Patient story: Arato

As a naturally gifted and determined young tennis star, Arato dreamed of one day becoming a professional player – until he started missing shots he had once found easy.

When Arato was diagnosed with genetic blindness, his father, Tim, recognised the symptoms because he also lives with the same condition. Stargardt's Disease often starts in childhood with black spots in the centre of the child's vision and sensitivity to light.

"It was 25 years ago when I was in full training as a triathlete myself," Tim says. "My training partners could see that I was hitting objects on the road or tripping over things on the footpath, and so I had a similar problem.

"People often ask me, 'Tim, what can you see?' I explain to them that I'm not walking around with a white cane all the time, but if you're standing a metre away from me, I can't see your face."

Arato now plays in Tennis Australia's Low Vision Competition, where he is experiencing great success. School is a bit more challenging because he struggles to recognise the faces of his friends.

"When he first knew about his diagnosis, I don't think he understood the impact to his life," says his mother, Junko.

> **"We remain hopeful that there will be a treatment for Stargardt's Disease, and hopefully that treatment will enable Arato's vision to be restored."**
> **– Tim, Arato's dad**