

# Paralympic Goalball Team

## Daryl Walker

**Height:** 5'11

**Weight:** 208 lbs.

**DOB:** December 29, 1981

**Hometown:** Hoboken, New Jersey

**Current Residence:** US Men's Goalball Resident Program at Turnstone, Fort Wayne, Indiana

**High School:** Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind 2001

**College:** Florida State College 2007

### Paralympic Experience:

2008 Paralympic Games, Beijing – 4<sup>th</sup> Place

2016 Paralympic Games, Rio

### Career Highlights:

2006 World Championships – Bronze

2008 Parapan American Games – Silver

2014 World Championships – Bronze

2015 Parapan American Games – Silver



### Background:

Born with albinism, Daryl was first introduced to the sport of goalball at the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind in the spring of 1996. The more he learned about the game, the more he began to enjoy playing. "It was the first sport that I had ever played with total confidence," says Daryl. A few years after graduating from high school, he was invited to try out for the U.S. Paralympics Men's Goalball Team. It would lead to his Paralympic Games debut at the 2008 Games in Beijing, China.

Daryl graduated in 2007 from Florida State College of Jacksonville with an Associate of Arts degree. He then transferred to the University of North Florida where he studied Psychology.

When Daryl isn't playing goalball, he enjoys reading, hanging out with friends, writing, attending The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and other church activities, meeting new people, studying scripture and talks/lessons from latter-day prophets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, spending time with family, and watching a good movie or television series. He hopes to one day become a goalball coach and teach others what he has been given.

# Paralympic Goalball Team

## Tyler Merren

**Height:** 6'0"

**Weight:** 193 lbs.

**DOB:** May 29, 1984

**Hometown:** Coral Springs, Florida

**Current Residence:** US Men's Goalball Resident Program at Turnstone, Fort Wayne, Indiana

**High School:** Wayland High School 2003

**College:** Western Michigan University 2008, Exercise Science

### Paralympic Experience

2004 Paralympic Games, Athens – Bronze

2008 Paralympic Games, Beijing – 4<sup>th</sup> Place

2016 Paralympic Games, Rio

### Career Highlights:

2001 Pan American Games – Silver

2003 World Championships – Silver

2005 Parapan American Games – Silver

2006 World Championships – Bronze

2014 World Championships – Bronze



### Background:

Tyler was introduced to goalball in 1999 at a Sports Education Camp hosted by the U.S. Association of Blind Athletes at Western Michigan University. After being diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa as a teen, Tyler found that goalball was a sport he could play no matter how much eyesight he lost. Retinitis pigmentosa is a degenerative eye disease which causes gradual deterioration in sight as photoreceptor cells (rods and cones) die.

Tyler played goalball throughout high school and college. He earned a B.A. in Exercise Science from Western Michigan University and is a father to four children. Tyler's wife, Leanne, plays goalball with Tyler on a recreational team in Florida. Their son, Mason, who is sighted, coaches his parents, who are both legally blind.

When Tyler is not training or playing in tournaments, he works as a personal trainer and assistant fitness manager. Tyler lives by the motto "If you can't perform any and every task that your coaches throw at you with your top ability, then you haven't trained hard enough."

## Matt Simpson

**Height:** 5' 10"

**Weight:** 170 lbs.

**DOB:** March 30, 1990

**Hometown:** Smyrna, Ga.

**Current Residence:** US Men's Goalball Resident Program at Turnstone, Fort Wayne, Indiana

**High School:** Whitefield Academy 2008

**College:** Washington and Lee 2012, Politics

### Paralympic Experience:

2016 Paralympic Games, Rio

### Career Highlights:

2009 World Youth Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> Place

2011 National Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> Place

2014 World Championships – Bronze

2014 National Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> Place

2015 Parapan American Games – Silver



### Background:

Matt was born with a congenital retinal disease that left him with severely impaired vision from an early age. He became active in sports and discovered the U.S. Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) at a Sports Education Camp in 1999. He fell in love with the sport of goalball and has been playing competitively ever since, including with the Georgia Renegades.

Matt is the Membership and Outreach Coordinator at USABA. He works to ensure that USABA members receive access to the information and resources that they need while also helping to strengthen USABA's relationships with other organizations. Besides playing goalball, Matt enjoys skiing, hiking, climbing and triathlons.

Lacrosse, Matt's guide dog



## Joe Hamilton

**Height:** 6'4"

**Weight:** 234 lbs.

**DOB:** September 6, 1978

**Hometown:** Wayne, Mich.

**Current Residence:** US Men's Goalball Resident Program at Turnstone, Fort Wayne, Indiana

**High School:** Livonia Churchill High School, 1997

**College:** Western Michigan, English, 2002

### **Paralympic Experience:**

2000 Paralympic Games, Sydney – 11<sup>th</sup> Place

2016 Paralympic Games, Rio

### **Career Highlights:**

1998 World Championships – 8<sup>th</sup> Place

2001 National Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> Place

2001 Pan American Games – Silver

2002 World Championships – 10<sup>th</sup> Place

2005 Pan American Games – Silver

2009 Parapan American Games – Gold

2010 World Championships – 4<sup>th</sup> Place

2011 Parapan American Games – Silver

2012 National Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> Place

2013 Parapan American Games – Silver

2014 World Championships – Bronze

2015 Parapan American Games – Silver

2015 National Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> Place



### **Background:**

As an infant, Joe had a corneal transplant after being exposed to the Rubella virus in the womb. The transplant restored partial sight to his left eye but a snowboarding accident at age 12 left him totally blind. Just two years before the accident, Joe had been introduced to goalball at a Sports Education Camp hosted by the U.S. Association of Blind Athletes at Western Michigan University. Growing up in a family that loved sports, Joe was excited to have found his sport and has played goalball ever since. It has become his passion to train and share the sport with as many people as possible. His motto: "Just keep playing goalball."

## John Kusku

**Height:** 5'11"

**Weight:** 180 lbs.

**DOB:** August 6, 1984

**Hometown:** Commerce Township, Michigan

**Current Residence:** US Men's Goalball Resident Program at Turnstone, Fort Wayne, Indiana

**High School:** Warren Mott High School 2002

**College:** Western Michigan University 2007, Math & Physics Education

### **Paralympic Experience:**

2016 Paralympic Games, Rio

### **Career Highlights:**

2011 Parapan American Games – Silver

2014 World Championships – Bronze

2015 Parapan American Games – Silver



### **Background:**

Born with a hereditary degenerative retinal disease, John is legally blind with less than 1 degree of vision in each eye. John was introduced to goalball at a Sports Education Camp hosted by the U.S. Association of Blind Athletes at Western Michigan University at a young age. Having a passion for sports as a child, he was excited to learn about a team sport in which he could compete without special accommodations. John continued to develop his skill in the sport throughout high school and college. He is now a husband and father, and teaches high school math and physics.

John's wife Jessica coaches his team, Michigan Omega, and helps build workouts and tournaments into their busy schedule. It brings a smile to John's face when his son George imitates his strength workouts with one-pound dumbbells.

## Andy Jenks

**Height:** 6'4"

**Weight:** 240 lbs.

**DOB:** September 21, 1990

**Hometown:** Wilmington, Delaware

**Current Residence:** US Men's Goalball Resident Program at Turnstone, Fort Wayne, Indiana

**High School:** Brandywine High School 2009

**College:** West Chester University '13, B.A. Political Science, University of Delaware '15, M.A. Political Science & International Relations, PhD '18 (expected graduation), Political Science & International Relations

### **Paralympic Experience:**

2016 Paralympic Games, Rio

### **Career Highlights:**

2010 World Championships – 4<sup>th</sup> Place

2013 Parapan American Games – Silver

2015 Parapan American Games – Silver

### **Background:**

Andy was born with incomplete achromatopsia, caused by an abnormality of the retina and characterized by decreased vision, light sensitivity, and the absence of color vision.

When he's not training with the goalball team, Andy likes to read, explore major metropolitan areas and go on brewery tours. He plays the saxophone and loves listening to and playing funk/jam music. Andy lives by the motto: "The world is your oyster so shuck it, put some hot sauce on it, and shoot it."



## **Matthew Boyle – Coach**

**DOB:** April 15, 1989

**Hometown:** Durham, CA

**Years Coaching Goalball:** 6

### **Paralympic Experience:**

2016 Paralympic Games, Rio

### **Career Highlights:**

2012 National Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> Place

2013 National Championships – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

2014 World Championships – Bronze

2015 National Championships – 1<sup>st</sup> Place

2015 Parapan American Games – Silver



### **Background:**

Matt has been working with people with disabilities since he was 12 years old, volunteering for recreational camps and after-school programs. In 2009, Matt was introduced to goalball while working for the City of Sacramento Access Leisure Department. By 2010, he had fallen in love with the game, and began traveling and coaching the team from Sacramento.

Matt says, "I once read the following quote by Gandhi: 'The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.' And that is exactly what coaching goalball has done for me. It has allowed me to help others, but stay competitive and have fun while doing it."