



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE USE: Thursday, 23rd July 2009

VERGEER AND HOMAN INTO WOMEN'S FINAL AT BRITISH OPEN WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

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

Dutch top seeds Esther Vergeer and Korie Homan will contest Friday's women's singles final at the 20th British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships, part of the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour, after both easing through their respective semi-finals during Thursday's fourth day of action at the City of Nottingham Tennis Centre.

Meanwhile, as rain continued to impact on the schedule of the ITF Series event, Britain's world No 1 and defending champion Peter Norfolk continued in impressive form as he cruised in to the quad singles semi-finals.

However, the most notable result of the day came in the men's main draw singles quarterfinals as reigning NEC Singles Masters champion Stefan Olsson of Sweden beat Dutch world No 3 and two-time former British Open champion Robin Ammerlaan of the Netherlands.

Twenty two-year-old Olsson won five games in succession to give himself a 5-3 first set lead at the City of Nottingham Tennis Centre and he then served out the set before edging a second set tie-break to prevail 6-4, 7-6(6).

It was a timely victory for Olsson, who leads Sweden in the defence of their Invacare World Team Cup men's title next week in Nottingham next week when Ammerlaan will lead a Dutch team that will again be among Sweden's biggest challengers.

Olsson goes on to face world No 1 and defending champion Shingo Kunieda of Japan in Friday's semi-finals after Kunieda kept up his bid for a third successive British Open title with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Belgium's Joachim Gerard.

World No 4 Michael Jeremiasz of France averted another quarter-final upset yesterday as he recovered from a set down to beat his unseeded compatriot Frederic Cattaneo 5-7, 6-3, 6-3. Jeremiasz now has another all-French contest in his semi-final as he takes on world No 2 Stephane Houdet. Houdet also had a tough quarter-final, but won the points that mattered to beat seventh seed Martin Legner of Austria 6-4, 6-4.

There were mixed British fortunes in the quad singles quarter-finals as top seed Norfolk eased in to the last four with a 6-0, 6-1 win over of Israel's former champion Shraga Weinberg. It was the second day in a row that Norfolk had dropped just one game and the Hampshire man now plays Dorrie Timmermans of the Netherlands in Friday's semi-finals.

However, British eighth seed Jamie Burdekin lost out 2-6, 2-6 to American world No 4 Nick Taylor. Taylor plays his compatriot and world No 2 David Wagner in the other semi-final after Wagner won the last nine games of his quarter-final to beat Israel's Boaz Kramer 6-3, 6-0.

There was further British success in the women's doubles as Somerset's British No 1 Lucy Shuker and her Australian doubles partner Daniela di Toro eased through to the semi-finals. Shuker and di Toro beat Katharina Kruger of Germany and Marjolein Buis of the Netherlands 6-3, 6-0 and could now face second seeds Florence Gravellier of France and Jiske Griffioen of the Netherlands in the last four. With Gravellier and Griffioen still to play their quarter-final, if they progress they will meet Shuker and di Toro in a rematch of the recent Wimbledon Women's Wheelchair Doubles semi-final, a contest that Shuker and di Toro won in straight sets.

Additional heavy rain storms on Thursday meant that a vital quad doubles quarter-final for Norfolk and Burdekin was delayed until Friday. The British duo are due to meet Israeli pairing Weinberg and Kramer in a rematch of their 2008 Beijing Paralympic quad doubles semi-final. Weinberg and Kramer won that contest before going on to take the silver medal. Meanwhile, Norfolk and Burdekin recovered from the disappointment of their semi-final loss in Beijing to win the bronze medal.

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>

