Everyone for Tennis

**(Music playing 00.00-00.20)**

**Moderator: All these players have one thing in common, they have a disability, but it hasn't stopped them loving a game of tennis.**

Peter Norfolk OBE: I saw a couple of guys playing wheelchair tennis. I was just absolutely taken by it. I could not believe they were playing tennis. For the previous ten years I had been looking and playing all sports. Archery, table tennis, I have been swimming, basketball. That was my light bulb moment, I went out and found my local tennis club and walked in, well, wheeled in, and said to the coach 'I want to play wheelchair tennis.'

Scott Brown: A friend of mine was already playing tennis so he got me into it.

Tony Knappett: So, I went along to South Ribble Tennis Centre one day. I had just had my accident, I didn't have anything else to do, never played before… and then yes, just got the bug really quickly.

Rose Pybus: I went along to the session at Sunderland having got lost. Dad dropped me off, we ended up in Sainsbury's car park not knowing where we were going and I finally got there and low and behold, I managed to hit a few tennis balls.

Jaina Mistry: Following my sight loss I was a bit disheartened because I couldn't play racket sports anymore, but recently I have discovered you can actually play blind tennis and it is something that I am looking to try again.

Tony Knappett: It's an exclusive sport for all, it's not categorized. So you can play against an amputee, you can play against somebody with a spinal chord injury, brittle bones.

Peter Norfolk OBE: 'Do you play with Andy Murray at Wimbledon?' 'Yes,' well, I wish I did but, you know, I could and vice versa, he could come down here to the tennis court we're on now and we can play.

Rose Pybus: It is the inclusive sport because I mean, no other sport do I know where you can have on one court somebody, for example, in a wheelchair playing against somebody who is visually impaired and it's the same ball, the same game, same court.

Tony Knappett: It's a great sport to get into and if you're not talented and you're not going set the world on fire, you can still play with your family and friends. Able bodied perception of a disability sport is different. They are different in the sense that some of the rules are different, I don't think they're different in the sense that you would go

to a tennis club, you get your racket out of your bag, you play with friends or you go and you have a coaching session, so I think the sport itself is exactly the same.

Rose Pybus: Disability is the same as coaching in general, I mean, if you're going to rock up and coach a session you will look at your audience and say, 'Okay so we have got some juniors, the red ball', so that will determine the sort of things and it is finding out what they can do rather than what they can't do and it is the same as people with disabilities.

Tony Knappett: I think coaches themselves are doing a lot, there's a lot of work with The Tennis Foundation that coaches are going on courses and they're learning more how to deliver the skill. Any tennis coach can teach me how to play tennis because it's exactly the same game. It is making sure that they know how to deliver the skill.

**Moderator: The Tennis Foundation has set up a disability tennis network programme that gives disabled people the choice to play at their local venue in both specifically designed or existing non-disabled sessions.**

Tony Knappett: I would miss competing and playing with other people in chairs if I only played with able-bodied people and vice versa. If I just stopped playing with the guys, I would miss that as well. I don't think I prefer either, I just think I enjoy both.

Rose Pybus: The fact that I can phone my friends and, you know, any other sport if I said to them, 'Put a blindfold on, you've got to play on my terms,' they would probably say no, whereas when I say, you know 'Come and play tennis, you don't need to do anything, just hit the ball'.

Peter Norfolk OBE: I could play tennis with my wife, with my little boy, with anyone. I can play it competitively. Tennis is tennis, just get out and go play tennis.

Jaina Mistry: I think The Tennis Foundation have been super helpful. They have great information on the website. You can actually search for your local disability tennis club which is amazing. It's a good resource to go to.

Alan Whetherly: The Tennis Foundation have helped us enormously around coaching, getting the game out into the mainstream audience.

Tony Knappett: Start, find out where your hub sites are.

Rose Pybus: Whether you go on your own, with a friend, with a family member, just take that first step because it is such a rewarding game to get involved in.

Tony Knappett: Whether you are able bodied or whether you have just had a disability or you've always had a disability, it's an absolutely fantastic way of getting yourself included.

Peter Norfolk OBE: I can play wherever I want, anywhere in the world, on any tennis court, with anyone. I can't do that with any other sport.