

Lucas Sithole: South Africa's Most Successful Paraplegic Tennis Player – 21 Icons

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6:50 am



21 Icons Season 3 – Episode 3: Lucas Sithole



“We all have our dreams. We all have our choices. But it’s up to us if we wake up and chase our dreams or to stick with our choices.”

Self-taught international paraplegic tennis champion, motivator, inspiration and award winner. Currently ranked 4th in the world and hailed as the first African to win the British Super Series and US Grand Slam title, Lucas has athletically accomplished more in 10 years than what most able-bodied people do in a lifetime.

Sithole is one of the faces of the Wheelchair Tennis South Africa organisation, he fights against the stereotyping of people with disabilities, aims at promoting diversity in sports and focuses on impacting young lives through tennis.

“If God didn’t give me this chair then I wouldn’t be a motivator to the youth and to the people who live with a disability “



After losing 3 of his limbs in a tragic train accident, Lucas found himself in Bumbisizwe Special a school for cripples in Newcastle. It was here where Lucas found his motivation and passion for sport.

“When I got there I saw other kids living with physical challenges – from watching them be free I said why do I need to feel sorry for myself?”

Shortly after completing matric in 2005 Sithole met the development officer of the Wheelchair Association of South Africa, Patrick Selepe, who introduced him to wheelchair tennis. A year later Lucas was competing in Netherlands and in the following year won the Melbourne Open in Australia.

Other achievements include nomination by the Mail & Guardian as one of South Africa’s **200 Young South Africans** in the Sport category during 2011, qualifying for the London 2012 Paralympics whereby he won **Sportsman of the Year with Disability** and at the 2013 **South African Sports Awards** where he was awarded **Sportsman of the Year with Disability**.

Portrait: ‘Against All Odds’

With his combat-ready poise and racquet in hand, Lucas stares confidently into the eyes of adversity meeting his unfortunate circumstances head-on. The converging tennis court lines depict a "V", representing his victories, both personally and professionally. The leopard print shirt highlights the spirit of a fighter in a war and serves as a token of remembrance to the Zulus who died in the war.

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Jordan is Joburg based student currently studying at WITS. In his free time loves to socialize, screenprint and dabble in music.

"Life isn't about finding yourself, its about creating yourself"

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