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Epsom charity backs Ukrainian wheelchair athletes in world championship

31 July 2025



Surrey Stands with Ukraine, the Epsom-based humanitarian charity operating under Harrop HR Missions Ltd (Registered Charity No. 1117155), is proudly sponsoring the Ukrainian Pickleball Team at the prestigious **English Open Pickleball Tournament** in Telford this summer, taking place from **6–10 August 2025**.

This powerful gesture of international solidarity comes with a particular emphasis on supporting Ukrainian **wheelchair athletes**—many of whom suffered life-changing injuries during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Founded in early 2022 by Ukrainian and British friends, Surrey Stands with Ukraine has grown to become one of the UK's most active grassroots support groups for Ukraine. To date, the charity has delivered more than **£4 million** in humanitarian aid, including over **10,000 mobility aids**, **40+ tonnes of medical supplies**, and **140 aid vehicles** to those in need across the country. It also funds Ukrainian NGOs and institutions, with a strong focus over the past 18 months on **rehabilitation from physical and psychological trauma**.

Now, that mission expands to the world of sport.

The Ukrainian Pickleball Team arriving in Telford includes several inspirational wheelchair athletes whose journey into sport has been shaped by wartime adversity. For many, pickleball has become a vital outlet for physical recovery, psychological strength, and renewed purpose. Their participation in this international tournament is seen as a powerful symbol of national resilience—and comes at a time when Ukraine's sporting community continues to suffer, having lost **487 athletes** since the full-scale Russian invasion began.

"We are honoured to sponsor the Ukrainian Pickleball Team and shine a light on these remarkable athletes," said a spokesperson for Surrey Stands with Ukraine. "Their participation in the English Open is a testament to their courage and a reminder of the human toll of the war. They represent not only Ukraine, but also the enduring spirit of all those affected."

As part of its sponsorship, Surrey Stands with Ukraine is covering travel and accessible accommodation costs to ensure that all team members, especially the wheelchair athletes, can compete on equal terms.

The **English Open Pickleball Tournament**, held annually in Telford, is one of Europe's premier events in the sport. This year's edition promises to be especially meaningful with the Ukrainian team's presence on court.

Event Details

- **What**: English Open Pickleball Tournament
- **When**: 6–10 August 2025
- **Where**: Telford, United Kingdom
- **Team**: Ukrainian Pickleball Team, including wheelchair athletes, sponsored by Surrey Stands with Ukraine

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About Surrey Stands with Ukraine

Operating under Harrop HR Missions Ltd, Surrey Stands with Ukraine is a registered UK charity supporting civilians, hospitals, and trauma centres across Ukraine. Founded in February 2022, it continues to deliver aid, funding, and solidarity from the UK to those most affected by the war.

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Donate

Support the charity's Trauma Rehabilitation Fundraiser at
https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/trauma-rehabilitation-pack

Meet Two of the Athletes: Stories of Courage

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Oleksandr, 30, from Mykolaiv, was serving as a frontline medic when a Russian shell strike in 2023 caused devastating injuries to both his legs. After undergoing multiple surgeries and losing mobility, Oleksandr found himself struggling with isolation and trauma. Introduced to pickleball during rehabilitation in Lviv, he quickly found strength in sport and camaraderie. “Pickleball gave me a reason to get out of bed again,” he says. Now a wheelchair athlete, he’s competing internationally for the first time in Telford.

Natalia, 27, from Dnipro, was wounded in a missile attack while volunteering at a humanitarian centre in early 2022. With long months of rehabilitation behind her, she turned to pickleball as a low-impact sport that helped her regain balance and confidence. As one of the few female wheelchair players on the Ukrainian team, she says the sport has become a symbol of her resilience. “We lost so much—but we didn’t lose our spirit,” she says.

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