Centre of Attention

How the Paralympics are gaining ground in sponsorship and broadcasting
“A cumulative TV audience in excess of 4 billion people is set to watch the London 2012 Paralympic Games, and this edition looks closely at the growing appeal of Paralympic Sport to broadcasters and the benefits this has in terms of commercial revenue.”

Welcome to the first edition of The Paralympian of 2012, a year that promises so much for the Paralympic Movement with the London Games fast approaching.

A cumulative TV audience in excess of 4 billion people is set to watch the London 2012 Paralympic Games, and this edition looks closely at the growing appeal of Paralympic Sport to broadcasters and the benefits this has in terms of commercial revenue.

IPC Governing Board member Andrew Parsons gives us an insight into the success of the Brazilian Paralympic Committee’s proactive media strategy which has led to more TV coverage than ever before for Paralympic Sport in Brazil. As a result, sponsorship income has increased by 1,000 per cent in the last eight years. Armed with extra money to invest in athlete development programmes, Brazil has started to rise up the medal tables, an encouraging sign for them ahead of Rio 2016.

It is not just the larger National Paralympic Committees that are implementing successful media strategies, however. NPC Namibia also tells us about the success it has had in increasing media exposure.

With London 2012 very much on the agenda, this and the next edition of The Paralympian, look closely at all 20 sports that will be played in the British capital. We will inform you about the sport, ticket availability and which athletes and teams are the ones to watch between 29 August and 9 September.

Ones to Watch is also one of the many new features on the new look IPC website www.paralympic.org which was launched around the time of 200 days to go until London 2012. Designed and developed by IPC worldwide partner Atos, the new site aims to give visitors more videos, photos and news about their favourite athletes, and this issue we take a look at some of the new pages.

IPC International Partner, Allianz, also tells us about its ‘Believe in Yourself’ section on the new website, whilst Ottobock reveals details about an exciting schools project they have launched.

NPC Hungary, which hosted an IPC Governing Board in Budapest last year, is our NPC Profile this edition whilst the USA women’s Sitting Volleyball team feature in our Team Profile.

The winter in the northern hemisphere has seen a lot of snow sport competition and we look back at the best events in our Sport Review section. We also look ahead to May’s London 2012 Test Events, the BT Paralympic World Cup and June’s IPC Athletics European Championships.

Looking even further ahead we report on the progress for London, Sochi and Rio, the host cities of the next three Paralympic Games.

In the Medical and Science section anti-doping is explained with the help of world champion Irish para-cyclist Colin Lynch and IPC Athletes’ Council member Kate Nagogwic.

Finally, we bring you all the latest news from around the world and pick out the key points from last December’s IPC General Assembly in Beijing, China. Enjoy the magazine.
Enjoy this edition of “The Paralympian” – the official award-winning magazine of the Paralympic Movement!

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Out of the Shadows and into the Limelight

Media coverage of Paralympic Sport in recent years has grown significantly. The London 2012 Paralympics are expected to accumulate four billion TV viewers from around the world. In addition, 6,000 media representatives will be reporting on the Games from the British capital.

Increased media coverage makes the Paralympic brand more attractive to sponsors and many National Paralympic Committees are developing their own media strategies to capitalize on this interest.
Prior to the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games, the work of the Brazilian Paralympic Committee was “completely ignored by society” according to its President Andrew Parsons, leading to problems in attracting and activating sponsors.

The Brazilian NPC decided the best way to change this and raise the profile of Paralympic Sport in Brazil was to get on TV.

“Media strategy is fundamental. In the end, we need revenue and funding for our sport programmes – whether high level or development. If you’re not in the media, if people are not aware of what you do, the sponsors will not pay for part of the operation and then we paid for the remaining amount,” said Parsons.

“Out of the shadows”

Thanks to the strategy, Brazilian TV broadcast 168 hours of live coverage and news from the Athens Games, where the team won six gold and one silver medal.

“Because of initiatives like this, people recognized the Brazilian NPC as a very young, dynamic, fun and creative organization, delivering high quality services to the athletes and achieving sporting excellence,” stated Parsons.

By raising the NPC’s profile and drawing attention to Paralympic success, the NPC increased sponsorship revenue from one million Reals (US$ 340,000) in 2004 to R$ 3.4 million (US$ 1.46 million) the following year. In 2011, sponsorship had increased to ten million Reals (US$ 5.37 million).

“No one had done this in the past. There were a lot of concerns, so we really had to stick to our strategy.”

To finance the project the NPC called upon the support of an existing sponsor Loterias Caixa, the Brazilian National Lottery.

“We convinced them in order to maximize their return on investment they should team up with us in this strategy. They paid for part of the operation and then we paid for the remaining amount,” said Parsons.

“Sounds expensive, doesn’t it?”

At first the NPC’s membership was skeptical of the strategy. However, getting broadcasters to agree to show Paralympic athletes on TV was not easy.

After seeing footage, Brazilian broadcasters showed some interest, but were not too keen on paying money for broadcasting rights or sending their journalists to Athens. In fact they did not want to pay for anything.

In response, the Brazilian NPC bought TV rights to the Athens Games, hired a production company, and gave 13 Brazilian TV stations everything for free. They even paid for all journalists’ expenses to fly to Greece to cover the Games.

“We were 100 per cent sure this was the way to go, but it was hard to convince people. Some of our members said, you’re taking a serious the training was and how professional the athletes were, they started covering Paralympic Sport. By understanding what they want and their challenges, you can create your own strategy to match your resources and the event you wish the media to cover.”

“Small scale works too”

The key to a successful media strategy according to Parsons, is understanding and tackling the obstacles in the way.

“We came to see that the only way we could get them involved, was to invite some of them to the international competitions we were attending. This helped us very much.”

Hamukwaya said once journalists saw how serious the training was and how professional the athletes were, they started covering Paralympic Sport.

“We’re finally getting to where we wanted to be at the beginning. The TV channels are buying the rights because they see the value in the Paralympic Games.”

Full circle

The Brazilian team’s performances at Paralympic Games and other major Championships has also improved dramatically in recent years, a consequence of athletes benefiting from greater financial support from sponsors.

TV Globo, one of Brazil’s most popular TV channels, has also recently purchased the broadcasting rights to show the London 2012 Games.

“We’re finally getting to where we wanted to be at the beginning. The TV channels are buying the rights because they see the value in the Paralympic Games,” said a clearly delighted Parsons whose team is tipped for a top-six finish in London after coming 14th in Athens eight years ago.

Smaller scale works too

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“We came to see that the only way we could get them involved, was to invite some of them to the international competitions we were attending. This helped us very much.”

Hamukwaya said once journalists saw how serious the training was and how professional the sports were run, they started covering the sport more.

“When they went back to our country they made sure this information was published.”
Holding a home Paralympic Games has the potential to leave behind a legacy as the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) found out after the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.

CPC’s coverage increased from approximately 25 million media impressions during the year before the Games, to 13 to 27 million media impressions every day during the Games.

CPC is on pace to total 300 million media impressions this year.

“Vancouver was a catalyst in getting Paralympic Sport on the map in Canada,” said Henry Storgaard, CEO & Secretary General, Canadian Paralympic Committee, which is working hard to get broadcasters to hold a home Paralympic Games advantage.

As well as allowing CPC to secure some additional corporate partners, media coverage of the Vancouver Games has also changed the perceptions of Paralympic athletes.

CPC is hoping to continue this momentum with a new marketing campaign featuring vignette videos of its “super-athletes” which will be shown online.

“We’re trying to emulate the overall sports model where the Wayne Gretzky’s of the world really increase viewership, participation, social media numbers, all of those kind of things,” said Storgaard, referring to one of the greatest hockey players of all time.

“For many of them competing has changed their lives, provided them with a goal. Viewers are becoming familiar with these exceptional performances and over time relate to these athletes which we can all only admire,” Lundby said.

Part of the reason that audiences are engaging more with the Paralympics is the higher production standards.

“Only a few editions ago … production was limited to highlights and, given the number of competitions included in each edition of the Games, viewers did not have the opportunity to understand these sports,” continued Lundby.

For the first time, London 2012 will offer live feeds for 11 sports and news and highlights packages for every other sport, meaning that coverage has the potential to be more extensive than ever.

Interest from broadcasters has been impressive. London 2012 is set to sign agreements with the majority of territories around the world and, in each case, broadcasters have guaranteed record levels of coverage for London 2012 compared to previous Paralympics.

“It’s fantastic that millions of people around the world will have the opportunity to watch the London 2012 Paralympic Games,” said Nick Heckley, Head of Commercial Negotiations for LOCOG.

In the UK, Channel 4 acquired the broadcast rights and is already broadcasting weekly programmes profiling Paralympic athletes and their journeys to compete at London 2012.

Greater visibility of the Paralympics has made it an even more attractive proposition for sponsors to invest in, especially in the lead-up to London 2012.

“In Vancouver all sponsors from the Olympics also crossed over to the Paralympics for the first time,” said Alexis Schläfer, IPC Marketing and Commercial Director.

“Pleasingly this has been repeated in London. However, what we’re now seeing is more sponsors activating their Paralympic sponsorship and using para-athletes to front their campaigns.”

Whilst supermarket chain Sainsbury’s has produced a series of 90-second films for screening on Channel 4 featuring British Paralympians. Visa is using a number of London 2012 hopefuls in its promotional work and Ottobock has erected huge banners of German athlete Heinrich Popow in Berlin’s main train station which handles more than 300,000 people per day.

“For a long time, the Paralympics was in the shadows and was partly pushed out of sports coverage and into the “Health” category,” said Professor Hans Georg Naeder, Chairman and Managing Director of Ottobock, an IPC Worldwide Partner since 2005.

“In light of a rapid increase in recent years of public interest in the Paralympics, Ottobock’s involvement in disability sport has markedly increased awareness for the company,” Naeder added.

Allianz is also pleased to be associated with the Paralympic Movement, having first got involved with the IPC in 2006. Today it is the IPC’s first International Partner and a National Supporter of nine NPCs on a local level, a partnership that it sees as ongoing.

“Together with the IPC and the NPCs, Allianz will continue to foster public awareness, generate a greater interest in Paralympic Sport and bring the Paralympic Community forward,” said Elke Bürgel, Global Brand Manager at Allianz SE.

Should the Paralympic Movement come out of London 2012 with the same momentum it has going into it, then it can only mean great things and great viewing.
IPC Launches New-Look Website

To mark 200 days to go until London 2012, the IPC launched its new-look website on 13 February, which aims to be the world’s leading source of information about the Paralympic Movement, including the Games, its athletes and sports.

Designed and built by international IT services company and IPC Worldwide Partner Atos, www.paralympic.org integrates the latest news, features and blogs with thousands of images of athletes in action and hundreds of hours of video footage from previous Paralympic Games.

Allianz, the IPC’s trusted international partner, has a new section on the website entitled “Believe in Yourself” that is committed to fostering public awareness and generating further public interest in Paralympic Sport through promotional videos, information graphics and athlete interviews.

Devoted readers of the IPC’s award-winning magazine can now easily scroll through editions from the past decade and preview highlights from the most recent issue in the media centre.

All NPCs now have their own page on the IPC website, and all include the latest news, photos and video for their respective nations. These sections also incorporate tables that display nations’ medal achievements from the latest Paralympic Summer and Winter Games, as well as their NPC social media feeds, athlete biographies and contact information. The final feature is a pictograph that illustrates participants by year in the last few editions of the Paralympics, including the breakdown of men and women.

With a very user-friendly scrollbar, fans can make their way through past Paralympic Games pages to find out information regarding the competitions, ceremonies, Torch Relay and attendance and coverage of each Games edition. They can also view photos and videos, in addition to medals tables and a news archive.

In the lead-up to the London 2012 Games, the IPC is working closely with Facebook to create official pages for all of its “Ones to Watch” athletes and teams. This will give fans easy access to follow top competitors as they train for the Paralympics and will give them an opportunity to learn more about the athletes on a personal level.

Users can now vote for the IPC’s Athlete of the Month via a poll on its homepage, and the winner will appear here.

The IPC’s official Paralympic Games Facebook page and @Paralympic Twitter account are now directly linked with the website, to make all Paralympic fans feel like they’re in the first row.

All 28 Paralympic sports have their own pages, which include the latest news, photos and video, as well as historical results and essential contact information.

Athletes can take a look at biographies and news for para-athletes around the world, and this section includes a new “Ones to Watch” feature, highlighting top athletes and teams the IPC believes you should keep your eye on heading into London 2012.

With everything located in one central location, visitors can now read about their favourite sport or athlete with just one click of the mouse and can view related videos, images, biographies, results and social media feeds.

The latest news, videos and photo galleries will immediately draw users’ attention to the Paralympic Movement when they land on www.paralympic.org.

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Believe in Yourself

Global financial-service provider Allianz, the IPC’s trusted international partner, has its own section on the IPC’s new website entitled, “Believe in Yourself.” The featured section focuses on the motivation and strength of Paralympic athletes via various short video clips, info-graphics, athlete interviews and a weekly fact for users. Allianz’s aim is to share knowledge and inspire everyone to believe in their own abilities.

Allianz has already released video clips on Australian sprinter Kelly Cartwright and Swiss wheelchair racer Marcel Hug, both of whom are on the IPC’s “Ones to Watch” list. It has also published a feature clip and information graphic on Germany’s Sebastian Ivanow and Ireland’s Orla Barry, and it will be publishing several more items in the lead up to London 2012 on both the IPC website and Global ParaSport Facebook page.

BP America Sponsoring Four Team USA Athletes

In the lead-up to the London 2012 Games, BP, one of the world’s largest energy companies with operations in more than 100 countries, will sponsor four Paralympians from Team USA.

American swimmer Rudy Garcia-Tolson, archer Matt Stutzman, sprinter Jerome Singleton and wheelchair racer Tatyana McFadden will all receive financial support.

*These athletes personify courage and dedication. Many have had to overcome tremendous adversity, which we find inspirational as individuals and as a company,* said Steve Williams, Head of U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Programmes for BP America.

In 2012, the company will support charities related to the athletes’ personal causes, as well as local sports clubs to nurture the next generation of Paralympians.

BP America unveiled a series of innovative, interactive trading cards through an “augmented reality” platform this winter. Held up to a computer screen or mobile phone camera, the printed cards come to life as the athletes digitally appear in front of the user with exclusive training tips and information about themselves and their sports.

The company has created several videos telling fans why they should support these athletes, held meet-and-greet sessions and even revealed new BP trucks with large images of the Paralympians displayed along the side.

Garcia-Tolson, who won gold and bronze medals at the Beijing 2008 Games, said the sponsorship is simply helping him achieve his dreams.

*“BP’s impact on my life is huge,” Garcia-Tolson said. “I’ve always wanted to be the best, and they are able to help me in that pursuit. I’ve always believed you can do anything you want to do, and BP is helping me make this a reality.”*

Schools get Hands-On with Paralympic Equipment

Ottobock, a partner of the Paralympic Games since 1988 and IPC Worldwide Partner, will soon distribute resource kits to science and physical education teachers to help build excitement for London 2012 by educating children about the equipment para-athletes use to compete.

The resource pack is full of useful facts, images and instructions on how to build a carbon-fibre running blade, and contains useful content for lesson planning and group work.

The kit contains:
- Paralympic running blade: Description of the blade, including how it works, how it is made and how it differs from an everyday prosthesis.
- Build a Paralympic running blade: A cut-out mould and instructions on how to make a Paralympic running blade using papier-mâché.
- Paralympic athlete information: Meet Kelly Cartwright from Australia and Heinrich Popow from Germany, two competitors the IPC has deemed “Ones to Watch” at London 2012.
- Facts and figures – With over 20 years’ experience spanning the globe as a Paralympic partner, Ottobock shares its knowledge of the Paralympics.
- Images – Access to images of how a Paralympic running blade is made and what it looks like in detail.

Throughout the London 2012 Games, 80 Ottobock prosthetists, orthotists and wheelchair technicians will operate out of three repair centres in the Athletes’ Village, the Olympic Park and Weymouth Sailing Village. They will oversee as many as 2,000 repairs for athletes, co-ordinate 15,000 spare parts and replace 2,000 wheelchair tyres.

BPs image will travel the USA on the side of BP trucks

Germans Heinrich Popow educates students about the Paralympic Movement and his training as an athlete

Students in London learn how a Paralympic running blade works

Global financial-service provider Allianz, the IPC’s trusted international partner, has its own section on the IPC’s new website entitled, “Believe in Yourself.” The featured section focuses on the motivation and strength of Paralympic athletes via various short video clips, info-graphics, athlete interviews and a weekly fact for users. Allianz’s aim is to share knowledge and inspire everyone to believe in their own abilities.

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**Passionate about sport and ambitious for the future**

Zsolt Gömöri, President of NPC Hungary

Zsolt Gömöri founded the Hungarian Wheelchair Fencing movement in 1991, together with fencing legend Pál Szekeres. After that, Gömöri got more involved in Paralympic Sport, becoming Vice President of the Hungarian Sport Federation for the Disabled and later the Vice President of the Hungarian Paralympic Committee (HPC). Since 2007 he has been the President.

The process of integration with able-bodied sports is something Hungarian NPC President Zsolt Gömöri sees as the future of sport for persons with a disability.

“The biggest challenge for us is integration of disabled sport and able-bodied sport.

“For the last two years we have been a member of the Hungarian Olympic Committee and this relationship is getting stronger. We expect next year to integrate even more with the Olympic Committee, so that in Hungary the two organizations will work together,” said Gömöri.

Gömöri is passionate about sport and believes it is only through integration that athletes of all physical abilities can achieve sporting excellence.

“The most important point we would like to emphasize is that this is about sport and not a social issue.

“It is very important that the same professional sporting leaders also train disabled athletes with the same sporting venues and on the same level as able-bodied athletes,” Gömöri said.

BIG AMBITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Though the NPC has a small office of just four people, Gömöri believes its enthusiasm and desire to seize communication opportunities, will help to launch it to the next stage.

In 2011 it hosted a Table Tennis International World Ranking Championship, Fencing World Cup, Powerlifting European Cup and an IPC Governing Board meeting.

“Road to integration”

The process of integration with able-bodied sports is something Hungarian NPC President Zsolt Gömöri sees as the future of sport for persons with a disability.

“It was a great challenge for us to be able to organize such an important IPC event as the Governing Board meeting,” said Gömöri, who believes the meeting was a great success, both on a wider political level and for launching the NPC into the media spotlight.

“The President of Hungary received Sir Philip Craven and they had a very nice long conversation in his residence. It was a good opportunity to be in the media and show that the Hungarian Paralympic Committee is important in Hungarian sport life. We wanted to show the IPC that we can organize events in the future.”

The NPC has high ambitions. One event that Gömöri is particularly keen to organize is a conference for sport medicine and research workshops for scientists.

“I don’t think we’re strong enough in these fields, so they need to be developed,” Gömöri said.

**SpONSORSHIP STRATEGY**

Gömöri hopes the NPC’s new sponsorship strategy will help make it financially stronger.

“We are trying to introduce ourselves to the sponsors of the IPC. We’ve managed to make the IPC is communicating with its sponsors and marketing. We would like to follow this example and use the sponsors that the IPC already uses,” Gömöri said. “I see a lot of open possibilities for us that I’ve been working on recently.”

LONDON MEDAL GOALS

In 2008, 33 athletes represented Hungary at the Paralympic Games, winning one gold and five bronze medals. Gömöri hopes to improve both figures this year.

“We would like to have a bigger team than in Beijing and we would like to win more medals than in Beijing. At the moment, this seems possible.”

“For us a very good example is to see how the IPC is communicating with its sponsors and marketing. We would like to follow this example and use the sponsors that the IPC already uses,” Gömöri said. “I see a lot of open possibilities for us that I’ve been working on recently.”

**HUNGARIAN LONDON 2012 PARALYMPIC TEAM**

Para-Table Tennis

Péter Pálos, Dezső Berecki, András Csernka

Judo

Nikollett Szabó

Wheelchair Fencing

Pál Szekeres

Richard Osváth

Zsuzsanna Krajnyak

György Dani

Shooting

György Guntari

Kristóf David

Swimming

Tamas Sors

Zsuzsanna Krajnyak (right), a world champion wheelchair fencer

**Hungarian medal contenders:** Tamas Sors (left), S9 swimming world record holder, Pál Szekeres (centre), a multi-Paralympic medalist in Wheelchair Fencing, and Zsuzsanna Krajnyak (right), a world champion wheelchair fencer

**Road to Integration**

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**Sponsorship Strategy**

Gömöri hopes the NPC’s new sponsorship strategy will help make it financially stronger.

“We are trying to introduce ourselves to the sponsors of the IPC. We’ve managed to make a relationship with Allianz, which is the official insurance company of the Hungarian Paralympic Team and we signed a special contract with them for the Paralympic Games.”

**London Medal Goals**

In 2008, 33 athletes represented Hungary at the Paralympic Games, winning one gold and five bronze medals. Gömöri hopes to improve both figures this year.

“We would like to have a bigger team than in Beijing and we would like to win more medals than in Beijing. At the moment, this seems possible.”

**Hungarian Paralympic Committee**

Passionate about sport and ambitious for the future

Zsolt Gömöri, President of NPC Hungary

Zsolt Gömöri founded the Hungarian Wheelchair Fencing movement in 1991, together with fencing legend Pál Szekeres. After that, Gömöri got more involved in Paralympic Sport, becoming Vice President of the Hungarian Sport Federation for the Disabled and later the Vice President of the Hungarian Paralympic Committee (HPC). Since 2007 he has been the President.

The process of integration with able-bodied sports is something Hungarian NPC President Zsolt Gömöri sees as the future of sport for persons with a disability.

“It was a great challenge for us to be able to organize such an important IPC event as the Governing Board meeting,” said Gömöri, who believes the meeting was a great success, both on a wider political level and for launching the NPC into the media spotlight.

“The President of Hungary received Sir Philip Craven and they had a very nice long conversation in his residence. It was a good opportunity to be in the media and show that the Hungarian Paralympic Committee is important in Hungarian sport life. We wanted to show the IPC that we can organize events in the future.”

The NPC has high ambitions. One event that Gömöri is particularly keen to organize is a conference for sport medicine and research workshops for scientists.

“I don’t think we’re strong enough in these fields, so they need to be developed,” Gömöri said.

**Sponsorship Strategy**

Gömöri hopes the NPC’s new sponsorship strategy will help make it financially stronger.

“We are trying to introduce ourselves to the sponsors of the IPC. We’ve managed to make a relationship with Allianz, which is the official insurance company of the Hungarian Paralympic Team and we signed a special contract with them for the Paralympic Games.”

**London Medal Goals**

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**Light up the Future**

**London 2012**

**Paralympic Torch to Visit All Regions of United Kingdom**

The London 2012 Paralympic Torch Relay will begin in London on 24 August with the lighting of England’s flame in Trafalgar Square.

The United Kingdom’s other three capital cities – Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh – will then light a flame on each of the following days, at special events, and each city will develop its own unique method of lighting.

Once the Paralympic Torch (pictured) has been lit, it will visit local community groups and key locations in and around the city. In addition to the lighting events there will be a series of evening celebrations called Flame Festivals, which will include plenty of activities and entertainment.

In addition, LOCOG announced that China Central Television (CCTV) will be the Chinese Rights Holding Broadcaster for the Paralympic Games this summer. CCTV will broadcast a minimum of five hours per day during the Paralympic Games to a potential audience of one billion viewers in 140 countries and regions.

Tickets for London 2012 can still be purchased through the IPC’s official ticket reseller at

>> [www.paralympictickets.com](http://www.paralympictickets.com)

**Sochi 2014**

**Sochi Volunteers to Learn From London**

Two years before the start of the Games, the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee has announced its volunteer recruitment programme.

Anyone between the ages of 18-80 as of 2014 will be eligible to volunteer.

Prior to the Games, volunteer events will be held all over Russia, with the biggest one being organized in Sochi at the Rosa Khutor Alpine Centre in Krasnaya Polyana. In the presence of Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak, volunteers will set on fire a giant heart that has already become a symbol of the Sochi 2014 volunteer movement.

The London 2012 Organizing Committee, meanwhile, has selected around 100 members of the Sochi 2014 volunteer team to travel to Great Britain this year and become part of the London 2012 Games Makers volunteering initiative.

An estimated 25,000 volunteers will work at the Games in Sochi in more than 20 areas, including meeting and greeting delegates at the airport and organizing the Closing Ceremony. After Russia, Canada has the highest number of people interested in volunteering.

The Brazilian government spent R$35 million to renovate the venue four years ahead of the Games.

After the race, veteran ladies from several samba schools performed a traditional floor-washing ceremony for good luck.

**Rio 2016**

First Venue Opens to Public

The Sambodromo became the first Rio 2016 Paralympic Games venue to be opened to the public in February.

Nearly 1,000 athletes and carnival revelers took part in a 5.5km race to mark the reopening of the venue, which will host Archery events.

After the race, veteran ladies from several samba schools performed a traditional floor-washing ceremony for good luck.

The Brazilian government spent R$35 million to renovate the venue four years ahead of the Games.

Close to 600 construction workers took turns to guarantee a 24-hour workflow. Four new grandstands were built on one side of the Sambodromo similar to those located on the opposite side, increasing its capacity.
Boccia

Athletes with severe disabilities showing incredible abilities

**QUICK FACTS**

Ticket availability: Venue: ExCel; Dates: 2–8 September; Medal Events: 7

Classifications:
- BC1: Players with Cerebral Palsy (CP) who are able to use their hands or feet to propel a ball into play.
- BC2: Players with CP or other disability who use a ramp to propel the ball into play and are supported by a sport assistant or ‘ramp’.
- BC4: Players who do not have CP but have another disability with similar functional ability to BC2 athletes.
- BC5: Players with CP with a greater functional ability.
- BC6: Players with CP or other disability who use a ramp but have another disability with similar functional ability to BC2 athletes.

Paralympic Games debut: Stoke Mandeville 1984

Athletes expected to compete: 104

Boccia is a game of skill, accuracy and mental cunning where players with cerebral palsy and other physical impairments try to aim coloured balls as close to a jack ball as possible.

Athletes play against the clock. There are four ends in each match and during each end, each individual or pair throws six balls. Although it is a physical game, above all, Boccia is a game of strategy.

“When players are sitting there looking at the game, you wonder what’s going on in their minds? How are they going to play this one out? For them to nail the jack right on is totally amazing,” Leslie Halicki, Chair of the CPISRA Boccia Committee explained.

After new qualification rules were introduced, London 2012 will be the first time individual players can qualify without being part of a team.

“It’s the first time we’re going to be highlighting the very best players in each class,” said Halicki.

Paralympic legend is returning back from an injury to compete for home crowds.

There is only one gold for the Team Test, making it very prestigious.

“It’s a fantastic event when you have a mix of different grades which work together to obtain the best possible result,” said Asmyr.

Para-Equestrian

... is going home

Interest in Para-Equestrian has never been as strong as at the London 2012 Paralympics with organizers doubling the number of tickets available.

Trond Asmyr, Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) Director of Para-Equestrian Dressage says this is down to the superb Greenwich Park venue and the British love of the sport.

“Great Britain has always been one of the leading nations in Paralympic Equestrian, which means the interest around Para-dressage in London is huge,” said Asmyr.

At the Paralympic Games, athletes compete in three Dressage tests: a Team Test (with three to four riders per team), an Individual Championship Test, which is also the second round of the team competition, and a Freestyle Test, for which athletes choose their own choreography and music.

There is good interest in Para-Equestrian, with organizers doubling the number of tickets available.

Each test is divided into between 20 and 40 movements. Five judges sit around the arena to mark the movements from 0 to 10 and the marks are added to give the final result.

Para-Equestrian is unique in that it involves a special co-operation between an animal and a human being, something Asmyr says will transfix the crowds.

“That is the most fascinating both for those involved in the sport and also for those who are watching,” he said.

Riders are able to adapt their riding style, depending on their disability, such as carrying the reins in their mouth or carrying extra equipment, like a second whip.

Ones to watch

- Greg Polychronidis (Greece): The Beijing silver medallist will be looking to do one better in the BC3 category in London.
- Nigel Murray (Great Britain): The world number one BC2 player will hope to take advantage of being on home soil to play for gold.
- Marco DiPasquale (Canada): The former rugby player has come out of nowhere to become a real medal contender in the BC4 class.
- Pepo Puch (Austria): Is currently the highest ranked athlete on the FEI Paralympic Athletes Individual Ranking List going into London 2012.
- Stitna Tange Kaastrup (Denmark): The 17-year-old new talent hopes to challenge Pearson’s dominance.
- Lee Pearson (Great Britain): The Paralympic legend is bouncing back from an injury to compete for home crowds.

**QUICK FACTS**

Ticket availability: Venue: Greenwich Park; Dates: 30 August – 4 September; Medal Events: 11

Classifications:
- Based on the riders’ disability, which influences their ability to ride. They compete in one of five grades (Aa, Ab, B, C and IV). Riders in Ab have the least functional ability and riders in IV have the most functional ability.

Paralympic Games debut: Stoke Mandeville 1984

Athletes expected to compete: 78

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Football 5-a-Side
One of world’s hottest sports to rock Riverbank Arena

Quick Facts
Ticket availability: 
Venue: Riverbank Arena
Dates: 31 August - 8 September
Medal Events: 1
Classification: Visually impaired athletes
Teams Qualified: France, Spain, China, Iran, Brazil, Argentina, Great Britain, Turkey
Paralympic Games Debut: Athens 2004
Athletes expected to compete: 64

Since its Paralympic debut at the Athens 2004 Games, Football 5-a-Side has expanded to 44 countries and four continents.

At London 2012, the competition will use the World Cup format, with two groups of four teams squaring off on the blue-coloured field at Riverbank Arena.

The pitch will be surrounded with a rebound wall, and each squad – made up of visually impaired athletes – will field four outfield players and a goalkeeper. They will play using a ball with a bell fitted inside.

To ensure fairness, all outfield players wear eyeshades, though the goalkeeper may be fully or partially sighted.

During matches, which consist of two 25-minute halves, each team will be allowed one guide for each third of the pitch to call out instructions.

Brazil is the only country to have ever won Football 5-a-Side gold, beating Argentina and China in the past two Paralympics. It also won the 2010 World Cup and the 2011 Pan American Games.

“We’ve seen similar levels of development and growth in all the continents over the past few years,” said IBSA’s Football 5-a-Side Chairman Carlos Campos Lopez.

“Having said that, it’s difficult to ignore the sport’s roots and traditions, so Brazil and Argentina, countries synonymous with blind futsal, will be up there batting for the gold medals.”

Spain could also fight its way into the medal round, as could China, which has come on leaps and bounds as of late. Both Great Britain and Argentina have also benefitted from training with former England captain David Beckham.

“It’s a special sport,” Lopez said. “It’s exciting and passionate, and the public can easily relate to it.”

Paralympic Sport is already unique in itself, but Para-Table Tennis is even more distinct in that it integrates a variety of disabilities.

For the first time since 2000 athletes with an intellectual disability will be allowed to compete in the Paralympics.

“We’re able to offer the full spectrum,” said Alison Burchell, Deputy Director of the ITTF Para Table-Tennis division. “In each class, there is a level of excitement.”

Para-Table Tennis is similar to the able-bodied game, though wheelchair players must serve over the end line so that their opponents do not have difficulty reaching the ball.

Players will compete in singles, doubles and team events in London.

Ones to watch

Brazil
As the only team to ever win Paralympic gold, Brazil boasts a Paralympic Pele in star striker Jefferson da Conceicao Graciates.

Argentina
The 2004 runners-up will look to seek revenge on rival Brazil in London.

Spain
The squad fell just short of a world title in 2010, losing to Brazil in the gold-medal contest.

Para-Table Tennis
All-inclusive sport promises an array of entertainment

Quick Facts
Ticket availability: 
Venue: ExCel
Dates: 30 August - 6 September
Medal Events: 29
Classification: Athletes are grouped into 11 different classes based on their functional ability.
Five classes are devoted to wheelchair athletes, five to standing athletes and one to those with an intellectual disability.
Paralympic Games Debut: Rome 1960
Athletes Expected to Compete: 276 (174 men, 102 women)

Paralympic Table Tennis is already unique in itself, but Para-Table Tennis is even more distinct in that it integrates a variety of disabilities.

For the first time since 2000 athletes with an intellectual disability will be allowed to compete in the Paralympics.

“All table tennis is a fairly accessible sport for all people with disabilities,” she said. “I think that particularly in developing areas like Africa, South America and some parts of Asia and Oceania, there’s been a huge growth.”

Para-Table Tennis was handed over from the IPC to the ITTF in 2007, and since then, the sport’s number of national associations has increased to 215.

All-day passes are still available to see Para-Table Tennis at ExCel, and there is bound to be an equal representation of competitors from around the globe in London, insists Burchell.

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Ones to watch

Mateja Pintar (Slovenia)
The Slovenian Paralympic champion always promises surprises once she hits the international stage.

Will Bayley (Great Britain)
The British 24-year-old has leaped to the top of the standings after winning gold at the 2011 European Championships.

Alison Burchell
The Polish Olympic and Paralympic star has claimed the last two Paralympic golds in the women’s Class 10 competition.

Beijing 2008
Brazil
China
Argentina

Paralympic Games Debut: Athens 2004
Medal Events: 1
Classification: Visually impaired athletes
Teams Qualified: France, Spain, China, Iran, Brazil, Argentina, Great Britain, Turkey
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Goalball
Putting your body on the line in front of a 80km/h ball

Goalball is a game for visually impaired athletes. The aim is to throw the ball into the opponents’ net. But there is one catch – all players wear eye masks, so cannot see anything.

Teams consist of six players, with only three on the court at any one time.

When a team throws, the other team has to listen to the bell in the ball to identify where it is and defend their net. Players make reactions within split seconds.

“When the men play, the ball speed is 70 – 80km per hour. It’s fast and the ball is rather heavy, so it’s a big effort for your body to stop it, so you have to be brave,” Kari Marklund, IBSA Goalball Manager, said.

The sport originally started in Austria to rehabilitate visually impaired soldiers from World War II, and has grown to become one of the most popular Paraolympic sports in the world with over 100 countries playing it.

In London, there will be a new, longer, much tougher match format, with teams thrashing it out for 12 minutes per half as opposed to the normal 10.

“Players have to be more prepared. And I tell you after playing 24 minutes, the players’ heads are completely empty because all their effort goes on concentrating on where the ball is,” said Marklund.

It is a game of mental toughness as much as tactics and physical strength, says Marklund.

“Goalball requires much mental strength, but it is about technique.”

The draw for Goalball at the London 2012 Paralympics will take place on 27 April 2012.

QUICK FACTS

Ticket availability: 
Venue: Copper Box
Dates: 7 to 9 September
Medal Events: 1
Classification: For visually impaired athletes

Paralympic Games debut: 1984
Teams qualified:
Men: Great Britain, Lithuania, China, Iran, South Korea, Denmark, Brazil, Australia, Canada, Algeria, Turkey
Women: France, Belgium, Sweden, South Korea, Finland, Brazil, Algeria, Turkey, Great Britain, China, USA, Sweden, Belgium
Athletes expected to compete: 132 (12 men’s teams and 10 women’s teams)

Football 7-a-Side
Exciting end-to-end action guaranteed

The field is a little smaller, the goals are a bit tighter and there are no off sides, but Football 7-a-Side is still a rendition of football, one of the world’s most entertaining sports.

The Paralympic Sport for ambulant athletes with cerebral palsy will be played at Riverbank Arena at the London 2012 Games, where eight teams will play a 20-match tournament culminating in the gold-medal match on 9 September.

“The game is very exciting because the top teams are very equal and a lot of goals are scored and that’s what the people want to see,” said CPISRA Football 7-a-Side Chair Tom Langen.

Since Football 7-a-Side began in 1978, Brazil has been an obvious pick as a powerhouse in the sport, but in recent years, Russia, Ukraine and Iran have risen to the top.

The point system in Football 7-a-Side, based on the severity of an athlete’s disability, makes the coach’s job that much more interesting in deciding which players to put on the field together.

Many times the matches are extended an extra 20 minutes if the score is tied at the end of full-time, and matches are decided by a penalty shootout if still tied after extra time.

QUICK FACTS

Ticket availability: 
Venue: Riverbank Arena
Dates: 1-9 September
Medal Events: 1
Classification: Athletes with cerebral palsy are classified as either C5, C6, C7 or C8, with C8 having the most functional ability. Each team must field at least one class C5 or C6 player at all times, and they can have a maximum of two C8 players on the field at once.

Teams Qualified: Ukraine, Iran, Brazil, Great Britain, Russia, the Netherlands, Argentina, USA
Paralympic Games Debut: New York and Stoke Mandeville 1964 Games
Athletes Expected to Compete: 96

Ones to watch

Denmark (women)
The team won European qualification tournament and are destined to make waves in London.

Lithuania (men)
A strong team at the 2010 World Championships, they will hope to bounce back after a disappointing 2011 European Championship.

China (women)
With a great technique and tenacity not to throw balls straight in, but rather bend or bounce them, China is difficult to beat.

Russia (men)
The squad reached the podium at the last four Paralympic Games and won the 2011 CPISRA World Championships.

Ukraine (women)
The team could win its third Paralympic gold in London.

Iran (men)
The bronze medallists from Beijing 2008 have made vast improvements since winning their first Paralympic medal.
Sailing
A sport in full bloom

The London 2012 Paralympic Games will showcase Sailing like never before. In the four years since Beijing 2008, sailors have had more opportunities than ever before to race. “ISAF opened up the World Cup competitions to Paralympic classes. A lot of the boats have been taking advantage of those events to improve their skill level and it’s really made a huge difference,” said Linda Merkel, President of the International Disabled Sailing Federation (IFDS), adding that it is not uncommon for Paralympic sailors to beat their able-bodied counterparts.

The Paralympic Sailing competition consists of three boats: single-person keelboat (2.4mR), two-person keelboat (SKUD18) and three-person keelboat (Sonar). Boats will compete in 11 races. The boat that crosses the finish line first gets one point, second takes two points and so on. The boat that gets the least number of points in total wins. Each boat can be adapted, for example with hand-holders, cushions, transfer chairs and bars to suit the disabilities of the crew. “Once you get on the water, the wheelchairs are on the dock, and you cannot tell the difference between Paralympic and able bodied sailors. To me it is the real beauty of the sport. We’re all just sailors,” said Merkel.

This year’s Paralympic Sailing is free of charge for spectators and takes place in a large enclosed bay in Weymouth, Dorset. “ISAF opened up the World Cup competitions to Paralympic classes. A lot of the boats have been taking advantage of those events to improve their skill level and it’s really made a huge difference,” said Linda Merkel, President of the International Disabled Sailing Federation (IFDS), adding that it is not uncommon for Paralympic sailors to beat their able-bodied counterparts.

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Wheelchair Rugby
AKA ‘Murderball’ … need we say more?

Wheelchair Rugby is a brutal team contact sport for both men and women who have upper and lower-limb impairments.

The aim of the sport sounds simple – to carry a volleyball across the goal line like in rugby – however, you have to do so whilst avoiding collisions that are so hard that they can bend the metal of wheelchair frames. “It’s not a game for the faint of heart,” said Eron Main, Secretary General International Wheelchair Rugby Federation.

“It’s a full contact sport with wheelchair on the field of play. The strength, the skill and the speed of the players is incredible. It will suck you in within the first 30 seconds and you will want to see every match.”

Wheelchair Rugby was invented in 1977 in Canada, and is still affectionately known by its original name, ‘Murderball’. By 2011, there were 26 countries playing the sport and Main is predicting fierce competition in London.
Wheelchair Basketball
A Paralympic tradition just got a bit more exciting

Already one of the most dynamic Paralympic sports, Wheelchair Basketball will be more exciting than ever before at London 2012 thanks to titling.

Allowing players to “tilt” and get up on one wheel to shoot or guard their opponents will make for an even more athletic game.

“We show athleticism,” said IWBF President Maureen Orchard. “We show a level of team sport that’s hard to show in some other para-sports.

“To think that an athlete can shoot a 3-point fl oor is great to watch.”

Wheelchair Basketball is played with similar rules to able-bodied basketball, and players are required to throw or bounce the ball after every two pushes of the wheels on their chairs.

“The competition in London on the men’s side will absolutely be closer than it’s ever been before, and I think you’ll see the top six women’s teams be close as well,” Orchard said. “The bottom four women’s teams are still coming up to the level of the top, but the men were like that two Games ago.

“I would not want to bet who is going to be in the gold-medal game.”

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Two minimal disability players – those without any amputations – are allowed on a roster, although only one can be on the court at a time. Teams win points by landing the ball on the opponent’s half of the court. The game is the best out of five sets. Teams win the first four sets by reaching 25 points, and the fifth set is often considerably faster.

In London, the 10 men’s and eight women’s teams will be divided into two groups each. The top four teams in each group will qualify for the quarter-finals.

With some surprise teams qualifying from Europe, and Colombia’s men joining the Netherlands in the 1950’s, requires a smaller court and a lower net than the standing game, yet is often considerably faster. The team to better its bronze medal from the 2011 Parapans. The Iranians have won gold at five of the last six Paralympic Games. Need anything more be said?

Ones to watch

China (men) The team fell to Iran in the finals of the last Paralympics and World Championships, so the rivalry is bound to heat up.

USA (women) After winning gold at the last two Paralympics and 2010 World Championships, the Americans head to London as favourites.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (men) The Iranians have won gold at five of the last six Paralympic Games. Need anything more be said?

Four countries have established themselves as perennial powerhouses in Sitting Volleyball heading into London 2012.

Iran and Bosnia and Herzegovina are the dominant teams on the men’s side, and China and USA are consistent contenders on the women’s end.

The competition in London will take place inside ExCeL, along with five other sports. However, the Sitting Volleyball schedule has been arranged so that matches take place during the downtime for many other sports.

“We’re the only team sport in there, so we’ll be trying to make as much noise as possible and getting as many people to come to us as possible,” WOVD Sport Director Dennis Le Breuilly said.

“People should buy tickets for Sitting Volleyball because it’s an exciting game to watch. There are potentially some excellent matches, and it will be a show.”

Sitting Volleyball, which started in the Netherlands in the 1950’s, requires a smaller court and a lower net than the standing game, yet is often considerably faster. The team to better its bronze medal from the 2011 Parapans. The Iranians have won gold at five of the last six Paralympic Games. Need anything more be said?

With the top four squads playing at their best, and a Rwandan team being the first ever squad to represent the sub-saharan zone, the competition is bound to be at its best.

Ones to watch

USA (women) After finishing second at Beijing 2008 and the 2010 World Championships, the Americans are hoping to upset China for gold.

Iran (men) The Iranians have won gold at five of the last six Paralympic Games. Need anything more be said?

Bosnia and Herzegovina (men) The team fell to Iran in the finals of the last Paralympics and World Championships, so the rivalry is bound to heat up.
USA’s women’s Sitting Volleyball team is tired of being the runners-up.

Following a bronze medal at the Athens 2004 Paralympics, the squad improved with silvers at the Beijing 2008 Games and 2010 World Championships.

Their World Championships performance qualified the team for London 2012, but none of the athletes were completely satisfied with how they played.

“While silver is great, it’s not the gold medal,” team captain Kendra Lancaster said.

Rounding into form

The American squad has become known around the world for its deep bench and experienced outside hitters. Several players train together as part of a residency programme at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Head coach Bill Hamiter will officially name the London 2012 roster in May, selecting 11 players from the 16 who typically train together with the national squad.

Hamiter only took the national team reigns in June 2009, but his work has already shown on the court.

Team captain Katie Holloway insists the squad’s movement, shot selection and technique have noticeably improved under Hamiter, and that the team is peaking just in time for London.

“We’re more focused now than ever because we are training together and have a good dynamic,” Holloway said.

“We have a lot more riding on this one. Going into Beijing, we weren’t expecting to win gold because many of us were still new. But now, we are.”

LATEST TRIUMPHS

| Silver         | 2010 World Championships Beijing 2008 Paralympics
| Bronze        | Athens 2004 Paralympics

“Nobody has a perfect game every day. Not necessarily everybody lights up the stat board, but we have several emotional rocks on the team who keep us stable while playing.”

Holloway, who was born without a fibula in her right leg and had her foot amputated as a baby, has quickly established herself as a veteran setter in the face of her teammates, and has the numbers and awards to prove it.

The former college basketball star was named the Most Valuable Player at last year’s Continental Cup in Ukraine and at the Parapan American Zonal Championships in Brazil, where USA finished undefeated.

Fellow team captain Lancaster, born without a left arm, was out of action for nine months last year following a car accident.

But with team depth and Lancaster now back on board, fielding a top squad on the court should not be a problem for USA in 2012.

USA will not settle for second best in London

USA Women’s Sitting Volleyball Team
Aiming to Become the World’s Best

BOSNIA TO BACKCOURT

As one of the best defensive specialists in the world, USA’s Kari Miller has held a strong place in the hearts of fans.

She served in the U.S. Army in Bosnia and Korea and had a promotion to officer awaiting her when she returned to the States in 1999 for the holidays. During her time off, she was hit by a drunk driver, resulting in the loss of both her legs and her friend in the car with her.

Miller has attracted numerous followers due to the way she handled her recovery, immediately getting involved in sports to serve her country in a different – yet equally honourable – way.

“Nobody has a perfect game every day. Not necessarily everybody lights up the stat board, but we have several emotional rocks on the team who keep us stable while playing.”

Boasting the competition

There has only been one nation standing in the way of USA’s Sitting Volleyball dominance: China.

The Chinese have never dropped a set in an international match against the Americans, beating them for gold at the last Paralympics and World Championships.

“The biggest thing this year is going to be being comfortable playing China and comfortable at beating them,” Holloway said. “I like being the underdog because I think it’s better for us when we play the Chinese.”

While Team USA is known for high passes and a prolific offense, China is notorious for its great ball control, fast play and never getting rattled on the court.

In London, libero Kari Miller and server Heather Erickson will provide plenty of experienced support to their team captains, and the up-and-coming players will lean on an enthused Lancaster for help.

“You’ll still find me hanging out with the 18-year-olds a lot,” a now 25-year-old Lancaster joked, hungry for gold.
Anti-Doping

Maintaining the integrity of Paralympic Sport worldwide

Heading into London 2012, athletes are extremely conscious of complying with the IPC’s anti-doping measures to help promote fair and equal competition worldwide.

The latest anti-doping testing statistics, released for 2011, revealed that 646 urine and blood samples were collected, and seven athletes were sanctioned for not competing clean.

The IPC fully supports the World Anti-Doping Agency’s (WADA) view that the long-term solution to prevent doping is through education and a strong anti-doping culture.

In the Know
Kate Rogowiec Spreads Message to Fellow Athletes

Two-time Paralympic gold-medallist nordic skier Kate Rogowiec has become a persistent force in educating fellow athletes about anti-doping.

With nearly 10 years of education and athlete experience on the matter, Rogowiec actively assists with the establishment of anti-doping policies and procedures and advises the IPC and WADA on athlete-related issues as a member of the IPC Anti-Doping Committee.

“If it’s the only way to push people to understand cheating,” Rogowiec said, “It doesn’t taste good to win if you do it because of doping help.”

London 2012 Unveils Anti-Doping Laboratory

In January, the London Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) unveiled the Anti-Doping Laboratory that will be used during the London 2012 Games.

6,250 samples will be analyzed during the two London Games.

7 tennis courts can fit inside the London Anti-Doping Laboratory.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week – the testing in the lab will happen around the clock.

1000 LOCOG staff will work on the anti-doping process.

150 scientists will carry out the testing.

Athlete Testimonials from members of the IPC Athlete’s Council

“We for me and my body, sport should mean something healthy, which means keeping your hands off things that damage your joie de vivre and quality of life in the long term.”

Heinz Frei, Swiss wheelchair racer

“I feel very strongly that doping places an athlete’s health and safety at significant risk. There are so many financial and other incentives in sport today that push athletes to making the wrong decision regarding doping.”

Bob Balk, Chairperson IPC Athlete’s Council

“I don’t want to lose out to someone who’s cheating.”

Halfway through an indoor home training session, Irish world champion para-cyclist Colin Lynch received a knock at his door.

“We are the Irish Sports Council here to administer out-of-competition testing,” said the pair standing on his doorstep.

Into the living room stepped the doping control officers, armed with their booklets of paperwork and specimen bottles. They took Lynch through the testing procedure step by step, asking to see his relevant identification forms and requesting his signature where need be.

He recommends that others speak with veteran teammates to educate themselves about anti-doping through their anecdotal stories.

“I would hope that even the fear of being tested and caught is enough to make some people twice about using performance-enhancing drugs,” Lynch said.

Knock, Knock Doping Control is Here

London 2012 the cleanest games ever

The IPC and UK Anti-Doping are joining forces on an education campaign called “Win Clean: Say No to Doping”. The campaign aims to make London 2012 the cleanest games ever by alerting international athletes coming to the UK in 2012 of their anti-doping rights and responsibilities in the form of education sessions and outreach stands.

“Every country and every athlete has a responsibility to help us prevent doping ahead of, and during the Paralympic Games,” said Andy Parkinson, Chief Executive of UK Anti-Doping.

“In the UK we have adopted intelligence-led sophisticated testing strategies to catch cheats. Win Clean: Say No to Doping underlines that there is a zero tolerance approach in the UK and that education is vital to avoid accidental doping. The IPC’s involvement and support is fundamental to our success. I’m delighted we are working together to support athletes coming to London this summer.”

Check out the site for more information and sign their wall to support clean games:

Win Clean – Say No to Doping

>> www.wincleanuk.com

WADA Play True Quiz. True or False?

1 If a medication is OK to use in my home country, I can safely use the same brand purchased overseas.

2 A coach or doctor assisting or encouraging an athlete to take prohibited substances can be sanctioned if that athlete tests positive.

3 When requested, my coach can accompany me to the doping control station.

Check out WADA’s free Prohibited List iPhone app

Please see page 45 for answers.

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Please see page 45 for answers.
World Wheelchair Curling Championships

Russia won the gold medal at the World Wheelchair Curling Championships in Incheon, Korea (picture), after defeating hosts Korea, 3-1, in the final.

It was the first time Russia has ever medalled at the World Championships, and the team is now gaining momentum heading into the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games.

The Koreans took the silver medal and China took the bronze medal, winning its game against Slovakia, 7-4.

>> www.wwhcc2012.curlingevents.com

IPC Ice Sledge Hockey Season Update

Canada arguably headed into March World Championships in Norway as favorites after already winning two international tournaments this season.

In December, Greg Westlake smashed a hat trick on his home ice in Calgary, as Canada beat USA, 4-1, to take gold in the World Sledge Hockey Challenge, as Canada beat USA, 4-1, to take gold in the World Sledge Hockey Challenge, a tournament also featuring Japan and Norway.

The following month, Canada struck gold again, this time after a 5-1 victory over Norway.

IRM support for Canada as it heads into the Sochi 2014 Paralympics.

>> www.ipc-nordicskiing.org

IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup

USA won the team title at the 2011-12 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup, with 4,657 points. France pushed its way into second place during the USA won the team title at the 2011-12 IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup, with 4,657 points. France pushed its way into second place during the IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup.

The World Cup series has taken almost 100 skiers from 16 nations to Arte Term, Italy, La Molina, Spain, Winter Park, USA and Panorama, Canada.

Though USA clocked up the most points overall, it only claimed two individual race trophies. Here’s a breakdown of the trophy winners:

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<td>Katarzyna Rogulina (POL) - Giant Slalom</td>
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<td>Andrea Rothfuss (GER) - Giant Slalom</td>
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<td>ANNA SCHAFFELHUBER (GER) - Super Combined</td>
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The IPC Nordic Skiing World Cup Final will take place in Vuokatti, Finland, from 22 March - 1 April.

The IPC Alpine Skiing European Cup Finals will take place in Auron, France from 26-30 March 2012.

>> www.ipc-alpineskiing.org
Paralympic fans around the globe have flocked to Facebook in droves this winter to vote for the best performances from the world’s leading para-athletes. As of February, the Athlete of the Month poll has moved from Facebook to the IPC’s newly launched paralympic.org.

Colombia’s men’s Wheelchair Basketball team finished with a surprising silver medal after beating favourites Canada in the semi-finals of the Parapan American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico. With the second-place finish, the squad qualified for its first ever Paralympic Games.

At just 17 years old, Canadian alpine skier Alexandra Starker raced to first on both days of the Giant Slalom and Slalom Standing competitions at the NORAM Cup on Copper Mountain in Colorado, USA, from 12-15 December.

Russian nordic skier Roman Petushkov medalled in every race at the IPC Nordic Skiing World Cup in Cable and Minneapolis in the USA at the end of January. In honour of International Women’s Day on 8 March, all of the finalists for February’s award were women.
2012 IPC Ice Sledge Hockey World Championships
24 March to 1 April
In one of the winter’s biggest events, the world’s top eight Ice Sledge Hockey squads will trek to Hamar, Norway, to battle it out for the title. USA starts as the reigning Paralympic champions, but Canada, Norway and Japan will certainly give the Americans a run for their money.

ISAF Sailing World Cup Regattas
Continues 31 March
The final five World Cup Regattas of the season will begin at the end of March in Palma de Majorca, Spain. The competition will head to France in April, the Netherlands in May and Germany and Great Britain in June. It will give fans a final look at how the sailors stack up before London 2012.

London 2012 Test Events
Begins 18 April
The Wheelchair Rugby competition from 18-19 April will be the first of five London 2012 test events held in the Paralympic Games venues this spring. The Wheelchair Rugby event will be followed by Wheelchair Tennis (3-6 May), Archery (3-6 May), Athletics (8 May) and Boccia (5-7 May).
Four Ghanaians Express ‘Right to Dream’

Ghana has not been awarded any qualification slots for the London 2012 Paralympic Games to this point. Thus, four of the nation’s top para-athletes have sought out support in their uphill battle to qualify. They have partnered with a programme called “Right to Dream,” which provides training support and equipment to para-athletes with the aim of combating the misconceptions of persons with a disability in Ghana and to offer the nation new role models to help inspire and engage the next generation.

“With London 2012 coming up, there’s really an opportunity there in their uphill battle to qualify. They have partnered with a programme called “Right to Dream,” which provides training support and equipment to para-athletes with the aim of combating the misconceptions of persons with a disability in Ghana and to offer the nation new role models to help inspire and engage the next generation. "With London 2012 coming up, there’s really an opportunity there in their uphill battle to qualify. They have partnered with a programme called “Right to Dream,” which provides training support and equipment to para-athletes with the aim of combating the misconceptions of persons with a disability in Ghana and to offer the nation new role models to help inspire and engage the next generation. "With London 2012 coming up, there’s really an opportunity there in their uphill battle to qualify. They have partnered with a programme called “Right to Dream,” which provides training support and equipment to para-athletes with the aim of combating the misconceptions of persons with a disability in Ghana and to offer the nation new role models to help inspire and engage the next generation. "With London 2012 coming up, there’s really an opportunity there in their uphill battle to qualify. They have partnered with a programme called “Right to Dream,” which provides training support and equipment to para-athletes with the aim of combating the misconceptions of persons with a disability in Ghana and to offer the nation new role models to help inspire and engage the next generation. "With London 2012 coming up, there’s really an opportunity there in their uphill battle to qualify. They have partnered with a programme called “Right to Dream,” which provides training support and equipment to para-athletes with the aim of combating the misconceptions of persons with a disability in Ghana and to offer the nation new role models to help inspire and engage the next generation.

Raphael Botsyo Nkegbe of Ghana is aiming to compete in his third Paralympic Games.

Sir Philip Craven, MBE, Receives 2012 GSD Humanitarian Award

It has been announced that IPC President Sir Philip Craven will receive the 2012 Foundation for Global Sports Development (GSD) Humanitarian Award, which includes a $100,000 grant to use toward advancing youth sport development. GSD will present the award to Sir Philip at a ceremony held at London’s Globe Theatre on 28 July, 2012.

Sir Philip Craven was delighted to receive the award, which recognizes and contributes to the exemplary work of individuals and organizations which use sport for development.

"We are seeing promising results from the youth development programs the IPC has launched in co-operation with GSD and others, and I continue to be excited about increasing our ability to reach out to and strengthen the grassroots of all Paralympic sports," said Sir Philip.

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Argentina
Four cities in Argentina have submitted applications to host the 2019 Pan and Parapan American Games. San Luis, La Plata, Rosario and Salta have all expressed interest in hosting the international event and recently met with Argentina’s Olympic Committee and the Nomination Evaluation Committee to learn more about the selection process. The applicants must submit their final reports and forms to host the Games by 13 April 2012.

Canada
Thirty-one organizations representing 21 different sports received a total of CDN $233,340 from the Para-Equipment Fund and the Canadian Paralympic Committee. The grants will aid local-level clubs to purchase adapted equipment, enabling more people with a disability to participate in sport.

South Africa
South African “Blade Runner” Oscar Pistorius won the coveted Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Award on 6 February. In 2011, Pistorius won three golds and a silver at the IPC Athletics World Championships and was the first athlete with a disability to medal at an able-bodied Athletics World Championships.

Australia
Wikipedia contributors in Australia have the chance to travel to London for the 2012 Paralympics as part of a project to boost Wikipedia’s coverage of Paralympic Sport. The competition remains open until 20 April 2012.

Italy
Unfortunately, not all roads lead to Rome. The city withdrew its bid to host the 2020 Summer Games after the government refused to provide the financial guarantees during a time of economic crisis in Italy, leaving Istanbul, Tokyo, Baku, Doha and Madrid to battle it out.

Korea
Jin-Ho Son was appointed as the Secretary General of the Korean Paralympic Committee, effective from 3 January 2012. During his inauguration, he emphasized the importance of communication and harmony in the Paralympic Movement heading into London 2012.

Qatar
The UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace hosted a pilot Youth Leadership Camp in Doha from 9-19 January. The programme provided 30 young people from sub-sahara Africa and the Palestinian territory with the tools to inspire and invoke change in their respective communities and to overcome barriers to implementing sport programmes for development and peace in their own countries.

USA
The Reha-bilitative Adaptive Sport Training Conference was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado at the end of January to build awareness and share best practices on how to provide adaptive sport opportunities for veterans with disabilities. Conference participants took part in Paralympic sports and mingled with U.S. Paralympians.

Belgium
Swimmer Sven Decaestecker won the National Trophy Victor Boin 2011 – the award for Belgium’s para-athlete at the international level. Decaestecker won gold in the 200m Individual Medley S10 and bronze medals in the 100m Backstroke S10 and 5-mile Open Water Swim at the 2011 IPC Swimming European Championships.

Ireland
In conjunction with Paralympics Ireland, the Irish Independent released a 24-page special supplement in January previewing the London 2012 Paralympic Games. It included interviews with top Irish athletes, as well as the delegation’s medal history and tales of past Paralympians.

Great Britain
Standard Life signed a partnership with British Wheelchair Basketball to be official sponsor of its men’s and women’s teams and their home games. Both squads will compete at London 2012.

Israel
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Estonia
Estonia is the host nation for the 2012 European Championships in Athletics, which will be held at the Alexander Stadium in Tallinn from 1-5 August 2012. The Championships will feature 14 discipline championships, including seven for women and seven for men, with events ranging from sprinting to middle-distance running. This will be the first time the Championships have been held outside of Europe, and Estonia is a strong contender to win gold in the 4x100m Relay.

Ukraine
The Ukrainian Paralympic Committee has announced that it will host the 2012 European Championships in Athletics, which will be held at the Olympiyskiy Stadium in Kyiv from 22-27 August 2012.

United States
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United Kingdom
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United Arab Emirates
The United Arab Emirates Paralympic Committee has announced that it will host the 2013 World Para Swimming Championships, which will be held at the Al Shabab Sports Complex in Dubai from 12-20 September 2013. This is the first time that the Championships have been held outside of Europe, and the UAE is a strong contender to win gold in the 4x100m Relay.
Recap of the 2011 IPC Conference and General Assembly in Beijing

The 15th IPC General Assembly, the supreme governing body of the IPC, was held in Beijing, China, from 10-11 December 2011. The General Assembly, which meets every two years, determines policy for, and sets the fundamental directions for the development of sports for athletes with an impairment.

Delegates were updated on future games and members voted on a range of motions, including the adoption of the IPC Medical Code, and Dr. Robert Steadward, former IPC President, being granted Life Membership of the IPC.

IPC membership was granted to NPC Comoros, NPC Djibouti, NPC Democratic Republic of Congo, NPC Solomon Islands, NPC San Marino, NPC Malawi, the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF), International Triathlon Union (ITU), and International Canoe Federation (ICF).

In the two days preceding the General Assembly a new format IPC Conference took place, which aimed to build organizational capabilities within the Paralympic Movement.

The programme was tailored to fit the needs of developed National Paralympic Committees (NPCs)/Regional Organizations (ROs), growing NPCs/ROs, establishing NPCs/ROs and International Organizations (IOCs) for the Disabled (IDSs) / International Federations (IPSFs).

The purpose of the Conference was to draw together all NPCs and IFs at similar stages of growth to take them to the next stage in their development.

Highlights of the conference included networking opportunities and group work that enabled idea-sharing so that NPCs can develop their own strategic plans and move forward.

The Paralympic Movement, proudly partnered by Allianz, were also presented in Beijing.

The Paralympic Awards, proudly partnered by Allianz, were also presented in Beijing.

Recipients of the 2011 Paralympic Order
Matthias Berg, seven-time Paralympian and active member of NPC Germany
Luca Pancalli, President of NPC Italy
Nabil Salem, former President of NPC Egypt and the African Paralympic Committee
Randy Snow, four-time Paralympian and devoted member of the International Tennis Federation (ITF)

Paralympic Sport Awards
Best Male Athlete: German Alpine Skier Gerd Schneefelder
Best Female Athlete: German Nordic Skier Verena Bentele
Best Team: Japan’s Ice Sledge Hockey Team
Best Paralympic Games Deputy: Ukraine’s Oleksandra Kononenova

Paralympic Media Awards
Best Photographer: Jeff Crow of Australia’s Sport the Library
Best Writer: Gary Kingston from Canada’s Vancouver Sun
Best Broadcast: Sky Sport New Zealand

German Alpine Skier Gerd Schneefelder receiving the Paralympic Sport Award for Best Male Athlete from China’s Hou Bin, winner of three Paralympic golds in high jump

Answers:
1. False. Some medications have slightly different ingredients when bought in different countries. In some cases, these could be prohibited substances. You must check the ingredients carefully and seek advice from your doctor if you are unsure.
2. True. Encouraging or assisting athletes to use prohibited substances or methods is considered a serious doping violation and a sanction will be imposed under the World Anti-Doping Code.
3. True. Every athlete has the right to have a representative accompany them to the doping control station.
“To Enable Paralympic Athletes to Achieve Sporting Excellence and Inspire and Excite the World.”