



Path to Tokyo 2020: Path to Success launches campaign to sponsor women in disability sport

British charity to sponsor group of female athletes in support of International Women's Day, as they seek to achieve their dream of Paralympic Gold

In celebration of International Women's Day on March 8th, leading disability charity [Path to Success](#) has announced the launch of a new campaign to support talented British women in disability sport.

Path to Success will provide sponsorship for women competing in four major disability sports; Para-Equestrian Dressage, Para Powerlifting, Wheelchair Basketball and Wheelchair Tennis, with further sponsorship announcements to follow later this year.

The *Path to Tokyo* initiative will provide financial support for women in disability sport who need funding to pursue their dream of competing for a medal at the Paralympic Games.

The first athletes to benefit from the *Path to Tokyo* campaign with immediate effect are Para-Powerlifter Louise Sugden, 33, and London Titans Wheelchair Basketball player Sophie Patterson, 19. Both will receive funding towards coaching, training, travel costs, and specialised sports wheelchairs as they pursue their goal of representing Team GB in 2020.

Louise Sugden is already experienced at international level, she has won five European Championship bronze medals and represented Great Britain at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics and London 2012 as part of the GB Wheelchair Basketball side. She has recently changed discipline to move into Para-Powerlifting, recently representing Great Britain at the World Championships in Mexico.

Sophie Patterson said:

"The sponsorship that Path to Success has awarded me is a life-changing chance which will give me the opportunity to take my game to the next level. It means that I will not have to cut corners to make ends meet and I can access everything that I need to become the player that I am capable of being. Next stop Tokyo!"

Despite the success of London 2012 Paralympics in raising the profile of disability sport in the UK and team GB's second-placed finish in Rio 2016, many para athletes remain seriously underfunded, meaning they are forced to give up on their dreams if they cannot generate their own funding.

Anita Choudhrie, founder of Path to Success, said:

"In the years that Path to Success has supported athletes with disability, I have always been inspired by the skill, determination and positive attitude taken by those who we support. Our mission is to

secure the legacy of disability sport in the UK, and to inspire a new generation of British female Paralympic stars. If we can change the world of one person, then this campaign will be a success"

About Path to Success:

Path to Success was founded by leading philanthropist Anita Choudhrie in 2005, and focusses on causes that support disability. Most recently PTS has supported London Titans Wheelchair Basketball Club, who have produced over 50 Team GB players but receive no central sports funding.

Path to Success has launched two fundraising charity Wheelchair Basketball Tournaments at the iconic Copper Box in the Olympic Park to raise funds for and awareness of the sport. A third edition will follow this summer.

About the athletes:

Louise Sugden:

Louise has won five European Championship bronze medals and represented Great Britain at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics and London 2012.

She has recently chosen a change in career path, representing the Great Britain Para-Powerlifting team at the World Championships in Mexico. Louise has spoken on the importance of providing inclusive sport for young people with disabilities, saying:

'You can get disheartened if you're playing against people who are running around and you're not doing it very well. The fact that these kids are all playing on a level playing field is so crucial, because it helps them realise what they can do.'

Sophie Patterson:

Sophie recently moved to Sheffield Hallam from Kings College London, where she is now based on the GB programme. She continues to impress for the London Titans, and has participated in Senior GB squads.

Now that she is settled into life studying and training in Sheffield, her next major goal is selection for the 2018 World Championships in Hamburg.

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