



Harvey Norman®
**PARA SPORT
CHAMPIONS**

GARETH LYNCH

-  Auckland
-  November 5, 1996
-  Quadraplegia
-  Wheelchair rugby

Grassroots:

Kia ora tātou, my name is Gareth Lynch.

I spent most of my childhood growing up and going to school in Hamilton. Now I call Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) my home.

I have always loved sports. I have early memories of wanting to be an All Black and Black Cap. As a child I spent lots of time playing outside with my brother. We would make up new games to play or create competitions out of whatever equipment we were interested in. My favourite childhood memories involved family fishing trips and trying to reel in a big fish!

My journey as a Para athlete:

I had a spinal cord injury in 2016. After this I didn't know if I could participate in sport ever again, until someone else with a similar injury introduced me to Wheelchair rugby. I got into it soon after I was released from hospital and have loved playing ever since!



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#219

 Watch

<https://youtu.be/9Elijp1GPTc>

“

I am courageous when I do the right thing, especially when it's not easy.”



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GARETH LYNCH

Wheelchair rugby is a fast-paced game, where you're trying to score tries by crossing the baseline with the ball and trying to defend against the other team.

It's all about being in the right position at the right time. Most of my physical training is all about how I can be faster in my wheelchair, but I also work on ball skills and continue learning about the game.

One of the things I'm proud of today, is the way I worked hard to improve the quality of my life after I had my injury instead of dwelling on what I had lost. Choosing to play Wheelchair rugby was a major part of it. I put a lot of effort into increasing my independence little by little and I can now do things I never dreamed possible when I was newly injured.

My first international debut was in Japan for the 2019 Zonal Championship. I was very proud to wear the black singlet and to be competing against some of the best Wheelchair rugby athletes in the world. I was supported by my partner and parents who travelled over to watch the competition.

The Paralympic values of determination, courage and inspiration really help me to achieve my sporting goals. Determination is important as things won't always be easy and being able to work hard for things that are important to you is critical for success. I show determination in the way I work hard during training. Courage to me means being willing to stand up for what I believe in and making sure my behaviour is aligned with my values. I draw inspiration from a variety of sources. Even though there are challenges in my life because of my disability, I know there are many people who have even tougher circumstances. Recognising this inspires me to do things well that are important to me, including representing my country to the best of my ability.

Fun facts:

- I love a spicy Japanese ramen, especially one from Japan.
- Tairua in the Coromandel will always be one of my favourite places for the beauty and great memories I have from spending many summers there.
- I'd love to go on a long trip around Europe, to deeply explore cultures and places.
- Favourite quote: "It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters." – Epictetus.
- My favourite time of the year is summer at a beach with some waves.

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Learn to build good habits, as these are critical for being successful in whatever you decide to pursue – especially sport. Consistency is key.”

