

My Incredible Story

Manankova Olena - UKR



My name is Manankova Olena. I'm 22 years old. Living in Dnipro, the eastern part of Ukraine. At the age of 8 I had an accident. My sister and I were riding bikes when suddenly a huge trash truck downed us. Fortunately my sister landed up behind the truck and had just minor injuries. And unfortunately for me I got under the back double wheels of the truck. As a result I had an above knee amputation of my left leg.

Thank God I'm alive after that horrible accident as I got a severe injuries and lost lots of blood. Doctors gave only 5% for my life. I can remember that at the beginning (first month after the surgery) I didn't want to walk with crutches as I couldn't believe in what happened with me. I thought that my life is over - I will never live a normal life. It was a long way of recovery.

But I have a strong spirit and didn't want to feel like a disabled and day by day my family and friends did their best to bring me back to normal life and to show me that I'm just a normal girl and could do everything like others do. So I started to have a normal life of a child after a half a year after the surgical operation: my

friends taught me how to ride a bike with one leg, I played football on crutches, climbed trees, played a pom-pom-pullaway game etc.

To be honest I never heard about sitting volleyball before. But in my case people say: "if it weren't for bad luck have no luck at all". One day, when I visited a prosthetic factory, a coach and a doctor of the National Paralympic Team saw me there. After a short period of time I received a letter with an invitation for the training of the national team. I was so amazed with a first training, I liked it really much. Since that very moment it became my life.

I can still remember my first ever international event, my feelings, my thoughts that moment. That was a European Championship in Poland, where our team won silver. I was so happy, I couldn't even believe that happened till we were awarded our medals. That Championship I entered the playing court for the first time. I substituted Ilona Yudina and had to serve the ball. Oh God, my hands were shaking that moment. I had a fear to fail my team. Unforgettable memories.

I hope that my life story could inspire people with disabilities who don't know what to do in life and think they are needless. Sport helped me to integrate in life, to see the world, to meet new people and to see new cultures. I got a huge family around the world with a name of ParaVolleyball. Thank luck that the coach invited me that day and I have this opportunity to be here, surrounded with such people.