



Life in a wheelchair turns to competitive tennis

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It has not taken Scott Bonk long to master the sport of wheelchair tennis.

The 39-year-old Grant resident took up the sport last December, and already has won a couple of championships in singles and doubles.

At the Midwest Indoor Wheelchair Tennis Championships last weekend at Champion Health and Fitness in Rockford, Bonk won the C singles championship with a 7-6 (7-4), 6-4 win over Belmont's Pat Besta.

Then Bonk teamed up with Besta and won the B doubles championship with a 7-5, 6-4 win over Waynesville, Ohio's, Wesley Coffman and Carl Milan of Birmingham, Alabama.

"I got a call from Pat and Dave (Briggs, who is also a wheelchair athlete), and they got me into the sport," said Bonk, who also won a doubles title with Besta in Nashville, Tenn., earlier this summer. "I never played before, but I got hooked right away.

"After my accident I wasn't thinking about athletics. But once I recovered, I got involved because the people are great, and I am a very competitive person."

Bonk is in a wheelchair because of a fall from a tree stand while hunting in 1998.

Despite the tragic turn of events, Bonk is moving forward with his life at a fast pace.

Besides tennis, he also began playing wheelchair basketball last fall. He still deer hunts.

"It is great to compete again," Bonk said. "When I am out there competing, it is a different world. I don't even think about my chair."

Besta, Bonk's playing partner and competitor, has been impressed.

"Some people get right in there and after it," Besta said. "There are a lot of good athletes out there, and Scott is one of them."

Bonk's wife Theresa, and their three children, Aaron (14), Alex (12) and Alyssa (8) have all begun playing now that dad has taken up the sport.

"We all go out and hit together," Scott Bonk said. "I hope to play tennis with my children to stay connected with them."

The next competition is August 19-21 in Louisville, Ky., at the Bluegrass Wheelchair Tennis Championships.

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