

News release

ITV to broadcast the inaugural BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge

The final countdown to the BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge kicked off today with the announcement of live broadcasting by ITV. The announcement coincides with the 100 days to go milestone to the opening match.

Taking place from 12th – 16th October 2015, the BT WWRC15 brings together the World's best "Murderball" teams. London 2012 Paralympic gold medallists Australia return to the former Olympic Park, alongside silver medallists Canada and bronze medallists USA. Hosts Great Britain look to capitalise on home support while New Zealand, South Africa, Japan and France also have their eyes on victory.

The international tournament is to be held at the iconic 6,000-seated Copper Box Arena, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and forms part of the Rugby World Cup Festival.

As part of the arrangement, ITV4 will show live evening matches of the hard-hitting sport. ITV4's comprehensive coverage will include five hours of live broadcasting each day, brought by a team with a wealth of sporting and broadcasting talent and experience including Presenter Martin Bayfield, the former England and British Lions player, alongside Steve Brown, captain of the GB London 2012 Olympic Wheelchair Rugby team, former England and British Lions player, Ugo Monye, reporter Rachael Latham with commentary team Simon Ward and Mike Spence.

David Pond, Chief Executive of Great Britain Wheelchair rugby, said: 'GBWR is really excited that ITV will broadcast BT WWRC15. The tournament will feature the world's best wheelchair rugby teams and run alongside the Rugby World Cup. ITV's commitment to viewer experience and its ability to reach out and inspire new audiences will be great for the game and will build on the huge public interest following the success of London 2012'

ITV's Director of Sport, Niall Sloane, said: 'We're excited to be the broadcaster of this important new tournament which presents a fantastic opportunity to engage the

public in a tremendous sport at the top level and entertain with first class live action. As the UK broadcaster of the Rugby World Cup, ITV is delighted to be able to offer viewers the perfect complement to that event and showcase the appeal of this fantastic form of rugby.'

Suzy Goodman, Head of Brand Partnerships, BT Group Marketing and Brand, said: 'BT has a long history of supporting disability sport and we're proud to be helping Wheelchair Rugby to grow and engage new audiences. The BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge will be thrilling. It's a fantastic opportunity for the GB squad to test themselves against some of the best teams in the world, and I urge people to buy tickets and get behind the team this October.'

Tickets are now on sale for the BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge, which takes place from 12th to 16th October at the Copper Box Arena, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London - <http://www.wwrc15.com/>

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Picture caption 1 – “BattHickling”: Ryley Batt of Australia duels with Garrett Hickling of Canada.

Picture caption 2 – “GBWR”: Ayaz Bhuta and Mike Kerr battle for the ball.

Picture caption 3 – “100 days to go”: (no caption needed)

Notes to editors: This release is embargoed until 7am Friday 3rd July 2015 and should not be release prior to this.

About wheelchair rugby

Originating in Canada in the 1970s, wheelchair rugby developed from the 'murderball' game – created by a group of disabled sportsmen.

One of the only full-contact disability sports, two teams of four aim to score by carrying the ball across the opposing team's line. Players compete in specially-designed manual wheelchairs and must meet minimum disability criteria classifiable under the sport classification rules.

Wheelchair rugby was first recognised as a full medal sport at the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney, Australia. It has since featured at the Paralympic Games in Athens in 2004, Beijing in 2008, and in London 2012.

About the BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge 2015 (BT WWRC15)

The tournament will take place from 12 to 16 October 2015 at the Copper Box Arena, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London. Competing nations have been divided into two pools and will battle it out for top position in each pool before the semi finals on Thursday and a battle for medals on the Friday.

Tickets for all nine sessions are now on sale, including the Great Britain pool matches and the USA v Canada 'murderball' opening match. Prices range from £5 to £45, with over 70% of tickets £20 and under and 90% of children's tickets under £10.

BT WWRC15 is proudly supported by BT, Every Road to Rio, Roma Sports, Sport England and the GLA.

UK Sport

The BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge 2015 is part of UK Sport's National Lottery backed #EveryRoadtoRio campaign, featuring over 30 world class sporting events across the UK to help our athletes qualify and prepare for Rio 2016.

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