



Will's now Strictly focused on Tokyo after injury blow

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Paralympic champion Will Bayley now has his sights firmly set on the defence of his Paralympic title in Tokyo next summer after a knee injury forced him to leave *Strictly Come Dancing*.

The 31 year old has captured the hearts of the nation with his performances on the popular BBC show with professional dancer Janette Manrara and admits that he has been overwhelmed by the support he has received.

However, the knee injury he sustained during rehearsals for his dance in the Halloween special last Saturday means he is unable to continue on the hit BBC1 show.

"Strictly has been an amazing experience," he said, "and I've loved every minute of it but Tokyo 2020 is my priority and I don't want to risk further injury by continuing on the show.

"I wanted to take on a new challenge but I also wanted to try and inspire people with disabilities to feel that anything is possible.

"The support I have had from the public has been overwhelming and I would never have expected so much. I have had some really nice messages from parents with children who have got the same disability as me and it has given them hope and that is a nice feeling.

"To hear that watching me dance has helped to change some people's lives is brilliant.

"Learning to dance is really going to help me when I am playing table tennis. It has improved my balance and strengthened my core so I think that will really help my movement around the table.

"It has also shown me that I can do things I never thought were possible; I can't wait to get back in the training hall and it is all about Tokyo 2020 now."

British Para Table Tennis Performance Director Gorazd Vecko said: "We are really proud of what Will has achieved on *Strictly Come Dancing* and he has shown all the determination and fighting spirit that have made him a champion.

"It is disappointing for Will that he has had to leave the show due to injury but I know he will come back stronger and work as hard as he can to retain his title in Tokyo."

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