Thomas – My Sporting Story – Part One

Growing Up with cerebral palsy

Hi my name is Thomas and I am really excited to be able to tell you a little bit of my story of how I became involved with the brilliant Douglas Bader Foundation and how they have really helped me in my sport.

I have cerebral palsy diaplegia which means I have permanent brain damage caused at birth. I know that may sound scary to a lot of people – it really means that my legs don't work very well.

I was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when I was 13 months old and the doctors told my Mum and Dad that I would never walk or talk… well they got that very wrong as I can talk for England!

You may wonder what cerebral palsy actually is? It is permanent brain damage and is often caused by lack of oxygen before, at or after birth. Despite what people say there is no cure!

Cerebral palsy affect people in different ways – some more severe than others. The type of cerebral palsy I have means that it affects both my legs, my right arm and a little impact on my sight.

I can't walk independently and I have a great piece of kit called a kaye walker to help me get around each day. I sometimes have to use a wheelchair for longer distances and I also wears splints every day to help support my legs as I can be quite wobbly sometimes. I didn't learn to walk until I was 4 when I got my first Kaye walker – it was quite shiny but I could really move on it once I got the hang of it!





My Dad is in the RAF and we moved to Shropshire when I was 18 months. My physio in Shropshire referred me to hippo therapy – which is riding therapy on a horse to help build my core strength. It was the first sport I tried and I loved doing it especially when it came to riding the horses!



My physio also encouraged me to use a tricycle to build up my strength. I just thought it was fun! We came back home to Lincolnshire in 2011 when Dad was posted back. It took a long time to sort out my new physio support and the trikes really helped in the meantime to build my leg strength up.



Getting into Different Sports

I have always loved sport and I adore football and Manchester United but never thought I would be able to play as I use a Frame. I was always the boy that was left on the side lines or put in goal or the last to be picked for a team and would often get upset. Then I got involved in CP Sport and played Frame Football for the first time and I got to play Frame Football at St George's Park and Aston Villa! I can't play now because of my knees, hips and leg issues.

