



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE USE: Saturday, 25 July 2009

KUNIEDA, VERGEER AND WAGNER WIN TITLES AT BRITISH OPEN WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

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

Shingo Kunieda of Japan, Esther Vergeer of the Netherlands and David Wagner of the United States have won the men's main draw singles, women's singles and quad singles titles respectively at the 20th British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships after the latest ITF Super Series event on the 2009 NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour drew to a close on Saturday at the City of Nottingham Tennis Centre.

While rain had disrupted the schedule during the first five days of action, Saturday's finals were played in glorious sunshine, with world No 1 Kunieda winning his third successive British Open men's main draw singles title after a straight sets win over world No 2 Stephane Houdet of France.

Kunieda made a sensational start to the men's final, taking a 4-0 lead before Houdet broke the Japanese player's serve to love to get himself on the score board. However, a run of two games was all the success Houdet had in the first set and the second set looked like being just as unfruitful as Kunieda opened up a 3-0 lead. However, Houdet rallied to take five of the next seven games in a contest featuring some spellbinding tennis and the Frenchman saluted taking the lead for the first time at 6-5 by punching the air and shouting his delight. Although Houdet then served for the set he found himself 0-40 down and Kunieda soon forced the tie-break.

The Japanese top seed sped through the first five points of the tie-break and then produced an exquisite backhand slice to bring up the first of four match points, but he only need the first as Houdet sent a forehand in to the net to complete Kunieda's 6-2, 7-6(2) victory.

The only main draw final during Friday's penultimate day of play saw Vergeer stretch her amazing unbeaten winning streak to 364 matches as she beat her compatriot and world No 2 Korie Homan in straight sets to collect her ninth straight British Open women's singles title.

Homan won the opening game of the final, her third successive British Open final against Vergeer, but the top seed then opened up a 4-1 lead before dropping just one more game in the first set.

Vergeer again started the second set in good form, taking a 3-1 lead before world No. 2 Homan broke back to level proceedings just before torrential rain forced the players off court for more than an hour. When the match resumed, Homan threatened to take her first set of tennis off Vergeer this season as she took a 5-4 lead and went 0-30 ahead on Vergeer's serve. However, Vergeer, forced Homan in to a number of errors while producing some stunning winners to take a 6-5 lead, only for Homan to bounce back and take the set in to a tiebreak. Homan improved her chances as she went 4-1 up in the tiebreak, but Vergeer kept herself together and wrapped up the 6-2, 7-6(5) victory on her first match point.

In Saturday's quad singles final, world No 2 Wagner clinched his second British Open title in three years as he denied Britain's world No 1 quad player Peter Norfolk a fifth British Open crown.

Wagner asserted himself from the outset, taking a 3-0 lead with some crisp winners and although Norfolk won the next two games, Wagner took the first set with a forehand winner to complete a sequence of four games in a row. Wagner broke again at the start of the second set, only for Norfolk to keep himself in the hunt as he broke back. However, the American continued to impress and won four of the next five games, Norfolk showing glimpses of his best form as he saved four match points at 5-2 down. But with Wagner earning two more match points in the next game, Norfolk brought the match to a disappointing conclusion with a double fault that wrapped up a 6-2, 6-3 victory for Wagner.

Houdet gained some recompense for his singles final loss as he paired up with his French compatriot Michael Jeremiasz (FRA) to clinch the men's main draw doubles title for the third successive year, top seeds Houdet and Jeremiasz beat Dutch second seeds Maikel Scheffers and Ronald Vink 7-6, 6-0.

After their women's singles final on Friday, Homan and Vergeer paired up to retain the women's doubles title on Saturday, beating Florence Gravellier of France and Jiske Griffioen of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-1. However, the match of the day came in the quad doubles final as Wagner and his fellow American Nick Taylor, the reigning Paralympic champions, justified top seeding and retained their title after a 6-1, 6-7(3), 6-4 victory over Norfolk and Jamie Burdekin, Britain's Beijing Paralympic quad doubles bronze medallists.

The 20th British Open has been 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).

A two week festival of top class international wheelchair tennis at the City of Nottingham Tennis Centre continues with the 25th Invacare World Team Cup, the Davis and Fed Cups of wheelchair tennis, which gets underway with the opening ceremony at 4.00pm tomorrow (Sunday) at the tennis centre, when the 187 players from 33 nations will parade on Centre Court ahead of Monday's first day of matches.

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>

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