

NEWS RELEASE

DAVID WILLISIE

- Born in London, Ontario on March 23, 1968
- Attended Nicholas Wilson Public School and Laurier Secondary School
- Participated in both hockey and cross country, reaching Ontario high school championships
- Played inter-county baseball for 5 seasons with the St. Thomas Elgins
- While playing hockey at age 27 he fractured his spinal cord, becoming a quadriplegic in 1995
- While recovering in the hospital, Willsie was recruited to play wheelchair rugby – sometimes called murderball
- Joined London Annihilators in 1997 and the Ontario Wheelchair rugby team in 1997
- Selected to the Canadian National Wheelchair rugby team 1998
- Made Paralympic debut with Team Canada in 2000 with the team placing 4th in Sydney Australia
- Captain of the 2002 world championships gold medal team
- Captain of 2004 Summer Paralympics (Athens) silver medal winning team
- Featured in the documentary “Murderball,” which was nominated for the 78th (2006) Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature
- Captain of 2006 world championship bronze medal winning team
- Captain of 2008 Summer Paralympics (Beijing) bronze medal winning team
- Captain of 2012 Summer Paralympics (London) silver medal winning team
- Recipient of 2012 Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal
- Member of 2014 world champion silver medal winning team
- After placing 4th, in the Rio 2016 games, he retired from competing as an athlete and accepted an assistant coaching role with Team Canada which he held until 2022
- In 2017 he and Garrett Hickling of British Columbia were the first athletes to have their jerseys retired by the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association
- Was part of Canadian team as a player and coach for 24 years
- Father John Willsie was an international hockey referee
- Inducted in 2016 into the Thames Centre Wall of Fame
- Built a wheelchair rugby gym in Dorchester at the Flight Exec Centre and continues to promote, recruit and develop the game he loves.