Wichita's Ratzlaff, Taylor on BNP Paribas Championship Team

For the first time in 15 years, the U.S. junior team, consisting of Chris Herman (Gulfport, Fla.), Casey Ratzlaff (Wichita, Kan.), and Conner Stroud (Spindale, N.C.), captured the junior team title at the 2015 BNP Paribas World Team Cup at Ali Bey Resort Manavgat in Antalya, Turkey.

The U.S. junior team faced the Netherlands in the final. In the first match, Ratzlaff defeated Ruben Spaargaren in a tight, 6-4, 4-6, 7-6(5), match. Herman then defeated Mitchel Graauw, 6-0, 6-4. Herman and Stroud were then set to play Graauw/Spaargaren in the doubles, but the match was not played since the American team already clinched the title. The U.S. junior team made it to the World Team Cup final after defeating defending champ Russia in the semifinals.
“After months of hard work and constant support from family, coaches, teammates, and friends, we managed to take the junior WTC title home,” said Herman.

“It’s been a fantastic World Team Cup. Our team worked hard together and overcame many obstacles,” said Stroud. “It’s great to be able to say that we are second to none.”

“I feel like we gave our all out there, as a team and as individuals,” added Ratzlaff. “We kept competing no matter how difficult the challenge ahead of us was. We cheered for each other and we fought for each other, and it all worked out our way in the end.”

“I am an extremely proud coach and want to also congratulate the other coaches, especially the hometown coaches that help guide these three young kids along the way,” said Head Coach Jason Harnett. “I could not be more excited for these wonderful kids and their parents. I can’t wait to see what this group will do next.”

The U.S. quad team of David Wagner, (Chula Vista, Calif.), Nick Taylor, (Wichita, Kan.), Greg Hasterok, (San Diego), and Bryan Barten, (Tucson, Ariz.), led the U.S. to its ninth title in the quad division over the past 15 years with a 2-1 final-round victory over Japan.

In that final, Japan took the early lead, as Shota Kawano beat Taylor, 6-4, 6-0, but world No. 1 Wagner leveled the score with a 6-0, 6-1, victory over Mitsuteru Moroishi. The title was decided with the doubles match, where three-time Paralympic champions Taylor and Wagner defeated Kawano and Moroishi 6-2, 6-4.

The U.S. women’s team, led by Emmy Kaiser, (Fort Mitchell, Ky.), Kaitlyn Verfuerth, (Flagstaff, Ariz.), and Dana Mathewson, (San Diego, Calif.), finished in sixth place after finishing seventh in 2014. The U.S. men’s team finished 11th. The men’s team consisted of Steve Baldwin, (San Diego, Calif.), Hunter Grace, (Tucson, Ariz.), and Jon Rydberg, 36, (Woodbury, Minn.).

The World Team Cup annually features the world’s best wheelchair tennis players. A total of 52 teams representing 28 countries took part in the 2015 competition.

The USTA was officially designated by the USOC as the national governing body for the Paralympic sport of wheelchair tennis in June 2002, becoming the first Olympic national governing body to earn this recognition. As the national governing body for wheelchair tennis, the USTA manages wheelchair tennis in the United States, including the sanctioning of tournaments, overseeing wheelchair rankings, creating and managing a High Performance program for developing elite disabled athletes, and selecting teams to compete internationally for the United States.