

BRAD NESS

Rolling Home with Gold



After competing in his third Paralympic Games Australian wheelchair basketball team captain Brad Ness left Beijing with a gold medal around his neck and memories he will never forget.

Australia battled it out against Canada in the grand final to win the gold medal game 72-60.

“Winning the gold was like a dream come true,” Ness said.

“Think of your most special moment and times it by a thousand.

“Its euphoria, it’s every emotion you can think of and it all comes out in you because it’s everything you’ve always worked towards.

“When they raise that flag with the national anthem playing, this huge sense of satisfaction comes, it’s the best feeling.”

Originally from Wagin, Ness now lives in Italy but travels to South Yunderup to visit his mum, local business woman Sandra Bolton of Access WA.

Ness is a below-the-knee amputee, suffering a serious injury in a boating accident two weeks after celebrating his 18th birthday. The former Aquinas College student has always been sports mad.

Far from destroying his sporting dreams he was introduced to disabled sports a year after the accident and started playing for the Shenton Park wheelchair basketball team.

“From when I first got into that wheelchair, I loved the sport.”

Ness showed an obvious talent for the game and not long after played his first pre-season match for WA.

“Being a prosthetic user it was a challenge, I had never been in a wheelchair before and it was something I wanted to get better at and master.”

He travelled to Melbourne and played under legendary wheelchair basketball athlete Sandy Blythe and then received a sporting scholarship with the University of Texas where he lived and played for a year.

“It was like a dream, something you watch from the movies, living the college life.”

“I came from this little country town and although America is an English speaking country, it was a big culture shock.”

“I had so many experiences and it was a big eye opener,” he said.

After that Ness returned to Australia and won his first championship which led to his selection in the 2000 Sydney Olympic team.

“When I got selected it was like everything finally paid off and it was a massive experience, especially playing in front of 18,000 people.”

Ness then asked to play for Italy for a season but stayed a little longer than expected.

“I thought it would only be for 10 months, but it’s been more than seven years since I made the move.”

He now speaks fluent Italian thanks to his partner Giovanna, who he married last year. Not only playing for Italy Ness still returns to WA to play for the Perth Wheelcats, a team that has won the national and world championships.

“From October-June I’m in Italy and then for the back half of the season I play for Perth from late August.”

“It’s a pretty good feeling knowing that you’re on the best side in the whole world.”

His next big challenge is the 2009 qualifying tournament for the 2010 World Championships held in Birmingham.

After playing the game for 15 years Ness has never looked back.

“I would love to continue playing professional basketball.”

It’s been nearly 10 years since I’ve been playing at this level and I’ve had a good run and there is so much great young talent coming through.

*Story courtesy Mandurah Mail
Newspaper, WA*



Published 2008

1300 782 231