



## GAME, SET & MATCH: HOW MS SUFFERER TOOK UP TENNIS & SMASHED HER WHEELCHAIR FEARS

**When Judy Turner was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, she was “terrified about ending up in a wheelchair”. But the 65-year-old fought back and aced her fears by taking up an unusual sport – wheelchair tennis.**

Judy, who is a former nurse, doesn't require a wheelchair yet and is still able to climb the stairs in her home, albeit at a slower pace. However, knowing a wheelchair will become part of her life sooner or later, she wanted to get a head start by getting used to it - but in a fun way.

Inspired by watching the likes of Great Britain's Wheelchair Tennis Men's Singles gold medallist Gordon Reid on television at Brazil's Paralympic Games last summer, Judy decided she wanted to try and smash it herself.

With no previous tennis experience, and further handicapped by the loss of one eye from a white-water rafting accident eight years ago, Judy is certainly a determined and inspirational individual.

And she is now regularly serving up a treat at Spytty Park in Newport which stages wheelchair tennis – an hour's drive from her home in Herefordshire.

She explains: “Able-bodied people cannot play wheelchair tennis but people with MS who have compromised mobility are allowed to join in. I can walk slowly but would not be able to run to the net to hit the ball.

“Wheelchair tennis is very fast and competitive because the wheelchairs themselves are so advanced. The only difference is the ball is allowed to bounce twice – other than that the sport is exactly the same as able-bodied tennis. It's even more difficult for me as I only have one eye so sometimes I miss hitting the ball back by inches!

*“I was inspired to try the sport after watching wheelchair tennis at the Brazil Paralympics”*





“I was inspired to try the sport after watching wheelchair tennis at the Paralympics – those people are amazing! I was terrified about being in a wheelchair when I found out about my MS, but wheelchair tennis has made me look at it differently.

Because it’s sport, you don’t feel disabled or like an old lady stuck in a wheelchair. It’s helping me prepare for the time when I might need a wheelchair myself.

“I’ve only been playing for a couple of months and I haven’t won any games yet but I’m very determined. You’ve got to be haven’t you!”

As someone who clearly likes to plan ahead – Judy has also made changes to her three-bedroomed barn conversion home in Ross-on-Wye by widening doors and installing a Stiltz Trio Classic Homelift. She only moved to the property three years ago and wasn’t keen on moving to a bungalow. Judy added: “I’ve had the doorways widened and decided I needed to find a way of getting upstairs when I do finally get to the point of needing a wheelchair. A way in which I can continue to use the all of the home I love.

“I’m a former nurse so I know from an occupational therapist’s point of view that a stairlift would have taken up too much room and not been safe, especially if I required a carer later on. My stairs are high, and the staircase also turns in two places. I have a lovely oak staircase and a stairlift would have totally affected the aesthetics of the room, ruining the way the it looks.

*“I looked at how much it would cost to move and worked out that buying the Stiltz Lift would be cheaper. The lift has already made my life so much easier. It’s been the best decision. That and taking up the wheelchair tennis, of course”.*



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