

ISSUE 2008

No.

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Closing Ceremony with "Letter to the Future" theme

## Beijing Closes Games, Raising Bar in All Arenas

The Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games have now become an inspiring reference point for all athletes, officials, spectators, and just about every person from around the world. From 6-17 September, the Chinese capital was host to what the President of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), Sir Philip Craven, deemed the greatest Games ever in his speech at the Closing Ceremony. The people of China did deliver an unforgettable and well-organized sporting event in Beijing, and it did change standards. In effect, what this signifies today is the marking of a large growth spurt for the Paralympic Movement.

The Games saw about 4,000 athletes from a total of 147 different countries in Beijing, competing in 20 different sports, including a new addition to the Paralympic programme, Rowing. The Beijing Games had a total of 472 medal events, with 262 for men, 176 for women, and 34 were in mixed events.

The medal tally was topped by the host country, China, winning 89 gold medals. Following the Chinese Paralympic Team in the gold medal count were Great Britain with 42, USA with 36, Ukraine with 24 and Australia with 23. The Games saw a total of 279 new World records, and 339 new Paralympic records.

With regard to spectators, the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games saw a total of 3.44 million people on site. Guiding the crowds on the Olympic Green and in the venues were more than 30,000 volunteers, mostly from China.

Every one of these facts and figures during the Paralympic Games was celebrated at the Closing Ceremony. With the thoroughly presented "Letter to the Future" theme, the event closed this successful chapter in Paralympic history.

During the Closing Ceremony, the audience was brought into the stadium as not only spectators, but as players, with the option of writing postcards to friends and family from Beijing. The athletes and delega-

tions entered into the stadium at the very beginning of the ceremony, giving them the opportunity to witness the entire performance.

After well-received speeches and appearances from Sir Philip, the President of the Beijing 2008 Organizing Committee (BOCOG), Liu Qi, and the President of China, Hu Jintao, a short video followed which introduced spectators to the winners of the Whang Youn Dai Achievement Award, Said Gomez of Panama and Natalie Du Toit of South Africa. The award was presented by Dr. Whang and IPC Vice President Miguel Sagarra and recognized elite athletes who have exemplified an exceptional level of determination in overcoming adversity through sports and the Paralympic Games.

Extinguishing the Paralympic flame was done with the help of Wang Yimei, a ten-year-old with a hearing impairment. Yimei's sign language spoke to the flame, putting it out in 50 seconds, and giving people around the world an interpretation of her spirit, and the spirit of the Games.

Some of the dignitaries attending the Games included Dr. Horst Köhler (President of Germany), Mahamoud Ahmadinejad (President of Iran), HRH Princess Margriet (IPC Honorary Board Member, The Netherlands), HRH Princess Victoria (IPC Honorary Board Member, Sweden), Hassan Ali bin Ali (IPC Honorary Board Member, Qatar) and Soprano Maria Guleghina (IPC Honorary Board Member, Belarus), HRH Prince Felix (Luxembourg), HRH Prince Edward (Great Britain), HRH Princess Astrid and HRH Prince Lorenz (Belgium), Jadranka Kosor (Vice Prime Minister, Croatia), Abdul-Rahman Hassan Bimba (Minister of Sports, Nigeria), Djamel Ouldabbes (Minister of Solidarity, Algeria), Johanna Sigurdardottir (Minister of Social Affairs and Social Security, Iceland), Orlando de Jesus Silva (Sport Minister, Brazil), Ismail Sabri Yaakob (Minister of Youth and Sports, Malaysia), Dr. Batsereedene Byambaa (Minister of Health, Mongolia), Vivian Balakrishnan (Minister of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore), Kate Ellis (Minister of Sport, Australia), and Tessa Jowell (Olympic and Paralympic Minister, Great Britain).



186 Paralympic records were broken in Athletics



Over 30,000 volunteers guided spectators at the Games

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# The President's Message



It is clear that the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games will remain in the hearts and minds of people around the world. And as the accomplishments in China have been extraordinary, we now have the opportunity to look back and understand the many elements that were part of this major event.

In attending the competitions, I could not forget the exceptional amount of hard work and energy that was put forth in the delivery of the best Paralympic Games to date. Beijing, Hong Kong and Qingdao all confirmed the successful organization that produced such a spectacular sporting event for the world to have seen.

Our Paralympians lived up to, and surpassed all of our expectations in Beijing. They allowed us to feel each one of the Paralympic values of courage, determination, inspiration and equality, clearly demonstrating that they are something unique and their own empowerment is incomparable.

The Games have also changed China forever. The growth in the Paralympic Movement is without a doubt a result of the many years of preparation and hard work that has been carried out in the country. Because of the Beijing Games, it will continue to have a positive effect on Paralympic Sport.

**“Our Paralympians lived up to, and surpassed all of our expectations in Beijing.”**

Accessibility and Paralympic Sport will remain an integral part of the Chinese people now that such a successful implementation of services and facilities has occurred in the country. This dramatic change with accessibility in China, together with the millions of spectators who witnessed it, will impact not just the athletes, but the entire country.

This issue of The Paralympian is centred on Beijing, including sections like the Torch Relay, the 20 sports and media coverage. Whatever order you decide to read the articles, with each one comes yet another perspective on the Games.

I would like to thank once again the people of China. They have set new standards in all realms of competition and organization, and opened the world to its country and culture. I also congratulate our Paralympians on their performances and all their hard work. As you plan your next competition and your participation, always remember that you were part of something historical and incomparable in Beijing.

In 2009, we will be celebrating the ten-year anniversary of our headquarters in Bonn, Germany, and 20 years of the IPC. The year will also include the General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, and the last regular season of Winter Sport before the Vancouver 2010 Games.

In closing, I would like to send all readers of The Paralympian Season's Greetings and wish a wonderful new year!

*Philip Craven*

Sir Philip Craven, MBE  
IPC President

## The Torch Relayed to Beijing

From the Temple of Heaven, and through Ancient and Modern China, the Paralympic Torch Relay carried the focus of many Paralympic athletes and fans. About 850 torchbearers participated in this high standard-setting run which began with the Torch Lighting Ceremony on 28 August at the Temple of Heaven in Beijing.

The Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao officially began the Torch Relay with the lighting of the cauldron at the historic monument. Others present at the event were IPC President Sir Philip Craven, BOCOG President Liu Qi, Executive Vice President of the China Disabled Persons Federation (CDPF), Deng Pufang, BOCOG Executive Vice President Tang Xiaoquan, as well as additional high-ranking officials from China.

“Transcendence, Integration and Equality” was the theme of the Paralympic Torch Relay, which included two different routes run simultaneously, totalling a length of 13,181 kilometres. The “Ancient China” route included Huangdi Mausoleum, Xi'an, Hohhot, Changsha, Nanjing and Luoyang. The “Modern China” route included Shenzhen, Wuhan, Shanghai, Qingdao and Dalian.

Within the IPC community, a total of 46 torchbearers took part in the Torch Relay. This included IPC Family members, Worldwide Partners, IPC Patrons, as well as other partners.

After the extensive relay around China, the Paralympic Torch made its way to Beijing on 5 September. For two days the flame travelled around the city, eventually leading to the main lighting of the cauldron at the Opening Ceremony in the Bird's Nest.

Sir Philip Craven was one of the first Torchbearers in Beijing, beginning his stretch of the relay at the Millennium Square. Sir Philip said that the Torch Relay went from the Temple of Heaven and throughout the country to demonstrate to the world the equality of these Games and of our athletes.

“What we have witnessed with the Paralympic Torch Relay going through several cities and monuments around Modern and Ancient China was a display of integration that China has worked hard to achieve with these Games,” Sir Philip said.



## Unveiling the UN Convention Wall

The unveiling of the UN Convention on Rights for Persons with Disabilities Wall in the Paralympic Village took place before the start of the Games and drew a large crowd of athletes, officials and supporters. The Convention was introduced unanimously in 2006 by the delegates of the 192 UN Member Nations. It recognizes that persons with a disability have the right to participate in sporting activities with a choice between mainstream and disability-specific programmes.

The wall included a special area that was designated for athletes, coaches and team officials to sign, and show their

support of the Convention. The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, wrote a special message, inspired by those associated with the Paralympic Movement.

He wrote: “The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities aims to achieve human rights and development for all. The Paralympic Games are a powerful force for advancing this objective; they inspire not only athletes, but all of us, to recognize the unlimited potential of all persons.”

## A Spectacular Opening Ceremony



Above: Festivities of the Opening Ceremony  
Below: Paralympian Ambassador Hou Bin lighting the Paralympic flame at the Opening Ceremony



The massive Opening Ceremony impressed each television viewer in their own way, but mostly became a lasting memory for the 90,000 spectators. Inside the Bird's Nest, the stadium came alive with a spectacle that raised the bar for Games success and the celebration that goes with it.

As the athletes walked in, representing their country with a leading flagbearer, fans and fellow countrymen cheered, enthusiastically supporting their entry. The audience, which had spectators from all around the world, was delighted and surprised as each part of the performance unfolded. The three-hour event focused on the “harmony between man and nature”.

This ever-large spectacle had a round of fireworks that lit up the opened area atop the Bird's Nest, revealing a clear sky that was easily coloured, and setting a mood of heightened reality. An Opening Ceremony of such a magnitude could only bring about more curiosity to those new Paralympic spectators who were not sure what to expect during the period of the Games.

As this was one of the largest performances of the sort, a total of 420 actors with a disability were constantly intertwined into the ceremony. One memorable performance was the ballet ensemble that included 11-year-old Li Yue, who had studied ballet before losing her left leg after the earthquake in China's Sichuan province. As she was a continued study in the art, she performed in her wheelchair, alongside other ballet dancers in a poetically choreographed dance routine.

Cheering from the audience reached its pinnacle as the President of China, Hu Jintao, officially opened the Games. This was closely met with the lighting of the Paralympic flame. Chinese Paralympic gold medalist and Paralympian Ambassador Hou Bin used his own strength to lift himself up in his wheelchair, with a rope that led him to the flame at the roof of the Bird's Nest.

Athletes and spectators continued their undivided attention when listening to Sir Philip Craven's speech. With his words, he congratulated all of the Chinese volunteers and performers on an exceptional job.



## The 20 Sports

### An Even Number, An Even Finish

#### Archery

In order for the athletes to reach the final rounds at the Beijing Olympic Green Archery Field, they had to compete in the qualification round which occurred during the first two days of competition.

The final three days of competition saw a total of nine gold medals won by the athletes. Hwa-Sook Lee from Korea took the first gold in the Women's Individual Recurve on 13 September, followed by Gizem Girismen from Turkey taking the gold in the Women's Individual Recurve W1/W2. The second saw a win from Baatarjav Dambadondog from Mongolia in the Men's Individual Recurve, David Drahoninsky from Czech Republic in the Men's Individual Compound W1 and Changjie Cheng from China in the Men's Individual Recurve W1/W2. The final day brought strong competition, ending with a win for China in the Women's Team Recurve and Korea in the Men's Team Recurve.

Archery was governed under the International Archery Federation (FITA) for the first time at the Beijing Games after the transfer of governance in 2007.



#### Cycling

Cycling Track quickly brought fans to its venue of the Laoshan Velodrome. Darren Kenny of Great Britain set a new World and Paralympic record in the Men's Individual Pursuit (CP3). Britain's Simon Richardson and the pair Aileen McGlynn and Ellen Hunter also set World records in the Men's 1km Time Trial (LC3-4) and the Women's 1km Time Trial (B&VI) respectively.

Cycling Road took place at the Triathlon Venue. Paralympian Ambassador Ernst van Dyk from South Africa took the gold in the Men's Road Race (Handcycling, C). Heinz Frei from Switzerland, a World record holder in the Marathon competition, took the gold in the Men's Road Race (Handcycling, B), and the team of Iryna Fiadotava and Alena Drazdova from Belarus took the gold in the Women's Road Race (B&VI).

Cycling was governed by the International Cycling Union (UCI) for the first time at the Beijing Paralympics after the transfer of governance in 2007.



#### Athletics

The disciplines in Athletics included Track (100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5,000m, 10,000m, 4x100m Relay and 4x400m Relay), Jumps (High Jump, Long Jump and Triple Jump), Throws (Shot Put, Discus, Javelin and Club Throw), Pentathlon and Marathon. Athletics had the largest number of athletes and events.

A total of 118 World records and 186 Paralympic records were broken. Some of the World records were set by Shirlene Coelho from Brazil in Javelin (F37) with 35.95m, Tetyana Yakybchuk from Ukraine in Discus (F33) with 17.05m, Aldona Grigaliuniene from Lithuania in Shot Put (F38) with 12.58m, Wojtek Czyz from Germany in Long Jump (F42) with 6.50m, and Jason Smyth from Ireland in 100m (T13) with 10.62sec.

South African star athlete Oscar Pistorius brought his best performance to the Bird's Nest, winning a total of three gold medals in the Men's 100m, Men's 200m and Men's 400m. Giving the spectators a great deal to cheer about, Pistorius was thrilled to once again, be a gold-medal winning Paralympian.



#### Football 5-a-Side

Taking place every other day, to accommodate Football 7-a-Side on the same field of play, each game day had three different preliminary matches that lead to the final competition on 17 September. Those three matches that day culminated in the final gold medal match between China and Brazil. With a total crowd attendance of 2,317, China's Yafeng Wang scored the first goal right before the 10-minute halftime break. The second half saw Brazil's Ricardo Alves scoring, and Marcos Felipe making a double penalty goal at the last minute to give the team the gold against China 2:1.

The same-day bronze medal match between Argentina and Spain ran past the clock, as the two teams remained tied after the 50-minute game. In the Penalty Shoot-out, Argentina's Diego Cerega decided the game with his goal for his team, following two previous saves by Spain.



#### Boccia

A Paralympic Sport that requires the utmost concentration and support from not only the officials and trainers, but the audience as well, Boccia found a full house of spectators each one of its six competition days. A total of seven gold medals were possible on the third and sixth days.

The third day of competition saw the first gold medal (BC1) go to Joao Paulo Fernandes from Portugal, competing against fellow Portuguese athlete Antonio Marques. On the final day of competition, 12 September, Brazil took the gold after winning against Portugal in the Mixed Pairs (BC4) event. The other gold medals for Mixed Pairs went to Korea after beating Spain (BC3) and Great Britain after beating Portugal (BC1/BC2).

Boccia was also broadcasted on television for the first time at the Beijing Games.



#### Equestrian

The athletes in Hong Kong were able to experience the Games just as those in Beijing did, with the same level of intensity and organization. Competition began with a Team Test for Grades Ia, Ib, II, III and IV. Germany's Britta Naepel and South Africa's Philippa Johnson took the first place on 8 September in the Individual Championship Test Grade II and IV, respectively.

Great Britain won in the Overall Team event with Sophie Christiansen, Anne Dunham, Lee Pearson and Simon Laurens. Dunham and Christiansen also took the top two positions in the Individual Championship Test Grade Ia, with Pearson taking the gold in Grade Ib.

On the final day of competition, Dunham, Christiansen and Pearson once again took top positions, with Germany's Hannelore Brenner winning the gold in the Individual Freestyle Test Grade III.

Equestrian was governed under the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) for the first time at the Beijing Paralympics after the transfer of governance in 2006.





## Football 7-a-Side

Mirroring the every other day schedule of Football 5-a-Side, Football 7-a-Side held a consistent series of four games each day. As the name suggests, each team has seven players on each side, with one of four ambulatory sport classes in Cerebral Palsy (C5, C6, C7 and C8). The game length is two halves of 30 minutes.

The gold medal match on 16 September between Ukraine and Russia played to an audience of 11,267. With no scoring at the end of 60 minutes, two 10-minute extensions of extra time followed, with Ukraine winning 2:1. Volodymyr Antonyuk from Ukraine scored both goals, with Lasha Murvanadze from Russia scoring with 74 minutes on the clock.

In the bronze medal match that same day, Iran impressed spectators, winning 4:0 against Brazil. Abdolreza Karimzadeh scored a strong three goals, with Moslem Akbari taking the fourth goal.



## Goalball

Players in Goalball are one of three classifications (B1, B2 and B3). Regardless of classification, all players are blind-folded during the entire game. Sound trackers noted the cheering-to-silent spectrum, giving athletes the concentration they needed to hear the bell inside the ball.

The final day of competition began with the Women's Semi-finals and the Men's competitions deciding finishing positions five through eight, and ending with bronze and gold medal matches.

China took the win against Lithuania in the Men's gold, 9:8, with six goals from China's Liangliang Chen. In the Women's gold, the USA took the win against China, 6:5. Asya Miller scored all six goals from the USA. For the Men's bronze medal, Sweden won against USA 5:2, with high scorers Jimmy Bjorkstrand and Fatmir Seremeti controlling the offense. In the Women's bronze game, Denmark won against Sweden 3:2.



## Shooting

The first gold medal of the Paralympic Games went to Veronika Vadovicova from Slovakia in the Women's R2-10m Air Rifle Standing SH1. Following Vadovicova with the first silver and bronze medals of the Games were Manuela Schmermund from Germany and Nilda Gomez Lopez from Puerto Rico, respectively. Sir Philip Craven was also on hand at the Shooting Range that day to present the medals to the athletes.

The final two days saw Matt Skelhon from Great Britain taking the gold in the Mixed R3-10m Air Rifle Prone SH1, followed by Cuiping Zhang from China and Jae-Yong Sim from Korea. In the R4-10m Air Rifle Standing SH2 competition, Ji-Seok Lee from Korea took the gold, followed by Raphael Voltz from France and Michael Johnson from New Zealand. And in the final two competitions, Sea-Kyun Park from Korea and Jonas Jacobsson from Sweden took the gold in the Mixed P4-50m Free Pistol SH1 and Mixed R6-50m Free Rifle Prone SH1, respectively.



## Powerlifting

Lucy Ogechukwu Ejike from Nigeria took the gold in the Women's -48kg lifting 130kg, followed by Olesya Lafina from Russia and Souhad Ghazouani from France. In the Women's -52kg and -56kg, Amalia Perez from Mexico and Fatma Omar from Egypt took the gold respectively. Audiences were in high spirits that day as Guojing Wu from China took the gold in the Men's -52kg, lifting 175kg.

The final three days saw groups in the highest weight class compete. In the Women's -82.5kg and +82.5kg, Heba Said Ahmed from Egypt and Ruifang Li from China took the gold medals respectively. And in the Men's -100kg and +100kg, the gold medals went to Dong Qi from China lifting 247.5kg, and Kazem Golojeh Rajabi from Iran lifting 257.5kg respectively.

74 NPCs qualified for the Games, the largest number to date.

## Sailing

The athletes in Qingdao experienced the Games just as those in Beijing did, with the same level of intensity and organization. The five-day event kicked off with 1-,2- and 3-Person Keelboat races that were a combination of practice and qualification for the medals awarded.

Eventually taking the gold on the final day in the 3-Person Keelboat (Sonar), the team from Germany (Jens Kroker, Robert Prem and Siegmund Mainka) maintained their position during the last race. Taking the silver and bronze were teams from France (Bruno Jourden, Herve Larhant and Nicolas Vimont-Vicary) and Australia (Colin Harrison, Russell Boaden and Graeme Martin). In the two other races, Paul Tingley from Canada took the gold in the 1-Person Keelboat (2.4mR) and USA won in the 2-Person Keelboat (SKUD18).



## Judo

With four gold medals already in the first day, all athletes had a strong opening. The first gold was won by Huaping Guo from China against Karla Cardoso from Brazil in the Women's -48kg. Following the match, in the Women's -52kg, Na Cui from China won against Sandrine Aurières-Martinet from France. Algeria's Mouloud Noura won in under 30 seconds against Iran's Saeed Rahmati in the Men's -60kg, and Algeria's Sidali Lamri also won against Japan's Satoshi Fujimoto.

On the final day, Maria del Carmen Herrera from Spain started the gold medal win in the Women's -70kg. In the Women's +70kg, Yanping Yuan from China took the gold. The three gold medals in the Men's competitions were won by Russian Federation's Oleg Kretsul (-90kg), Brazil's Antonio Tenorio Silva (-100kg), and Azerbaijan's Ilham Zakiyev (+100kg).



## Rowing

New to the Paralympic sports programme, Rowing had three intensive days of competition. The first gold medal went to Helene Raynsford from Great Britain in the Women's Single Sculls. She finished the 1,000m race at 6:12.93, and was followed by Liudmila Vauchok from Belarus and Laura Schwanger from USA. In the Men's Single Sculls, Tom Aggar from Great Britain took the gold with a time of 5:22.09. Aggar was followed by Oleksandr Petrenko from Ukraine and Eli Nawi from Israel.

In the Mixed Double Sculls competition, China's team of Yangjing Zhou and Zilong Shan took the gold, followed by teams from Australia and Brazil. In the Mixed Coxed Four, the final event, Italy's team of Paola Protopapa, Luca Agolletto, Daniele Signore, Graziana Saccocci and Alessandro Franzetti took the gold. The strong four athletes were followed by teams from USA and Great Britain.





Photo: © Prezioso

## Swimming

A total of 207 Paralympic records (124 for men, 83 for women) and 138 World records (83 for men, 55 for women) were broken inside the Water Cube. An impressive total of 62 NPCs competed in Beijing, which tied the amount at the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games.

The final day of Swimming saw 17 different medal events, with the first gold won by Christos Tampaxis from Greece in the Men's 50m Backstroke (S1). In the Women's 50m Backstroke (S2), Ganna Ielisevetska from Ukraine took the gold and set a new World record with a time of 1:13.64. The final event of Swimming was the Men's 4x50m Medley, with China's team (Jianping Du, Yuan Tang, Qing Xu and Yuanrun Yang) taking the gold and setting a new World record with a time of 2:33.15.

South African star athlete Natalie du Toit impressed all spectators inside the Water Cube, winning five gold medals in the Women's 100m Butterfly, 100m Freestyle, 200m Individual Medley, 400m Freestyle and 50m Freestyle.



Photo: © Lieven Coudenys

## Wheelchair Basketball

In the Women's gold medal match, USA won against Germany 50:38, with a full crowd of 12,000 people. USA's Christina Ripp was the high scorer of the game with 16 points. The Women's bronze medal match saw Australia's Team win against Japan 53:47. Japan's Mari Amimoto was the high scorer of the game with 18 points, followed by Australia's Liesl Tesch with 16 points, and Japan's Ikumi Takubo with 14 points.

A sold-out crowd was once again present for the Men's gold medal match of Canada versus Australia. Australia won the gold, finishing 12 points ahead, 72:60. Canada's star athlete Patrick Anderson was the high scorer with 22 points. The bronze medal match saw Great Britain win against USA 85:77. Great Britain's Terence Bywater was the high scorer with 32 points, followed by USA's Joe Chambers with 25 points, and Great Britain's Simon Munn with 20 points.



Photo: © Lieven Coudenys

## Wheelchair Tennis

The first gold medal went to USA's Nick Taylor and David Wagner in the Quad Doubles against Israel's Boaz Kramer and Shraga Weinberg. Quad Singles followed, with Great Britain's Peter Norfolk defeating Sweden's Johan Andersson. Compatriots Esther Vergeer and Korie Homan from the Netherlands excited the audience in the Women's Singles with their battle for the gold, eventually going to Vergeer.

The final day saw the return of Homan and Vergeer in the Women's Doubles. Together with Sharon Walraven, Homan took the gold medal against Vergeer and Jiske Griffioen. In the Men's Doubles, France's Stephane Houdet and Michael Jeremiasz won against Sweden's Stefan Olsson and Peter Wikstrom. In the Men's Singles, Shingo Kunieda from Japan defeated Robin Ammerlaan from the Netherlands.

## Volleyball (Sitting)

On the first day of finals, four strong Women's Teams took over the Gymnasium in the hopes of claiming a medal. In the gold medal match between China and USA, the Chinese Team shut out the Americans, winning 3:0. China's Yuhong Sheng scored a high 28 points during the game. And the bronze medal match between the Netherlands and Slovenia, the Dutch also had a shutout, winning 3:0. Djoke van Marum and Elvira Stinissen scored a high 13 and 9 points respectively for the Netherlands.

The final day of the Men's competition saw Iran take the gold medal, giving Bosnia & Herzegovina the silver. The final score was 3:0, with impressive high scoring from Iranian players Davood Alipourian, Jalil Eimery, Reza Peidayesh and Mohammad Khaleghi. In the third and fourth place match, Russia took the bronze away from Egypt, with a competitive finish of 3:2.



Photo: © Lieven Coudenys

## Wheelchair Rugby

The Beijing Science and Technology University Gymnasium, the venue for the rough sport of Wheelchair Rugby, was a place for fans to witness Paralympic Sport perhaps at its most rugged.

In the well fought-for Mixed gold medal game between USA and Australia, USA won 53:44. Although several high scorers came from the USA Team, the top position went to Australia's Ryley Batt with a total of 23 points. Batt was followed by Americans Will Groulx with 16 points, and Bryan Kirkland with 13 points.

In the high-energy bronze medal game between Great Britain and Canada, Canada took the medal, winning 47:41. Similar to the gold medal match, Great Britain's Troye Collins was the high scorer with a total of 16 points. Following Collins were Canada's Mike Whitehead with 14 points, and Great Britain's Alan Ash with 12 points.



Photo: © Lieven Coudenys



Photo: © Lieven Coudenys

## Table Tennis

As Table Tennis is one of the most popular sports in China, it became a must-see event for many citizens of Beijing. After the first three days of preliminary matches, the fourth day was filled with semi-finals and several medals. Four out of five gold medals that day in the Women's Individuals all went to China. The fifth gold medal was won by Poland's Natalia Partyka (Class 10). Partyka is well-known for having competed in the Olympic Games just prior to the Paralympics.

The fifth day of Table Tennis had a high 11 medal events, where four of them had competitors from the same country. Two pairs were from the host country, and the others were from Russia and France. Those winners were Natalia Martyasheva (Women's, Class 6-7) and Vincent Boury (Men's, Class 2) respectively. The final day of competition saw Men and Women's Teams representing many countries, with three of the four gold medal winners from China (Women's Class 4-5, Men's Class 6-8 and Men's Class 9-10). Korea's Team (Men's Class 4-5) took the fourth gold medal of the day.

Table Tennis was governed by the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) for the first time at the Beijing Games after the transfer of governance which began in 2007.



Photo: © Getty Images

## Wheelchair Fencing

Taking the place of Boccia upon its final day of competition, Wheelchair Fencing became the new focus of the Fencing Hall of National Convention Centre on 14 September. The event, spanning a total of four days, was filled with athletes who competed in match after match, aiming for one of the ten gold medals.

Of the ten gold medals, China's athletes dominated the field, winning a total of six gold medals (Jianquan Tian, Chuncui Zhang, and with Daoliang Hu and Ruyi Ye both winning two medals) followed by Hong Kong, China with three (Chui Yee Yu, Yui Chong Chan won in both Foil and Epee). France's Laurent Francois took the tenth gold medal for Wheelchair Fencing, winning against Hong Kong, China's Charn Hung Hui in the Men's Individual Sabre Category B.

China actually only first began competing in Wheelchair Fencing just four years ago at the ATHENS 2004 Paralympic Games. The progression of the team was clear this year in Beijing with their strong showing in the sport.



# Record Media Coverage

The Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games not only broke a heavy set of actual sporting records, but the number of media and the size of the audience set a new standard. Beginning with the number of media in Beijing, 5,600 representatives reported to their respective outlets, and as a result, widened the Paralympic world beyond expectations. And because of the high number of stories and articles circulating around the world because of the Games, the impact is unprecedented.

During the period from 6-17 September, the media presence online was more than apparent, with websites from countries all around the world reporting on the Games. Germany had a strong showing in the number of articles published, with other impressive numbers from Great Britain, USA, China, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Singapore, and Malaysia. Divided by continent, Europe had the biggest presence with online articles, followed by North America, Asia, and Africa. Many countries, like Bangladesh, took the opportunity to send reporters to Beijing and report on the Games for their country.

The Games also had the largest number of rightsholding broadcasters in the history of the Paralympics. A total of 64 rightsholders covered more than 80 countries worldwide and from all regions (Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania). China’s own CCTV and BTV took top position as the broadcaster with the most time, totalling more than 22 hours of Paralympic Games daily on different channels. This included live programming and news specials.

A total of 36 from the 64 rightsholders were member broadcasters of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), bringing the Games into homes across Europe. This accounted for more than 800 accredited journalists, and two international feeds (team sports and individual sports). The number of hours broadcasted easily exceeded 750, with the well-known British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) having an average of 2.2 million viewers for the Opening Ceremony. In Germany, ARD and ZDF had an average daily audience of 840,000 and 770,000 respectively.

In terms of total television coverage, 1,838 hours were broadcasted, with a record-setting 3.85 billion viewers. Sir Philip Craven praised the progress and the possibilities that became available to a new audience.

“The IPC welcomes this strong showing for a television audience and for the opportunity viewers had around the world,” Sir Philip said. “It is superb news for those who had never seen the Paralympic Games before.”



A screenshot of the ParalympicSport.TV website

The IPC also took the initiative during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games to further promote Paralympic sports and the Paralympic Movement with the launching of a YouTube Channel. The channel ([www.YouTube.com/ParalympicSportTV](http://www.YouTube.com/ParalympicSportTV)) set a few records of its own, positioned as number one on 10 September in several categories, including “Most Viewed”, “Most Viewed – Directors”, and “Most Viewed – Partners”.

The official internet TV channel of IPC, ParalympicSport.TV, provided the opportunity to those interested in watching the competitions conveniently on their computer. A minimum of 12 hours per day of live commentated coverage was broadcasted, with an interesting mix of sports and daily highlights offered as video on-demand. The twelve sports included in the ParalympicSport.TV programme were Athletics, Boccia, Cycling (Track), Football 7-a-Side, Judo, Table Tennis, Swimming, Volleyball (Sitting), Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Fencing, Wheelchair Rugby and Wheelchair Tennis.

# The Paralympic Flag Handover Begins Countdown to London

Near the end of the Closing Ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games on 17 September, the handover to London occurred, officially symbolizing and promoting London 2012 as the next Games. The Paralympic Flag was the centre of attention that evening, as it was held by three different important individuals in the middle of the Bird’s Nest, for all eyes to see. And although it was not the only presence of the foreseeable London 2012 Games, it was the most symbolic.

The flag began in the hands of Beijing Mayor Guo Jinlong, with a full and fluid waving that signified not just a complete, but also successful Games. IPC President Sir Philip Craven then took hold of it, and continued Mayor Jinlong’s wave before passing it to the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. And as Mayor Johnson symbolically guided the Paralympic Flag through the air, the spectators filling the stands of the Bird’s Nest cheered on in acknowledgement of London 2012.



The next stop is London 2012



Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, waves the Paralympic Flag at the Closing Ceremony

In addition, that evening saw an eight-minute performance from London 2012 that was part of the Closing Ceremony. A typical London double-decker bus was driven around the stadium during the act, with able-bodied dancers, as well as dancers with a disability using many visual images and choreographed routines introducing the new host city.

During the Paralympic Games in Beijing, several events were also held that gave hint to London being the successor in four years, namely receptions for Visit Britain, as well as for the Mayor of London. Visit Britain is a national tourism agency that was in Beijing to promote Great Britain, showcasing what the country has to offer, including athletes, sports venues, facilities and events that all were of interest to everyone associated with the Paralympic Movement. Sir Philip Craven said that Beijing provided the ideal opportunity for Visit Britain to communicate its message to a wide audience.

“The ticket figures showed that there were more than 100,000 international visitors in Beijing for the Paralympics,” Sir Philip said. “That means this became a perfect stage for opening up the world further to Paralympians, and to what the Paralympic Movement is all about.”

Finally, a reception in honour of the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, took place on 16 September. The Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games were the first Games experience for the London Mayor, and the reception included many influential people from the London 2012 circuit. Mayor Johnson said that the Beijing experience was important in the successful delivery of a legacy for London.



# First VISA Hall of Fame for Paralympic Summer Games

During the Games on 7 September, the IPC inducted four accomplished Paralympians and one Paralympic coach into the Visa Paralympic Hall of Fame. Beijing was the first Paralympic Summer Games to induct athletes and coaches into the Paralympic Hall of Fame.

Honoured at the ceremony were athletes Andre Viger of Canada, Claudia Hengst of Germany, Connie Hansen of Denmark, Peter Homann of Australia and coach Kevin McIntosh of Australia. Viger passed away in 2006 and his sister, Manon Viger was present at the ceremony to accept the award on her brother's behalf.

The head of global sponsorship of Visa, Inc., Michael Lynch, said that the company was proud to be the presenting sponsor. "Visa's sponsorship of the Paralympic Hall of Fame recognizes and celebrates the universal values of sportsmanship, excellence, and a commitment embodied in these athletes and coaches, and recognizes the great influence they have had on the Paralympic Games," Lynch said.

The Hall of Fame induction in Beijing was officially the second, following the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games, where the IPC inducted the first Paralympic Winter Games' athletes and coach. The inductees in 2006 were female athlete Annemie Schneider, male athlete Jouko Grip and coach Ulla Renvall.

To be eligible for the induction, candidates must have participated in at least two Paralympic Games and must have won a number of medals, either directly or, in the case of a coach, through the athlete or team they trained. An athlete or coach must also have ceased being an active participant in the Paralympic Games for at least four years, or one Paralympic cycle, prior to the year of election.

For more information about the Paralympic Hall of Fame and biographies of the inductees, please visit <http://www.paralympic.org/hof/main.html>.



After the Paralympic Hall of Fame Ceremony (left to right) Michael Lynch, Manon Viger, Connie Hansen, Peter Homann, Kevin McIntosh, Claudia Hengst, Sir Philip Craven

## The Paralympic Order in Beijing


As the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games came to a close, the IPC took the opportunity to award the 2008 Paralympic Order to individuals who worked and committed themselves to the success of the Games.

The Paralympic Order is the highest honour given by the IPC and was ceremoniously presented in Beijing at an event attended by IPC President Sir Philip Craven, as well as several IPC Governing Board Members. The dedication that the organizers took to successfully carry out the Games more than shows in the outstanding result, and ultimately will benefit

the Paralympic cause. These individuals have illustrated the Paralympic ideal through their actions, and have achieved remarkable merit in Beijing.

Sir Philip, in presenting the Paralympic Orders to the recipients, said the leaders of China should be proud of the real impact they have had on the Paralympic Games, and therefore the Paralympic Movement. "The Paralympic Family looks forward to seeing the future of what has been put into motion not only here, in China's capital, but throughout the entire country," Sir Philip said.

### Recipients of the 2008 Paralympic Order



Paralympic Order recipients in Beijing

**Mr. Liu Qi**  
President of the Beijing 2008 Organizing Committee (BOCOG), Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Secretary of the CPC Beijing Committee,

**Mr. Hui Liangyu**  
Vice Premier of the State Council, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee

**Ms. Liu Yandong**  
Vice President of BOCOG, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, State Councillor

**Ms. Chen Zhili**  
Vice President of BOCOG, Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

**Mr. Deng Pufang**  
President of the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), Executive President of BOCOG, Vice Chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)

**Mr. Liu Peng**  
Executive President of BOCOG, Minister of the General Administration of Sport of China, President of the Chinese Olympic Committee


**Mr. Guo Jinlong**  
Mayor of Beijing, Executive President of BOCOG

**Ms. Tang Xiaoquan**  
President of the Executive Board and Vice President of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, Executive Vice President of BOCOG

**Ms. Zhao Wenzhi**  
Deputy of Paralympic Games Command Center, Vice Chairperson of CPPCC Beijing Committee

**Mr. Manolo Romero**  
Managing Director of Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS)

In October, **Anne Ebbs** was also awarded with the Paralympic Order during a private ceremony in Dublin, Ireland. Ebbs was instrumental in the early days of the development of Paralympic Sport in Ireland, leading the Paralympic Council of Ireland from 1987-2008.



Ann Ebbs with Sir Philip Craven

## Medal Tally

Rank/NPC				Total
1. China	89	70	52	211
2. Great Britain	42	29	31	102
3. USA	36	35	28	99
4. Ukraine	24	18	32	74
5. Australia	23	29	27	79
6. South Africa	21	3	6	30
7. Canada	19	10	21	50
8. Russia	18	23	22	63
9. Brazil	16	14	17	47
10. Spain	15	21	22	58
11. Germany	14	25	20	59
12. France	12	21	19	52
13. Korea	10	8	13	31
14. Mexico	10	3	7	20
15. Tunisia	9	9	3	21
16. Czech Republic	6	3	18	27
17. Japan	5	14	8	27
18. Poland	5	12	13	30
19. The Netherlands	5	10	7	22
20. Greece	5	9	10	24

For complete results, please visit our website <http://www.paralympic.org>.



# Paralympian Ambassadors Experience Beijing

As every Paralympian is a role model in one way or another, the Paralympian Ambassadors take on an additional role of actively representing the Paralympic Movement in the community, enhancing and increasing its public profile. While at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, several Paralympian Ambassadors not only held an important representative role, but also competed in various events. Below are the experience summaries of four Paralympian Ambassadors, Kirsten Bruhn, Esther Vergeer, Ernst van Dyk and Verena Bentele.



Bruhn finishing a race in the Water Cube

## Kirsten Bruhn

Kirsten Bruhn won a total of five medals in Swimming during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, including one gold (100m Breaststroke), one silver (100m Backstroke), and three bronze medals (100m Freestyle, 400m Freestyle and 50m Freestyle). Her gold medal win came after a strong heat in the same event, where she set a new World and Paralympic record with 1:36.30.

### She says:

“My experience at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games was full of emotions. This of course began with my strong five heats in the different Swimming events. And the competition area, the Water Cube, was just really amazing. I have never seen a pool like that before. It was so full of light and glamorous in its own way. We as athletes really have to be thankful to have been in such an incredible atmosphere and background. I think we just could not have swum slowly at this pool with its special features.

The mascot, “Lele”, was also a highlight at the Water Cube during the Medal Ceremony. Its dance and movements were lovely and sweet. You had to fall in love with Lele. Everyone wanted to get one of those little stuffed animals.

Along with the Water Cube, being at the organized Paralympic Village was the most unforgettable adventure of my life. And I think it will be very hard for Great Britain to keep the Olympic and Paralympic Games at that high level for London 2012. Thank you Beijing! Thank you so much for the dream that became a reality!”

## Verena Bentele

Verena Bentele is a Winter sports athlete, competing in Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing. The Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games were her first Summer Games experience, as this was also the first time Paralympic history that the IPC officially sent Paralympic Ambassadors to the Games. As an observer, she explains how much of an honour it was to represent the Paralympic Movement and to have witnessed the Games from start to finish, as well as cultural aspects of China.

### She says:

“At the Games I went to many competitions that I have never attended before, like Swimming and Track Cycling. We really had the chance to share wonderful moments during the competitions with the people from different countries. Some of them had never been to the Paralympics before and I was able to help them understand the rules.

One of the most impressive moments for me was a running event in Athletics. All of the athletes were really close together, and finally a Chinese athlete won the gold medal. Well, the entire stadium had people standing up, and happy, as if it was their own medal that they had won. And it was not because the athlete was blind; it was just because the eight athletes had shown a really exciting competition on such a high level.

I just can say that it was an experience that I did not want to miss. And now all we can hope is that we showed the people in China what is possible, if you have a disability or not. The development of such a large country can sometimes go slowly, but if we use the metaphor of sport, then we did not make little steps with the Games... I think it was a big jump!

I want to say thank you to the IPC for the chance to be with you, and also to the athletes for their strong efforts in every competition. I now look forward to Vancouver, where we can again inspire the world and show the power of the Paralympics.”



Bentele at the Forbidden City

## Esther Vergeer

Esther Vergeer was a returning Paralympian in Wheelchair Tennis at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games and was no less than impressive. She won the gold medal in the Women’s Singles, and the silver medal in the Women’s Doubles. Even though this was her third Paralympics, she still considers each one different, and expressing that Beijing was very spectacular and well-organized.

### She says:

“During the Opening Ceremony I was a Flagbearer, which was very special to me. Presenting your country to the world at the Paralympic Games, wow! And then the stadium full of people, it was unbelievable.

My tournament was good, and I had a good draw, even though I played my first match against Australian Daniela di Toro, who was my toughest opponent in the past. Eventually I reached the final, which was why I was there, and I had to be ready to win that gold medal.

I was so nervous on the day of the final that I did not even want to play anymore. I only wanted to run away and cry. It is weird what nerves can do with a human body. I played against Korie Homan, also Dutch. We train together and we know each other very well on and off the tennis court, so it was a little weird to play against her in the most important match in four years. The last couple of months before the Games I played her a couple of times, and every time she got closer and closer. But I was not planning of letting her get close this time. That third set, which was needed to see who could take the gold medal home, made us both nervous. I was 5:3 down and it was almost over for me. But I survived (do not ask me how). I won the tiebreak 7:5.

Lots of emotions and a big relief after that last point. I do not think I have ever felt like that after a match before. What a great feeling with tears, smile, screaming and lots of shaking.”



Vergeer in action on the Beijing Olympic Green Tennis Court

## Ernst van Dyk

Ernst van Dyk is a familiar face in the Paralympic world, with his first Games being the Barcelona 1992 Paralympics. His fifth Paralympic experience, Beijing proved to be successful for van Dyk. He won the gold medal in the Men’s Individual Road Race in Cycling, and the bronze medal in the Men’s Marathon (T54).

### He says:

“Life was good in the Paralympic Village, but at times you could feel the stress levels would start to kick in. People were edgy and their sense of humour had gone missing, but this is the big league and you do not get any bigger than this so you better be ready for it!

But the big moment was that after five Paralympic Games, 16 years and three sports, I can finally say that I am a Paralympic gold medalist! There had been some very close moments in Athens, but that day things finally went perfect and I claimed my gold medal. I did have some other disappointments previously, but that night before I really slept well. I was the first competitor in the venue that morning and I had taken a few extra moments to take everything in... to really appreciate the beauty of it all and how lucky I was to be there with the opportunity ahead of me.

I remember before I arrived in Beijing that I was going over all the preparations and what had led me to this point. I went over the races, and realized that I had trained hard for these upcoming events. And I knew at the time that my equipment was state of the art and I felt confident and ready. However, I also knew that before I could line up, a lot of things also had to go right for me. But I was really looking forward to the trip and getting to Beijing.

It’s hard to believe it is all done. And when I returned home, I realized that I was very happy that I was able to share this experience with my friends and family!”



Van Dyk pictured with Nelson Mandela





Photo: © Steffen Kumme

## New on the Paralympic Scene in Beijing

### Two Young Reporters Describe Their Games Experience

Weeks before the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games began, German radio station bigFM and Deutsche Telekom AG advertised their search for two reporters that they would send to the Chinese capital. The “Apply Now!” campaign rang true in the ears of university students Steffen Kumme and Birte Berg, who competed among more than 100 applicants before getting the positions.

In Beijing, their work included three audio reports a day, as well as online diaries and video clips. Their experience over the two-week period at the Beijing Paralympics, as they explain below in their written reports to The Paralympian, was and will remain unrivalled and unforgettable.

Birte Berg and Steffen Kumme sitting at the Press Tribunes in the Bird's Nest



Photo: © Steffen Kumme

**“It was so much fun to be in the venues seeing the athletes show what they had practised for the past four years.”**  
– Steffen Kumme

When I think being a reporter in Beijing, I remember a great time and it was easy to feel the “Paralympic Spirit”. In my opinion, the greatest experience was the Opening Ceremony. The 90,000 cheering spectators inside the Bird's Nest give anyone a very special feeling. It was a perfectly organized, emotional and colourful celebration with so many highlights and a great display of fireworks.

But apart from all of the great moments, I was in Beijing to work for the Deutsche Telekom AG and bigFM. It was so much fun to be in the venues seeing the athletes show what they had practised for the past four years. And it was even better to be in the Mixed Zone (where reporters can talk to athletes) afterwards, interviewing them about their competitions.

One of the athletes I was able to talk with was a German athlete in Athletics, Katrin Green. She won the gold medal in the 200m (T44), and her dream was always to hear the National Anthem of Germany. She was so overwhelmed when it happened and showed emotions that everyone was able to see. This was her perfect day. However, two days later she finished fourth in the 100m. That was not her luckiest day, but I think in the end she was very happy with her gold medal. Luck and misfortune, so close together!

The Closing Ceremony concluded the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games for us. It was a great adventure, but also a sad moment when you realize that this incredible time with the people from all over the world must end.

The return to Germany and the daily routine came so fast, and after just days in the country, I was back in the library studying for my final exam. Only the pictures that I showed to my friends and family brought me back to Beijing, and I knew I had a great time with memories and experience. I will never forget. And I was able to feel the “One World, One Dream” of Beijing.



Photo: © Birte Berg

**“We visited every competition and training venue to report from the Mixed Zone, press conferences, Paralympic Torch Relay, and the Opening and Closing Ceremony.”**  
– Birte Berg

The weeks before coming to Beijing were stressful because of my combination of studies and my internship in Munich. But mostly because my mind was always on Beijing and what the experience would be like. The stress did pay off though. In the blink of an eye, Steffen and I were arriving at the Beijing Capital International Airport and collecting our baggage.

After we dropped off our baggage in our hotel, we picked up the most important card for the next two weeks: the Accreditation Card. With this accreditation we visited every competition and training venue to report from the Mixed Zone, press conferences, Paralympic Torch Relay, and the Opening and Closing Ceremony.

During the next 11 days, Steffen and I attended various competitions, and held interviews with the athletes, coaches, officials and sponsors. We even took part in the reception at the German Embassy, where we had the intimidating task of interviewing the German President Horst Koehler!

After our normal workday, we tried the restaurants around our hotel. Each time was a little surprise because we had trouble communicating with the waitress. So sometimes we got dishes that we did not want to order. And of course sometimes the dish was so spicy that our whole mouth was burning and tears were running down our faces.

When I came back to Germany, I really wanted to turn back the clock and return to Beijing. I showed my pictures to my family and told stories about China and most especially about the Paralympics.

I keep the memory of the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games alive at all times now. It was an indescribable time, with extraordinary experiences and an incredible chance to see so much. A dream did come true!



# Partners Planted on the Olympic Green

## More Activities Than Ever Before Showcase Sponsors

In the event that spare time was available in between and around competition viewing, the north area of the Olympic Green had its own offering of newly-built venues that housed sponsor activities for the public to see. Located close to the International Broadcast Centre, Paralympic visitors could access the area directly after exiting the new subway station or by walking a few minutes north of the Bird's Nest. Regardless of product preference, the various buildings and tents were designed beyond just advertisement.

One of the most popular and written about exhibitions was the Terracotta Warriors from Johnson & Johnson, Official Partner of the Paralympic Games. Inside this new pavilion, Johnson & Johnson wanted to provide an exhibition that displayed not only the current products and services on the market, but information about who the company was and what initiatives they have taken. For example, walking into the pavilion, you immediately entered an exhibit titled "Our Caring World". The extensive display was divided into eight parts and aimed to show visitors that the company cares by means of its medicines and pharmaceuticals, and outreach programmes.

The Executive Director of Corporate Communications, Lorie Gawreluk, said that the photos throughout the pavilion included people with a disability which gave the impression of a more realistic view of the world. Many visitors from the Paralympic community took the opportunity to stop by the building starting on day one.



Photo: © IPC

"The very first person to come in when we opened the doors for the Paralympics was Chris Waddell (Paralympian Ambassador)," Gawreluk said. "As we walked through with him, he said it was wonderful, the entire setup with the ramps and the accessibility."

The main event for most visitors at the pavilion however was the aforementioned Terracotta Warriors. The history behind these Terracotta Warriors is that 2,200 years ago, the first emperor of China, credited with unifying the country, decided that in the afterlife he would like to be as comfortable as possible.

This included his needing an army to protect him, which led him to commission the building of a force of 8,000 warriors. Fast forward to 1974, farmers uncovered the site where they had been buried. This history, as well as original artifacts, was the treasure of each visitor to the pavilion during the Games.

**"The athletes were the main characters in Beijing, they were the reason the Paralympic Games took place."**

Close by, IPC's Worldwide Partner Samsung had its own pavilion, labelled "OR@S", which stands for "Olympic Rendezvous at Samsung". The pavilion was in fact just that, a meeting point for relaxation and communication. The ambiance that was created by the organizers was said to give athletes and their families the opportunity to meet and rest, with free drinks, snacks and a phone call to anywhere in the world.

The Senior Manager of Sports Communication at Samsung, Y.T. Cha, said the goal of the pavilion was not only to show the spectators, athletes, and families a general showcase of technology by the company, but also provide an athletes' centre, which was a place for them to come and relax. He said that as the athletes were the main characters in Beijing, they were the reason the Paralympic Games took place.

"Most of the time it is very difficult for the athletes to meet their loved ones, because it is very difficult for family members of the athletes to get an accreditation into the Paralympic Village due to security reasons," Cha said. "We wanted to have a space that provided a secure lounge area where they could freely come with any kind of rules or guidelines."

IPC Gold Patron Allianz was so busy in the preparation and during the Paralympic Games that they launched a special Microsite which was created to inform their employees about the partnership, advertise the Paralympic Movement and increase internal motivation and identification with the company. Almost 80,000 Allianz employees visited the Microsite, and followed the daily activities of the company. Allianz was present at several events, including the Paralympic Torch Relay, the official opening of the German Paralympic Club, VIP reception in the German House, the medal



Sir Philip Craven visiting Omega showcase

handover with Chairperson of the Board of Management of Allianz Germany AG Dr. Gerhard Rupprecht, as well as several receptions.

Allianz also took the opportunity to distribute its Paralympic Moments footage, which was shown for a total of seven hours on 36 channels. The tracking reports from 25 August to 30 September had a strong 132,122,000 viewers worldwide. The idea of Paralympic Moments was to portrait and document Paralympic athletes and their special moments on their way to the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games.

Automobile Partner Volkswagen overwhelmed everyone in Beijing, with a total of 260,000 visitors to its showcase, 20,000 more than for the Olympics. This averaged to 28,000 per day. Many of those working for Volkswagen expressed repeatedly how great the Paralympics were and what a tremendous success it had in opening up the eyes of many companies.

Nearby, Coca-Cola, Omega and Adidas also had impressive showcases. This was the first time that sponsors had left the showcases open during the Paralympics and continued their operation. Coca-Cola created a Paralympic Collectors Can, which was handed over to Sir Philip Craven during his visit to the building. Adidas was the partner of several Paralympic teams, while Omega offered visitors information on their technology and timekeeping.

The feedback reported from sponsors praised the atmosphere, success, and the whole environment during the Paralympic Games.

## Delivering Services from Otto Bock and Atos Origin

Outside the Olympic Green, IPC's Worldwide Partner Otto Bock set up a workshop inside the Paralympic Village that was more of practical use, giving athletes the opportunity to have wheelchairs and prosthetics repaired free of charge. The company had trained technicians offering services, ranging from pumping up tires, to anything else that may have been needed.

When the athletes walked into the service centre, they first entered a waiting area where they would fill out a form relating to their particular issue. After the information was documented, a technician would come and speak with the athlete in a general consultation about what needed to be done. The repairs would begin shortly afterwards.

Project Manager of Otto Bock, Peter Fanzel, said that in the first week, many athletes came from poorer countries, bringing in broken parts that needed to be either repaired or replaced. However, they were not the only ones who brought in job orders.

"Athletes also competing in Wheelchair Basketball and Wheelchair Rugby came in because they are very rough sports," Fanzel said. "It happened a lot and we had to do a lot of welding."

Fanzel noted that Otto Bock had a total of 12 satellite workshops in or close to the venues during the Games in Beijing, as well as in Hong Kong and Qingdao. He explained that there was also an express service vehicle that was mobile and able to provide service anywhere around the Chinese capital, like hotels and other locations.

A less obvious, but ever crucial IPC Worldwide Partner, Atos Origin, successfully managed computer systems throughout the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. Although the Beijing Digital Building, where Atos Origin was located on the Olympic Green, was not open to all visitors, it provided information that was used in some way by every person at the Games.

Atos Origin worked with the IPC, BOCOG and other IT partners and subcontractors as one team to ensure that the Paralympic Games were a great success. The company was responsible for all IT aspects like designing and building systems, managing all the IT partners, running the critical IT infrastructure and networks, and the immediate distribution of competition results to the world.

The Executive Vice President at Atos Origin for the Olympics and Major Events, Patrick Adiba, said that the Paralympic



Photo: © IPC

Technician at work inside the Otto Bock repair station

Games are a world-class sporting event, and the systems that ran them were as complex as those for the Olympic Games.

"The quality standard that we set for the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games IT operations was exactly the same as we set for the Beijing Olympic Games," Adiba said. "We were delighted to have worked closely with BOCOG Technology to help make the Games an international sporting success."



## Creating Opportunities for Paralympic Family to Meet



Photo: © IPC

Inside the Hospitality Centre

Whether it was an athlete or an official, a committee member or someone observing the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, the Paralympic Hospitality Centre became a meeting and celebration point for many individuals. Located on the first floor inside the Intercontinental Hotel, next to the National Convention Centre Fencing Hall on the Olympic Green, the Hospitality Centre was the ideal, upscale environment to enjoy a meal, a drink and a chat, all at the same time.

Morena Peracchio, the Manager of the Paralympic Hospitality Centre, essentially became the heart and soul of the undertaking, along with her team. As it was the largest setup to date for the Paralympic Games, the IPC and Peracchio both had their schedules fully booked.

Peracchio said the goal of the Paralympic Hospitality Centre during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games was to focus on creating a quality atmosphere, along with good food. The hope was to make a difference for each person.

The Paralympic Hospitality Centre comes from a concept of wanting to bring different groups together at one meeting place. For example, the Hospitality Centre not only provided for National Paralympic Committees, but also their guests, corporate business partners, sponsors and other organizations. Peracchio said this unique setting promoted more than just good socializing.



Photo: © IPC

“It’s very good for the different groups to be together and combine their efforts in either business relations or any exchange in ideas,” she said. “And it is meaningful for us because we are able to get the message of the Paralympic Movement across much better within this relatively small area.”

The first event to take place at the Paralympic Hospitality Centre was the Games Officials Reception on 5 September. With a lot of expectations, and it being the first real event in the Centre, Peracchio said it was successful and allowed the staff to quickly learn what could be improved upon.

“With about 365 people, we were able to see how exactly our operations worked. We saw the use of the foyer area for giving a speech and other first moments of every evening, the check-in area and the possible large crowds, and were able to make adjustments by offering aperitifs in the open area to control the flow into the buffet,” she said.

One of the final events of in the Paralympic Hospitality Centre was the “Farewell Beijing” celebration which included VIPs and organizers of the Games. The event had music provided by a DJ and an interactive atmosphere. The aim was to emphasize the culture and hospitality of China by combining not only Western and Asian foods, but also welcoming services. Several evenings also saw on-site, Chinese back massages offered by Blind Massage Therapists.



Photo: © IPC

In terms of success, there did not seem to be any complaints from the guests at the Hospitality Centre. In fact, Sir Philip Craven called Peracchio and congratulated her and her team on a job well done.

Peracchio actually was introduced to the Paralympics after the Winter Olympics in Torino. She said that working there firmly remains in her mind as a perspective-changing experience.

“Let me tell you that I had a revelation working at the Paralympic Village,” Peracchio said. “The Olympics were a nice environment, but the Paralympics were something else. I could really see that these people are amazing and they deserve all of the strength that you put into your work.”

The Paralympic Hospitality Centre also provided many opportunities for the National Paralympic Committees to meet. This followed the original concept of the setup, which planned for interaction that might not otherwise be possible during their busy schedule at the Games.

The success of the Paralympic Hospitality Centre, she said, will most certainly help in the preparation of similar undertakings in the future.

## Observers’ Programme Enlivens Future Games Organizers

A total of 269 participants from 24 different organizations from all around the world found their way to the Chinese capital for the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. Their target was not primarily to attend the Games themselves, but rather to participate in an initiative that was more behind the scenes called the “IPC Observers’ Programme”. The aim of the Observers’ Programme was to help future Games organizers in learning about a variety of Paralympic-themed organizational aspects and related preparations.

In Beijing, the programme was built on the knowledge gained following the Games in Athens and Torino. As a result the IPC invested a significant amount of resources and the evolution was tremendous. More than 30 activities took place in Beijing over a period of 13 days. This was a dramatic increase from the four activities in Athens, and seven in Torino.

During the Observers’ Programme, the participants focused on a variety of subjects, including: main Paralympic Games themes (e.g., accessibility, venue operations, Paralympic Village), client experiences (e.g., for athletes, media, Paralympic Family) and specific topics (such as classification, accommodation, city operations, etc). In addition to those, a workshop for corporate aspects (marketing, education, finance, etc.) and a session for smaller events were conducted.

The Observers’ Programme was mainly targeted at the organizers of actual upcoming Paralympic Games, namely Vancouver 2010, London 2012, Sochi 2014, and the Candidate Cities for 2016 (Chicago, Madrid, Rio and Tokyo), and other sporting events. And although the focus was on the Games-like preparations, it was also inclusive for other events of Paralympic sports like World and Regional Championships.

Apostolos Rigas, IPC Head of Paralympic Games Strategic Projects and Head of the Observers’ Programme, said that the IPC put this programme together in order to best inform and educate Organizing Committees, Candidate Cities and their public authorities, as well as other Paralympic Movement organizations. This, he said, required a lot of planning which paid off during the Games period.



Photo: © IPC

IPC and BOCOG Observers’ Teams with the Co-ordinators of participating organizations at the final session of the IPC Observers’ Programme on 17 September

“We indeed went far beyond anything we had done in the past and I am happy to say that the programme was a great success,” Rigas said. “We were able to provide the participants with an incomparable opportunity to gather first-hand experience and insight into the Games and its operational aspects. Never before have so many organizations been present at the same time, and participated in knowledge-sharing activities.”

The success was reflected as well in the responses from the participants. The organizers of the Para-Cycling World Championships 2009 for example, thanked Rigas and the IPC team for a wonderful programme.

“I would like to congratulate you on the kind way you received us and the opportunity to learn from the world’s best,” Para-Cycling organizers said. “It was a fantastic initiative that helped different committees all over the world to share their experiences.”



# 2008 IPC Wheelchair Dance Sport World Championships in Minsk

From 25-26 October, a very eager group of athletes competed on the most elite of levels at the 2008 International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Wheelchair Dance Sport World Championships in the capital of Belarus. Beginning with a very colourful Opening Ceremony, which had athletes included in an extravagant parade, the festivities of the first day enlivened each audience member.



Winning couple from Belarus, Ihar Kisialiou and Hanna Charchakova

Following the parade, the traditional raising of the Paralympic Flag, the sounds of the Paralympic Anthem, and the various dance presentations brought not only the spectators, but all athletes and officials to an appreciative silence. Many of the countries have reported that this was the best Wheelchair Dance Sport World Championships that they have ever experienced.

The eight events that took place included the Duo Standard (class 1 and 2), Duo Latin (class 1 and 2), Combi Standard (class 1 and 2) and Combi Latin (class 1 and 2). The competition, which was staged inside the Football Hall of Minsk, had a total of 137 athletes from 17 countries around the world.

Russian dancers Aleksey Fotin and Ruzanna Kazaryan won the gold medal in the Duo Standard (class 1) event, followed by Eduardo Nunez Medellin and Maria Antonia Pena Anguiano from Mexico, and Andrei Tsibulski and Hanna Siratsiuk from Belarus. The three couples also dominated the Duo Latin (class 1) event and took home the medals in the same order. In class 2 of the Duo Standard event, European Champions Konstantin Sosunov and Elena Shilyaeva from Russia took home the gold medal. The silver medal was won by Polish couple Norbert Kaminski and Katrzyna Bloch, and Pawel Karpinski and Joanna Reda (POL) were awarded the bronze medal in the event. They added a silver medal to their record in the Duo Latin (class 2) event. The gold medal was awarded to Ukrainian dancers Ivan Sivak and Nadiia Verbytska, the bronze medal was awarded to Andrey Antonov and Alexandra Berdnik from Russia.

Marcin Blazejewski and Iwona Wydra from Poland won the Combi Latin (class 1) event, followed by Peter Vidasic and Helena Kasicka (SVK), and Valeriy Bevzyuk and Olena Iarenko (UKR). The Slovakian couple won another medal in the Combi Standard (class 1) competition. This time they came in third place, leaving the gold medal to Oleksandr Ivanov and Illona Slugovina (UKR), and the silver medal to Aliaksei Zukhtsikau and Veranika Kasach (BLR).

Polish dancer Kamil Kuran together with his partner Nadine Kinczel won the gold medal in the Combi Latin (class 2) event, followed by Ihar Kisialiou and Hanna Charchakova from Belarus, and Maxim Sedakov and Svetlana Kukushkina from Russia. Kisialiou and Charchakova also managed to win the only gold medal for the host country, by winning the Combi Standard (class 2) event. Alexander Lyapin and Irina Gordeeva (RUS) won silver and Rafal Skiera and Monika Chojnacka (POL) won bronze.



## Dutch Duo Wins at Wimbledon

The Dutch Wheelchair Tennis players Robin Ammerlaan and Ronald Vink pushed themselves in the finals of the Wimbledon Wheelchair Tennis Master Series in July, defeating the French pair Stephane Houdet and Nicolas Peifer. They were able to retain their title after a 6:7 (6:8), 6:1, 6:3 victory.

Although there were unfavourable weather conditions, which affected the grass court, the four players were quickly able to adapt. Ammerlaan and Vink made a successful comeback after losing the first set, proving their high-ranking status to the audience. The third set became an intense tiebreaker, which was in fact close (2:2) early on, but the Dutch players quickly regained, and held the lead.

In the game which decided the third and fourth places, Tadeusz Kruszelnicki of Poland and Martin Legner of Austria defeated the British pair of David Phillipson and Gordon Reid. The scores, 6:4 and 6:2 led to a quicker victory for the Polish and Austrian players.

2008 had been the fourth consecutive year that the four leading men's partnerships were first up against each other in the Wimbledon Doubles Masters Series. The event was sanctioned by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) as part of the global Northeast Conference Wheelchair Tennis Tour. A record amount of about US\$ 28,000 was the prize this year.

For more information about Wheelchair Tennis, please visit [www.itftennis.org](http://www.itftennis.org).

## Winter Sports Season Outlook

As the Winter Season is quickly approaching, athletes are warming up for a competitive series of events that will begin their road to the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. Listed below is the schedule of the upcoming competitions that are already on the calendars of many athletes.

**2009 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup**  
La Molina, Spain from 11-16 January

**2009 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup**  
Sestriere, Italy from 18-25 January

**2009 IPC Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing World Championships**  
Taking place in Vuokatti, Finland from 21 January to 1 February 2009, the Championships will include several events in both Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing. In Biathlon, there will be Official Training, followed by Pursuit and 10/12.5km Long Distance. In Cross-Country Skiing, there will be 10/15/20km Classic Technique, Relay, 5/10km Free Technique and Sprint Classic Technique. There will also be an Opening and Closing Ceremony for the Championships.

**2009 IPC Alpine Skiing World Championships**  
Taking place in Gangwon-Do, Korea, from 19 February to 1 March 2009, the Championships are organized by the Korea Sports Association for the Disabled (KOSAD), Korea Adaptive Ski Association (KASA) and the High 1 Ski Resort. The events will include Downhill, Super-G, Giant Slalom and Slalom. An Opening and Closing Ceremony are part of the event programme.

Other Events:  
**2009 Paralympic Winter World Cup**  
Taking place in Solleftea, Sweden from 2-7 February, the 2009 Paralympic Winter World Cup is the biggest winter multi-sport event outside of the Paralympic Winter Games programme. This will be a new presentation for the Solleftea Winter Games that first took place in 1995.

**2009 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup Finals**  
Whistler, Canada from 9-14 March

**2009 IPC Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing World Cup**  
Whistler, Canada from 2-7 March

**2009 IPC Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing World Cup Finals**  
Mt. Washington, Canada from 11-14 March

**2009 IPC Ice Sledge Hockey World Championships B**  
Eindhoven, the Netherlands from 13-21 March

For more information about Paralympic Winter Sport, please visit [http://www.paralympic.org/release/Winter\\_Sports](http://www.paralympic.org/release/Winter_Sports)



Alpine Skiing athlete in action

Photo: © Getty Images

Photo: © Vladimir Korolev



# The First ICSEMIS Precedes Games

Scientists and Experts Meet in Southern China for the Advancement in Several Aspects of Sport



In Guangzhou, China, about 120km Northwest of Hong Kong, 1,500 attendees, representing 40 different countries, experienced 350 oral and 1,000 poster presentations in a much anticipated gathering of scientists. The foundation set by the first International Convention on Science, Education and Medicine in Sport (ICSEMIS) has promised to continue a successful co-operation from the four participating organizations, which included the IPC, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Council for Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), and the International Federation of Sports Medicine (FIMS).

Having taken place from 1-4 August, just before the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, the forum provided a crucial platform for success of the current, as well as upcoming Games. The theme of the convention, "Sports Sciences and Harmonious Society in the 21st Century", furthered the exceptional environment and its purpose by providing a focus for all participating experts. This was an extension of the general goal in discussing the advancement of science and practice of human movement from the four international organizations.

As the scientists involved had the same interests, at the same time they were targeting different populations. These different areas were for example education versus medicine, sociology versus biomechanics, or Olympic athletes versus Paralympic athletes. The environment created at the ICSEMIS 2008 became an intensive exchange of ideas which enabled all participants to learn from one another and encourage progress in sports participation starting from the grass-roots level of sport development, up to the elite performance of Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

The convention provided a near countless number of sessions, presentations, workshops and informal contacts which might have been a challenge for a single individual to visit. Just like the number of participants, stemming from the four major, international organizations, the amount of information and knowledge was extensive.

Three examples of focus statements from presentations at the convention included:

**"Art versus Science: An imperfect process to have an optimized experience."**

**"Lucky accidents, great discoveries and the prepared mind."**

**"We went looking for exceptional musicians, but all we could find were exceptional environments."**

Many of the sessions and presentations focused additionally on sharing perspectives from different parts of the world in the area of pedagogical strategies, political challenges and professional preparations for various programmes. The conference also looked at the extensive benefits that can be had from sports and physical activities. Examples of targets like sports in rehabilitation, school sports programmes, lifelong physical activity and the costs of health programmes on workers were presented and evaluated. This was further examined to see sports beyond its role as a global entertainment commodity, and into being a vehicle for international relations and co-operation.

Dr. Peter Van de Vliet, IPC Medical and Scientific Director, said that the ICSEMIS 2008 emphasis on integrated scientific symposia and thematic sessions provided a unique multi-disciplinary approach to sport through science, education and medicine that is much greater when the four international partners involved realize them together.

"The scientific portion of the convention speculated future development of competitive sport on the basis of key values related to performance and progress in sport," Dr. Van de Vliet



From left to right: Dr. Sean Tweedy (promoter of the winner and member of the IPC Classification Committee), Emma Beckman (winner of "Young Scientist Award"), Dr. Walter Thompson (member of the IPC Sports Science Committee)

said. "This referred to both ideologically driven state sport systems, and the commercially driven sports entertainment industry which set the pace for a wide variety of views."

During the Closing Banquet of the 2008 ICSEMIS, the "Young Scientist Award" was presented to Emma Beckman in the category of best oral presentation for her preliminary findings on the IPC Athletics Classification Research project. Beckman is a PhD student of Dr. Sean Tweedy, who is a member of the IPC Classification Committee.

The idea for 2008 ICSEMIS, a joint world scientific conference on science, education, medicine and sports, began following the Games in Athens in 2004. Two years later, in 2006, representatives from the IPC, IOC, ICSSPE and FIMS met in Beijing and agreed to the convention, confirming the placement before the Games in 2008.

In concluding the convention, the four international partners expressed their commitment to continue this successful co-operation, and met with bid applicants for 2012 ICSEMIS. Great Britain will be the host of the second ICSEMIS in 2012.



French athlete Lionel Brun at Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games



## Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games Call for Research Applications!

The IPC is calling for research applications for all projects that are to be conducted during the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, from 12-21 March 2010. The IPC Research Application Form, as well as details on the application procedure, schedules, and examples of previously approved research projects are on the IPC website in the Sport Science section.

In order to be considered by the IPC, applications must be received by 10 March 2009. All research approved by the IPC must comply with internationally recognized ethical standards and research practices.

## Re-inclusion of Athletes with Intellectual Disability in Future Paralympic Games

In 2007, the IPC and the International Sports Federation for Persons with an Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) created a Working Group with representatives from both organizations to discuss the re-inclusion of athletes with intellectual disability in future Paralympic Games and other IPC-sanctioned competitions. After having received an update report, both the IPC Governing Board and the INAS-FID Executive Committee recognize that the inclusion process is an ongoing process, requiring constant refinement and continuous improvement. However, both are pleased with the progress to date and that the re-inclusion of athletes with an intellectual disability in London 2012 and beyond remains a viable and reasonable objective.

The classification system currently being explored is based upon a scientific approach and is compliant with the IPC Classification Code. It focuses on: eligibility criteria, sport specificity and on site protest and appeal procedures. The Working Group currently also liaises with the different sports to make tests, processes and procedures available for pilot testing during the early part of 2009.

Both the IPC and INAS-FID target that the inclusion of ID athletes in future Paralympic Games will be formally ratified by the IPC General Assembly in November 2009, which will provide these athletes with the competition experience necessary to be prepared properly for London 2012.



# A Matter of Education

Disability Versus Ability or Ability Versus Ability

Dear IPC,

To begin with, I would like to say well done! I applaud the efforts of the organizers in Beijing, the International Paralympic Committee, and everyone involved in making the Paralympic Games a success.

In August of this year I was invited back to Seoul to help them celebrate 20 years of Paralympic history (1988-2008). And what a 20 years it has been! I am not sure if 20 years ago any of us could have predicted how far the Paralympic Movement would have developed both in the Summer Games and the Winter Games, as well as within every Paralympic Sport.

Paralympic sport is a highly competitive medium that brings together trained athletes who display their strength and skills in an inclusive, unique environment. What we should begin advocating is that Paralympic sports in the main are just modified versions of mainstream sports and can be enjoyed by everyone.

What role do establishments like schools, higher education institutions or communities play in education and in the Paralympic Movement?

Why not have activities such as Wheelchair Basketball, Boccia or Goalball as part of our mainstream physical education programme? They can be played by all children and can potentially lead to a better understanding of ability by removing the barriers and stigma associated with disability.

Disability in education often has a medical association related to inclusion. The model we saw in Beijing illustrated otherwise. Athletes living their dreams, living in an inclusive setting; equals within the community. The success in Beijing developed out of the Paralympic Movement aligned sport with ability. If we can position ourselves to use that concept in education we can have an impact. In the end, I believe it will lead to a more open and equitable society where services are individually directed.

Maybe we all need to dream sometimes, and live life as we see it and for what it is instead of trying to fit ourselves in boxes that we do not fit into. Or even worse, trying to fit other people into boxes that are either too big or too small for them just because of what we have available.



Mansell hopes to have more programmes like the one shown here, Spain’s Paralympic School Day, implemented around the world



Paralympian Martin Mansell inside the Water Cube

“Remember: inclusion (whatever that is) is a right rather than a responsibility and that the terms for acceptance should be universal rather than conditional.”

So what and how does this relate to both Beijing and education? Well maybe what we saw in Beijing and over the years developing out of the Paralympic Movement is connected more to sport and ability rather than any medical or social model of disability. And if we can capture that and use the concept in education, then this will have an effect on how we see disability in our everyday lives and not just in the Paralympic Games. Ultimately, this will lead to a more open and equitable society with services that are people/needs-led, not services-led.

Remember: inclusion (whatever that is) is a right rather than a responsibility and that the terms for acceptance should be universal rather than conditional.

The remaining questions that we should consider are what will the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games and the London 2012 Games deliver, and how will they contribute to the development of the Paralympic Movement, education and society as a whole? Let us capitalize on our success to improve and insure future success.

Once again well done Beijing!

**Martin Mansell**  
IPC Education Committee  
Paralympic Champion in Swimming

**Inspired to be a Reader’s Letter contributor?**  
If you want your words, thoughts, opinions, and/or experiences with any aspect of the Paralympic Movement written here, please send your idea for your own Reader’s Letter to Jeff Wolfshohl at [jeff.wolfshohl@paralympic.org](mailto:jeff.wolfshohl@paralympic.org). The restrictions are minimal, the field is open. All ideas are welcome.

What do you want to say to The Paralympian Audience?

Season’s Greetings

聖誕節和新年快樂！ • God jul och gott nytt år • Sretan Božić • E schéine Chrëschttag an e glécklecht neit Joer! • WESOŁYCH ŚWIĄT • Joyeux Noël et bonne année  
Frohe Weihnachten und ein gutes neues Jahr • اجمل التهاني بمناسبة الميلاد و حلول السنة الجديدة • Prettige Feestdagen • Καλά Χριστούγεννα και Ευτυχισμένο το Νέο Έτος  
¡Feliz Navidad y próspero año nuevo! • Glaedelig jul og godt nytår • С Рождеством Христовым • Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon • Gleðileg jó!  
メリクリスマス&新年おめでとうございます。 • Buon Natale e felice anno nuovo • Crăciun fericit și un an nou fericit • הג מולד שמח ושנה טובה • Bon Nadal i felix any nou  
Kellemes karácsonyt és boldog új évet • Честита Коледа • God jul og godt nytt år • 즐거운 성탄절 되시고, 새해 복 많이 받으세요.



# Athletes' Corner Attracts Record Numbers

Over 2,000 visitors found their way to the Athletes' Corner during the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. Situated inside the Paralympic Village, the building was used to house the IPC Information Area, as well as the Athletes' Council Election. Being that the location was adjacent to the large cafeteria, athletes and other visitors were easily able to pass directly by and notice the curious display.

In combining the IPC Information Area, and the place where the athletes voted for the Athletes' Council Election, visitors had the possibility to take part in a series of setups that included a live stream of the Beijing competitions, a viewing of various historic videos, or simply photo opportunities holding the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Torch, which was fixed to a decorative panel outside the Corner.

The Athletes' Corner in Beijing was for sure a unique environment, and for the first time presented items from the IPC Documentation Centre to a wide, international audience. Some of the items included an exhibition of historic posters, photographs, medals, torches, pins and mascot articles. Together, this area created an informal IPC promotion forum in the Paralympic Village during the Games in Beijing.

But the area was not exclusively for competing athletes. Although the majority of athletes did visit, and the first two days had an impressive influx of people, past competitors also had the chance to re-live memories of previous Games in photos and videos, many of them seeing themselves compete for the first time. Officials and non-athletes were also able to learn about the IPC by watching videos of past Paralympic Games, surfing the IPC website, asking questions, signing the guestbook, as well as picking up information materials and souvenirs to take back home. One of the most popular souvenirs was the IPC tattoo that some applied on the spot.

One of the highlights during the Paralympic Games at the Athletes' Corner was Sir Philip Craven's visit to the building. Hou Bin, Paralympian Ambassador and the Chinese athlete who lit the Paralympic Torch, accompanied Sir Philip during this visit. Before leaving, Sir Philip received an IPC flag, signed by all of the delegations at the Games.

Some of the notable visitors to the Corner were Paul Deighton, the CEO of the London 2012 Organizing Committee, and several other Paralympian Ambassadors like Cheri Blauwet and Michael Teuber.

Organized and operated by IPC staff, there was the additional support from ten Chinese volunteers. The volunteers expressed their interest in the Paralympic Movement throughout the period of the Games and also practiced their English-speaking skills. The main focus of this Athletes' Corner was on athlete outreach to foster Paralympic identity and pride. The IPC staff aimed to increase athletes' awareness about the IPC, including the mission, values, history, development and organizational structure. Additionally, all subjects were connected to the Paralympic Movement and the disability rights of the athletes.

This unique opportunity that was the Athletes' Corner is sure to be built upon and used once again in the upcoming Games. It will repeat the goal in further persuading athletes to work closer with the IPC and to recognize the importance of the international structure.

For more information about the IPC Athletes' Corner or the IPC Documentation Centre, please email [stefanie.pohle@paralympic.org](mailto:stefanie.pohle@paralympic.org).



Athletes voting at the Athletes' Corner



Volunteers giving information about the Paralympic Movement

## Crash Course: The Movement

Do you know...

1. Who are the current 11 Paralympic Ambassadors?
2. How many medal events were at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games?
3. Which sport was for the first time part of the Paralympic Summer programme this year?
4. What were the two co-host cities of the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games?
5. List the five countries that took home the most number of gold medals at the Games this year.



Founder of the IPC, Sir Ludwig Guttman



Sir Ludwig Guttman, Prince Philip and archer at the Opening of the Stoke Mandeville Stadium (1969)

- 1.) Verena Bentle (GER) / Hou Bin (CHN) / Cheri Blauwet (USA) / Kirsten Bruhn (GER) / Mufti Davis (USA) / Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson (GBR) / Michael Teuber (GER) / Ernst van Dyk (RSA) / Esther Vergeer (NED) / Chris Waddell (USA) / Henry Wanyoike (KEN)
- 2.) 472
- 3.) Rowing
- 4.) Hong Kong and Qingdao
- 5.) China (89), Great Britain (42), USA (36), Ukraine (24) and Australia (23)



IPC Athletics Summit

IPC Athletics announces the launch of the IPC Athletics Summit to be hosted in Bonn, Germany, from 27-28 February 2009. Initiated by the IPC Governing Board and IPC Athletics Sport Technical Committee, the Summit will present a unique opportunity for athletes and members of the Paralympic community to come together and discuss at a strategic level the future direction in the sport of Athletics as well as covering key topical areas that require immediate attention.

The Summit promises to set the mode of operation and main priorities in the lead up to Christchurch 2011, London 2012 and beyond.

The model of the Summit and application process can be found on the IPC website, Athletics Section.

Two New Honorary Board Members

Over the past few months, the IPC has since welcomed two new Honorary Board members, namely Thérèse Rein of Australia and Hassan Ali Bin Ali of Qatar.

The IPC Governing Board was informed about the addition of Therese Rein during the 51st IPC Governing Board Meeting in Beijing in early September. Therese Rein is the

IPC Gala in Rotterdam

Charity & Sport, funding partner of the IPC, organized a big gala to support various development projects of the IPC all around the world in November, with presenters Esther Vergeer and Hein Vergeer.

The gala was held in St. Laurenskerken, in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, with performances by Russian pianist Dmitry Mayboroda, Jazz singer Denise Jannah and the big band of the Royal Dutch Marines. Sport demonstrations rounded off the evening.

Sir Philip Craven, President of the IPC, was among the guests that night and received a cheque of EUR 151,000 from Rob Visser, President of Charity & Sport.

Athletes' Council Election Results

After a record turnout of voters during the Games, athletes successfully elected new members to the IPC Athletes' Council. The six athletes elected, receiving the most votes out of 14 candidates, were Teresa Perales (Spain, Swimming), Marketa Sidkova (Czech Republic, Archery), Yu Chui Yee (Hong Kong/China, Wheelchair Fencing), Heinz Frei (Switzerland, Athletics), Robert Balk (USA, Athletics) and David Smetanine (France, Swimming).

The voting took place from 4-15 September in all three Paralympic Villages (Beijing, Hong Kong and Qingdao), and had a participation rate of 88.72%. All accredited athletes in the Beijing Paralympic Games had the opportunity to take part in the IPC Athletes' Council Election.

The next Athletes' Council meeting is 13-14 February 2009, in Bonn, Germany.

PARALYMPIC VALUES INSIDE THE MOVEMENT

The Question: Where did you recognize the Paralympic Values in Beijing?



Courage

"I know we hear it a lot, but the courage of the athletes to come to China and perform at the elite levels that they did just seems worth overstating. It is something that affects the way I, at least, think of the human spirit and the desire to just give everything you have. I keep thinking about it and hope it never leaves me. The entire experience brought out the true meaning of courage."

– Jairus Mogalo,  
NPC Kenya Vice President

Inspiration

"Inspiration really hit me when I was at the Opening Ceremony and saw Hou Bin pull himself in his wheelchair to light the Paralympic flame. His strength was clear when his face was shown on the big screen for the stadium to see. As an artist I also appreciated the work and effort that was put into the entire event."

– Maria Guleghina,  
IPC Honorary Board Member

Determination

"Determination is what still drives you when you are hurting, telling your body to keep pushing even when it says to stop. It is a positive emotion so powerful, that it can overcome intense pain, setting apart the good from the best."

– Kurt Fearnley,  
Australian Paralympic Gold Medallist

Equality

"In being part of the Paralympic Torch Relay, at every turn there was another reason to see these were Games of Equal Splendour. I had an idea of what to expect, but the equality I saw when carrying the Paralympic Torch just could never have been imagined. The entire way during the Torch Relay, there was an equal excitement from the Chinese crowds which I will never forget."

– Verena Conrad,  
IPC Events Manager

Imprint

Editor: Steffi Klein  
Assistant Editor: Jeff Wolfshohl  
Graphic Design: Clever + Klug GmbH  
Printing: welzel+hardt GmbH

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International Paralympic Committee, 2008  
ISSN 1609-1329

For subscriptions please visit [www.paralympic.org](http://www.paralympic.org)

International Paralympic Committee

Adenauerallee 212-214  
D-53113 Bonn, Germany

Phone: +49 228 2097 200  
Fax: +49 228 2097 209  
Email: [info@paralympic.org](mailto:info@paralympic.org)  
Web: [www.paralympic.org](http://www.paralympic.org)

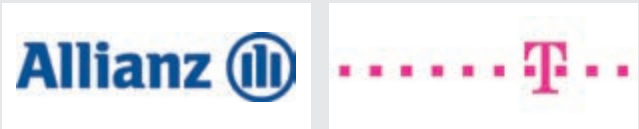
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