

Sharpshooters Finish Off Winter Season

The final year before the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games brought countless high-level performances onto different fields of play, undeniably bringing forth great anticipation for the big event to come.

Athletes in the Paralympic Sport of Ice Sledge Hockey were no less than an outstanding group of sharpshooters, as the various competitions leading up to the World Championships Tournaments A and B culminated the winter season. Most notably, the games in both tournaments determined the qualifiers for the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games next year.

At the 2009 IPC Ice Sledge Hockey World Championships Tournament A, six teams made that qualification official. It was clear in fact from 12 May, the last day of the pool games in this competition, that teams from Canada, Japan, Norway and USA would proceed to the semi-finals, and therefore qualified for the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.

Czech Republic and Italy were two more teams to qualify for Vancouver. After a hard three losses, the Czech team defeated Korea in the play-off round 5:1. Italy’s play-off against Germany had the Italians scoring in the penalty shootout, putting them as the sixth and final team on the list.

The eight days in the north-eastern city of Ostrava gave audience members and Paralympic fans around the world the chance to experience the highly physical Paralympic Sport. The gold medal battle for example between USA and Norway filled the first of three 15-minute periods with powerful strikes and constant defence. The score remained 0:0 throughout the game, but the teams brought an increased intensity as the clock continued to run out. Just when the audience assumed that overtime was inevitable however, Andy Yohe scored the winning goal with just over 11 seconds left, putting the final score at 1:0, USA.

Nearly 1,200 kilometres away in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, the 2009 IPC Ice Sledge Hockey World Championships Tournament B took place less than two months earlier from 15-21 March, exactly one year before the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.

The competition brought out teams from Estonia, Great Britain, Poland, Sweden and host country The Netherlands. The five teams were not only competing for the gold medal, they were also aiming to reach the finals which would therefore put them in the qualification tournament for the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.

Every athlete’s fast-moving sledge on the ice saw this as their chance to make it to the Games, with Estonia and Sweden eventually placing in the top two spots. The Estonian team took the top position, winning 1:0 against Sweden. Although the winter season 2008/2009 is now officially over, and many athletes undoubtedly have the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games on their minds, the eight team slots for Ice Sledge Hockey are not completely filled.

A Paralympic Qualifier is still in the wings for four teams whose fate remains undetermined. The Paralympic Qualifier in Ice Sledge Hockey will include the top two teams from Tournament B, Estonia and Sweden, and the bottom two teams from Tournament A, Germany and Korea. The two winners of those competitions will fill the final two slots for Ice Sledge Hockey teams to compete in Vancouver.

Finishing up the winter season in Alpineskiing, athletes were in Whistler, Canada, to compete in Downhill, Super-G, Super Combined, Giant Slalom and Slalom. At the event, the overall Nation Ranking was won, for the first time, by Canada, followed by Austria and the USA.

Closely in Mt. Washington, Nordic Skiers completed their World Cup series in Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing. With athletes from 19 different nations in Canmore, the event completed the series with final rankings ensuing.

And in Wheelchair Curling, the World Curling Federation (WCF) World Wheelchair Curling Championships also had athletes finishing their season to qualify for the upcoming Games. The countries ranked in the top ten comprise Norway, Canada, United States, Korea, Scotland/Great Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Japan.

The Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games will take place next year from 12-21 March. All Paralympic winter sports will be in Canada, including Alpine Skiing, Biathlon, Cross-Country Skiing, Ice Sledge Hockey and Wheelchair Curling, bringing athletes out to show highly-trained and skilled performances that will inspire every Paralympic fan around the world.

For more information about the Paralympic Winter Games, please visit www.paralympic.org.

See footage from Ostrava on www.ParalympicSport.TV.
Athletes Grow With Organization After 20 Years

Former IPC President Dr. Robert Steadward Recalls Progress Over The Years With Hans Lindstrom and Fred Jansen

The number of competitions and events this winter season were quite the dose of excitement for Paralympic Winter Sport fans around the world. State-of-the-art venues became fantastic background settings, and countless volunteers did more than their fair share in contributing to the success. Now with the winter season 2008/2009 officially over, athletes have the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games in clear view.

Sport events which have taken place in Whistler/ Vancouver, Canada, this year proved that the upcoming Games will be no less than impressive. Like in Beijing, Paralympic fans will have a chance to witness Paralympic Sport on an elite level, but in its winter form. Winter athletes have been fine tuning their skills this season in order not only prepare for the Vancouver Games, but also for qualification purposes.

After the 2009 IPC Ice Sledge Hockey World Championship and the World Wheelchair Curling Championships, to name two deciding events, athletes now have their definitive results with their respective ranking, clearing the way for training and Games preparation.

I was at the One-Year-Out celebration of the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games in March, which was organized by the Government of Canada at Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Being there, we had the opportunity to link all Canadians with the Paralympic Winter Games next year.

With the winter season complete, other Paralympic sporting competitions have continued this year. The Arafura Games for example, brought together athletes with a disability integrated with able-bodied athletes. The Games provided a diverse sporting environment and experience, and also incorporated the IPC Women in Sport Summit into the 2009 Arafura International Sports Conference.

But the big event was in Manchester at the 2009 Paralympic World Cup. Athletes from all around the world competed in four sports, including Wheelchair Basketball, Track Cycling, Swimming and Athletics. The record six-day run of the event had many athletes who were successful at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games seeing this event as a key stepping stone in their preparations for World Championships in 2010/2011 and the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

Inside this issue, we have included a special section on the 20 year anniversary of the IPC, with interviews of people who have been a part for the organization for many years. Through their eyes and in their words, readers have the chance to experience the past that has made IPC what it is today.

We also see the IPC Swimming Summit in Berlin covered, with athlete interviews from Athletes’ Council members Teresa Perales and David Smetanine. In the Education and Development section, we examine the success of the Paralympic School Day Project that has been happening in Sweden over the past few years.

The Accessibility section includes an overview of the progress because of the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. Detailed information on the Accessibility Guide and an interview with expert Nick Morris both show the plan to success in Beijing and how the results remain today.

Finally, Picking the Vault takes a look at the 1960 Games in Rome, Italy, giving readers the chance to learn about the first Paralympic Games.

I hope you enjoy the issue and have an incredibly successful summer!

THE PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Sir Philip Craven, MBE
IPC President

The comprehensive list of changes that has been compiling in recent years within the Paralympic Movement gives anyone a clear picture of accomplishment and evolution. This year, as the IPC celebrates its 20 year anniversary, that list has more defined borders however when focus turns to the progress of athletes and the actual organization of the committee.

Dr. Robert Steadward, the former IPC President, took office when the IPC was just beginning in 1989. He served until 2001, which encompassed three four-year terms. As the first President of the organization, he said that there was a memorable moment everyday because they demonstrated the opportunities and changes that were in fact taking place right before his eyes with and for the athletes.

“There were so many memorable moments, including the debate and discussions we had surrounding the creation of the IPC in 1989. At the beginning of his time with the IPC, Dr. Steadward said. “It gave us a home base with professional staff which would help support our volunteer based organization at the time, and ultimately lead to the growth of the Paralympic Movement for our athletes.”

From the beginning, the gigantic organization that is international sport was a challenge for the IPC and other organizations representing athletes with a disability to work with on an equal level. Sport for people with a disability had in the past principally focused on rehabilitation through the implementation of remedial exercise and was not really seen as on a high level.

“In the 1980s we struggled for our rights, recognition, respect and equality in order to equate ourselves with the so-called normal realm of sport,” Dr. Steadward said. “Our athletes were considered patients rather than high performance athletes and were without the work in establishing the sports technical structure, IPC sports programme and rules, which was lead by former IPC Executive Committee Member Hans Lindstrom. Mr. Lindstrom recalled this as a difficult, but rewarding task to complete.

“When the IPC was founded there was no sports programme, no sports technical infrastructure and no comprehensive rules package,” Mr. Lindstrom said. “It was necessary to immediately prepare the constitution for the operational practicalities of the organization.”

Mr. Lindstrom, who was also with the IPC at the beginning, said it started almost as a kitchen table operation, and established itself as a professionally recognized and respected organization in the international world of sport. Like Dr. Steadward, Mr. Lindstrom said an enormous change was caused by the hiring of qualified, professional staff.

“I think the IPC of today is more united and stable, because time has allowed the organization to grow together and build and strengthen routines and operating procedures,” Mr. Lindstrom said.

IPC Governing Board Member Fred Jansen said the IPC quickly changed from a gathering of several interest groups with no funding or regulations, into a solid group of stakeholders supported by professional management in Bonn and better financial support with harmonized rules. Mr. Jansen had been part of the IPC for many years, formerly a member of the IPC Executive Committee.

“The IPC over the years has broadened its horizon from exclusively elite sports to supporting development in nations and sports,” Mr. Jansen said.
The Ability of Athletes With a Disability

Even though so many athletes with a disability have previously competed in the Olympic Games, only in 2008 did so many sporting officials more frequently question the dynamics of the Paralympic Games and the Olympic Games. Pistorius has been referenced in causing a “topping point” in questioning the future of the Paralympic Games and athletes with a disability. Sir Philip Craven, President of the IPC, was asked this question in so many ways over the course of the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games by various journalists and inquisitive onlookers, as well as during official press conferences. He answered each time, saying that the focus is on the present day, and to realize the distinction between the two largest sporting contests in the world.

“At the moment we are happy with the format of the Paralympic Games,” Sir Philip said. “I realize that there is a lot of interest out there going both ways in terms of the future relationship between the Paralympic Games and the Olympic Games, however the foreseeable future maintains the unique relationship which we currently have.”

The list below comprises athletes with a disability who have competed in the Olympic Games. This article is a condensed version of one printed in PALAESTRA: The Forum of Sport, Physical Education, and Recreation For Those With Disabilities. For more information, please visit www.palaestra.com.
Vancouver in Less Than a Year

Celebrations for the one-year countdown to the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games began in March, with Canadian cities Ottawa, Vancouver and Whistler as the background setting.

The events of the official day on 12 March included the official raising of the Paralympic Flag at Parliament Hill and a number of events. Celebrations were organized by the Canada in Ottawa along with Minister of State for Sport Gary Lunn, John Furlong, CEO of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games (VANOC), Carla Qualtrough, President of the Canadian Paralympic Committee and other high-ranking officials.

In Vancouver, the public was invited to come and have their photo taken with Paralympic mascot Sumi in front of the Vancouver 2010 Countdown Clock, where cupcakes were served and Paralympic stickers handed out.

Whistler at the same time was the place to mingle with some of the world’s top Paralympic Alpine Skiers starting with the awards celebration for the IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup Finals in the afternoon, followed by the distribution of Countdown Cake and a festive countdown celebration at the base of the Games venue.

IPC President Sir Philip was at the event in Ottawa and said Paralympic athletes and fans of the Paralympic Movement are joyfully looking forward to a unique experience in March 2010.

“From this day onwards, the excitement will mount every single day,” he said. “Preparations related to the Paralympic Games are fully underway and the courage and determination of Paralympians will be inspirational for all of us. I can only recommend all to attend the Games - as a participant, volunteer or spectator!”

The following week Sir Philip personally invited the National Paralympic Committees (NPC) of the world to come to Vancouver and Whistler for the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. At the same time, the Chef de Mission Seminar gathered delegates of around 30 NPCs to receive updates on topics including Qualification, Accreditation, Sport Entries, Classification, Sport and Venues, Transport, Paralympic Village and NPC Services. Besides various presentations and workshops aiming at briefing the NPCs on the preparations for the Winter Paralympics, listening to their needs and seeking their opinions and suggestions to improve the preparations, the seminar included a venue tour to competition venues and the Paralympic Village.

At the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, approximately 600 athletes from 45 countries are expected to compete in five sports: Alpine Skiing, Biathlon, Cross-Country Skiing, Ice Sledge Hockey and Wheelchair Curling.

For more information, please visit the official website at www.vancouver2010.com.

Tickets Now Available for Vancouver

Official ticket sales for the upcoming Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver were launched at the beginning of May with a kick off that was met with a celebration at the Library Square Conference Centre at the North Promenade in Vancouver, Canada.

The 250,000 tickets are currently available on a first come, first serve basis. They are sold in real-time and there is not a random lottery process for any Paralympic event. Paralympic fans do have the opportunity to buy tickets for every session, however some sessions have limits on the number of tickets one can purchase.

VANOC says that 70% of Paralympic events at the Vancouver Winter Games are available to the general public, with most tickets ranging in price from CAN$15-30. All Canadian residents, regardless of citizenship, can purchase tickets from the Vancouver Organizing Committee either online, by phone, or at box offices in Whistler and Vancouver. Non-Canadian residents must purchase tickets through their respective NPC or the Official Ticketing in their respective territory.

For the Opening Ceremony on 12 March 2010, tickets range from CAN$30-175. Tickets are not yet available for the Closing Ceremony, but pricing will be similar in range.

On hand for the big event were VANOC Executive Vice President (Revenue Marketing and Communications) Dave Cobb and VANOC Vice President (Ticketing and Consumer Marketing) Caley Denton. Paralympic mascot Sumi was also at the event, accompanied by four Paralympic Winter Sport athletes from Canada aiming to compete at the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. Josh Dueck (Alpine Skiing), Jim Armstrong (Wheelchair Curling), Joe Skillen (Ice Sledge Hockey) and Courtney Knight (Cross-Country Skiing) each gave interviews and demonstrated their respective sports and equipment.

For information on ticket sales and prices, please visit www.vancouver2010.com.
Candidate City Tour Concludes

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Evaluation Commission for the 2016 Olympic and Para-
ymic Games finished its busy four-city tour in early May, offi-
cially completing the site inspec-
tions. The Commission including IPC representative Greg Hartung, is lead by Chairperson Nawal El Moutawakel.

The first stop on the list was Chicago (USA) in early April. The Commissi-
on was presented with details of the city’s Candidature File, ranging from Environment to Paralympics. During the visit, various federal, state and local government offi-
cials, leaders from the business, civic and community world as well as Olympic and Paralympic ath-
etes introduced their respective areas of expertise. The visit ended with a tour of the proposed venue sites.

Second on the list was Tokyo (Japan) in mid-April. The inspec-
tion in the Japanese capital included meetings with several Government representatives like the Prime Minister, the Japanese Olympic and Paralympic Commit-
tees, Sports Federations, the Jap-
anese business community, and numerous Olympians and Paralymp-
ians which Tokyo has involved in the planning process. Along with members of the sports community, the Commission also met with vol-
unteers and was briefed on several subjects such as the Tokyo 2016 legacy and sustainability.

The third city visited was Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in late April and early May. The inspection was over the course of four days and included meetings with and pres-
entations by several Government representatives, such as Minister of Sport Orlando Silva, Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes and Governor Sergio Cabral, Rio 2016 Bid Committee members, as well as Paralympic and Olympic athletes from Brazil.

The fourth and final city was Ma-
drid (Spain). From 5-8 May, the 2016 Evaluation Commission was in the Spanish capital for a series of meetings and presentations by representatives from the Spanish Olympic and Paralympic Commit-
tee, the Spanish government and the bid committee as well as Olym-
pic and Paralympic athletes.

In Madrid, as well as every other city visit, the Evaluation Commissi-
on had an in-depth look, provided through presentations and on-site visits, into 17 different themes, in-
cluding Paralympic Games, Trans-
port, Accommodation, Technology, Media Operations, Environment and Meteorology, Finance, Secu-
rity, Sport and Venues and Athletes Village(s).

The outcome will be summarized in a technical report, which will be published and submitted to all IOC members no later than one month before the election of the Host City, which takes place on 2 October during the IOC Session in Copen-
hagen, Denmark.

For more information about the bid for the 2016 Olympic and Para-
ymic Games, please visit the of-
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Swimming Summit Meets Expectations

MEMBERS OF THE SWIMMING COMMUNITY OUTLINE FUTURE WITH BERLIN AS A BACKDROP

The first three days in June brought out IPC Swimming to Berlin, Germany, with the overall goal of engaging each attendee and promoting a real dialogue. This was the first IPC Swimming Summit and it followed in the spirit of the IPC Athletics Summit which occurred just months earlier in Bonn.

Before the IPC Swimming Summit, members of the Swimming community undoubtedly had their list of items and expectations that they were ready to bring to the table in Berlin. As a result, the Summit brought organizers and participants together to develop many planned-for objectives, as well as find newly discovered ones.

IPC Swimming Sport Manager Agnes Szilak was the main organizer behind the inaugural event. She said there was no such gathering since the 2006 Sports Forum and there was a need to align thinking, directions and priorities.

“The IPC Swimming Summit collected experts from different fields and put them together to correlate and combine thoughts,” Ms. Szilak said. “The Summit determined our priorities, where we had to focus first, and what could be done later.”

Ms. Szilak saw the Summit as a chance to learn from the past, identifying all challenges. With 20 countries represented at the Summit, this information is valuable in finding what does need to improve to determine the future of the sport.

“It is important that everybody understands the needs of others, and to accept that there might be other matters more important,” she said. “Being objective is important, as we then are able to accomplish more.”

Australia’s Swimming coach Brendan Keogh agrees with Ms. Szilak. Before the Summit he explained that there was a need to have a vision in which everyone can agree upon, and which accurately reflects where the Paralympic Sport is headed.

“I hope to bring an Australian vision for Swimming,” Mr. Keogh said. “From my own perspective I would like to see coaches having more of a voice. We want the best for the swimmers and we are the ones dealing with them on a daily basis.”

Mr. Keogh decided to attend the Summit because he recognized the opportunity for him to not only voice his opinion, but also listen to what other participants wanted to contribute, with the hope of beginning a new era for IPC Swimming.

Athlete David Smetanine from France, member of the IPC Athletes’ Council, saw the Summit as a chance to bring a new vision to IPC Swimming, bringing people who are connected to the Paralympic sport together to make it stronger.

“I have been dealing with Swimming for a long time now, and I am sure that because of this experience, I could contribute to its development,” he said. “This is a great opportunity for all of us to take the time and discuss important changes.”

One of the changes that fellow athlete Teresa Perales from Spain hoped to see is improving Swimming for athletes with high support needs.

“I know that it is very difficult, but if we do not, we will lose the Paralympic spirit and the magic of the sport,” Ms. Perales said.

Ms. Perales was able to bring her experience of three Paralympic Games to the Summit. She competed in Sydney, Athens and Beijing.

“I want to explain the importance of practice and sport from an active point of view,” Ms. Perales said. “I train a lot, I compete and I know what it means to make a dream come true. I want other athletes to have the chance to do that as well.”

Like other attendees at the Summit, Ms. Perales was very excited about the event and knew there would be a lot of people with the same goal.

“I hope we improve the sport of Swimming, work in the athletes’ best interests, and make our competitions more attractive to everybody,” Ms. Perales said.

Sessions Extract Priorities

When the IPC Swimming Summit ran through its third and final day, it was clear that the expectations and goals presented were reached.

The themes of the Summit, “The Water is Open, Make Your Splash, Create the Wave”, gave the participants a chance to put together their ideas and answer questions beforehand in preparation. “The Water is Open” aimed to look at things from all aspects, and thinking broadly to create changes in the future. “Make Your Splash” brought ideas to the table for the purpose of listening and learning from others. Finally, “Create the Wave” wanted participants to make the input known and therefore build the future of the sport.

The format of the Summit was based on Open Space Technology, which is the idea that each person will have topics or ideas to share, as well as contribute to other topic areas. The organizers of the Summit set the themes mentioned, but the specific order of events and workshops was left up to the participants in the first hour of the first session.

Discussion papers which were submitted from participants from around the world were utilized in each session and expanded upon as everyone had a chance to have their own opinion heard, getting direct feedback from others.

The third and final day included a summary session which closed the Summit with general feedback and recommendations from the 70 participants toward the future of the Paralympic Sport.

The end of the Summit is but another step forward for the Paralympic Sport, and will continue to bring more and more individuals into the influential dialogue.

“Participants exchange ideas”

“Discussion papers were sent from all around the world for the Summit”

“The Open Space Technology allows themes to be set at the beginning of an event”

“The organizers of the Summit set the themes mentioned, but the specific order of events and workshops was left up to the participants in the first hour of the first session.”
Para Table Tennis Matched at International Federation

As a child, Jordi Serra had always regarded Table Tennis as the sport of his life. After trying out his own skills as a player, he went on to become a coach and an umpire, thoroughly learning about the sport from several perspectives. Eventually, Mr. Serra became involved in the Barcelona, Catalonia and Spanish Table Tennis Federations.

Now as Executive Director of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), Mr. Serra recognizes how the sport has grown and the significance of his leadership in moving it forward together with the Paralympic Movement.

Can you describe the integration process of Para Table Tennis (PTT) into the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)?

The first contact with ITTF was in 2001. The IPC was also involved following its decision in 2003 to promote sports independence. The decision by the ITTF was taken in 2005 to integrate what was then the International Paralympic Table Tennis Committee into the ITTF. The IPC Table Tennis Assembly formally resolved at its assembly held in Montreux, Switzerland, appropriately close to the ITTF headquarters in Lausanne, to recommend to the IPC Governing Board that it becomes part of the ITTF. This was formalized in 2007 with the transfer of governance agreement being signed, and the Para Table Tennis Division being born under the ITTF on 1 July 2007. This is the technical aspect of the integration process between IPC and ITTF.

What has been the response in the international community of the integration?

It has generally been positive as it is a process being implemented in several international federations. With increasing integration at a national level, there is a clear filtering process into the nation’s society and this can only be good for us all.

As a result for governments to consider as there is a value added concept as a consequence.

What are the advantages of having the accountability line to the ITTF Board of Directors?

The advantages for us at an international level mirror those at a national level. We are able to promote a single international federation responsible for our sport. We incorporated the specific rules for Para Table Tennis into our rules in 2005 and this allows us to move into training umpires and referees to officiate at any Table Tennis event at all levels of our sport.

Our Equipment Committee approves the tables which are compatible for players who use a wheelchair. We are working towards an integrated development programme and have already produced a level one coaching course for potential PTT coaches. This all arises from the accountability to the Board of Directors.

How can sustainability be best achieved?

Sustainability is not only an issue applicable to PTT, but also to ITTF. Every day we grapple with how we can improve our services to our membership and provide a return on investment. Sustainability is integrally linked to commitment, and in reality, the commitment of individuals to Table Tennis is the key to sustainability.

Many think that sustainability only refers to finances, but without people the ITTF would not exist. Having said that, funding does promote overall sustainability particularly since the ability of volunteers to contribute in the current economic circumstances is certainly being put to the test. Our sustainability is therefore based on people, our development programmes, delivery to our stakeholders including funders as well as ensuring we have a positive reputation in terms of good governance.

What are some challenges ahead?

The main issue in relation to PTT is ensuring that the national and local integration process is facilitated and takes root in all of our activities. One of the main issues for ITTF is to develop the funding streams for the organization including PTT which is a particular challenge in the current economic climate. With the proliferation of sports in the international arena, we are working to ensure that Table Tennis and the ITTF remain top of mind which means we must remain relevant to internal and external stakeholders, promote good governance, and ultimately expand our membership.

For more information about ITTF, please visit www.ittf.com.

To watch Table Tennis footage, visit www.ParalympicSport.TV.
The annual world class multi-sport event for elite international athletes with a disability did not disappoint Paralympic fans in Manchester, Great Britain. In what was created to bridge the gap between the four yearly Paralympic Summer Games brought out over 400 participants from over 31 countries this year from 20-25 May.

Athletes competed for a total of 357 medals with the final two days seeing swimmers cutting through the water at the Manchester Aquatics Center. The 2008 BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year, Eleanor Simmonds (GBR), took the gold medal in the Women’s 100m Freestyle (S5) with a time of 37.15sec. Simmonds was followed by Natalie Jones (GBR) and Erika Nara (JPN). In the Men’s 100m Freestyle (S11), Poland’s Damian Pietraski took the gold with a time of 1:03.41, followed by Keichi Kimura (JPN) and Philip Scholz (USA) respectively.

Familiar Paralympian Natalie Du Toit from South Africa also reached her gold medal target in the Women’s 100m Freestyle (S9) with a time of 1:02.42. Du Toit was followed by Great Britain’s Louise Watkin and Stephanie Milward. In the Men’s 200m Individual Medley (SM10), Brazil’s André Esteves placed first, over four seconds ahead of silver medal winning Lucas Ludwig from Germany. Australia’s Rick Pendleton and Jeremy Tidy took third and fourth place respectively.

On 24 May, Paralympic fans got their first taste of Athletics since athletes were inside the Bird’s Nest in Beijing, competing at the Games. Well-known Paralympian Oscar Pistorius from South Africa was the focus of many spectators as he took two gold medals over the span of the day in the Men’s 100m (T44) and the Men’s 400m.

James Singleton (USA) and Ian Jones (GBR) took the silver and bronze in the 400m respectively. Jones also won in the 400m, taking the silver medal, followed by David Prince (USA) who took the bronze.

In the Women’s 200m (T44), Russia’s Nikol Rodomakina and Eugeninya Kutsanova took the gold and silver medals, followed by Poland’s Alicja Fidorew. The Women’s 100m (T44) had a good mix of winners with Germany’s Katrin Green in first, followed by Marie-Ammie Le Fur (FRA) and Stefanie Reid (CAN) respectively.

The Track Cycling event had an extensive three days of competition, with a qualification round in the 4km and 3km Pursuit filling the first day. On 21 May, Great Britain’s Jody Cundy took the gold in the Men’s 1,000m (LC1/2/CP4). Cundy finished at 1:06.03, followed by Ishii Masashi (JPN) and Mark Bristow (GBR) respectively. In the Women’s 500m (LC1/2/CP4), USA’s Jennifer Schuble set a new world record in her class with 38.957sec. Schuble was preceded by Sarah Storey (GBR) and followed by Greta Neimanas (USA) in the overall placing.

Athletes in Wheelchair Basketball had four full days to compete in their Paralympic Sport, with Women’s teams from China, the Netherlands, Mexico, and Great Britain. Men’s teams were from Germany, Australia, Great Britain and USA. The first day’s third session began with China (Women) winning against Great Britain 48-46. The second and final game saw The Netherlands (Women) win against Mexico 56-37.

In the Men’s Final on 23 May, Australia outscored the USA in every quarter, giving them the gold medal win 69-48. The Men’s bronze medal game saw Great Britain win against Germany 69-49. In the Women’s Final, The Netherlands took the gold medal, with the silver going to Mexico and the bronze to China.

For full results from the 2009 BT Paralympic World Cup, please visit www.btparalympicworldcup.com.

For footage of the 2009 BT Paralympic World Cup, go to www.ParalympicSport.TV.

BT Paralympic World Cup Finishes in Manchester

Paralympic fans got their first taste of Athletics since athletes were inside the Bird’s Nest in Beijing, competing at the Games.

Aftet the 2009 IPC Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing World Cup Finals in Mt. Washington, Canada, completed the World Cup series, final rankings were subsequently calculated, additionally encompassing the 2009 Paralympic Winter World Cup in Solleftea, Sweden, and the 2009 IPC Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing World Cup in Whistler, Canada.

The big event in Mt. Washington was the final series of World Cup races, taking place from 11-14 March, with athletes from 19 different nations at the Canadian venue in Comox Valley.

Finishing atop the list in the Women’s Sitting Cross-Country Skiing category was Ludmila Vauchk from Belarus with a total of 580 points. Following Vauchk were Monica Bascio from USA and Olena Iurkovska from Ukraine. In the Men’s Sitting Skiing category, Irik Zarpov from Russia finished with a total of 380 points, followed by Damian Loban from Belarus, and Roman Petushkov from Russia.

In the Women’s Standing Cross-Country Skiing category, Anna Burmiestova from Russia finished first with 340 points, followed by Larisa Varona from Belarus and Kataryna Rogowska from Poland. In the Men’s Standing category, Ikka Tuumisto from Finland finished first with 336 points, followed by Yoshirio Nitta from Japan and Nils-Erik Ulsø from Norway.

In the Women’s Visual Impaired Skiing category, Yuliachenko with guide Valery Kosklin and Lyudmyla Pavlenko from Ukraine. In the Men’s Visual Impaired category, Ilya Ilyuchenko with guide Valery Kosklin from Russia and Robbi Welison with guide Brian Berry from Canada. In the Men’s Visually Impaired category, Vasili Shaptsieb with guide Mikalai Schablouski from Belarus finished first with 405 points, followed by Rustav Gumerov from Russia’s Nikolay Polshkin with guide Andrey Tokarev and Eugeniy Saltorov with guide Salavat Gumerov.

In the Women’s Sitting Biathlon race, Olena Iurkovska from Ukraine was at the top of the list with 340 points, followed by Inna Polyakova from Russia and Lyudmyla Pavlenko from Ukraine. In the Men’s Sitting category, Georges Bettega from France took first with 385 points, followed by Irik Zarjov from Russia and Tryggve Larson from Norway.

The Women’s Biathlon Standing category saw Aleksandra Kononova from Ukraine take first with 400 points, followed by Shoko Ota from Japan with 365 points, and Pamela Novaglio from Italy with 273 points. The Men’s Standing category saw Nils-Erik Ulsø from Norway take first with 460 points, followed by Yannick Bourseaux from France and Gregory Vovchynskiy from Ukraine.

Yadxia Skorabahatahaya and guide Vasili Haukovitch from Belarus once again took first position in the Women’s Biathlon Visually Impaired category with 386 points. She was followed by Russia’s Tatiana Ilyuchenko with guide Valery Kosklin and Liubov Vasileva with guide Vachasiev Goldinov. In the Men’s Visually Impaired category, Thomas Clarion from France with guide Tommy Terraz took first position with 435 points. He was followed by Irik Mannanov with guide Salavat Gumerov from Russia and Vitaliy Lukyanenko with guide Volodymyr Ivanov from Ukraine.

The complete World Cup Rankings can be found on www.ipc-nordic-skiing.org.
Athletes Power Through Alpine Skiing World Cup Finals

Canada won the overall Nation Ranking for the first time, followed by Austria and the USA.

A total of 130 athletes from 19 countries came to Whistler, Canada, for the final races in Downhill, Super-G, Super Combined, Giant Slalom and Slalom. And after four days of exciting competitions, the 2008/2009 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup season officially ended on 14 March with many athletes having reached their respective finish lines.

With her wins in the Giant Slalom and Slalom, Lauren Woolstencroft (CAN) became the dominating athlete in Whistler, and subsequently the best Alpine skier of the season. In the Women’s Standing category, Woolstencroft won the World Cup Rankings in Giant Slalom, Slalom, Super-G and Downhill, and the overall World Cup Ranking of all disciplines combined. Melissa Corradi from Italy won the ranking in Super Combined.

Germany’s Gerd Schoenfelder was as successful as Woolstencroft this season in the Men’s Standing category. Schoenfelder won the final Giant Slalom and Slalom races in Whistler, and finished first in all World Cup Rankings, except the Slalom where Vincent Gauthier-Manuel from France managed to take first place, followed by Adam Hall from New Zealand and Schoenfelder respectively.

The Women’s Sitting category was dominated by Austrian skier Claudia Loesch and Laurie Stephens from the USA. Loesch placed third in the final Giant Slalom race of the season, first in the Slalom, and as a result, she placed first in the Slalom World Cup Point List. Whereas Japanese Taki Mori placed first in the Giant Slalom World Cup Point List. The speed disciplines were dominated by USA’s skiers, with Christopher Devlin-Young winning the Super-G World Cup and Tyler Walker taking the Downhill World Cup. German Martin Braenthaler finished first in the Super Combined World Cup and managed to repeat his win in the overall World Cup from last season, just 13 points ahead of Mori.

After winning the last Giant Slalom race of the season on 13 March, Canadian Vivian Forest and her guide Nata- lia Subrtova from Slovakia won the Slalom on 14 March, and finished first in the Super-G World Cup Point List. The Slalom World Cup was won by Anna Cohi from Spain and her guide Raquel Garcia.

Jon Santacara (ESP) together with his guide Miguel Galindo dominated the Men’s Visually Impaired category, winning the overall World Cup Rankings, and the Giant Slalom, Super-G, Downhill and Super Combined World Cup Rankings. The Slalom World Cup was won by Jakub Krako (SVK) and his guide Juraj Medera.

The overall Nation Ranking was won, for the first time, by Canada, followed by Austria and USA.

For complete results of the IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup Finals and the complete World Cup Rankings, please visit www.ipc-alpinekiing.org.

For highlights, watch the ParalympicSport.TV.
Paralympic Sport Accelerates in Colombia

With 5,000 athletes represented by the committee, NPC Colombia has a full schedule of events this year.

The two Paralympic medals we won made our country very proud. Swimmer Moisés Fuentes took the bronze medal in the 100m breaststroke (S4), and Elkin Serna got the silver medal in the Men’s Marathon event (T11) on the last day. Together, it was the same number of medals that our country’s Olympic athletes brought home from Beijing.

What other competitions or championships have been important globally and regionally?

The important competitions include the Parapan American Games, Youth Parapan American Games, and the National Paralympic Championships.

NPC Colombia also participates in World Championships. For example, we were for the first time at the IPC Athletics World Championships (France 2000), Boccia (Rio de Janeiro) and Swimming (Bordeaux, France).

We hope to increase our participation in all Paralympic Sport competitions in the future.

Could you explain the main objectives of the Committee?

NPC Colombia is the entity that promotes the formulation and implementation of the sport public policy, recreation and the sport rehabilitation within the Colombian Paralympic System. It also co-ordinates and implements the different programmes of Paralympic sports in the Colombian territory, along with its previously mentioned federations.

What have some of the recent challenges been?

The main challenges are the Parapan American Youth Games this year in Bogota, the upcoming Boccia America’s Cup, the Para-Cycling Championships in Cali (Colombia 2010), the National Paralympic Championships in 2011.

We are also working on the support of the candidature for the Panamerican and Parapan American Games in 2015, taking place in Bogota, and we would like to strengthen the Paralympic system in looking ahead to the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

What educational programmes have taken place in Colombia, related to Paralympic Sport?

We are implementing agreements with universities to establish a professorship in Paralympic sports in technical, medical and administrative topics.

We are also using the web as a teaching method. We have made pedagogical videos about Paralympic Sport, which have been broadcasted on public television, getting the most out of the sports events. We have made an institutional bulletin, called “Paralympic Facts”, distributed through e-mail. We also had an international seminar about Paralympic Sport within the frame of the upcoming Parapan American Youth Games in October, and we will organize an international Swimming course together with the IPC during the event.

What is the media and audience response to Paralympic Sport in Colombia?

It is very much optimal. It has been an absolute surprise and something we really appreciate. We have had very important exposure from the media, which have spread the awareness about Paralympic Sport in our country. We had a three and a half hour broadcast during the Beijing Games where high level sports journalists changed their own minds about the Paralympic sport concept after becoming more familiar with it.

The audience is learning more about these sports and they are recognizing it as high performance, but also as an opportunity for inclusion. Even though we currently have a very young system, it is recognized by all media in the country.

Mr. Gerard Masson is the new President of NPC France, Mr. Yves Foucault is the new Vice President and Mr. Jean-Paul Moreau is the new Secretary General.

Ms. Anne d’Ieteren is the new President of NPC Belgium, and Mr. Philippe Mees is the new Secretary General. The term of office is four years.

In the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Mohammad Al Hameli is the new President of the NPC, His Excellency Tariq Al Mansouri is the new Vice President, His Excellency Thani Berregad is the new Second Vice President, and Mr. Majid Rashid is the new Secretary General.

Moisés Fuentes won the bronze in 100m breaststroke in Beijing.
During the IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup Finals in Canada, Allianz took the opportunity to film some footage of three athletes. The portraits recorded focused on Danja Haslacher, Martin Braithwaite and Tyler Walker, all of whom competed in Whistler and are hoping to reach the podium in Vancouver next year. Additionally, Allianz met with the IPC Alpine Skiing Sport Technical Committee, the Vancouver 2010 Organizing Committee (VANOC), IPC President Sir Philip, and the Disable Skiers Association of British Columbia.

Allianz, as the Gold Patron of the IPC, has said that throughout 2009 they will be creating more “Paralympic Moments” in other Paralympic Winter sports like Ice Sledge Hockey, Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing.

In looking back at the last three years of co-operation with Allianz, together with its partners have helped foster public awareness and create a greater interest in Paralympic Sport in general. The partnership initiated with the IPC and the Deutsche Behindertensportverband (DBS) by Allianz in 2006 continues the commitment to supporting athletes in preparing for the Paralympic Games.

Together with Paralympic athletes, Allianz wants to share its passion for Paralympic Sport and provide insight into the Paralympic Movement, spreading emotions associated with the sports to a broad audience.

For more information about Allianz, please visit www.allianz.com. Paralympic Moments will be available starting next winter on www.ParalympicSport.TV.

Outstanding Events Advance Movement

The IPC renewed its global working relationship with Edelman as its Official Media & Communications Agency. The assignment is an extension of an agreement originally forged in 2006, when Edelman was selected as the IPC’s first global public relations agency of record.

IPC President Sir Philip Craven said Edelman has been a terrific partner to the IPC over the past three years, and particularly around the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. “Their expertise in the sports industry and media relations, combined with their global reach, has helped us improve our global communications efforts, expanding the Paralympic message to a much broader audience,” said Sir Philip.

Edelman will continue to support the IPC on the development of its global public relations programme and implementation in key countries, leveraging the firm’s expertise in sports marketing, corporate reputation, consumer and multicultural marketing, and issues management. Edelman’s IPC team, based across the UK, USA, Canada, Germany and China, will expand to include offices in Russia and Australia as part of the new agreement.

Kate Gordon, Edelman’s UK Head of Sports & Sponsorship, said: “Our relationship with the IPC means a great deal to Edelman on many levels. This project not only offers an interesting and challenging assignment for our sports teams around the world, but we truly believe in the power of the Paralympic Movement to change attitudes and perceptions in a positive way. It is rewarding for us to put our expertise to work for such an important organization.”

For more information about Edelman, visit www.edelman.com.

Boosting Scientific Survey Presses Education

In 2006, the IPC successfully applied for a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Social Science Grant to conduct a study on the awareness of boosting by Paralympic athletes. The final report was submitted at the end of April 2009. The study was supported by researchers in the scientific community, recommending more education programmes regarding the issue. Contributors to the report included representatives of the IPC Sports Science and Anti-Doping Committee.

Athletes with cervical or high thoracic spinal injuries can suffer from an abnormal sympathetic reflex called autonomic dysreflexia. This reflex is caused by painful stimuli to the lower part of the body, particularly distension or irritation of the urinary bladder. The symptoms of dysreflexia are a rapid rise in blood pressure, headache, sweating, skin blushing and giddiness. In serious cases, confusion, cerebral haemorrhage and even death can occur. But it also is known that the condition leads to enhanced performance capacity. The sympathetic reflex may happen spontaneously or may be deliberately caused (“Boosting”). As this is a health hazard, the IPC forbids athletes to compete in a hazardous dysreflexic state.

The report, entitled “Boosting in Athletes with High Level Spinal Cord Injury: Incidence, Knowledge and Attitudes of Athletes in Paralympic Sport,” had several objectives. The first was to examine the incidence of boosting in competitive high level spinal cord injured athletes. Additionally, the report aimed to evaluate the knowledge and beliefs of the participants with respect to the effects of boosting on sport performance and overall health, as well as to document their attitudes towards boosting and other performance enhancement strategies in competitive sport.

The four-phase study had 99 participants who completed the survey, whereon only a little over half had previously heard of boosting.

Because some competitors were using it, the participants in this study, both males and females, were strongly opposed to the use of boosting to improve training capacity, enhance performance during competition. This opinion was independent of their sport, education level, employment status, and duration of injury.

Approximately 40% of the participants felt that boosting was more useful in some sports compared to others, while 15% indicated the opposite. The remaining 44% of the participants were unsure whether boosting was more useful in some sports compared to others.

The following recommendations were made by the investigators based on the findings:

1. Boosting educational programmes should be targeted
   a. In regions where the awareness is low
   b. To junior level so that these individuals are fully aware of the dangers of boosting when they become competitive athletes
   c. To specific sports (e.g., Wheelchair Rugby, Athletics) in which the incidence of boosting is likely to be high

2. Increase the frequency of boosting tests at competitions so that the incidence and trends in this practice can be systematically evaluated.

3. Further research should be conducted on a larger sample size of competitive spinal cord injured athletes of both genders with lesion levels above thoracic vertebral segment six (T6) so that the findings can be generalized to a larger segment of this population.

To the best of the researchers’ knowledge, this is the first study that has systematically examined the incidence, knowledge and beliefs, and attitudes towards boosting in Paralympic athletes with high level spinal cord injuries.

The full report can be found www.wada-ama.org → Education → Social Science Research → Funded Projects.
Paralympic School Day Project in Sweden

What began as the Paralympic School Day (PSD) concept has turned into a highly developed educational initiative that has been well implemented around Europe. Starting back in 2004, the IPC, in close collaboration with the European Paralympic Committee (EPC), initiated a two-year PSD pilot project in Europe. The Swedish Development Centre for Disability Sport (SUH) was one of the partners that worked together in collaboration with the IPC to develop Paralympic Education with PSDs.

The pilot project went further, as SUH collaborated with the National Paralympic Committee of Sweden (NPC Sweden) to initiate a subsequent three-year project. With the pilot project aimed at following the English resource kit provided by the IPC, the three-year project included a resource kit designed to meet Swedish culture and Swedish needs.

In order to conduct PSDs successfully, SUH targets having at least one Paralympian as part of the programme. It is important for the children to meet and interact with these athletes SUH says, as it provides real sport figures with experience in their field. And with a good resource kit and some education, many people can be activity leaders including high school students.

As SUH is a resource at a national level however, it is not possible for actual involvement in every PSD. Therefore, SUH has been working in collaboration with NPC Sweden, as well as establishing a university course in adapted physical activity held in co-operation and on behalf of the University of Gavle. One of the particular tasks of this course is for the students to organize a PSD, preferably in their hometowns. After finishing this course, students can become good resources themselves for continuing to organize PSDs throughout the country.

Currently, PSDs which focus on summer sports have been greater in number across the country. However, because of the high popularity of winter sport in Sweden, emphasis on these other sports has been implemented into the PSD programme. The organization of the PSDs which focus on winter sports has proven to be more demanding and a bigger challenge for SUH, but it continues to be a priority.

In late March for example, the second PSD in winter sports took place at the Lillbo School in the small municipality of Edsbyn, Sweden. A total of 130 students took part in the educational sporting event, with various activities to educate youth about Paralympic Sport. The PSD enabled the children to learn about individual differences and disability issues in a fun and playful environment.

The students for example, experienced Alpine Skiing with sit skis and ski carts, as well as going down hills blind-folded and using a guide. They also had the possibility to try out Cross-Country Skiing under different conditions. At the same time, summer sports were included in the programme including Wheelchair Basketball and Goalball.

One of the highlight activities during the day was the chance to meet Paralympian Per Jonsson, an athlete in Athletics. Jonsson gave a testimony about his experiences as a participant in the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games and answered the children’s questions.

At the moment, approximately 3,500 children, ages 6-12, have participated in PSDs, and about 300 high school students have been involved as activity leaders. In addition to these numbers, university students and primary school staff have also been part of the country-wide project.

The Swedish resource kit for PSD is not only aimed to support organizers in Sweden. Beginning in August 2009, SUH will have a web based PSD resource on its website where new information and material will constantly be added.

For more information about the Swedish Development Centre for Disability Sport, please visit www.suh.se.

Education Committee Aims at Awareness

The IPC Education Committee has propelled itself over the last few years to further its integrating of Paralympic ideals and values into a system of education. Around the world, there already are Paralympic School Days which have been heavily influenced from the committee for example, teaching acceptance and appreciation for people with a disability. The Paralympic School Day project in Sweden is one model for what is possible in other countries, according to the IPC Education Committee.

The objective of the committee is to educate the general public with a specific focus on youth about the Paralympic Movement. Whether creating high-quality resources, encouraging programme implementation, providing Paralympic specific training or promoting scholarly research activities, the IPC Education Committee hopes to extend the knowledge and understanding to a global audience.

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Changing the perception and attitudes towards people with a disability will continue to be on the table of ideas that will guide educational programme directors around the world into the future. Chairman Ann Cody said that Paralympic athletes demonstrate courage and determination and they inspire others to believe that anything is possible.

“The Paralympic Brand is a bridge which links sport with social awareness to challenge stereotypes and ultimately leads to equality,” Ms. Cody said. The philosophy of Paralympic education will continue to be grounded in a social-relational model that instills positive values.”

For more information about Paralympic Education, visit www.paralympic.org - Education.

“At the moment, approximately 3,500 children, ages 6-12, have participated in PSDs, and about 300 high school students have been involved as activity leaders.”

The weather in Sweden permitted winter sports to be experienced.

The Paralympian
Paralympic Sport Expands in Rwanda

WORKSHOPS LEAD BY NPC INCREASE ATHLETES’ SKILLS IN GREAT LAKES REGION

The Great Lakes region in Africa has recently been busy with creating an improved platform for athletes with a disability, even amongst the political and economic difficulties in the area.

The term “Great Lakes” region refers to a group of countries on the massive continent which includes Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. And recently, the countries in the region have been convening for the betterment of Paralympic Sport, which therefore increases opportunities for athletes with a disability.

One of these busy leaders of the workshops and activities is the President of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) of Rwanda, Dominique Bizimana. Mr. Bizimana has been in the middle of much of the planning and carrying out for the education of trainers, judges, referees and athletes in the region.

NPC Rwanda organized a seminar this year in April for training in the Paralympic sports of Athletics and Goalball for visually impaired athletes. A total of 20 participants were from Rwanda, as well as one from Kenya and one from the Democratic Republic of Congo. As a result of the training, Athletics and Goalball became more of a reality afterwards, as the region gained coaches, judges and referees for the sports.

Mr. Bizimana said the athletes and coaches get to experience the activities and improve their performance techniques with each workshop.

"Those activities that we have already done give the athletes in the Great Lakes region a better path to playing in competitions," Mr. Bizimana said. "And we are planning to bring more athletes to the London 2012 Paralympic Games in Athletics and Goalball, as well as in Cycling and Sitting Volleyball.”

Rwanda’s NPC has also been focusing much of their resources on Sitting Volleyball. In November 2008, the committee organized a workshop on the Paralympic Sport, bringing in the surrounding countries in the region. The workshop was sponsored by the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and managed to have Jouke de Haan on hand to lead the group. Mr. Haan is an expert in Sitting Volleyball from The Netherlands. He was joined by the President of the World Organization Volleyball for the Disabled (WOVD), Pierre Van Mannen.

A total of 12 coaches and eight referees were trained at the workshop in Sitting Volleyball, with coaches from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. Mr. Bizimana said the two experts helped to conduct the seminar and activities, and as a result, helped to set up a calendar for developing the sport up to the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

“NPC Rwanda is ready to help develop Sitting Volleyball in Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and Tanzania by sending experts to those countries,” Mr. Bizimana said. “We also had our National Championships in Sitting Volleyball from 2-3 May in Rwanda’s North Province.”

The overall objective at the moment is to prepare the national teams for July’s Open Great Lakes Sitting Volleyball competition in Rwanda, which will be a qualification opportunity for the 2010 World Cup Sitting Volleyball competition in USA.

NPC Rwanda President Dominique Bizimana has been involved in sports for most of his life. After he lost his left leg in Rwanda’s civil war in 1994, he decided to continue competing in sports. In 2001, Mr. Bizimana was asked to develop sports for people with a disability, as only Swimming was available at the time. The same year he participated in a seminar in France about sports for people with a disability, where he received information that lead to the founding of the National Federation of Sports for People with Disabilities in the country.

After being elected Vice President in charge of development and technical, Mr. Bizimana started to recruit new athletes from the university where he studied how sports can contribute to the integration of people with a disability into society.

“I started in Sitting Volleyball as a player, and I managed to create a link with WOVD,” he said. “I was elected President of NPC Rwanda in 2004, and re-elected this year in 2009.”

Mr. Bizimana said that he will continue to organize seminars in the region, in the hopes of expanding the Paralympic Movement as well as athletic opportunities and success for people with a disability.
Seemless Pathways Mark Beijing

EXPERIENCE IN BEIJING AND IPC ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE TARGET FUTURE

When the IPC Accessibility Guide started to take shape, several goals were put on the table. Main objectives included responding to the needs of the host cities of Olympic and Paralympic Games, and creating a benchmark on accessibility for a global audience. These needs can be anything from designing venues and services, to recognizing insufficient legislation, building codes and learning about established practices in the field.

Around the same time, everyone who attended the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games witnessed an incredible series of events that have since gone down in the history books. The people behind much of the work that was needed for such a success however, continue to utilize the results in maintaining the high standard set.

The building of the IPC Accessibility Guide and the experience in Beijing were together driving forces. Just like Beijing, the guide was a long time in the making. As the now global audience is learning, and so too was the Paralympic Movement along with it, many people have wanted to have a stand-alone guide and the experience in Beijing made great strides in providing accessibility for people with a disability, and they now can visit the Great Wall of China. That is one of the biggest challenges was the day before IPC President Sir Philip Craven had to carry the Paralympic Torch,” he said. “There was no attachment to his wheelchair, so we met with the Otto Bock Repair Crew to adapt the Torch to make it usable.”

Mr. Morris said that winning the silver award in Event Services at the Sport-Business Management Awards in 2008 was fantastic recognition for not just his company, but also for the IPC team and the Paralympic Movement in general.

“Standards in China were raised to incorporate accessibility in not only venues and the Athletes’ Village, but monumental sites like the Great Wall and the Forbidden City.”

Mr. Morris added that many organizers of major events, not exclusively with a Paralympic component, are starting to realize that the concept of universal accessibility presents so many positives. Furthermore, it is not just in bidding for major events, but also to be used by all of the community.

A total of five chapters make up the aforementioned IPC Accessibility Guide, beginning with concepts and fundamental principles comprising equity, dignity and functionality. More specifically, it describes how the beneficiaries of accessibility are a significant segment of the population. The second chapter focuses on the main elements that bidding or hosting cities of the Games should be committed to having to ensure accessibility. Chapter three addresses requirements on Games infrastructure, while chapter four goes into technical specifications. The final chapter targets the staff members of the Games Organizing Committees (OCOGs) and the volunteers.

There are direct and indirect benefits to the guide. The OCOGs benefit most directly, as it provides the outline on making all Games-related infrastructure and services accessible and inclusive. Indirectly, local governments and authorities, businesses and tourism organizations will be providing solutions and practices, creating a culture of inclusion.

For more information on the IPC Accessibility Guide, contact IPC Head of Paralympic Games Strategic Projects Apostolos Rigas at apostolos.rigas@paralympic.org.

The specially designed torch holder was swiftly made by Otto Bock at the last minute.

Mr. Morris added that many organizers of major events, not exclusively with a Paralympic component, are starting to realize that the concept of universal accessibility presents so many positives. Furthermore, it is not just in bidding for major events, but also to be used by all of the community.
Rome 1960

STARTING POINT FOR PARALYMPIC GAMES STILL EXTRAORDINARY

Sometimes history can blur the past into simply names, places and a timeline. But if the historian in question takes the extra minute or two to delve into the fact at hand, then much more can come from that discovery.

The Games in 1960 were extraordinary. This was the first time the Paralympic Games were put together and assembled to be equivalent to the Olympics, in the same city. Founder of the Paralympic Movement Sir Ludwig Guttmann and Director of the Spinal Centre at the Italian institute INAIL Antonia Maglio started preparations in 1958 to stage what was called the 9th Annual International Stoke Mandeville Games (the term “Paralympic Games” was only approved by the International Olympic Committee later in 1984).

The Games were held from 18-25 September under the auspices of the INAIL and the Italian Olympic Committee, six days after the Closing Ceremony of the XVII Olympic Summer Games. The Opening Ceremony on 18 September saw a crowd of 5,000 spectators greeting the colourful entry of the wheelchair athletes at the Acqua Acetosa stadium. Camillo Giardina, the Italian Minister for Public Health at the time, declared the Games open. It was the largest international Games to date with 400 athletes from 23 countries, the largest delegation coming from Italy.

The competitive programme included eight sport events considered beneficial and suitable for athletes with spinal cord injuries: Snooker, Fencing (foil or sabre), Javelin and Precision Javelin, Shot Put, Indian Club Throwing (throwing a baton), Men’s Basketball and Swimming (Freestyle, Breaststroke and Backstroke). Other events were: Table Tennis (singles and doubles), Archery, Dart Archery and the Pentathlon (Archery, Swimming, Javelin, Shot Put and Club Throwing)

Medals were presented in 57 different events, with Italy finishing on top, followed closely by Great Britain and USA.

The Closing Ceremony on 25 September was held in the Palazzo dello Sport in the Olympic village in the presence of the Patron of the Games and wife of the Italian President Donna Carla Gronchi, and Sir Guttmann.

At the time, Sir Guttmann summed up the Games saying, “the vast majority of competitors and escorts have fully understood the meaning of the Rome Games as a new pattern of re-integration of the paralyzed into society, as well as the world of sport.”

“it was the largest international Games to date with 400 athletes from 23 countries, the largest delegation coming from Italy.”

CRASH COURSE: THE MOVEMENT

Do you know...

1. Where was the first General Assembly held?
2. How long is the 2009 IPC Conference and General Assembly?
3. What is one of the most important items to be covered at the General Assembly this year?
4. How many delegates is each member allowed to bring?
5. Where is the General Assembly taking place this year?
New Honorary Board Member

Her Royal Highness (HRH) Princess Astrid of Belgium accepted the IPC’s invitation to become a member of the IPC Honorary Board in late April at an event in Brussels to discuss various issues regarding sport for people with a disability.

In agreeing to join the Honorary Board, HRH Princess Astrid supports the IPC’s goal in keeping the issue of Paralympic Sport high on the agenda of the global community.

Laureus Award Winner

The winner of the 2009 Laureus World Sports Awards is Daniel Dias from Brazil (Swimming). Nominations had been announced in late April for the World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability category. The list comprised six athletes who were prominent competitors at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games:

Daniel Dias (Brazil), Swimming (winner); April Holmes (USA), Athletics; Darren Kenny (Great Britain), Cycling; Jonas Jacobsson (Sweden), Shooting; Teresa Perales (Spain), Swimming; Zhang Lixin (China), Athletics.

Footage of the Laureus Award winner will be shown on www.ParalympicSport.TV.

Governing Board Meeting in USA

The Governing Board (GB) concluded its 52nd official meeting in Colorado Springs, USA, at the end of March. During two successful days of meetings at the US Training Centre in Colorado Springs, Headquarters of the US Olympic Committee (USOC) and US Paralympics, the GB discussed and approved several issues, including the adoption of the audited accounts and financial results of the Financial Year 2008.

Furthermore, the GB approved the action plan presented by the IPC to the International Sports Federation for Persons with an Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) Working Group as well as a policy for recognizing International Federations, a position statement on Boosting, the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic-Winter Games Classification Programme and a new set of IPC Ethic Procedures, Rules and Regulations. The Board also received updates on the work of various IPC Standing Committees and Councils.

International Paralympic Day

On 11 July, the International Paralympic Day will again be the main event at the Pariser Platz in Berlin, Germany. That Saturday, Paralympic fans can make their way to the centre of the Germany capital and experience the excitement of Paralympic Sport.

An interesting variety of Paralympic sports will be demonstrated, including Football 5-a-Side, Long Jump, Table Tennis, Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Rugby and Wheelchair Dance Sport. With the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games on the horizon, the IPC has added the Paralympic Winter sports Biathlon and Ice Sledge Hockey to the programme.

Presentations from the Organizing Committee of future Paralympic Games will also be in attendance, including the London 2012 Organizing Committee. A VIP area will also serve as the reception area for all Governing Board Members, Honorary Board Members, as well as Partners and Patrons.

Highlights will be on www.ParalympicSport.TV.