**June 2019**

**Holly Saunders**

Hi, my name is Holly Saunders, I am 16 years old and go to Northern Beaches Christian School. Currently, my major sports focus is athletics. I compete in 100m, 200m, and discus for Cherrybrook Athletics Club. I have an international  
classification as a T/F 35 athlete and have enjoyed competing at a State, National and International level in Track and Feld for both school and open competitions. On March 11, 2017, I broke the women’s world record in T/F 35 long jump. It still stands today.

My proudest sporting achievement was competing at the CP World games in 2018. It was great to represent Australia and make new friendships with athletes from other countries; but the best part was receiving my bronze medal for 100m.

One thing you might not know about me is that I was born with tricuspid atresia, ventricle septal defect, transposition of the great arteries and double outlet left ventricle. I had heart surgeries at 2 weeks, 21 months, and 8 years. I crawled and walked normally but as a preschooler, I developed spasticity in my lower legs. After MRIs of my brain and spine, I had spinal surgery at age 5 due to a tethered spinal cord. I was later given a CP diagnosis too.

After my Fontan surgery at age 8, I developed a passion for sport. Previously I had spent a lot of time in a pram to get around, but after the surgery, I could be more active without getting so tired. Now I could start to keep up with my peers. My spasticity allowed me to be classified in different sports.

When I was younger, I played able-bodied soccer for many years but now I find it difficult to keep up with my peers. In the last couple of years, I have attended CP football camps, Pararoo training sessions and Football 4 All Gala Days. I am looking forward to the Kanga competition in Canberra in July and being part of the first female CP football camp for the Oceania region in October. I am looking forward to participating in female CP football squads representing Australia in the (hopefully) not too distant future.

In the future, I would love to compete for Australia at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics and be involved in any CP Female Football squad opportunities in Australia and overseas.