



PRESS RELEASE
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NORFOLK WINS AS SEEDS CONTINUE TO TUMBLE AT BRITISH OPEN WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

PART OF THE NEC WHEELCHAIR TENNIS TOUR - ITF SUPER SERIES STATUS - SANCTIONED BY THE ITF

Britain's two-time Paralympic champion and defending quad singles champion Peter Norfolk made a comfortable start to his title defence on Wednesday's third day of the 20th British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships, part of the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour, but on a day when gusting winds ensured that the rain stayed away, there were plenty of upsets elsewhere at the City of Nottingham Tennis Centre.

One of the biggest upsets of the day saw Dorrie Timmermans of the Netherlands beat Beijing Paralympic quad singles silver medallist Johan Andersson as the Dutch players coped much better in the conditions to beat the Swedish world No 3 6-4, 6-1.

Meanwhile, former British Open champion Bas van Erp of the Netherlands saw his challenge come to an end, the seventh seed losing 0-6, 6-7 to Israel's Boaz Kramer.

Britain's Andrew Laphorne also came to within six points of defeating American fourth seed Nick Taylor, but the world No 4 eventually held on to secure a 3-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory.

Norfolk and fellow Briton Jamie Burdekin both eased through to the last eight, Norfolk dropping just one game to Italy's Antonio Raffaele. However, top seed Norfolk is likely to face a much stiffer task in his quarter-final on Thursday as he takes on Israel's former British Open champion Shraga Weinberg.

Belgium's Joachim Gerard joined Frederic Cattaneo (FRA) as one of two non-seeds in the men's main draw singles quarterfinals after he upset Dutch sixth seed Maikel Scheffers in one of Wednesday's feature matches.

Gerard prevailed 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 to book a quarter-final against world No. 1 and defending champion Shingo Kunieda of Japan, who was in imperious form as he beat Daniel Pellegrina (SUI) 6-0, 6-0.

After beating eighth seed Nicolas Peifer (FRA) in Monday's first round, Cattaneo became one of three French quarter-finalists after a tense 6-7, 6-4, 6-4 victory over Peter Wikstrom (SWE). Cattaneo plays his compatriot and fourth seed Michael Jeremiasz (FRA) in the last eight after Jeremiasz ended the challenge of local favourite David Phillipson 6-4, 6-2.

However, there were no upsets in the women's singles as the four top seeds comfortably reached the semi-finals, French third seed Florence Gravelier having a much easier match than Tuesday's three set contest as she joined a trio of Dutch semi-finalists led by eight-time British Open champion and world No 1 Esther Vergeer.

Vergeer extended her winning streak of singles matches to 362 as the top seed eased past Daniela di Toro of Australia 6-1, 6-2. Vergeer goes on to face world No 3 Florence Gravelier of France in Thursday's semi-finals following Gravelier's victory over world No 7 Aniek van Koot by the same score.

The other semi-final will be an all-Dutch contest. Second seed Korie Homan dropped just three games in the second set of her quarter-final against Katharina Kruger of Germany. Meanwhile, the day's only all-Dutch women's quarterfinal ended with world No 4 Sharon Walraven beating world No. 5 Jiske Griffioen 6-4, 6-1.

While Thursday's fourth day of play features the women's singles semi-finals and the men's main draw singles and quad singles quarter-finals, Wednesday's largely rain-free schedule meant that the main draw doubles events could get in to full swing, with one match in particular grabbing the headlines.

Athens Paralympic gold medallists and Beijing bronze medallists Kunieda and Satoshi Saida took on Sweden's Beijing silver medallists Olsson and Peter Wikstrom. However, it was Kunieda and Saida that eventually got on top to dominate the final set and earn a 7-6, 3-6, 6-0 victory.

One of the world's leading wheelchair tennis tournaments and one of just three Super Series events on the 2009 NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour, the 20th British Open has a bumper entry of 176 players and arguably the highest quality entry in the history of the event, which has been held in Nottingham for the past 17 years.

The 20th British Open is supported by Nottingham City Council, Slazenger, Grandstand Seating, Highland Spring, Owen Brown and Audi, as well as the Tennis Foundation and the National Wheelchair Tennis Association of Great Britain (NWTAG).

The 20th British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships continues until the weekend, with the finals on Friday 24th and Saturday, 25th July. Entry is FREE to all spectators throughout the tournament.

Following the British Open, the 25th Invacare World Team Cup, the Davis and Fed Cups of wheelchair tennis, begins at the City of Nottingham Tennis Centre on Monday, 27th July.

For all media enquiries about the 20th British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships, please contact Marshall Thomas, Press Officer, on 0115 922 7850 or 07880 641 855 or email Marshall.Thomas@btinternet.com.

For any further enquiries about the British Open, please contact the Tournament Office, on 0115 922 8360 or Becky Drew, Tournament Director, on 07971 141 301 or email Becky.Drew@tennisfoundation.org.uk.

Website: <http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/disabilitytennis/British-Open-2009/>

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour originated in 1992 with 11 international tournaments. It has grown into a tour comprising of 150 events in approximately 30 countries around the world. The NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour concludes with the most prestigious event, the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters, a year-end world championship for the top 8 men and top 8 women players. The NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour is divided into Grand Slam, Super Series, ITF 1, 2 and 3 Series events and ITF Futures events.

With international rankings and prize money, the sport has clearly elevated itself to a more professional level. Tournaments offer various draws allowing all players a chance to compete at a competitive level. The No. 1 ranked male and female players at the end of the year are honoured as the Wheelchair Tennis World Champions during the ITF World Champions Dinner held at Roland Garros.

The primary goals of the **NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour** are to:

- Provide opportunities for thousands of people with physical disabilities to compete in professionally organised sporting events.
- Offer high intensity competition and excitement for men, women, quad and junior players from recreational to professional levels.
- Give wheelchair tennis players rightful recognition as top sport athletes.
- Increase awareness about people with disabilities throughout the world.
- Create lifetime opportunities for athletes to enjoy and practice a sport with able-bodied and disabled opponents.

For more details about the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour, please refer to site:

<http://www.itftennis.com/wheelchair/tournaments/aboutnecour.asp>

For the latest world rankings (the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Ranking), please refer to:

<http://www.itftennis.com/wheelchair/rankings/index.asp>

