



Sitting Volleyball Featured in CitiBank Advertisements (What is Sitting Volleyball?)

WOW! Have you seen the Citibank advertisements on TV featuring our very own sitting volleyball player, Kari Miller?

If you are like me, I usually surf for other shows during the commercials, but just happened to catch Kari late one night. I have seen her several times since, and all the ads are not alike. Let me introduce you to Kari Miller. She is the libero for the Women's National Sitting Volleyball Team and will be participating in the Paralympic Games that will be held in London, August 29 through September 9, 2012. The Paralympic Games are held two to three weeks after the Olympic Games in the same cities and usually in many of the same venues. The Paralympic Games offer many sports for the physically disabled, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, goal ball for the blind, track and field, tandem biking for the blind, swimming, soccer for those with cerebral palsy, fencing, and sitting volleyball for those missing a limb or unable to use their limbs to the fullest. These are just a few of the sports that will be competing in London.

Kari Miller is from Washington, DC and still has many family ties here. She currently resides in Edmond, Oklahoma, the site of The University of Central Oklahoma Paralympic Training Center for sitting volleyball. She was in the Army, but lost her legs when her car was hit by a drunk driver. They were crushed beyond repair and needed to be amputated to extract her from the vehicle. Kari would be the first to tell you that this changed her life in a lot of positive ways. She has gone back to college to finish her degree and had the opportunity to compete for her country. Kari is ranked at the top of the liberos for sitting volleyball. If you think tracking down a dig with two feet is hard, you should see Kari do it on the floor. The game is very fast, powerful, and athletic. You pretty much have to have good anticipation skills to go along with your volleyball skills. You play the game the same as you do standing, with a pass, set, hit, dig sequence. You just have to do it quicker. Try it, you'll be hooked.

Sitting Volleyball is played sitting on the floor. The players move about with the help of their arms and any feet they may have. The women's net height is 1 meter 5 centimeters. The men's net height is 1 meter 15 centimeters. The court dimensions are 10 meters by 6 meters. There is a 2 meter line that defines front and back court within the 5 meter by 6 meter side. The players must contact the ball with part of their buttocks or side in the case of a stretched out dig in contact with the floor. Basically, they are not allowed to raise up on their stumps or jump to contact a ball. The players are allowed to attempt to block serves which makes serving more of a challenge with the smaller court and three sets of hands to avoid. Most of the sitting players on the National Teams have lower limb disabilities such as one or two legs missing, however, we have recently identified some players missing their forearm on one side. They also qualify as permanently disabled. There is a classification for minimally disabled people such as an ACL injury that has not been repaired. If you think you qualify, the doctors will let you know if you are a permanent or minimal. We are always recruiting and looking for new players that want to play at the highest level of the sport and maybe have a chance to play for their country.

I have had the privilege of being an assistant coach for the Men's National Team since 2012. Unfortunately, we did not qualify to attend the London 2012 games, but will still be recruiting and training for the next major event, the World Championships in Poland in 2014. The Women's National Team placed second at the last World Championships in 2010 and secured a spot to London early. They have been training and preparing for the Paralympic Games where they hope to move up a notch and secure the Gold Medal.

Good Luck to Kari and the rest of the team as they head to London. Bring home the GOLD!