



## **Jack Pegram**

Jack Pegram is a young man with real talent and one to watch in the future. At just 15 years of age he has already achieved the stuff of dreams. He captained England in Tokyo in 2002 playing Powerchair Football and this year was a star player for Aspire Hotspur in the play off Championship finals, scoring the winning goal in the last minutes of extra time. Jack who is a full time wheelchair user and uses a power wheelchair to get around is much like any other youngster of his age and attends Bushey Meads, his local mainstream school. He is a school's Sports Representative, currently studying for his GCSE PE exams and is rightfully considered a real hero having gained huge respect for his football achievements.

Dad Graham explains:

*'It all started back when Jack was just six years old and came home from school with the announcement that he was going to be a West Ham fan. In a household where my wife Jill supports QPR, Jack's brother Tom supports Chelsea and I am a diehard Fulham fan, this really set the stage for some colourful family debates. Jack has stuck to his guns and we were thrilled when we got tickets in the wheelchair section to see his beloved Hammers at Upton Park. We'd been a couple of times when we heard about Powerchair football, so we set about finding out more.'*



Jack takes up the story:

*'I'd always wanted to play football like my mates, so when I heard about Powerchair football I was really up for it and mum and dad found out all the information. I went to one of the first sessions run by James Isaac and now play in midfield for Aspire Hotspur, where we are the Champions of The National Powerchair League for 2006/2007 (see photograph of Jack with the cup). I've had a really good season and managed to score 36 goals for my team. I've just returned from the final round of England trials and have just found out that I have been selected for the squad that will travel out to Japan in October for the 2007 World Cup. It's amazing representing your country at football and Tokyo in 2002 was brilliant. I've been playing Powerchair football for a long time now and I've made loads of friends including Hiroshi, the captain of the Japan team. The highlight of my football so far has to be being England captain, but winning the National League this year was also amazing. I also follow the England senior team and I'm looking forward to going to the new Wembley stadium. I'm working hard at school, as I want to go to Loughborough University to study PE and my ambition is get a job in sport. '*

Jack is an inspirational lad and his parents are justifiably really proud of him. Jill and Graham are so glad that they got those wheelchair tickets for Jack to watch the Hammers back in 2000.

Mum, Jill, says:

*'It has really opened up his world and taken him to areas he would not have got to. He's travelled all over, making life-long friends and has a busy social life. His success at Powerchair football has given him real 'street-cred' at school amongst his peers. All this came about because we were able to take him to watch a football match and he got the taste. **Disabled supporters' facilities at football grounds are priceless, look what it's led to for Jack.'***



Jack has recently become an ambassador for Whizz Kidz (a children's disability charity) and will be involved in promoting disability sport for youngsters.

Powerchair football is now played in many countries around the world and was developed to inspire power wheelchair users to play the beautiful game. There are 4 players in a team and the chairs are fitted with bumpers to 'kick' the ball. The game is played on a basketball or indoor five-a-side court and consists of two twenty minute halves. (You can find more at [www.thewfa.org.uk/index.php](http://www.thewfa.org.uk/index.php) or by calling Ricky Stevenson on 0115 9773219.)