

Star Bayley proud to join Hall of Champions

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Will Bayley by his Hall of Champions display

Table tennis player Will Bayley has become the first ever Paralympian to be inducted into the Hall of Champions at the English Institute of Sport – Sheffield (EIS Sheffield) in recognition of his sporting achievements.

A giant image of the 27-year-old Paralympian, who is currently preparing for Rio 2016, is now on display in the Hall of Champions alongside athletes such as Nick Matthew, Jessica Ennis-Hill and Kelly Holmes after it was unveiled at a celebration ceremony.

The Hall of Champions was opened by Lord Sebastian Coe in 2009 and features athletes who have trained at EIS Sheffield on their way to World or Olympic success.

Bayley was born in Poole, Dorset, and was diagnosed at birth with arthrogryposis, a rare congenital disorder that was to affect all four of his limbs.

He was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma at the age of seven and it was while recovering from cancer that his grandmother bought him his first table tennis table.

He went on to compete in his first Paralympic Games in Beijing 2008 before winning gold at the 2011 European Championships and claiming a silver medal at London 2012.

Bayley, current World Para Table Tennis champion, said: "I'm so proud to join such an elite list of athletes and being the first ever Paralympian to join EIS Sheffield's Hall of Champions makes it extra special.

"Becoming world champion and winning a medal at London 2012 are of course the highlights of my career so far but I still have a lot more I want to achieve.

"Seeing my name on the wall alongside such great sporting names will definitely give me a huge boost as I continue my preparations for Rio 2016."

Lorenzo Clark, director of operations at the charity Sheffield City Trust (SCT), which operates EIS Sheffield, said: "Will Bayley is a true role model and is fully deserving of his place on the Hall of Champions.

"We're extremely proud to be home to top athletes such as Will and provide world-class facilities to support and develop their careers.

"We wish him the best of luck in his preparations for Rio 2016 and hope he can return home with another medal."

EIS Sheffield has world-class sports facilities for participation at every level from grass roots to Olympic champions and is home to athletes including London 2012 gold medallists Jessica Ennis-Hill and Nicola Adams.

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