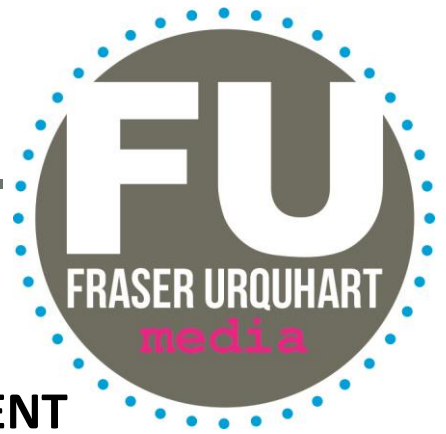


PRESS RELEASE



LEICESTER TO WELCOME JAPANESE DIGNITARIES TO SIGN NEW COMMITMENT TO GREAT BRITAIN WHEELCHAIR RUGBY AHEAD OF THE 2020 PARALYMPIC GAMES

Leicester is to play host to a special delegation from Japan as the Mayor of Kitakyushu and other dignitaries come to the city to attend the launch of the King Power Quad Nations Wheelchair Rugby tournament and to confirm the city's ongoing support of the Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby Squad ahead of the World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge and the Paralympic Games hosted by Japan in 2020.

The host city for the Welsh Rugby Union during the Rugby World Cup in October 2019, Kitakyushu have also agreed to host the Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby squad for the next two years. As part of this initiative the city will provide considerable support for the Great Britain team during planned training camps ahead of the World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge, the Paralympic Test Event and the Paralympic Games in 2020. GBWR will support the city with a number of civic engagements in schools and businesses and will open their doors for the citizens of the city to watch GB training sessions.

The Mayor of Kitakyushu will enjoy a tour of Leicester including a visit to the King Richard III centre and Leicester Cathedral before travelling to the city's Morningside Arena to watch the Japan v France match at the King Power Quad Nations Wheelchair Tournament.

As part of his visit, Mr Kitahashi will receive a presentation on 'Applied Sports Science Support to Wheelchair Rugby' by Professor Vicky Tolfrey, Director of the Peter Harrison Centre of Disabled Sport at Loughborough University.

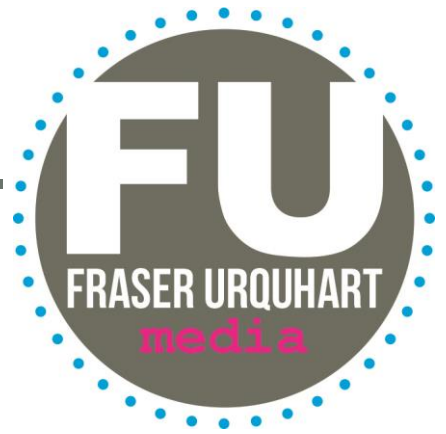
Following the match, The Major, Mr Kenji Kitahashi, has been invited to Leicester Town Hall where he will meet with the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Councillor Ross Grant and Leicester City Council CEO Andy Keeling. This will be followed by Mr Kenji Kitahashi and David Pond CEO GB Wheelchair Rugby signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the city of Kitakyushu and Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby.

He will end his visit to Leicester with a formal dinner hosted at the King Power stadium.

Speaking about the visit, **David Pond, CEO of Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby** said: "It's an enormous honour to welcome Mr Kitahashi and delegates from Kitakyushu to Leicester. I am grateful for the support of the city of Leicester in hosting this important visit and I am looking forward to taking wheelchair rugby to Kitakyushu and for its citizens to enjoy an incredible sport played by incredible athletes".

For more details visit www.gbwr.org.uk and www.wrquadnations.com

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ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Hi res images and additional assets are available via the Google Drive:

<http://bit.ly/wrquadnationspress>

Keep up to date on social media - Facebook /GBWheelchairRugby and Twitter @GBWRNews

For interview or photo opportunities, or for media passes for the King Power

Wheelchair Rugby Quad Nations tournament contact claire@fu-media.co.uk or call 0116 2533445.

Kitakyushu is a city in the northernmost city of Kyushu with a population of around 1 million and is a leading industrial city as well as an important hub for both land and marine traffic. It is the gateway between Honshu and Kyushu and important for international trade. It is the host city for the Welsh Rugby Union for the Rugby World Cup in October 2019.

Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby Limited (GBWR) is the National Governing Body (NGB) for the game of wheelchair rugby in England, Scotland and Wales. It is a registered charity^[1] and company limited by guarantee^[2]. GBWR is a full member of the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF) and of the British Paralympic Association (BPA). GBWR is funded through public, commercial and individual investment. GBWR's mission is to build wheelchair rugby communities where athletes, officials and volunteers all enjoy being part of a team. It is a values-based organization which aims to be inclusive, accessible and supportive of all who wish to be part of the sport.

Wheelchair rugby is a London 2012 legacy success story and GBWR has grown the sport from a domestic league with a single division comprised of 7 teams, to one which now has 3 divisions providing competition opportunities for 20 teams. The domestic league is internationally recognised for its high level of competition. It regularly sees international players from Europe joining domestic teams which strengthens the level of competition. The domestic league culminates with the Roma Sport sponsored National Championships.

The GB national team are the current European Champions, having taken the gold medal a record total of 6 times since 1995, and are currently ranked 5th in the world. GB achieved 4th position at the 2018 IWRF World Championships in Sydney, Australia.

The King Power Wheelchair Rugby Quad Nations tournament will take place 1st – 3rd March 2019 at Leicester's Morningside Arena and will include teams from World Champions Japan, Great Britain, Canada and France. The three-day tournament marks an important performance opportunity for Great Britain ahead of the 2019 European Championships in Denmark where they will be defending their title, and ahead of the World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge which will be played alongside the Rugby World Cup in Tokyo in October and involve the top eight teams in the world.

PRESS RELEASE



Fast paced and violent, players compete in specially-designed, manual wheelchairs and must meet a minimum disability criterion, classifiable under the sport classification rules. All competing athletes were either born with physical disabilities, or have suffered illness which has affected their mobility, or else experienced life-changing injuries through accidents, including those serving in the armed forces.

[1] Charity Commission Registration Number: 1130038

[2] Company Number 6108379