

Wheelchair rugby players go to the 2023 European Championships, 3-7 May 2023, Cardiff

For the Czech national wheelchair rugby team which finished 3rd (out of ten countries) in the Qualification Tournament in Norway last year for the European Championships Group A. This is the biggest achievement in the history of Czech Wheelchair Rugby since its debut on the international stage at the 1996 World Games in Stoke Mandeville.

Participating countries: Great Britain, France, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Israel, and the Czech Republic.

Player and coach David Lukes



Date of birth: 10. 7. 1981

Jersey number: 2

Classification / disability: 0,5 / quadriplegic

Club: Sitting Eagles

International experience / National team career:

- 2005 - Qualification to ECH, Belgium
- 2007 - European Championship Finland
- 2013 - Qualification to ECH, Ireland
- 2013 - European Championship, Belgium
- 2015 - European Championship B, Czech Republic
- 2016 - European Championship B, Switzerland
- 2017 - European Championship C, Germany
- 2018 - European Championship B, Finland
- 2019 - European Championship C, Spain
- 2021 - European Championship B, Poland
- 2022 - Qualification to ECH, Norway

Interesting facts:

- Sport role model: skateboarder Rodney Mullen
- Occupation: Rehabilitation Centre Paraple Director
- Languages: English and Spanish
- Education: law degree

Dream: A house by the lake.

Life motto: A man is the happiest person in the world when undressing a woman and putting on the rugby jersey!

Hobbies: rugby, travel, Barcelona

Jiri Plesko



Date of birth: 10. 7. 1987

Jersey number: 4 - Captain

Classification / disability: 1,5 / quadriplegia

Club: Prague Robots

International experience / National team career:

- 2013 - Qualification to ECH, Ireland
- 2013 - European Championship, Belgium
- 2015 - European Championship B, Czech Republic
- 2016 - European Championship B, Switzerland
- 2017 - European Championship C, Germany
- 2018 - European Championship B, Finland
- 2019 - European Championship C, Spain
- 2021 - European Championship B, Poland
- 2022 - Qualification to ECH, Norway

Interesting facts:

- prior to injury rowing - multiple national champion, silver world junior champion in rowing 2004
- then studying at Business College Sydney, surfing accident at 22 years old
- tried various sports but rugby was the obvious choice/passion
- working full time, chairman of Prague Robots sports club, vice chairman of Czech PARA sport;

Dream: To make it to the Paralympics or at least 6th place in Europe

Life motto: Enjoy life!

Hobbies: handbike, wheelchair basketball, poker, partying and traveling

Filip Varton



Date of birth: 12. 5. 1991

Jersey number: 8 - AC

Classification / disability: 2 / quadriplegia

Club: Sport club SK Ostrava

International experience / National team career:

2015 - European Championship B, Czech Republic

2016 - European Championship B, Switzerland

2017 - European Championship C, Germany

2018 - European Championship B, Finland

2019 - European Championship C, Spain

2021 - European Championship B, Poland

2022 - Qualification to ECH, Norway

Interesting facts:

- prior to injury – rugby player - 3 times at the ECH U18, sport club TJ Lokomotiva Olomouc
- para-athletics national team member in 2019 Bydgoszcz ECH

Dream: I am fulfilling my dream.

Hobbies: handbike, family (one daughter)

Petr Oppenauer



Date of birth: 3. 7. 1983

Jersey number: 10

Classification / disability: 1,5 / quadriplegia

Club: Sitting Eagles

International experience / National team career:
2009 - European Championship, Denmark
2013 - Qualification to ECH, Ireland
2013 - European Championship, Belgium
2015 - European Championship B, Czech Republic
2016 - European Championship B, Switzerland
2017 - European Championship C, Germany
2018 - European Championship B, Finland
2019 - European Championship C, Spain
2021 - European Championship B, Poland
2022 - Qualification to ECH, Norway

Interesting fact:

- A sportsman with all his heart.
- Is never late.

Dream: To win the “Eurojackpot” in the lottery and build the sports hall!

Life motto: If you really want to achieve success, never give up!

Hobbies: rugby, beer tasting

Marek Vasa



Date of birth: 21. 5. 1992

Jersey number: 6

Classification / disability: 2 / quadriplegia

Club: Sitting Eagles

International experience / National team career:

2018 - European Championship B, Finland

2019 - European Championship C, Spain

2021 - European Championship B, Poland

2022 - Qualification to ECH, Norway

Interesting fact:

- Played guitar from 6 – 15 years of age
- First gig / concert at age of 9
- Can produce wine
- His father is the wine yard owner

Dream: To finish the house and have a hotdog buffet in Fiji!

Life motto: Better to burn than to burn out.

Hobbies: swimming, filmmaking

Valter Ronisch



Date of birth: 4. 4. 1993

Jersey number: 3

Classification / disability: 2 / quadriplegia

Club: Sitting Eagles

International experience / National team career:

2016 - European Championship B, Switzerland

2017 - European Championship C, Germany

2018 - European Championship B, Finland

2019 - European Championship C, Spain

2021 - European Championship B, Poland

2022 - Qualification to ECH, Norway

Interesting fact:

- was singing in choir since the age of 7

- involved in LARP (live-action role-playing game)

Dream: To stay in A division, build a house and plant a tree!

Life motto: What you can do today, put off until the day after tomorrow and get two days off!

Hobbies: rugby, Dragons and Dungeons

Tomas Moravik



Date of birth: 21. 8. 1992

Jersey number: 11

Classification / disability: 1,0 / quadriplegia

Club: Sport club SK Ostrava

International experience / National team career:

2019 - European Championship C, Spain

2021 - European Championship B, Poland

2022 - Qualification to ECH, Norway

Interesting fact:

- Plays guitar and harmonica in the band Střet

Life motto: It will soak in.

Hobbies: Music, nature, reading

Jan Mikeska



Date of birth: 12. 10. 1985

Jersey number: 5

Classification/Disability: 2.5 / quadraparesis

Club: Prague Robots

International experience / National team career:

2019 - European Championship C, Spain

2021 - European Championship B, Poland

2022 - Qualification to ECH, Norway

Interesting fact:

- can produce typical Czech plum brandy (Slivovitz)
- gardener in the orchard

Dream: I'm living my dream!

Life motto: Be nice to people otherwise they won't attend your funeral.

Hobbies: good food and drink, friends, movies and gardening

"Rugby is not just a sport, it is a lifestyle that often hurts. It is also often about overcoming yourself. We go into the European competition with all joy and humility. Above all, we want to play this tournament with our heads held high and show the upcoming generation that it pays not to resign, to do what you enjoy and to develop this beautiful game" adds David Lukes, playing coach and director of the Paraple Centre.