

McKee Selected to Represent USA at Sochi Paralympics!

Kevin Proves Doctors Wrong by Becoming a Paralympian



Kevin McKee, from Chicago, Illinois, was recently selected to the US Paralympic Sled team to compete for the gold medal at the Paralympic games in Sochi, Russia, this coming March.

Kevin is no stranger to setting his mind on a goal and then working as hard as it takes to achieve that goal. When Kevin was just a young boy, the doctors and therapists told him he wouldn't be able to compete in sports because of his disability — Casual Regression Syndrome. He decided otherwise and began playing wheelchair basketball and youth sled hockey. Living in Davenport, Iowa, Kevin had to have his parents drive him to Peoria every weekend to participate in wheelchair basketball, but was able to participate in sled hockey in his hometown of the quad cities.

When Kevin turned 18 years old, his real passion at the time was to take his basketball game to the next level. He moved to Champaign, Illinois, and attended a junior college taking pre-requisites with his real eye on making the University of Illinois college wheelchair basketball team which was rated one of the top in the country. While in Champaign he also played sled hockey on the St. Louis Blues adult sled team.

He came to Chicago with the St. Louis team to participate in the USA Disabled Hockey Festival being hosted by AHAI. While playing at the Festival he was spotted by JJ O'Connor, chair of the USA Disabled Hockey Section, as a top sled hockey prospect and was invited by JJ to attend the USA Sled Hockey National Player Development Camp that following summer. This is where his life changed forever as his dream of playing college basketball changed to a dream of representing his country at the Winter Paralympics.

Kevin performed so well at the Camp he was then ask to try out and was selected to play on the USA Development Sled team – a feeder program for the US National Sled Team. During his third year of playing for the development team he met Erica Mitchell, one of the top female players in the United States, who also plays for the US Women's National Sled team. Erica not only convinced Kevin to move to Chicago and play for the RIC Blackhawks, she also wooed him into becoming an item and they have been dating ever since.

The year following his move to Chicago to play for the RIC Blackhawks, he tried out for and was selected to the US National Sled Hockey Team. After competing in several international sled events, including the World Sled Championships, Kevin was selected last week to the US Paralympic Sled Hockey team, along with Brody Roybal from Northlake, Illinois, to compete for the gold medal at the Paralympic games in Sochi, Russia, this coming March.

Kevin's mental toughness, tenacity and determination to overcome barriers others try to put in front of him (*namely his doctors*), are all the more reason he will be a champion no matter what he pursues in life. The entire Illinois Hockey community is very proud of Kevin and Brody's accomplishments and wish them all the success as they compete for the GOLD in 2014.