





Harvey Norman®
**PARA SPORT
CHAMPIONS**

WOJTEK CZYZ

-  Hamilton
-  July 30, 1980
-  Left leg below knee amputee
-  Para badminton

Grassroots:

Kia ora, my name is Wojtek Czyz.

My favourite memories growing up were always having my soccer ball around me. I think I was basically born with a ball in front of me. My dream when I became older was to become a professional soccer player.

I grew up in Poland for the first 8 years of my life then moved to Germany. I then moved to New Zealand just before COVID-19 hit and now call Hamilton in the Waikato my home.

My journey as a Para athlete:

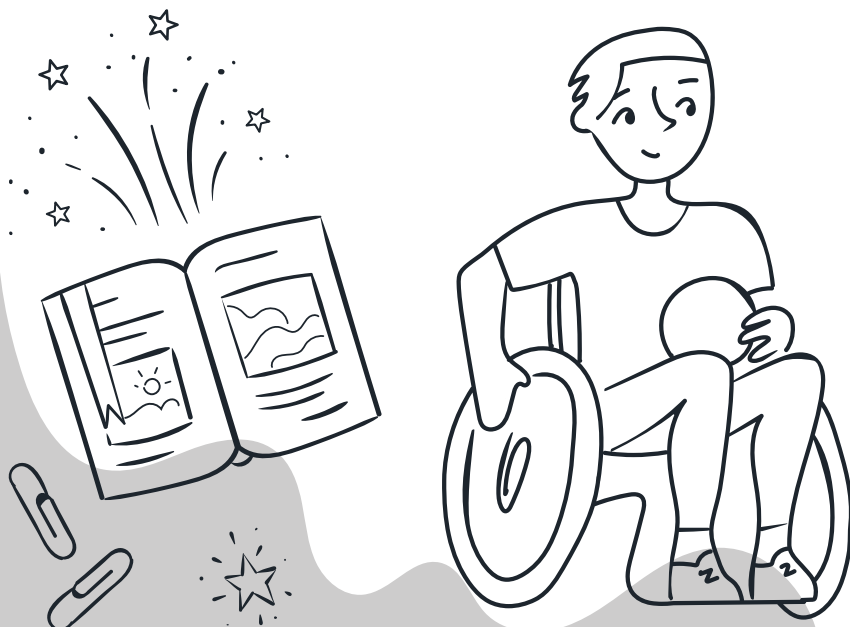
When I was 21, I unfortunately lost my leg after an accident during a soccer match. 6 months after my amputation, I was a German Champion in Para athletics. This was my new passion and I competed in 100m, 200m and long jump and won a silver medal for Germany in the Paralympic Games. This gave me an opportunity to find my way back into the life that I knew, because before my accident my life was heavily centred around sports – especially soccer.



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After 2 years I am now
13th in the world!”



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WOJTEK CZYZ

In total I competed in three Paralympic games (Athens 2004, Beijing, 2008 and London 2012), where I won 4x Gold, 1x Silver and 1x Bronze medals. Growing up, I was involved in a range of sports from gymnastics, athletics, swimming and soccer. I loved sport. After the amputation of my leg, Para sport gave me the chance to compete in sport again. It gave all my motivation back and put me back on the road.

This is why, even today, Para sport is so important to me.

I retired from Para athletics in 2013 after competing professionally for 12 years. A few years later, a friend noticed that I always loved Tennis and Badminton, but I never developed professional skills. He told me that Badminton is now part of the Paralympic programme and out of curiosity, and lots of time due to COVID-19, I decided to give it a go. It has been a long journey to get to where I am in my Para sport, as there is no funding or pathway yet in New Zealand. I wanted to start something completely from scratch and have the motivation and drive to prove to people that it is possible with enough passion and dedication. So, then everything came together, and I did an assessment with Badminton New Zealand to show them my skills. With this, my motivation came back too.

After a long struggle to receive citizenship in New Zealand, I first represented New Zealand in Dubai in March 2023. It was amazing to see the New Zealand flag and silver fern on my jersey and was such an incredible feeling. An achievement I am proud of is the person I am today and the value in the team around me. I am grateful and appreciate everyone that has helped me to be where I am in my sport. There is so much support that goes into my success!

The Paralympic values are the main driving point for me – you need to believe in something! Determination is key for me. I understand the journey is not easy and to not give up after the first hurdle. You need to face a lot of hills and mountains to see the sun on the other side. Determination helps me to keep going, and keep believing in myself, and always put in 100%. It provides an anchor for me in my why.

Fun facts:

- **Pizza is my favourite food! My wife is Italian, so I am lucky to get her proper Italian pizza!**
- **I have lots of interest in sports but besides badminton, I love to dive and spearfish.**
- **Something I am really trying to work on is patience! It's still hidden in me somewhere.**
- **I love a wide range of music from classical to heavy metal.**
- **My favourite quote is to 'always believe in yourself'.**

