



USA Deaf Sports Federation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM A HOMESCHOOLER TO THE USADSF SPORTSWOMAN OF THE YEAR

Emily Hangstefer wins 2013 Sportswoman of the Year Award

LEXINGTON, KY: November 15, 2013 – The USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF) announced that Emily Hangstefer of Signal Mountain, Tenn. was named the 2013 USADSF Sportswoman of the Year during the USADSF House of Delegates meeting on November 9, 2013 for her performance at the 2013 Deaflympics in Sofia, Bulgaria. The 2012 graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) is the first tennis player to receive the honor.

At the Deaflympics, Hangstefer and Laura Chapman of Columbus State University teamed in the women's double event as an unseeded team and swept all competition to capture the gold medal by beating third-seeded Spain (6-1, 6-2), top-seeded Germany (6-3, 6-1) and second-seeded Taiwan (6-4, 6-1) en route to gold. This action ended the 16-year medal drought for USA tennis.

Deaflympics doubles partner Chapman states, "Playing with Emily was quite an honor". "Emily has incredible passion for the game of tennis and that attitude drives her success on the courts."

Back home in Tennessee, Hangstefer grew up as a homeschooler and did not compete on the varsity level in high school; however, she was ranked seventh in the 18's group of the United States Tennis Association. All four of her older siblings went to play tennis in their respective colleges: John, Michael and Katie at University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Daniel at Lipscomb College. Daniel and Emily teamed in the mixed double event at the Sofia Deaflympics and took the silver medal by losing to the top-seeded Germany team (3-6, 3-6). "Emily worked so hard and prepared extremely well to get ready for the Deaflympics, and it

paid off!" said Daniel Hangstefer. "She did a great job of communicating in doubles and is extremely aggressive at the net."

The only medal that Hangstefer did not bring home was in the women's singles event. Hangstefer's match with the second-seeded Beatriz Villamandos Lorenzo of Spain was one of the most memorable tennis moments in the Deaflympics history. The nail-biting match lasted over three hours with the score of 7-5, 5-7, 7-5 and broke the longest women's single match in time played. "That match was actually Emily's second-ever match playing on the red clay court," said USA Tennis Team leader Howard Gorrell.

"Emily played a very tough match. Both players competed at a very high level and the match could have gone either way, it was a matter of only a couple points that decided the result," said Katie Mancebo, the third Hangstefer family member on the 2013 USA Deaflympics Tennis Team as the head coach. Mancebo also serves as the coach of the Converse College tennis team.

"Of course it's always heartbreaking to lose such a close and hard fought match, but I was



Hangstefer (R) with Chapman celebrating their gold in women's doubles tennis at the 2013 Summer Deaflympics

so proud of Emily's effort and I think that next time she is in that situation, she will come out on top," said Mancebo.

Presently, Emily is training toward playing for USA in the Maere Cup for Deaf Women, to be held at the Champions Club Tennis Center in Chattanooga on July 14-19, 2014. The Dresse Cup for Deaf Men will also be held at the same place and same time. "Emily Hangstefer has some of the quickest hands I've ever seen and is one of USA's best ever women's deaf tennis players" said USA veteran, Brad Minns. "She brings a ton of talent to the 2014 Maere Cup Championships, giving Team USA an excellent chance to win the cup." All is 'Golden' from the quiet lady from Chattanooga as Hangstefer lets her smile, her racquet and her game take her to new heights.

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To obtain more information about the USA Deaf Sports Federation, please contact Chris Kaftan at kaftan@usdeafsports.org.

About USADSF

USADSF is the only national athletic association in the United States that coordinates the participation of American deaf and hard of hearing individuals in international sport competitions. The Federation is affiliated with the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) and has hosted the Summer Deaflympics in 1965 (Washington, DC) and 1985 (Los Angeles), and the Winter Deaflympics in 1975 (Lake Placid, NY) and 2007 (Salt Lake City). The Games Preparation Committee, a standing committee of the Federation, coordinates with the Executive Board and each National Sport Organization to organize and prepare U.S. teams for the Deaflympics, Pan-American Deaf Sports Organization (PANAMDES) Games and World Championships.