



Press Release

For Immediate Release:

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL CANADA LAUNCHES GROUNDBREAKING NATIONAL ACADEMY AT UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SCARBOROUGH

(October 1, 2013 – TORONTO, ONT.) Backed by an unparalleled legacy of podium success, driven by a shared vision to be a world-leading nation, and steered by the top expert in the game, the next generation of Canadian wheelchair basketball gold medallists will cut their teeth at the world's first full-time, year-round, daily training environment for high performance wheelchair basketball athletes.

Wheelchair Basketball Canada's National Academy is a groundbreaking new initiative that launched today at the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC). It is a homegrown solution designed to train the next generation of elite Canadian athletes in their pursuit of gold at future world championships and Paralympic Games, including the 2014 Women's World Championship in Toronto, the Toronto 2015 Parapan American Games, the Rio 2016 Paralympic Summer Games and beyond.

"We are entering into a new, exciting era in wheelchair basketball and Canada's objective is to be number one in the world. Thanks to the ongoing support of our partners, the Government of Canada, Own the Podium, the Government of Ontario, the Canadian Paralympic Committee, the Canadian Sport Institute Ontario, and the University of Toronto Scarborough, we are poised to build on the success of Canada's senior national teams which have captured a combined six gold, one silver, and one bronze medal in the last six Paralympic Games," said Wheelchair Basketball Canada Executive Director Wendy Gittens.

"Sport plays an important part in Canadian culture, and our Government is proud to support Paralympic sports and Paralympic athletes who dedicate themselves to their sport," said the Honourable Bal Gosal, Minister of State (Sport). "They are an enormous source of pride and inspiration for all Canadians. The new Wheelchair Basketball Canada National Academy will help the next generation of wheelchair basketball athletes train and excel at the highest levels of their sport."

The National Academy will utilize existing facilities at UTSC until construction on the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre (TPASC) and Field House, which is the largest sport new-build for the Toronto 2015 Games, is complete in July 2014.

"The Government of Ontario is proud of the accomplishments of our wheelchair basketball athletes and we're pleased to support them through the development of this National





Academy” said Michael Chan, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. “This is a great example of how we are strengthening our amateur sport system by providing opportunities for our high performance athletes of all abilities to train right here at home in the lead up to hosting the Parapan Am Games in Toronto in 2015.”

The National Academy will be expertly guided by Mike Frogley, who is widely regarded as one of the top minds in the game. Frogley got his start in wheelchair basketball following a car accident in 1986. He made Team Canada in 1989 and competed at the 1992 Paralympic Games in Barcelona, placing fourth, before going on to coach Canada to back-to-back Paralympic gold medals in 2000 and 2004, and silver in 2008. Frogley returned to Canada to accept the new position of Head Coach / Academy Director in July after stepping down as a longtime head coach of wheelchair basketball in the NCAA where he won 12 national championship titles.

“The National Academy goes beyond being excellent to being the very best and developing the very best. It will take good athletes and make them great wheelchair basketball players. It will take great teams and make them world champions and Paralympic gold medallists. It is the new gold standard, not just innovative, but groundbreaking to such an extent as to lead and change the game of wheelchair basketball,” said Frogley.

“Canada has a rich history in wheelchair basketball both in performance and innovation. We are excited to support this groundbreaking initiative focused on providing a world-class training environment for our athletes who are on the cusp of transitioning to the National Team,” said Karen O’Neill, Chief Executive Officer for the Canadian Paralympic Committee. “Providing such support to these athletes will enable us to maintain our place as a leading nation and continue to inspire the next generation of athletes.”

Targeted athletes, primarily in the Train to Compete, and Learn to Win phase of the Wheelchair Basketball Canada Long Term Athlete Development Model (typically 18-25 year-of-age), will have access to optimized coaching, training, and mentorship at a central location not previously available in Canada. Prior to the launch of the National Academy, top Canadian athletes often looked to collegiate teams in the U.S., and semi-pro teams in Europe to find the best opportunities to hone their individual development.

“Knowing that I have access to the absolute best coaching, training and mentoring in the world, right here in my own backyard, is tremendous for me and every up-and-coming athlete who dreams of being on top of the podium. This is a great opportunity to build on Canada’s rich history of success and I’m extremely grateful for the support of all the National Academy partners who share in my ambition,” said National Academy athlete and London 2012 Paralympic gold medallist Tyler Miller.

Initially the National Academy will be home to 14 handpicked athletes (9 male and 4 female) and eventually grow to two-dozen full-time players. The roster includes three local Paralympians and two University of Toronto students. Miller (Kitchener, Ont.), Abdi

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL CANADA

Wheelchair Basketball Canada



Dini, of Scarborough, Ont., and Tamara Steeves, of Mississauga, Ont., competed in the London 2012 Paralympics, while Steeves and Corin Metzger, of Elmira, Ont., are enrolled at UTSC. Aaron Moseley-Williams, of Winnipeg, Man., is also a member of the Sr. Men's National Team.

Mitch Bossaer, of Saskatoon, Sask., and Reid Richard, of Tyvan, Sask., will join the National Academy ranks before the end of the year. Along with Aidan Love, of Whitehorse, Yukon, Jonathan Vermette, of Quebec, Que., and brothers Joel and Jeremy Watts, of Charlottetown, P.E.I., they recently competed on the Canadian Men's U23 Team at the World Championship in Adana, Turkey, placing sixth.

The National Academy will also be utilized as a central training location for other members of Canada's high performance program, including current and future members of the senior national teams.

About Wheelchair Basketball Canada

Wheelchair Basketball Canada is the national sports governing body responsible for the organization of wheelchair basketball in Canada. It is a non-profit, charitable organization that is the Canadian member to the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF).

Wheelchair basketball is a fast-paced, hard-hitting, competitive sport that has emerged as one of the most competitive and athletic sports played at the Paralympic Games. Our senior national teams are held in high esteem around the world for the elite skill and control that placed them on the podium with a combined six gold, one silver, and one bronze medal in the last six Paralympic Games.

For more information, visit: www.wheelchairbasketball.ca

-30-

For more information, to request a photo, or to schedule an interview contact:

Jody Kingsbury, Manager
Marketing & Communications
Wheelchair Basketball Canada
C: 613-260-1296 ext. 204

jkingsbury@wheelchairbasketball.ca

Courtney Pollock, Coordinator
Communications

Wheelchair Basketball Canada
T: 613-260-1296 ext. 203

cpollock@wheelchairbasketball.ca

For all the latest information follow us:

Online: wheelchairbasketball.ca

wheelchairbasketball.ca

6 Antares Drive, Phase 1, Unit 8, Ottawa, Ontario K2E 8A9
T: 613-260-1296 F: 613-260-1456

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL CANADA

Wheelchair Basketball Canada



WHEELCHAIR
BASKETBALL
CANADA

Facebook: facebook.com/wheelchairbasketball

Twitter: twitter.com/WCBballCanada

YouTube: youtube.com/WheelchairBball

Flickr: flickr.com/photos/wheelchairbasketball

BEAL LIFE. BEAL SPORT.

Wheelchair Basketball Canada

wheelchairbasketball.ca

6 Antares Drive, Phase 1, Unit 8, Ottawa, Ontario K2E 8A9
T: 613-260-1296 F: 613-260-1456