



Football is for everyone, let's enjoy it together...anyone for a kick about?

Keisha is nineteen. She says, "I love football. I think, eat and sleep football! I've been to over a hundred matches."

Keisha has been a keen football fan for years, but she didn't play wheelchair football herself until she started college. She says, "You didn't get the chance to do things like that at my secondary school. It was like they thought football wasn't for me, because I'm disabled. I wish they could see me playing now..."

So, what's it like to play? Keisha says, "It's a fun experience, but it's properly competitive too. You get so engrossed in the game...I feel excited, but I'm really concentrating at the same time, and working hard. I want to win! No point playing otherwise!"

Keisha says some people are surprised to hear that she's such a football fan. "Occasionally, people have said to me that they wouldn't expect me to want to watch something I can never do because I use a wheelchair – like running around, or kicking a ball. Which makes no sense at all! It's funny to me, really. I mean, can all the people who watch gymnastics do a tumbling routine? Would you expect anyone who likes the Grand National to be able to jump on a horse and do it themselves?"



So what changes would Keisha like to see in the future? “It would be great if everyone knew that there are stacks of disabled football fans out there. Then everyone who’s planning any sort of football related event at any level would remember us. It would occur to them that football’s enjoyed by everyone, and they’d make the necessary access arrangements. That doesn’t happen all of the time. I really wish it would. And it’s not just non-disabled people who need to know. More disabled people need to get the message that football is for them too, and that it’s okay for them to be a part of it, whether that be as a spectator or actually playing.”