



## Wheelchair tennis satisfies her competitive drive

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Taking care of four children ranging in age from 9 years to 11 months can be an exhausting time for any parent.

But Suzi Egeler needed something more.

Egeler, who also is in a wheelchair because of an auto accident nine years ago, was searching for something to satisfy her competitive side.

Three years ago she found it, in the form of tennis.

"I was looking to get back in shape after my third child," said Egeler, 33, a Belmont resident. "I was talking with my doctor and he did encourage me to meet with a representative at Mary Free Bed and they got me involved with a hand cycle and into some wheelchair basketball.

"I also went out to a tennis practice (for the Grand Rapids Wheelchair Sports Association), loved it and stuck with it ever since. That was three years ago in September."

Egeler stuck with it, with the help of husband Eric.

"Working this into my schedule has not been hard," Egeler said. "My husband has been very supportive. It is one day a week for two hours, and it gets me away from the house and some exercise. My husband sometimes pushes me out the door when I'm too tired, but I always appreciate it."

The work and exercise are paying off. Egeler is competing in the sport and is doing quite well.

"I started competing a year after I started at the competition here in Rockford," Egeler said. "I won the Women's A singles title my first year. I have been hooked ever since."

That was two years ago.

This past weekend she competed in the Midwest Indoor Championships at Champion Heath and Fitness in Rockford.

In women's A singles, she went 1-2. In doubles, she teamed with Rebecca Lincoln from Mississauga, Ontario, to win the title with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Grand Rapids' Alisha Middel and Jenison's Jessica Sportel.

"I felt like I played decent (last) weekend," Egeler said. "I felt this is the best tennis I played since my fourth child. By the end of the tournament I was exhausted.

Egeler plans to stay with tennis. That, and raising Mara, 9, Angela (5), Katherine (3) and Rita (11 months), are her passions.

"I definitely plan on sticking with it," Egeler said. "I don't know how many tournaments I will compete in. My husband is going back to medical school in the fall at Michigan State, so I don't know how much time I will have. But I do plan on sticking with the practices."

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