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Hart gets spot on Paralympic Team From staff reports

Rebecca Hart's life-long dream finally has come true.

The Erie resident got a phone call confirming she earned a spot on the United States Paralympic Equestrian Team on Thursday. She and her 16-year-old horse, Norteassa, will compete in Beijing on Sept. 6-17.

"I'm really excited. It's so, so overwhelming," Hart said, struggling to find the words.

The 24-year-old won the United States Equestrian Federation's National Para Equestrian Championship last weekend at the Lamplight Equestrian Center in Wayne, Ill., to solidify her spot on the Paralympic team. She and her Hanoverian gelding rode to a final score of 72.473 in the competition.

When Hart travels to the Paralympics in early August, she will compete in three events, including the team test, championship and freestyle. The events will take place in Hong Kong; horses are not permitted entrance into China.

Hart has had familial spastic paraplegia since birth, an affliction that affects the lower body. Her parents let her on a pony ride when she was younger, and she has loved riding ever since.

Hart was an alternate for the 2004 Paralympics in Athens but never has made the team, until now.

"I really couldn't ask for anything more," she said.



When: Sept 6-17

Where: Beijing