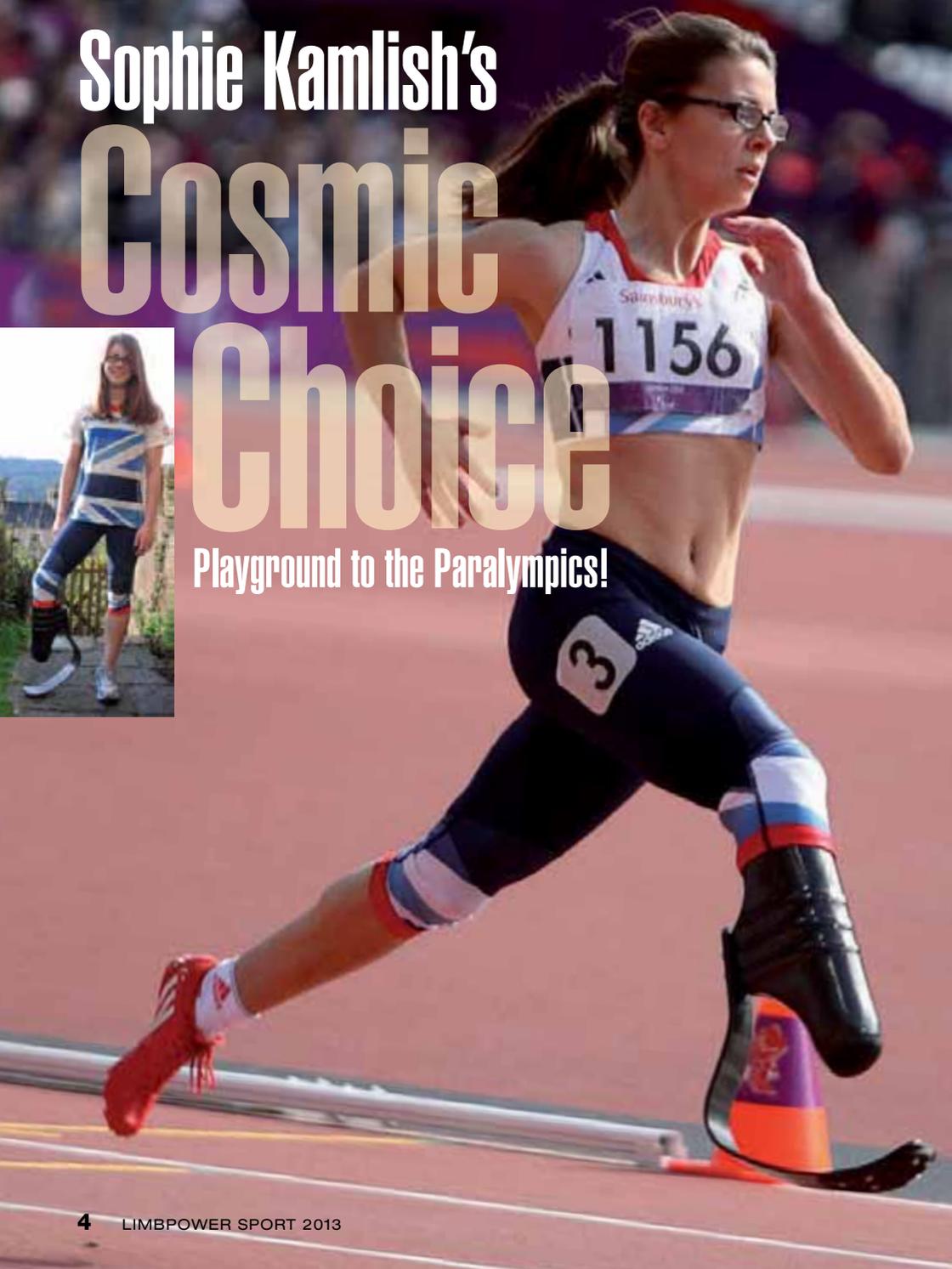


Sophie Kamlish's

Cosmic Choice

Playground to the Paralympics!



At the University of Bath in the Spring of 2011 when aged just 14, below knee amputee Sophie Kamlish was identified as a potential athlete through the Playground to Podium initiative. Two months later Sophie was competing in her first competition and being coached by Rob Ellchuck in both sprints and long jump.

The following May, still only aged 15 and with the provision of her first bespoke sprinting prosthesis, Sophie sprang onto the international Paralympic scene by winning a bronze medal in her first ever international event (Paralympic World Cup in Manchester). This proved to be just the beginning, as Sophie modestly explains, "Through funding from READY (Recreation and Easy Access for Disabled Youth), Pace Rehabilitation provided me with a specific running leg that enabled me to progress to the next level."

Up to this point Sophie had trained and competed on her everyday prosthesis. Thanks to the READY funding, she was able to attend the Pace Rehabilitation Clinic in Chesham, Bucks, to have a bespoke running prosthesis made. The specialist device incorporated an Össur Flex-Foot® Cheetah. The Cheetah is a foot for track and field sports, favoured by elite Paralympic Athletes around the world, with a design originally based on the hind leg of a cheetah.

Following her outstanding inaugural international appearance on her new Cheetah, Team GB selected Sophie for the 2012 Paralympics in London! On her Games debut, despite the huge pressure of competing in front of 80,000 people in the Olympic

stadium, not to mention the worldwide media, Sophie successfully qualified for both 100m and 200m (T44) finals from her heat races. Despite her lack of international experience, Sophie achieved very credible 5th and 6th places in the respective events, recording a personal best time of 29.08 in the final of the T44 200m.

Sophie's fast-track Paralympic achievements didn't go unnoticed, as Scott Richardson, Pace Rehabilitation's Business Development Manager explains, "Sophie's progress was incredible." He continued, "We wanted to recognise her achievements at the Paralympics and give her the best opportunity to continue to develop."

Following some discussion with her parents, Ros and Steve, Scott learnt that other than at school, Sophie didn't walk very far on her 'everyday' prosthesis, due to comfort issues. As Scott recalls, "It was ironic that a Paralympic sprinter was struggling to walk about on a daily basis, we felt we could improve the situation for Sophie."

Thanks to excellent cooperation from Össur UK, who agreed to provide a Low Profile Vari-Flex® foot, Pace prosthetist Paul Richardson

began working with Sophie, to provide her with a new 'everyday' prosthesis.

Paul explains, "The very low build height (68mm) of the foot is designed specifically for users like Sophie with long residual limbs. It offers similar benefits to the Vari-Flex®, providing a high level of confidence and security." He continued, "If we could provide Sophie with a more comfortable prosthesis for her everyday life, she'd hopefully be in better condition, both physically and mentally, for her sporting activities."

Össur UK Sales Manager, Paul Jamieson, was invited to Pace Chesham when Sophie took delivery of her new device. He said, "We are really pleased to have worked with Pace and Sophie to fit the new foot, and look forward to working together towards the Paralympics in Rio."

A few days afterwards, Sophie contacted Pace and said, "The leg is superb. I'm very happy with it and really do appreciate the whole team's effort. Thank you!" Adding, "Not only is my new leg loads lighter, it also has a really awesome design and walking around on it is so much easier now."

Outside athletics, Sophie has ambitions to develop a career as an author and illustrator.

Keep an eye out for Sophie this summer, at the World Championships in Lyon, and follow her progress to the Paralympics in Rio in 2016.

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