

AMERICAN JUNIOR WHEELCHAIR TEAM CROWNED CHAMPIONS

Team Wins Fifth All-Time Title, First in Seven Years at BNP Paribas World Team Cup

ORLANDO, Fla., May 13, 2024 – For the first time in seven years, the U.S. juniors are BNP Paribas World Team Cup champions after winning the title over the weekend to conclude this year's competition at the Megasaray Club Belek in Antalya, Turkey.

The American squad, made up of returners **Charlie Cooper** (La Quinta, Calif.), **Tomas Majetic** (Boulder, Colo.), **Max Wong** (Flushing, N.Y.), and rookie **Sabina Czaus** (Thornton, Colo.), won the Americans' fifth all-time title Sunday with a 2-0 win over Australia. The championship match was a repeat of what transpired in the group stage. Majetic rolled to start in a 6-0, 6-3 win over Jin Woodman (in round-robin, he won 6-1, 6-3) before Cooper served as the clincher with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Benjamin Wenzel (he'd won 6-4, 6-2 previously). The doubles was not played.

"These kids came in and I think a lot of people thought they would be one of the favorites even though they were the No. 6 seed," said Coach **Kevin Heim**. "To actually get to the point where we won, I think it exceeded all of my expectations. I think the biggest celebration of the entire week was that everyone got a chance to play multiple matches and contributed wins. This was a team victory, and top to bottom, they all did really well.

The Americans were last victorious in the competition in 2017, in a year that marked the last of three consecutive titles from 2015-17. But this year's victory marked the end of a long, redemptive road for the squad. After that run of dominance, the U.S. did not field a junior team in 2018 or 2019. It placed last in the field of eight teams in 2021, and seventh in 2022. Last year the team won its pool and went all the way to the final, finishing runner-up to Great Britain.

This year, they went 3-0 (9-0 in matches) in round-robin play against Australia, Great Britain and the Netherlands, and in particular, lost just 12 games in six sets in a rematch of last year's final. In their five ties in the week overall, the Americans lost just one match in 14 played (the doubles against Brazil in the semifinals, which played no role in the outcome of the result, as the Americans had already clinched the match).

"Coming into this year we put in a lot of work," Cooper, 16, said after the match. "We had that one goal in mind of getting gold, so we all knew that it would take all four of us to get it done and we had to believe in each other and stay humble. We had to put a lot of work in and I couldn't be happier to get it done here in Turkey."

The World Team Cup is the ITF's flagship wheelchair tennis event. The inaugural event in California in 1985 involved six men's teams. The women's competition began the following year, with quad and junior events introduced in 1998 and 2000, respectively. The event has experienced continued growth since.

In other action the United States men's team of **Jason Keatseangslip** (Tucson, Ariz.), **Casey Ratzlaff** (Wichita, Kan.) and **Conner Stroud** (Rutherfordton, N.C.) finished in seventh place. The

quad team of **Andrew Bogdanov** (Prescott, Ariz.), **Hunter Groce** (San Antonio) and **David Wagner** (Walla Walla, Wash./San Diego, Calif.) finished in fifth.

The USTA was officially designated by the USOPC as the national governing body for the Paralympic sport of wheelchair tennis in June 2002, becoming the first Olympic national governing body to earn this recognition. As the national governing body for wheelchair tennis, the USTA manages wheelchair tennis in the United States, including the sanctioning of tournaments, overseeing wheelchair rankings, creating and managing a high-performance program for developing elite disabled athletes, and selecting teams to compete internationally for the United States.

Team USA Final Results

Junior Results

Gold Medal Match: USA def. Australia, 2-0

Tomas Majetic (USA) def. Jin Woodman (AUS) 6-0, 6-3

Charlie Cooper (USA) def. Benjamin Wenzel (AUS) 6-2, 6-1

Men's Results

Seventh-Place Match: USA def. Thailand, 2-0

Jason Keatseangslip (USA) def. Naluemitr Benkhunthod (THA) 3-6, 6-4, [10-5]

Conner Stroud (USA) def. Suthi Khlongrua (THA) 6-4, 5-7, [10-1]

Quad Results

Fifth-Place Match: USA def. Great Britain, 2-0

Hunter Groce (USA) def. Gary Cox (GBR) 7-6(2), 6-1

Andrew Bogdanov (USA) def. Andy Lapthorne (GBR) walkover