

= Annika Zeyen =

Annika Zeyen ( born 17 February 1985 ) is a 1 @. @ 5 @- @ point wheelchair basketball player , who has played for ASV Bonn and RSV Lahn @- @ Dill in the German wheelchair basketball league , and for the University of Alabama in the United States . She has also played for the national team , with which she won three European titles , was the runner @- @ up at 2010 World Championships , won silver at the 2008 Summer Paralympic Games in Beijing , and won a gold medal at the 2012 Summer Paralympics in London , for which President Joachim Gauck awarded the team Germany 's highest sporting honour , the Silbernes Lorbeerblatt ( Silver Laurel Leaf ) .

= = Biography = =

Zeyen was born on 17 February 1985 . She is nicknamed " Anni " . At the age of 14 , she was involved in a serious horse riding accident that left her paralysed . During rehab , she was introduced to the sport of wheelchair basketball . She left the hospital and started looking for a club where she could play .

Zeyen joined ASV Bonn , initially playing with the youth team , then with the seconds , and finally with the firsts . In 2001 , she played in the German Championships for Women , and was named most valuable young player . In 2004 , she switched to RSV Lahn @- @ Dill , with which she won several German championships . She was invited to try out for the national team , and joined its development squad . She competed in her first paralympic games , the 2004 Summer Paralympics in Athens . She subsequently played for the national team that won the European championships in 2005 , 2007 , 2009 and 2011 .

In September 2008 , Zeyen participated in the 2008 Summer Paralympics in Beijing , but Germany was beaten in the gold medal match by the United States team , which contained three of her former team mates from the University of Alabama , Stephanie Wheeler , Mary Allison Milford and Alana Nichols . The German team took home Paralympic silver medals instead . After the Paralympics , the team 's performance was considered impressive enough for it to be named the national " Team of the Year " , and it received the Silver Laurel Leaf , Germany 's highest sporting honour , from German President Horst Koehler .

Zeyen took up a scholarship to the University of Alabama in 2009 , majoring in advertising and minoring in graphic design . She maintained a 4 @. @ 0 grade point average . Her team at the University of Alabama won three titles in five years , narrowly missing out in March 2013 to the University of Wisconsin ? Whitewater , which won the championship game 55 ? 41 , a game in which Zeyen scored 11 points . Zeyen was named an Academic All @- @ American in 2012 and 2013 .

In June 2012 , Zeyen was named as one of the team that competed at the 2012 Summer Paralympic Games in London . In the Gold Medal match , her team faced Australia , a team that had defeated them 48 ? 46 in Sydney just a few months before . They defeated the Australians 58 ? 44 in front of a crowd of over 12 @, @ 000 at the North Greenwich Arena to win the gold medal , the first that Germany had won in women 's wheelchair basketball in 28 years . They were awarded a Silver Laurel Leaf by President Joachim Gauck in November 2012 , and were again named Team of the Year for 2012 .

The German team lost the European Championship to the Netherlands before a home town crowd of 2 @, @ 300 in Frankfurt in July 2013 by a point , 56 @- @ 57 . The game was televised live in Germany , and cameras lingered on a tearful Zeyen , who could have tied the game and sent it into extra time with a free throw in its dying moments .

In April 2014 , Zeyen was part of the BG Baskets Hamburg team that won the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation Euro League Challenge Cup , its first International title , with a 62 ? 54 over the Frankfurt Mainhattan Skywheelers . The team also won the Fair Play Award of the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation Europe , and Zeyen was elected to its All Star team .

= = Achievements = =

2005 : Gold at European championships ( Villeneuve d 'Ascq , France )  
2006 : Bronze at World Championships ( Amsterdam , Netherlands )  
2007 : Gold at European championships ( Wetzlar , Germany )  
2008 : Silver at the Paralympic Games ( Beijing , China )  
2009 : Gold at the European Championships ( Stoke Mandeville , England )  
2010 : Silver at the World Championships  
2011 : Gold at the European Championships ( Nazareth , Israel )  
2012 : Gold at the Paralympic Games ( London , England )  
2013 : Silver at the European Championships ( Frankfurt , Germany )  
2014 : Silver at the World Championships ( Toronto , Canada )  
2015 : Gold at the European Championships ( Worcester , England )

= = Awards = =

2008 : Team of the Year  
2008 : Silver Laurel Leaf  
2012 : Team of the Year  
2012 : Silver Laurel Leaf