

ABBIE IN HOLLAND...MORE NEWS!



In February, I was asked if I would represent Great Britain at the World Team Cup in wheelchair tennis, which is equivalent to the Davis Cup in able bodied tennis. I could not believe it, as it was a dream come true for me. I was so excited that I had made the squad, but then I was told that until the official announcement was made by the Tennis Foundation I could not tell anyone except close friends and family. Do you have any idea how hard it was to keep it as a secret, when all I wanted to do was shout about it to every-

On 25th May, my Mum and Dad took me to the National Tennis Centre in London, for me to meet up with the rest of the squad and our coaches. We were all extremely excited and could not wait to get in our Great Britain Kit. It was such a proud moment when I got it wear it.

We trained that day and flew to Holland on the 26th May, and the hard work really started. As we came out of the airport the hot air hit us, as they were having a heat wave, and it was 33 degrees!!!

I have to tell you this: we checked into our hotel and it was great, my room was amazing. But the best bit was that it had a Dyson hairdryer!!! I know most boys won't appreciate this, but us girls definitely did.

The first team we played against was Colombia and all their players have world ranking, unlike any of us in our squad. I was playing the doubles rubber. I was so nervous that when I pushed on court my heart was racing so much. But once we started playing everything settled down and we played really well. Unfortunately we lost, but I was pleased with my performance as playing at this level is so different to what I am use to. But what a brilliant experience.



During the week, we also played against Australia, Malaysia and Turkey. But for me it was the Turkey rubber that I played in that I will always remember, as it was 38 degrees courtside and I was playing the junior world number 11. Every game went to deuce and advantage; one game went to 11 deuces and felt like it was going on forever. I was so hot that during the break I was



Logo designed by Katie Gascoyne

putting my cap in a bucket of cold water with ice in and soaking it, then putting it on to play with, but at the end of the 2 games it was dry again as it was just so hot. My match was over 2 hours and I unfortunately lost, but it was so close and playing in that heat was not recommended. But it is one of my best memories as it was so tough, but I learnt so much about myself as a player.

As a team we went 3 days without a win, but each day we were getting closer and just knew it would happen at some point. We were such an inexperienced team and for 3 of us it was our first international experience. Although we had not won any of our matches, our spirits were high and we all get along so well and supporting each other that it did not dampen our spirits. So on day 4, when my teammate Dahnon won against Australia, we were all screaming and shouting, it was an amazing moment for the whole team. This really lifted our belief and we went on to win all our matches against Malaysia the next day.

I can truly say it has been the best wheelchair tennis experience so far, and I have memories that I will treasure for a lifetime. It has helped me to refocus my training, which started the day after we flew home, and I am now hoping to get selected to play for England this summer at the National School Games.

This is the life I want on the professional tour as a professional Wheelchair tennis player.