



### **GABRIEL PALACIOS (#13)**

*In 2010, Gabriel was on tour in Afghanistan with the Marines when he was struck by an IED, causing severe injuries to his legs. Gabriel, not one to sit still long, Gabriel quickly got involved in adaptive sports. In 2021, when the USA Wheelchair Football League expanded to Alabama, Gabriel was living there and got to experience his first season with the Birmingham Hammer. When he moved home to Las Vegas, he joined the brand new Las Vegas Raiders team and helped serve as a defensive coordinator for his first season with the team. Gabriel continues to work to get other veterans active through adaptive sports and roles with organizations like the VFW and American Legion.*



### **JERRY PADGETT (#16)**

*Retired Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jerry W. Padgett II served for 17 years as a damage controlman who conducted riverine and search and rescue operations. He was injured in an improvised explosive device blast in Afghanistan in 2006 while working with the Army's 10th Mountain Division in Kunar province. He received a spinal injury and a traumatic brain injury. After 10 surgeries, Jerry was feeling like he might never feel normal again. And then a friend introduced him to adaptive sports. Jerry got into cycling where he was able to regain that sense of normalcy. Jerry joined the Tampa Bay Buccaneers team in 2021 when they joined the USA Wheelchair Football League and has been a leader on the team. He was part of the team featured in the 2025 national "football is for everyone" promotion for the NFL.*



### **JD DRINKARD (#18)**

*JD Drinkard was motivated to serve the United States following the attacks on 9/11. He enlisted in the Army in 2002 and was deployed to Iraq in 2004. During his time in Iraq, JD was wounded by a roadside bomb, which resulted in a Traumatic Brain Injury. He was able to remain in the Army and serve during Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita as a member of Task Force South with the Alabama Army National Guard. JD's injuries from Iraq eventually resulted in a neurological disorder that affected his nervous system and made him a full time wheelchair user. He began playing adaptive sports at the Warrior Transition Unit at Ft. Benning and eventually found his way to wheelchair football. He currently represents the Birmingham Hammers team. Outside of football, JD runs a nonprofit that supports those affected by wars, particularly those with disabilities, showing that life doesn't end when a disability occurs.*

# ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ STARS TEAM STARS ATHLETES



## ORAL MATTHEWS (#20)

*Oral Matthews served as a Sergeant in the US Army and was injured in 2019 resulting in a right leg above the knee amputation. Oral has been a member of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Wheelchair Football Team since 2023. His coaches say that he provides a great team first mentality. He is an athlete who will play any position, and is always prepared when his name is called. Oral is active within his local church community in the Tampa Bay area and has worked hard to bring more veterans to the sport of wheelchair football.*



## ALEX NGUYEN (#40)

*Alex Nguyen is a retired Sergeant in the U.S. Marines Corps. Nine years into his service, on September 20, 2011, he was on deployment when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. The explosion resulted in severe injuries to his legs and eventually the amputation of his right leg. Since his injury, Alex has been actively involved in adaptive sports competing for the Invictus Games and leading the Kansas City Chiefs wheelchair football team to 3 Championship trophies. Alex is recently completed his Master's degree at the University of Nebraska Omaha with a degree in psychology studying psychology with a focus in trauma counseling. His practice aims at helping others, including Veterans, with similar backgrounds.*



## JON BRACE (#45)

*Jonathan Brace joined the Marines in 2019 feeling a sense of duty to serve his country. On September 11, 2021 just two years into his service, the mission changed and Jonathan found himself preparing for combat action. While serving, Jon lost his leg. A lifelong football fan, Jon was surprised when in May of 2024 he learned that he would have an opportunity to participate in a sport he loved and join a new team. Jon was called up to serve as the team's quarterback after their starting quarterback was injured in the first play of the game this season. He led the Patriots team to their first win of the 2024 season at that tournament, and has been an integral part of the team, serving as a leader both on and off the field.*



### **MICHAEL SMART (#57)**

*Michael Smart served as a Staff Sergeant in the US Army. Upon leaving the Army he had an L1 fracture in his spine resulting in paraplegia. Michael was introduced to adaptive sports and wheelchair football in 2024. He is a leader on the Kansas City Chiefs wheelchair football team. His teammates say that he embodies the spirit of the wheelchair football league, consistently promoting the sport to fans, friends, and those interested in joining. Michael currently lives in the Kansas City area with his wife and is excited to represent the Chiefs in this game.*



### **BLAKE MCMINN (#82)**

*Corporal Blake McMinn joined the military following high school and was deployed to Iraq. In 2007 while he was there, his vehicle drove over an explosive, leaving him with severe damage to his legs. Following this injury, Blake turned his focus to adaptive sports and began playing wheelchair basketball in Las Vegas for a season. After this season, he was given the opportunity to return home to Texas to play this sport in college while working towards a degree at the University of Texas at Arlington. During this time, Blake was introduced to many other adaptive sports including cycling, swimming, sitting volleyball, softball, tennis, sled hockey, and eventually, wheelchair football. Blake joined the Cowboys two years ago and has been playing wheelchair football ever since.*



### **VINCE LEONE (#86)**

*Vince Leone served as a Private in the US Army. More than 20 years ago, Vince was in a car accident that resulted in a number of crush injuries and prevented him from full mobility for years. After more than a dozen surgeries, he finally convinced his doctors to amputate his right leg below the knee. Since then he's returned to a full life, participating in adaptive sports and wheelchair football has been a highlight for him. Vince plays on the Cleveland Browns Wheelchair Football Team. His teammates say that he is a leader on the team and always pushes them to be the best that they can.*

# STRIPES TEAM STRIPES ATHLETES



## MATTHEW GRASHEN (#2)

Retired Marine Corps Lance Corporal, Matt Grashen joined the military in 2011. In 2013 he lost both of his legs when he stepped on an IED in Afghanistan. He was sent to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, where he started the beginning stages of his physical therapy. While there, he was introduced to the sport of wheelchair basketball. When he relocated to San Diego, he joined the Wolfpack, an all-military wheelchair basketball team that is known for their drive, determination and winning. Matt joined the LA Rams wheelchair football team in 2025 and quickly became a core part of the receiving team, making the USAWFL All Veteran Team in his first season. He lives in the San Diego area with his wife and children.



## JP THOMPSON (#4)

JP Thompson joined the US Army because he wanted to serve his country. He served in the Military's Army Special Forces as an Airborne Infantryman and Long-Range Surveillance Team Leader from 1990 to 1995. Upon returning home, JP sustained a spinal cord injury in an accident. JP played a variety of sports throughout high school, including football, so when he found adaptive sports, he was eager to play. He just started playing wheelchair football less than a year ago and when he began, it was his first time sitting in a sports chair. Along with wheelchair football, JP trains in powerlifting, swimming, and cycling, with hopes to complete a triathlon in the future. JP currently works as a commercial drone pilot and a professional photographer and is excited to represent the Saints in this game.



## JASON RAINEY (#7)

Jason Rainey served as Corporal in the United States Army in Iraq. During his service, he sustained a gunshot wound to his foot. Returning home, some of his friends introduced him to the sport of wheelchair basketball. Jason began playing and found himself with the opportunity to do so while attending college. He enrolled at the University of Texas Arlington and competed while working towards a degree. While playing wheelchair basketball at UTA, he heard about wheelchair football and joined the league. Jason completed his fourth season as the quarterback of the Irving Outlaws team in 2025, and led the team to a USA Wheelchair Football League championship in 2024. He was named to the USAWFL All Veteran Team for the second year in a row after the 2025 season.

# STRIPES TEAM STRIPES ATHLETES



## KENYATA "KD" PATTERSON (#23)

Kenyata "KD" Patterson served in the US Army from 2000-2013. KD was a helicopter door gunner during deployment and on a resupply mission he took RPG fire, causing injuries to both legs. The injuries resulted in the loss of his right leg and left foot. Post-injury, KD got involved in adaptive sports and motivational speaking. KD's coaches appreciate his consistently positive attitude, ability to take feedback and commitment to growth on and off the field. In addition to playing for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, KD is looking to the day when he won't be playing on the field and participated in a 2023 training to start learning how to officiate wheelchair football. KD was named to the USAWFL All Veteran Team for the first year after the 2025 season.



## ANTOINE GRAY (#27)

Antoine Gray served as an E4 Nuclear Electronics Technician in the US Navy from 1996-98. In 2000, Antoine was in a car accident where he sustained injuries to both of his legs. This resulted in him becoming a bilateral leg amputee. Antoine had a difficult time following his injury, but after the persistence of one of his physical therapists, he began to attend adaptive sports activities. Antoine took a special interest in wheelchair basketball and began to fall in love with the sport and was able to compete at the collegiate and professional level. In 2022, he discovered wheelchair football and joined the Irving Outlaws. He was a member of the 2024 USAWFL Championship team and was named to the USAWFL All Veteran Team for the second year in a row following the 2025 season.



## BRAD SCHUMACHER (#38)

Brad Schumacher served in the US Air Force as a Chief Master Sergeant. He was introduced to adaptive sports through his daughter who is a wheelchair user and plays sled hockey and a variety of other sports in the Buffalo area. Brad joined the Buffalo Bills Wheelchair Football team in 2025 and his teammates say that he's a great member on and off the field, serving as a second coach thanks to his excellent game knowledge. They appreciate that he's very adaptable to any situation. Brad is excited to represent the Bills in the All Star Game in his first year as a wheelchair football athlete.

# STRIPES TEAM STRIPES ATHLETES



## JEANETTE THOMPSON (#44)

Jeanette Thompson joined the US Army in 1995 and served as a Security Officer until 2012. She was injured while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom resulting in partial paralysis of her legs. She was introduced to adaptive sports during her rehabilitation and has since been an accomplished three sport athlete, making Team USA in Field events in 2009 earning First Place in 2010 at the U.S. Paralympics Track & Field National Championships. She was also named Rookie of the Year in 2010 in the Southern Conference for wheelchair basketball. Now, Jeanette has turned her sights on wheelchair football and has become an integral part of the Birmingham Hammers team.



## JOHN TEEGARDEN (#61)

John Teegarden is a retired US Army Sergeant. In 2004, after his service, John sustained a spinal cord injury. After completing his rehabilitation, he discovered adaptive sports. He is most involved in wheelchair softball, where he serves in a leadership role with the National Wheelchair Softball Association as well as locally serving on the board of Midwest Adaptive Sports, the organization behind the Kansas City Chiefs wheelchair football team. John is excited to represent the Kansas City Chiefs as they are his favorite team, and he especially loves cheering for Travis Kelce. John is honored to be invited to the 2026 Veteran All Star Game prior to his retirement from wheelchair football. He hopes to stay involved in the sport by serving as a commentator on livestreams.



## MATT SCHOLTEN (#98)

Matthew Scholten served in the U.S. Army for 20 years. On August 22, 2007 his vehicle hit an IED while on patrol outside Bagdad, Iraq. Matthew sustained several injuries, including to his vertebrae. He required spinal surgery to be able to continue walking. While at the Warrior Transition Unit during recovery, he was introduced to adaptive sports and excelled. He enjoyed them so much, that upon his retirement he reached out to his local Move United member organization, Midwest Adaptive Sports, who introduced him to wheelchair football. Matthew currently works as a Human Resources Assistant with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.