

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FRIDAY, 23 May 2025

Roll With the Champions: Perth Wheelcats Tip Off 2025 Season with Eyes on the Title

Perth, WA – With Perth's winter sport scene heating up, the Wheelcats are ready to roll — and remind WA what determination, heart, and hustle look like. Donning the bold red and black of Perth's other iconic professional basketball teams—the Wildcats and Lynx- the Wheelcats embody the same relentless grit and pride that WA brings to every national stage. The 2025 Wheelchair Basketball Season starts on Tuesday, 27 May.

For nearly four decades, the men's Wheelcats (est. 1988) and the women's team (est. 2006) have defined elite Para-sport in WA, and this year they promise to showcase both athletic excellence and the power of community inclusion.

Men's Wheelcats

The men's eight National Wheelchair Basketball League (NWBL) titles—from 2002 to 2014—are impressive in Australian and WA sports. With trophies and medals in their pedigree, the focus for 2025 is on writing the next chapter.

"This team has a long legacy of success, but we are extremely excited about our future" " says long-time head coach Ben Ettridge. "Our athletes work incredibly hard. Our supporters at Bendat will see that dedication on court. We're hungry, we're deep, and we're ready." 2025 promises to be an exciting year with three first time Paralympians and five WA juniors from the Gold Medal 2024 team.

Women's Wheelcats

With three national championships (2013, 2016, 2022), the Women's Wheelcats enter the 2025 season as the second most successful team in WNWBL history. As the league expands with two new clubs, Perth's powerhouse squad is focused on defending its place — and adding another title to the trophy case.

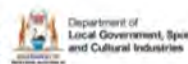
"People talk about hunger and drive," says Georgia Inglis, "but we've lived it. We've climbed to the top three times — and now we're building towards our fourth."

The 2025 season will challenge even the best, with two new teams joining the league — Victoria Wonders and Adelaide Thunder — nearly tripling the WNWBL's size. The Women's Wheelcats aren't fazed; they are ready to thrive in this new era, led by Paralympian Inglis and backed by a powerhouse coaching staff.

"Our Lady Cats feel that momentum," Inglis continues. "Every game is packed with energy, and our goal is to make Western Australians proud—not just with our performance, but with what we stand for: resilience, excellence, and unity."

Sponsors

The Insurance Commission of Western WA's Belt Up program will again share the spotlight, underscoring a message that *"sport is for everyone"*. As one WA official noted, these athletes have become "integral parts of our community," inspiring fans and promoting inclusivity.



Belt Up CEO Rod Whithear stated, "Sponsoring the Wheelcats aligns with our goal of empowering Western Australians. Their determination and skill exemplify what we stand for — safety, resilience and ambition."

Current player sponsors include Redgum Accounting and Affitto Equipment Solutions with several other sponsors pending.

Key 2025 Season Highlights

The season opens with interstate firepower:

- 31 May, the WNWBL season kicks off in Carrara on the Gold Coast – a sporting mecca that hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games.
- 28 June NWBL Round 1 tips off at Rowland Cowan Stadium in Carina, Brisbane – home of Queensland's Southern Districts Spartans.

Super Weekend at Bendat Centre (19–20 July)

One of WA's biggest basketball weekends of the year — two days, eight games, and elite competition as both men's and women's teams play back-to-back.

Indigenous Round (26-27 July)

Men facing Red Dust Heelers on the road. In addition to exceptional basketball, expect cultural performances, artwork, and a strong message of unity and resilience.

Blockbuster Rematch – Late July

Don't miss the women's clash between Perth and Sydney University, a fierce rematch of last season's WNWBL Grand Final. The rivalry is real, and the stakes are high.

Leading the Way in Inclusion

At every game, Wheelcats fans witness elite performance — and a reminder that disability is no barrier to greatness.

From junior grassroots pathways to elite competition, Perth is now home to a new Para-Sport High Performance Unit (via WAIS), helping to develop the next generation of WA athletes living with disability.

"Wheelchair basketball isn't just a sport – it's a celebration of how tough and united we are," says star guard Inglis. "When our fans pack the stands, it sends a message of pride and strength. We've got a deep squad and are ready to give WA a season to remember."

Home games at Bendat Basketball Centre are family friendly. The complete fixture, livestreams, and player news are available at wba.net.au/perth-wheelcats. Follow @PerthWheelcats on Facebook and Instagram.

About the Perth Wheelcats

Established in 1988, the Perth Wheelcats are Western Australia's elite men's and women's wheelchair basketball teams, proudly competing in the National Wheelchair Basketball League (NWBL) and the Women's National Wheelchair Basketball League (WNWBL), under the governance of Wheelchair Basketball Australia. In 2006, the program expanded to include a women's team.

With a proud legacy of national success and Paralympian development, the Wheelcats are recognised as one of Australia's most successful wheelchair basketball programs. The Men's Wheelcats have consistently set the standard in elite competition, securing eight NWBL championships in 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013, and 2014. The Women's Wheelcats secured three national championships in 2013, 2016, and 2022.

The Wheelcats are proudly supported by Belt Up, the Insurance Commission of Western Australia, and Basketball WA, and work closely with the recently formed WAIS Para Unit (Western Australian Institute of Sport) to identify, support, and develop the next generation of elite wheelchair basketball athletes. These partnerships promote road safety, disability inclusion, and sporting excellence while strengthening pathways from grassroots participation to the world stage.

Basketball is for everyone, and we strive to create opportunities for every Western Australian to become the best they can be, on and off the court.

For more information, visit <https://basketballwa.asn.au/athletes-with-disabilities/> and <https://www.facebook.com/perth.wheelcats> or <https://www.instagram.com/perthwheelcats>

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CAPTION L-R: 2024 Team Laura Gillis (7), Georgia Gott (10), Georgia Inglis (12), Taishar Ovens (13), Amber Merritt (15), Sara Houston (23), Ebony Stevenson (24)



CAPTION L-R: Natalie Alexander (6) v QLD

