

# Raissa Martin

Aussie Belles Paralympian



For nearly a decade, Raissa's love of sports and athletics saw her compete as a track athlete in Queensland School Sports. Growing up in regional Queensland, she was simply not able to participate in the Para Sports available to athletes with a vision impairment. Born with rod monochromatism, Raissa is completely colour blind and severely light sensitive. As a young adult, when Raissa moved to Brisbane for work and study, she finally found her way to a court and started playing goalball socially.

Inspired by her team-mate and training partner Meica Horsburgh, Raissa soon fell in love with the fast-paced sport and was impressed by the fact that goalball is the only Paralympic sport that is truly equitable - as everyone must wear blackout goggles to play. Raissa joined the Queensland side in 2012, winning several national titles, competing internationally and ultimately achieving selection for the Australian Paralympic team.

When Raissa made her Paralympic debut in 2016 at Rio, she realised the dream she'd held since her first athletics competition at ten years old. In Rio, the Belles received a late qualification following Russia's ban due to doping, and tied their match against the Ukraine, placing fifth in their group behind Turkey, China, Canada and the Ukraine.

Raissa loves the defensive aspects of goalball, waiting for the ball and then pouncing. When not on court, Raissa enjoys the outdoor lifestyle, hiking and pursuing her hobby of rock-climbing.



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# Homegrown Heroes

Raissa Martin



## Sport:

Goalball (Aussie Belles)

## How did you get involved in your sport?

I joined the social competition in Brisbane in 2012 and fell in love with Goalball. I had known of Goalball for many years prior to this, but had not lived in Brisbane or had other priorities before joining.

## What do you love most about your sport?

I love that everyone who plays, regardless of their level of vision, can put on a blindfold and immediately be on an equal playing field. I also love that it is the only Paralympic sport that is truly equalised and accessible to anyone who is legally blind or has lower vision to total vision loss. It is a truly equitable sport.

## What have been your major highlights?

My major highlight was representing Australia for the first time in 2014, but officially in 2015 and making the team that went on to the Rio Paralympic Games in 2016.

## First thing you would buy if you won the lottery?

A house.

## What would be your one superpower?

Super Strength

## Who has inspired you across your journey?

The two teammates who have made the most impact on me as an athlete are Meica Horsbrough and Nicole Esdaile. They have demonstrated unbelievable levels of commitment and dedication to not only improve themselves, but those around them. They have always taken the time to teach and model the best way to train and play as an elite athlete.

## What three words would best describe you?

Optimistic, chaotic, determined

**If you could have dinner with any 3 people (past or present, famous or not), who would they be?** Emma Watson, Jennifer Lawrence and Leonardo DiCaprio.

## Favourite meal or place to eat:

Butter chicken from Punjabi Palace.

## What is your favourite holiday destination?

Somewhere cold in the mountains with lots of hiking.

## What is some advice for a VI person wanting to be a part of a sporting club?

Be brave, take the leap and try something outside of your comfort zone. We will show you the way to go.



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