

# Jake Rowan

## **Brief football history**

I signed for my first team (which was a hearing team) when I was around 8 years old and made my way through the 7,8,9 a side teams and then eventually to the 11 a side team when I was old enough, and played for them for around 5 years, I then broke my ankle and this coupled with a lack of interest in football made me take a 2 year break from the sport. When I was 17 years old a friend of mine asked me to fill in for a few games and suddenly I was in love with football again, by the time I was 19 Sunderland deaf association football club had been set up, I went along to the first training session and the team went from strength to strength, winning the EDF Northern league 3 years in a row, and also beating St Johns in the EDF League championship final to be crowned champions of England 2015.

## **Barriers**

I have faced a few barriers whilst playing football, particularly trying to fit in with my other team mates at hearing teams, I never quite had the same bond as what I did playing with my deaf team mates, the people in deaf football are unbelievably welcoming. Injuries have been another barrier for me, my ankle break kept me out of action for a good year and a half as the recovery was complicated, however I've never let that get me down.

## **What does it mean to me being selected for GB?**

This will be hard because it is that special to me I cannot begin to put it into words, you are always told that representing your country is the greatest honour of your career and I have no doubt it will be if I manage to get myself into the starting 11, I feel that I have made my family proud as well which has been a big ambition of mine. I am now more confident than I have ever been before whilst playing football, however I know I still have a lot of work to do to become a regular member of the GB squads.

## **Barriers we now face with funding**

I personally have received a lot of support from my employers regarding possibly sponsoring myself to go to the tournament which I would be extremely grateful for, however I understand the squad as a whole need funding to take us to the upcoming European championships, and I am now going to begin discussions that would be them make a larger donation to the whole squad rather than an individual player of the group, hopefully these discussions will be productive.

## **Ambitions for the future**

In the short term I hoping to be one of the starting centre halves for GB at the upcoming European championships, I know it's not going to be easy because we have a fantastic squad of players, but I will give 100%. Further along the line I hope my involvement with the Under 21 squad will provide me with the experience and platform to make the next step to the senior Great Britain team in the future, on a club level I hope Sunderland Deaf AFC continue to dominate the EDF Northern division, and personally I hope to continue my development as a footballer through hard work and training.