and needing a ventilator and heart monitoring equipment while he sleeps, he has raised around £100,000 over the past four years for the charity, Action Duchenne. He has also appealed to the government to fund trials into finding a cure by taking a petition to the Prime Minister and spoken directly ministers in the Houses of Parliament.

Carl lives with his parents Fred and Linda in Levenshulme, and will turn 23 next month. Most sufferers do not live past their early twenties.

He said: *"I would like to appeal to people to consider casting their vote for me as Mancunian of the year not only because I would love the honour of receiving such a privilege, but because the awareness it would raise would immensely help my cause. It would also give hope for the other young men and children of today that maybe a treatment will come available in this generation."*

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy is caused by a gene defect and affects one in 3,500 boys from birth, but hardly any girls.

Those affected are born without the production of a protein called Dystrophin, and their muscles gradually deteriorate, which not only affects mobility, but also the control of the heart and respiratory systems.

Carl was nominated for Mancunian of the Year by his dad Fred Tilson – the son of Fred Tilson Snr who scored the winning goal for Manchester City in the FA Cup final in 1934.

This is the third year the Pride of Manchester awards have been held, across a number of categories.

Last year's winner of Mancunian of the Year was Tom Buckley, a cancer sufferer who completed a coast-to-coast walk in wintry conditions to raise money for The Christie hospital. Tom died last May.

Carl is up against a number of high profile contenders such as Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson and Take That's Gary Barlow. Neil Jones, one of the organisers of the Pride of Manchester Awards, said: *"Carl is the ideal candidate and he would be the perfect winner. It's great that someone who is not that well known can compete against the celebrities. His position is similar to last year's winner, Tom Buckley, in that he does a lot to raise money and awareness while being ill himself."*

Voting is open online until February 15th. To vote, go to <http://www.prideofmanchester.com/awards/2009i.htm> and choose from the drop-down menu.

Winners will be announced on March 1st.