

My Incredible Story

Tetiana Savchenko - UKR

My Name is Tetiana Savchenko - Number 4 on the Ukrainian Women's Sitting Volleyball team and I'm 21 years old. I'm studying at the 5th course of the National Pedagogical University named after M. Drahomanov at the department of the correctional pedagogy and psychology. I was born in a big family, which always supported me.



I have a congenital abnormal development of the right lower limb. At the age of 11 I had 12 surgical operations on my account. I'm using prosthesis to walk and it never stopped me to participate at school competitions.

My story of about being involved in sitting volleyball is very unusual as I didn't like this sport when I tried it for the first time. Once I met a boy at the prosthetic factory who asked me if I'm doing sport. I thought he is crazy. How can I do sport with my disability!? And he told me about the Paralympic movement and about the athletes with disabilities. I was so overwhelmed with this information when I came back home I'd read all the articles about the Paralympics and watched all videos. Next day I went the regional center "Invasport" in Kyiv and told them: "Hello, I'm disabled and I want to do sport". They proposed me to try table tennis, where I shortly won a silver medal at the Championship of Ukraine.

In 2015 I accidentally met a boy who was a member of the National Para Sitting Volleyball team of Ukraine and he invited me to visit their training and to try playing volleyball. I was shocked when I came there for the first time as I didn't know they play sitting on the court. I was taken out of my comfort zone. After the

first training I didn't pick up the phone for some time as I didn't want to go there anymore. But finally I decided to try again and the men team contacted me with a coach of the National Women Team.

After I started trainings in sitting volleyball team I had to choose between table tennis and volleyball as it was impossible to join two sports. It was a difficult choice: to start a new sport for you or to keep improve your skills in tennis. Now I'm here and don't regret about my choice.

I like being a part of a team. I can feel their support all the time. Volleyball helps me to stay active, travel around the world, meet new people, learn new cultures. Here I met lots of people with disabilities which helps me to believe myself even more.