

THE PARALYMPIAN

Official Magazine of the International Paralympic Committee



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2006

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NOW LIVE ON WWW.PARALYMPICSPORT.TV

The Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games will mark the beginning of a new level of broadcasting coverage for Paralympic sport, establishing a unique opportunity to connect with a worldwide audience. It will be the first time that all sports of the Paralympic Winter Games can be seen worldwide: via an Internet television channel:
www.paralympicsport.tv

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) will, in its capacity as an International Federation (IF) for 13 sports, also be the first IF to launch its own Internet television channel. The channel will be launched and fully operational beginning 20 February 2006.

ParalympicSport.tv will be a top quality 24/7 television channel broadcasting via the Internet, free of charge. This means that people all over the world will be able to watch live broadcasts, or see the coverage 'on demand' at a time convenient to them. Developed and managed by Narrowstep Inc., ParalympicSport.tv will underline the truly global nature of Paralympic broadcasting. Narrowstep's technology is the most comprehensive system in the world for managing, protecting, distributing and commercializing video content. The implementation of the new channel is co-ordinated by the IPC together with brand stage, a Hamburg based marketing agency.

A multi channel platform with a main video screen and a programme guide plus highlights section will provide an additional medium for viewers to watch

TV coverage of the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games, when they want, where they want. A searchable "Paralympic Archive" will also feature historical footage from various Paralympic Winter Games.

"For the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games, ParalympicSport.tv is expected to provide over 100 hours of live coverage from all four sports - Alpine Skiing, Ice Sledge Hockey, Nordic Skiing and Wheelchair Curling - as well as the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. In addition to the live coverage, the IPC will also provide a daily highlights package with the best performances from the previous days' competitions," said IPC Chief Executive Officer Xavier Gonzalez.

Webcasting offers an opportunity for a targeted delivery of content to a global interest group. ParalympicSport.tv will allow the IPC to reach a new audience of enthusiastic viewers and provide a commercially successful broadcasting platform. Samsung and Visa are the first presenting sponsors to join ParalympicSport.tv.

ParalympicSport.tv's long-term goal is to become a global media platform for Paralympic and IPC sport also providing access to images from other competitions and activities.

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SPIRIT IN MOTION



Photo © : Janas Exchörner

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Europe p.4



Photo © : Melbourne Sevens

Paralympians on the
Water p.9



Photo © : Mark Zibert

Images of 'Healthy
Paralympians' p.10



Photo © : Sportsbeat Images

2006 Visa Paralympic
World Cup Launched p.12

Saluto Torino



The big event is finally here. With the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games on our doorstep, the energy within the Movement is exciting and I am pleased to be a part of it.

You can all share some of that excitement, whether you will be with us in

Torino or not. The IPC is very proud to launch the live and on demand webcast (online broadcast) of the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games at www.paralympicsport.tv. At this site you will be able to watch live or delayed broadcast of all sports as well as the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. This is a thrilling initiative for the IPC, as it allows viewers all over the world free access to coverage of the Winter Paralympics.

On this note, we are also pleased to welcome a new partner of the Paralympic Movement, Samsung. As well as being a presenting sponsor of ParalympicSport.tv, Samsung is now a worldwide partner of the Torino 2006 Paralympic Games and the IPC for 2006.

Not long after this magazine is published, on 1 March, we will witness the lighting of the Paralympic Flame. The symbolic concept of the Flame lighting ceremony speaks volumes to me. The meeting of three figures, an athlete from the Rome 1960 Paralympic Games, a current Paralympic athlete and a young person who could be a future Paralympian, demonstrates the strengthening of the Paralympic Movement, learning from the past, enjoying the present and building the future for all athletes with a disability.

With this emblematic beginning we will follow the triumphant journey of the Paralympic Flame throughout the Region of Piedmont. It is significant that on this journey the Paralympic Flame will reach its greatest ever height, at the peak of Monte Rosa (4,559m).

Years of work that has taken place throughout the world will culminate in Torino. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work done by the Organizing Committee, the volunteers, the IPC and all the other administrators involved in the Paralympic Movement.

Torino will also be the peak of many years of hard work and training by approximately 540 Paralympic athletes and their coaches and support staff. Of course the athletes will be the stars of the show and Torino will provide a beautiful stage to showcase the sporting excellence of the world's best athletes with a disability.

I wish every athlete all the best in their sporting endeavours and hope that you will follow their achievements at www.paralympicsport.tv.

Philip Craven

Sir Philip Craven, MBE
IPC President

By increasing the accessibility to coverage of Paralympic Games, this new technology will allow more people to experience and witness the outstanding sporting performances of Paralympic athletes. To be inspired log onto www.paralympicsport.tv.

International Sports Broadcasting (ISB) will act as the Host Broadcaster for the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games. Over 140 hours of coverage will be produced including 130 live hours. The Host Broadcaster will

have more than 250 staff, 50 cameras and 25 videotape recorders on site in Torino and the mountains to run the broadcast operations. All footage will be produced in digital format.

So far, Australia, Canada, China, the European Broadcast Union (EBU, 54 countries), the Iberoamerican Television Organization (OTI, 23 countries), Italy, Japan, Korea, South Africa and the United States have acquired the broadcast rights to the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games.

PARALYMPIC GAMES: TORINO 2006

Paralympic Flame to Ignite Italy



flame in 2006, creating a bridge between past and present.

The area of the Colosseum, under the Arch of Constantine, will be transformed into a stage where the three symbolic figures will meet - one of the winners of the Rome 1960 Paralympic Games, a current athlete with a disability and a young person with a disability. Together they will represent the strength of the past and the challenge of the future. This meeting will give rise to the Paralympic Flame, which, via a

On 1 March, the Paralympic Flame will be lit, starting the Paralympic Torch Relay of the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games. The Lighting Ceremony will take place in Rome, Italy. Over the next 10 days, the Paralympic Torch will be carried by 130 torch bearers, passing through Piedmont, Italy.

The occasion will be celebrated with a big event in order to emphasize the values on which the next Paralympic Winter Games are based. Rome was the host city of the first Paralympic Games in 1960 and now welcomes back the

sophisticated technological device, will be revived from the historical memory of the Rome 1960 Paralympics, launched into the sky and, at the same time, lit in Torino.

From 5 to 6 March, the Flame will travel to the peak of Monte Rosa (4,559m) in the Piedmont region where the Flame will be exchanged by two torchbearers with a disability. This is a symbolic demonstration of the concept of the Paralympic Flame: "no barriers".

From here, the Flame will visit the Paralympic Village of Torino and on 8 March will arrive in the Piazza Castello in Torino, carried from the sky by Italian paratroops. Once landed, the torchbearers will bring it to the Po River and there it will be transported inside a special boat.

On 9 March, the Flame will visit a number of accessible landmarks throughout Torino, to acknowledge those infrastructures or facilities that have been built or renovated to make them accessible for persons with a disability.

Finally on 10 March, the Flame will start its journey to the stadium, from the centre of the city (about 10km). Following a parade through the streets, the Paralympic Flame will arrive in the Olympic Stadium in Torino, Italy, signifying the start of the Paralympic Games with the official Opening Ceremony of the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games.

The project has been developed with the collaboration of Vittorio Comi, an expert in special effects for cinema, television and events, and entirely created and staged by K-events.



PARALYMPIC GAMES: BEIJING 2008

Chinese Paralympic Athletes Eye 2008 Games



"Playing Basketball brings me great joy and I am eager to join the national team to participate in the Paralympic Games," said Fan Nan, following a training in the Beijing Union University gymnasium. Nan plays as a guard for the local women's Wheelchair Basketball team.

This is one of the facilities for local athletes with a disability and it also hosts local Wheelchair Fencing and Goalball teams. Municipal authorities and the community have made great efforts to provide and improve training and living conditions of local athletes with a disability.

One example is a new project approved by the Beijing Municipality to build a vocational and sport training center for persons with a disability in Beijing's Daxing district at the end of 2002. The project, scheduled for completion in June 2006, will be able to provide facilities for up to 600 Chinese Paralympic athletes.



Feng Xiaoling, of Beijing's Disabled Persons' Association believes that sports will help persons with a disability in their rehabilitation throughout China and these new developments demonstrate one way in which the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games will have a significant impact on the lives of persons with a disability in China.

PARALYMPIC GAMES: VANCOUVER 2010

Vancouver Prepares to Host the World in 2010

Spectacular theatres for sport await athletes and spectators at the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. The Games will take place in and around the mountain resort community of Whistler, 120km north of Vancouver. The goal is to stage compact Games in a stunning natural setting.

Since being awarded the Games on 2 July 2003, the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) has been building its team, signing sponsors and beginning venue construction.

"Our goal is early delivery of our competition venues," says John Furlong VANOC Chief Executive Officer. "Early delivery means less complexity and opportunities for athlete training. It also means extra time to test and re-test venue operations well in advance of the Games."

Construction on the new Nordic Skiing competition venue began in spring 2005,

ahead of schedule. The 250-hectare project covers impressive terrain for Nordic sports involving competition trails, ski jumps (for the Olympic Games) and a Biathlon facility.

Whistler's Meadow Park Sports Centre will be the place to experience the excitement of the Paralympic Games' Wheelchair Curling competition. A new facility proposed for Whistler's town centre will host Ice Sledge Hockey. Alpine Skiing takes place on Whistler Mountain, consistently ranked as one of the top ski areas in North America. Athletes will be housed in Whistler at the Paralympic Village, located less than 20 minutes from all competition venues.

With world-class venues, ample accommodation, solid planning and an extensive and successful record of hosting international events, the people of Vancouver, Whistler, British Columbia and Canada are ready to share their unique geography, heritage, history and hospitality with guests from around the world in 2010.

Find out more at vancouver2010.com.



Significant progress was made on the site preparation at the end of the 2005 construction season in September at the Nordic Skiing venue for the 2010 Winter Games. Photo ©: VANOC

PARALYMPIC GAMES: LONDON 2012

London 2012 Welcomes New CEO



The "Big Four", (from left to right): Jack Lemley (ODA Chairman), Paul Deighton (London 2012 CEO), Sebastian Coe (London 2012 Chairman) and David Higgins (ODA Chief Executive). Photo © London 2012

In December, Paul Deighton was announced as new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the London 2012 Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"As a Londoner passionate about sport, I am extremely excited about this opportunity. The Games have an enormous potential to inspire young people. (...) To help stage the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the world's most important sporting and cultural events, in my home city is a dream come true," said Mr. Deighton following his appointment.

As former Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Goldman Sachs' European businesses, Mr. Deighton will now be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the London 2012 Organizing Committee and oversee planning and implementation of a wide range of diverse and high profile Olympic and Paralympic programmes, from sponsorship and marketing to ticketing and the Torch Relay.

In early January, the "Big Four" responsible for delivering the Games, Sebastian Coe and Paul Deighton, Chairman and Chief Executive of the London 2012 Organizing Committee, and Jack Lemley and David Higgins, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) met together to begin work in 2006.

The two key organizations that have been set up to deliver the Games will be operating out of the same offices, to achieve increased levels of integration and efficiency. The London 2012 Organizing Committee has the responsibility for managing and staging the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) is responsible for delivering the permanent venues and infrastructure projects that need to be built for the Games.

REGIONAL NEWS

Paralympic School Day Spreads Europe-wide

After the implementation of the first 'Paralympic School Day' in May 2005 in Serres, Greece., the project partners have been busy organizing and conducting further 'Paralympic School Days' in their countries.

On 10 July 2005, around 100 children with and without a disability from elementary and special schools gathered in "Heyrovského" Elementary School in Olomouc, Czech Republic to attend classes in wheelchair mobility, blind orienteering and Athletics. Assisted by Czech Paralympians, the children

were able to gain an inside view into Paralympic sports such as Boccia, Goalball and Wheelchair Basketball and saw videos from the ATHENS 2004 Paralympics and Salt Lake 2002 Winter Paralympics.

The first Paralympic School Day in Germany took place in Merzig on 14 September 2005. In her opening speech Dr. Susanne Reichrath, State Secretary for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, stressed that: "Through such activities, elementary school children can develop a better understanding towards social interaction with persons with and without a disability. A second PSD was held in Besselich on 17 January 2006 with the participation of several Paralympic athletes.

In Saldus, the first Latvian Paralympic School Day took place on 4 November 2005. Organized by the Public High School of Saldus, in co-operation with the Latvian Disabled Children's and Youth Sport Federation, around 200 students experienced Boccia, Goalball, Volleyball (Sitting) and Wheelchair Basketball. Edgar Bergs, silver and bronze medallist at the ATHENS 2004 Paralympics and student of the school, was on hand to inspire his fellow students. Representatives of the local municipality and the German Olympic and Paralympic Committees attended the day.

From 21 to 25 November 2005, the Swedish Development Centre for Disability Sport (SUH) in Bollnäs, organized a series of PSDs. For five

days, around 800 students, aged between 6 and 12 years had the chance to experience sports for persons with a disability. Advised by SUH volunteers and Paralympians, including Marleen Bengtsson-Kovacs, European Table Tennis Champion and silver medallist at the ATHENS 2004 Paralympics, the children participated in different sports and simulated life in a wheelchair. HRH Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden and the President of the Swedish Sport Confederation, Karin Mattsson, attended one of the days and actively participated. "It was an enlightening experience, something that everyone should have the chance to experience", said HRH Crown Princess Victoria.

The target outcome of the PSD is a manual or handbook, to enable any school to implement a Paralympic School Day independently. The content of the handbook will consider cultural and educational differences of the European countries to ensure its applicability throughout Europe. The handbook is scheduled to be published in mid 2006.

The PSD, initiated in 2004 by the IPC Sport Science Committee. It aims to raise awareness and understanding in elementary schools about sport for persons with a disability. The project was made possible by a grant from the European Union (EU) to the European Paralympic Committee (EPC).



Photo © Jonas Ekströmer at Pressens Bild

IOSD NEWS

IBSA Partners with UEFA for Football

In November 2005, the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) announced a major agreement with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) for the development of Football 5-a-Side for persons with a visual impairment in the European region.

The project includes a pilot seminar for referees and coaches from IBSA member organizations and UEFA member associations, as well as the production of a multilingual manual and CD-ROM that will be distributed throughout the European football community. In addition, a project website will be set up to publicise IBSA's activities. The one-year project is initially planned until November 2006.

IBSA Football 5-a-Side Chairperson Carlos Campos said: "The backing from UEFA will

enable us to provide countries with the tools they need to coach their players, train their referees and, hopefully, be ready to play in future IBSA European and World Championships...I would like to thank UEFA publicly for believing in [Football 5-a-Side] and supporting our efforts to expand the sport."

Football 5-a-Side has experienced exponential growth in the last few years. While the game has been played for decades, becoming an official IBSA sport has enabled Football 5-a-Side to put in place a regular programme of international competitions, including Regional Championships on three continents, World Championships and IBSA Cup events. In addition, Football 5-a-Side made its debut at the ATHENS 2004 Paralympic Games and has maintained its status for the Beijing 2008 Paralympics.



Photo © Lieven Coudenys

SPORTS NEWS

Korea Showcases Alpine's Greatest



IPC 2004 Alpine Skiing World Championships. Photo © IPC

The world's best Alpine skiers with a disability recently competed in the final hurdle before the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games. From 23 to 27 January, the athletes took to the slopes of Yong Pyong in Korea, for five days of competition including events in Super-G, Giant Slalom and Slalom events.

American Christoph Devlin-Young took the title in both Super-G events in the Sitting category. German veteran, Gerd Schoenfelder also took a double victory in the Standing category. Tyler Walker (USA) who, finished tenth place in the Super-G, redeemed himself by winning both Giant Slalom events.

In the Visually Impaired category, the races featured a battle between Radomir Duda (SLO), Erik Fuentes Villalon (ESP) and Christopher Williamson (CAN). All three enjoyed podium finishes after displaying their technical superiority.

Austrian skier, Sabine Gasteiger, proved to be the strongest athlete in the Slalom and the two Super-G events for women with a visual impairment. In the Sitting category, Laurie Stephens (USA) was unrivalled and triumphed in the two speed events, her performance mirrored by Lauren Woolstencroft (CAN) in the Standing category.

NPC PROFILE: AUSTRALIA

Paralympians Down-Under

Australia has been a leading force in Paralympic sport even before they hosted the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games. Australia has consistently managed top-ten finishes, ranking first on the medal table in Sydney 2000, 8th in Salt Lake in 2002 and 5th in ATHENS 2004.

The Paralympian had an opportunity to speak with Darren Peters, CEO of the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC), to find out more about how the country achieves such outstanding results and how it intends to continue the trend in Torino.

When and how was the APC established?

The Australian Paralympic Committee evolved from the Australian Paralympic Federation, which was established in 1990. Our members are the six National Sporting Organizations for the Disabled and seven National Sporting Organizations.

How many people work at the NPC?

APC Headquarters are located in the Sydney Olympic Park, which matches the APC brand aspirations of corporate, sporting and elite.

Greg Hartung has been President of the APC since 1996 and I have been the Chief Executive Officer since December 2002. We also have 23 fulltime or part time employees spread around Australia at one headquarters [Sydney] and five branches.

How many members does the APC have?

The Paralympic Preparation squad features 300 elite and sub-elite athletes presently in 15 sports. Following the Sydney Paralympic, we have adopted a policy which sees mainstream sports responsible for the preparation of their athletes to Paralympic level. These sports include: Athletics, Cycling, Sailing, Swimming, Table Tennis, Wheelchair Basketball and Wheelchair Tennis. The APC will expand this list during 2005-2009.

What are your expectations for Torino and Beijing?

In Torino in 2006 we will be fielding the largest Australian winter team ever (8-10 athletes) including the first female [yet to qualify].

Then in Beijing for 2008 we will have a large Australian summer team with approximately 250-300 athletes, in a minimum of fifteen sports. Here we will be aiming for a top three finish. There will be plenty of young stars to watch out for in both Paralympics. Keep an eye on the APC website to track their progress towards the Games.

How has the public in Australia responded to Paralympic sport since the Sydney 2000 Paralympics?

Public awareness has increased and Australians regard Paralympians as successful elite athletes who are dedicated trainers. Community support has risen and corporate support is slowly rising. There is a greater inclusion of persons with a disability because of the awareness generated by Paralympians at the Sydney Games.

At the moment, do you have any Paralympic athletes training with Olympic athletes?

We have seven integrated programs with National Sporting Organizations and in some cases our athletes train alongside prospective or current Olympians. The Head Coaches all report to the main High Performance Manager and Head Coach of the sport.

What are some of the major programmes the APC is currently running?

We currently run a number of programmes to promote our athletes and Paralympic sport in general. The Heroes Speaker Programme is the official Speakers Bureau of the APC. In this programme an individual athlete or team will address an audience (workplace, schools etc.) and share a little bit of their dream, their battles, their training, their struggles and their triumphs. These talks are very inspiring and offer a very personal way to share the stories of our athletes.

The National Talent Search Programme is a new initiative of the APC to identify persons with a disability who display the athletic potential to one day make it to Paralympic level competition. In 2005/06 we will

host 37 Talent Search Days across Australia. The programme aims to identify 150 potential Paralympians by the end of 2006. All participants are provided with information and guidance to help them become involved in physical activity at any level they wish to pursue.

The Paralympic Supporters Club is both a fundraising and a public relations activity. Members receive many benefits including a bi-monthly e-newsletter providing updates from the APC and our inspirational athletes. Members also have opportunities to meet Australian Paralympians in person and through their support contribute directly to sending our national team to the Paralympic Games.



Photo © Australian Paralympic Committee

MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC

Doping Control on Target for Torino

The IPC has planned a comprehensive anti-doping programme for the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games.

From the opening of the Paralympic Villages on 4 March until 21 March, approximately 280 doping controls will be conducted, including urine for Erythropoietin (EPO) and for the first time at a Paralympic Games, blood tests will be conducted to test for Human Growth Hormone (hGH), synthetic haemoglobin (HBOC) and blood transfusions (BT).

The programme is under the authority of the IPC Anti-Doping Committee chaired by Dr. José Pascual. "The inclusion of blood testing at the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games is a significant step in the right direction by the IPC. We look forward to working with the Organizing Committee to ensure that the programme is of the highest quality and protects the rights of all athletes," said Dr. Pascual.

In 2005, the IPC strengthened its anti-doping programme with the inclusion of an Athlete Whereabouts Programme designed to track the whereabouts of athletes for the purposes of no advance notice testing. This out-of-competition programme, supported by the World Anti-Doping Agency, complements the preparations for Torino.

As a signatory of the World Anti-Doping Code (WADC), the IPC remains committed to a doping-free sporting environment at all levels. The IPC, together with the International Federations and the NPCs, established the IPC Anti-Doping Code in January 2004 to prevent in the spirit of fair play, doping in sport for athletes with a disability. The IPC Anti-Doping Code is in conformity with the general principles of the WADC.

VISTA 2006

The Countdown is on to the VISTA 2006 Conference to be hosted by the IPC in Bonn, Germany, from 6 to 7 May in Bonn, Germany.

The main goals of the VISTA Conference are to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to encourage interdisciplinary discussion in the field of sport for persons with a disability. The theme of next years' Conference will be "Classification - Solutions for the Future" which is one of the key issues in the Paralympic Movement today.

This Conference will provide an ideal environment in which to discuss how science can contribute to the field of classification in the future. Several keynote addresses by prominent researchers in the field will be held including Jennifer McTavish and Colin Higgs. Participants will also have the opportunity to take part in two Parallel Sessions related to Major Classification Questions and Major Instruments in Data Gathering. A total of 37 abstracts have been accepted in six different subject areas. These abstracts represent a broad representation of the research community and are sure to add an additional level to the conference.

For more information and to register, please visit the VISTA 2006 Conference section on the IPC website www.paralympic.org.

TEN TO WATCH

BRIAN MCKEEVER

Gender: Male
Age: 26
Sport: Nordic Skiing
Country: Canada

Growing up in an active family, Brian McKeever started skiing at the age of three and took part in his first competitions as an able-bodied athlete at the age of twelve. In 1998, the same year he competed in the Junior World Championships, McKeever was diagnosed with Stargard's disease which

causes macular degeneration or loss of central vision, fine detail and colour.

The Canadian athlete continued competing in able-bodied events and debuted as a Paralympian at the Salt Lake 2002 Paralympic Winter Games, winning two gold and one silver medal. Guided by his brother Robin, a Nagano 1998 Olympian, IPC World Cup medalist McKeever is among the favorites for the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games Nordic Skiing Competitions.



Photo © Serena Ovens



Photo © IPC

SADEGH KALHOR

Gender: Male
Age: 26
Sport: Alpine Skiing
Country: Islamic Republic of Iran

Sadegh Kalhor comes from a family of skiers. His brothers were members of the Iranian national ski team and encouraged him on the slopes from the age of three. Kalhor's dreams of skiing in the same Olympic team as his twin brother, Bagher, vanished when he lost his right leg after he skied into a cable hidden in the

snow. Kalhor participated in his first Paralympic Winter Games in Nagano 1998. He then participated in the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Paralympics in the Super-G, Slalom and Giant Slalom only two weeks after his brother, Bagher, competed at the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympics. He is now coached by his brother, Abbas. While he is yet to win a Paralympic Winter Games medal, he has produced some excellent results at recent World and Regional Championships and should he bring home a medal it would be Iran's first ever Winter medal - Olympic or Paralympic.

LAURIE STEPHENS

Gender: Female
Age: 21
Sport: Alpine Skiing
Country: USA

Laurie Stephens, born with spinal bifida, started skiing at the age of twelve. Before she turned to Alpine Skiing at the age of 15, she competed in several Swimming events, setting US records in 100m and 200m back-stroke events. During her first Alpine Skiing

season in 2004, Stephens won the first World Cup event she ever raced in, then went on to take the World Cup Overall and Giant Slalom titles, win six Giant Slalom World Cups and capture three gold medals at the World and US Championships.

Apart from sport, she is a fulltime student majoring in therapeutic recreation. The Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games will be her Paralympic Games debut.



Photo © USSA

Team Time

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR CURLING TEAM

Gender: Mixed
Sport: Wheelchair Curling
Country: Great Britain



Photo © World Curling Federation

While Torino will be the first appearance for Wheelchair Curling on the Paralympic Programme, the British Wheelchair Curling Team (Frank Duffy, Michael McCreadie, Tom Killin, Angie Malone and Ken Dickson) are no strangers to the ice, after having won the 2005 World Championships.

The team has a particularly tough start to the competition as it will face Switzerland and Denmark (the bronze and silver medallists at the 2005 Wheelchair Curling World Championships) on the opening day of the competition. Nevertheless, there should be enough experience: McCreadie played for the British Wheelchair Basketball team at three Paralympics and coached at two and Killin won a silver medal in Table Tennis in 1984 and silver in Wheelchair Fencing in 1980 and 1984.

ITALIAN ICE SLEDGE HOCKEY TEAM

Gender: Male
Sport: Ice Sledge Hockey
Country: Italy



Photo © Marta Linhartová

The Italian Ice Sledge Hockey Team is a newcomer to the rink as it will make its Paralympic debut in Torino. While Italy currently does not have a regular club championship, the objective is to launch the popular Paralympic sport in the country and encourage the growth of the sport nationwide.

Comprising of 17 athletes and coached by Andrea Chiarotti, the team will gain a lot of experience competing in Torino, building on their experience at the European Championships held last April in the Czech Republic. Italian athlete, Francesco Mancuso is already excited: "We'll be very proud to be there, but it's going to be very tough: Norway, Canada, the USA and Sweden are the great favourites".

USA ICE SLEDGE HOCKEY TEAM

Gender: Male
Sport: Ice Sledge Hockey
Country: USA



Photo © Lieven Coudenys

The final of the Ice Sledge Hockey competition was one of the highlights of the Salt Lake 2002 Paralympic Winter Games when the US team beat defending champions, Norway, in a breathtaking overtime thriller. At the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games, nine US players will be making their Paralympic debut, with only one of those players over the age of 20.

US Head Coach Keith Blasé believes that this mix of veterans and newcomers can not only work together, but work well: "We're really excited about the team itself, the make-up of the team, the number of young players we've got combined with the veteran leadership and we think that that combination is going to allow us to compete very effectively in our quest to recapture the gold medal." The US Team is one of the medal favourites for Torino.

VERENA BENTELE

Gender: Female
Age: 23
Sport: Nordic Skiing
Country: Germany

Verena Bentele gave an outstanding performance at the Salt Lake 2002 Paralympic Winter Games, winning four gold medals in Nordic Skiing, becoming one of Germany's most successful Paralympians. Born with a visual impairment, Verena first

came into contact with winter sport when she attended a Cross Country course at school.

At her international debut at the European Championships in 1997 she surprised herself and the audience by winning the gold medal. This was followed by numerous successes both in European and World Championships. At her first Paralympic Winter Games in Nagano 1998 she proved to be a real world-class athlete, winning one gold, two silver and one bronze medal.



Photo © Bentele



Photo © IPC

MICHAEL MILTON

Gender: Male
Age: 32
Sport: Alpine Skiing
Country: Australia

Four-time Paralympian Michael Milton was just 14 when he took part in his first international skiing competition - the Innsbruck 1988 Paralympic Winter Games. A single above the knee amputee due to bone cancer at the age of nine, Milton won Australia's first ever gold medal in winter sport, Olympic or Paralympic, at the Albertville 1992 Paralympic Winter Games. Four years later at the Salt Lake 2002

Paralympic Winter Games Milton was able to realize a ten-year goal as he won gold medals in all four Alpine Skiing disciplines. In recognition of this achievement, he was awarded the 2002 Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability.

In addition, has Milton won several Alpine Skiing World Championship titles and set a new World Record in Speed Skiing for skiers with one leg, clocking a staggering 210.40km/hr on the world's fastest course in Les Arcs, France. As preparation for the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games, Milton climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania together with his sister.

RONNY PERSSON

Gender: Male
Age: 39
Sport: Alpine Skiing
Country: Sweden

Swedish athlete Ronny Persson began his sporting career in 1995 and made his first Paralympic appearance at the Nagano 1998 Paralympic Winter Games winning a bronze medal. Four years later at the Salt Lake 2002 Paralympic Winter Games he established his

position on the podium, taking home three silver medals and a bronze.

Over the last few years, the World Champion sit-skier has also taken up a position as the sports representative on the Swedish Alpine Skiing Committee. In addition, Persson works with young skiers in Sweden and is a voluntary leader at camps for young people with a disability, leading him to become a nominee for the 2004 Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability.



Photo © Serena Ovens



Photo © Gasteiger

SABINE GASTEIGER

Gender: Female
Age: 49
Sport: Alpine Skiing
Country: Austria

Sabine Gasteiger has been fond of skiing all her life. Since 1973, when a genetic anomaly led to visual impairment, she has been practising sport of all kinds, but never thought of competing on a elite level. In 2003, Gasteiger's husband trained to become an

Alpine Skiing guide, launching Gasteiger's professional skiing career.

The mother of three children first competed in 2004 and has participated in every major event since. At the 2005 IPC Alpine Skiing European Cup in Germany and Austria in December 2005, the forty-nine year old won both the Slalom and Giant Slalom. Gasteiger is the current leader of the European Cup's point list in her category.

PARALYMPIC GAMES: TORINO 2006 SPECIAL

IPC Athletes' Council Positions Up For Grabs

During the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games, athletes will once again have the opportunity to elect three new Winter Sport Representatives to the IPC Athletes' Council (AC).

The IPC Athletes' Council is the collective voice of Paralympic athletes within the IPC and the greater Paralympic Movement. As the liaison between IPC decision-makers and Paralympic athletes, the IPC AC works to provide effective input into decision-making at all levels of the organisation. To this end, the IPC AC works to ensure effective athlete

representation on all IPC committees and commissions as well as to create other opportunities for athlete representation both within and outside the IPC.

The candidates are (in alphabetical order): Hans Burn (SUI, Alpine Skiing), Chris Daw (CAN, Wheelchair Curling and Wheelchair Rugby), Eskil Hagen (NOR, Ice Sledge Hockey), Frank Hoefle (GER, Nordic Skiing) and Katarzyna Rogowiec (POL, Nordic Skiing). More information about the candidates will be available on the IPC website and at the Voting Centres. The elected candidates shall

be officially announced and introduced during the Closing Ceremony of the Games.

All competing athletes can vote at one of the Voting Centres located in the Torino and Sestriere Paralympic Villages. At the Salt Lake 2002 Paralympic Winter Games, 51% of athletes voted to elect their representatives and 48% in Athens in 2004. It is hoped that 2006 will see an increased response from athletes.

'Catch the Spirit and Vote Today'.



Hans Burn



Chris Daw



Eskil Hagen



Frank Hoefle



Kararzyna Rogowiec

Sports Round-Up

ALPINE SKIING



Photo © IPC

Alpine skiers combine speed and agility while flying down slopes at more than 100km/h. There are four event types in the Paralympic Programme, Downhill, Super-G, Giant Slalom and Slalom, for male and female athletes with a disability. Using a functional classification system and a results calculation formula, athletes with different abilities compete against each other. Alpine Skiing is managed by the IPC through the International Paralympic Alpine Skiing Committee. The rules are those of the Federation International de Ski (FIS) with a few modifications. Skiers with a visual impairment are led through the course by guides using voice signals. Athletes with a physical disability use adapted ski equipment including single ski with outriggers, sit-skis or orthopaedic aids. Slalom and Giant Slalom were introduced at the first Paralympic Winter Games in Örnköldsvik, Sweden, in 1976.

ICE SLEDGE HOCKEY

Ice Sledge Hockey is the Paralympic version of Ice Hockey and, since its debut on the Paralympic Programme in the Lillehammer 1994 Paralympic Winter Games, it is quickly becoming one of the biggest attractions for spectators. It is fast-paced, highly physical and played by male athletes with a physical disability. Ice Sledge Hockey is practiced by athletes in about ten countries and is managed by the IPC through the International Paralympic Ice Hockey Committee. It follows the rules of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) with a few modifications. Instead of skates, players use two-blade sledges that allow the puck to pass beneath. They also use hockey sticks modified with a spike-end for pushing and a blade-end for shooting.



Photo © Serena Ovens

NORDIC SKIING



Photo © Serena Ovens

Nordic Skiing competitions are open to athletes with a physical disability (sitting and standing classes) and athletes with a visual impairment (who compete with a sighted guide). The Paralympic Winter Games competition involves two disciplines, Cross Country and Biathlon. Male and female athletes may compete in short distance, middle distance, long distance and Biathlon events or participate in a team relay. Cross Country appeared at the 1976 Paralympic Winter Games in Örnköldsvik, Sweden, but Biathlon was not introduced until Lillehammer in 1994. Nordic Skiing is managed by the IPC through the International Paralympic Nordic Skiing Committee following modified rules of the Fédération Internationale de Ski (FIS) and the International Biathlon Union (IBU).

SPORTS PROFILE: WHEELCHAIR CURLING

New Addition to the Paralympic Programme

Wheelchair Curling will make its debut at the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games. 'The Paralympian' had the opportunity to speak to the World Curling Federation Wheelchair Curling Leader, Kate Caithness, about what we can expect from this new sport.

What is the history behind the sport?

Curling is more than 500 years old and while it has evolved in Scotland, its true origin is unclear. Wheelchair Curling was accepted onto the Paralympic programme for the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games after a presentation given by the World Curling Federation (WCF) to the IPC in Salt Lake in 2002. The WCF is the governing body for both able-bodied athletes and athletes with a disability.

How is Wheelchair Curling played?

Each game is played between two mixed teams of four players. The athletes slide a stone (weighing no more than 19,96kg) down a sheet of ice (44.5 by 4.75 metres) and have it stop as near the centre of a set of rings ('the house') as possible. The opposing teams will do everything, tactically, to stop each other from achieving this goal. The game thus contains elements of skill, strategy, finesse, exertion and endeavour. There is no difference from the able-bodied game apart from the 'no sweeping' rule.

What equipment is needed?

Wheelchair Curling takes place on a standard ice rink and is played with normal stones which have a handle to lift, deliver and release. Delivery of the stone can be by hand delivery or using a delivery stick. The delivery stick, which is attached to

the handle of the stone, was introduced following the success of the Canadian team at the 2002 World Champs.

The wheelchairs are totally secure on the ice. Some players play from a mat (although this is now discouraged) and other teams use the buddy system where the next player holds on to the wheels of their teammate.

What is the appeal of the sport?

Tactics and strategy are a crucial part of the game. Anyone witnessing the past two World Championships will confirm that Wheelchair Curling involves a high degree of skill, teamwork and above all strong dedication. Curling is a team sport where able-bodied and wheelchair curlers can compete against each other and all-inclusive events have already taken place in some of our member countries.

What classification system is used?



Photo © Hugh Stewart

Wheelchair Curling is restricted to individuals with significant impairments in lower leg function, such as spinal injury, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis or double leg amputation, who require a wheelchair for daily mobility. Wheelchair Curling does not use the points system but only requires that teams be of mixed gender.

Which are the leading countries in the sport?

Based on the current ranking, Great Britain, Switzerland and Denmark are the leading nations going into the Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games. They are closely followed by Canada, Sweden, the USA, Italy and Norway. The top seven countries will compete in Torino and Italy, as the host country, will have an automatic spot.

How is the sport being developed?

We have a video explaining the basics of Wheelchair Curling, which is available as a handout to any new country. We also intend to produce a CD with video clips. For the past three years, coach education seminars have taken place in Fussen, Germany, during the Annual WCF Summer Camp. The WCF also provides coaching assistance for new member countries using a 'Come & Try Session'.

We are very excited about the prospect of showcasing our sport when it makes its first appearance at the Paralympic Winter Games. We feel sure that the game will appeal to everyone witnessing Wheelchair Curling for the first time and hope this will encourage many to participate in the sport.

For more information about Wheelchair Curling, please visit www.worldcurlingfederation.org.

Wind In Their Sails

At the 2006 International Association for Disabled Sailing (IFDS) World Disabled Sailing Championships the British team (John Robertson, Hannah Stodel and Stephen Thomas) successfully defended their World Championship crown in the Sonar class and Germany's Heiko Kröger took the title in the single-person keelboat 2.4 metre class.

The World Championships were hosted by the Royal Perth Yacht Club in Australia from 16 to 26 January. Germany (Jens Kroker, Holger Schoenberg and Tobias Schueltz) took second place in the Sonar class while

British sailor Helena Lucas finished second in the 2.4 metre. Norway was third in both events.

A seminar on the IFDS Functional Classification System 2005 was also held by Yachting Australia, in conjunction with IFDS and the Australian Sports Commission from 15 to 16 January 2006. The objective of the seminar was to train participants to be qualified to classify sailors at national events.



Photo © Royal Perth Yacht Club

IPC SPORTS CALENDAR

Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games	10 - 19 March 2006	Torino, Italy
2006 VISA Paralympic World Cup	1 - 7 May 2006	Manchester, Great Britain
2006 IPC Shooting World Championships	13 - 22 July 2006	Sargans, Switzerland
2006 IPC Athletics World Championships	2 - 10 September 2006	Assen, Netherlands
2006 IPC Cycling World Championships	8 - 18 September 2006	Aigle, Switzerland
2006 IPC Table Tennis World Championships	24 September - 1 October 2006	Montreux, Switzerland
2006 IPC Wheelchair Dance Sport WC	13 - 14 October 2006	Arnhem, Netherlands
2006 IPC Swimming World Championships	1 - 9 December 2006	Durban, South Africa

ATHLETE PROFILE: SEBASTIAN KESSLER

Spreading the Passion



Photo © Sebastian Kessler

Sebastian Kessler is a promising Ice Sledge Hockey player from the German team, who emerged as the winners of the first European Ice Sledge Hockey Championships in Zlin, Czech Republic, earlier this year. The upcoming Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games will be his first. Since the beginning of the year, Kessler has also been competing for the Chicago Blackhawks in the USA. The ambitious 24-year old has founded his own team in Germany and was the top Ice Sledge Hockey goal scorer of the 2004/2005 season both in Germany and the USA. 'The Paralympian' had a chance to talk to Kessler during an Ice Sledge Hockey demonstration event.

How did you start competing in Ice Sledge Hockey?

I was born without legs and attended a mixed school for both able-bodied and children with a disability. I started playing Wheelchair

Hockey and was encouraged by some opponents to try out for Ice Sledge Hockey. I have won two German championships and was invited to join the German National team when I was 20.

You have also founded your own team?

After two years in Hannover, I wanted to establish something of my own. I had been training with the able-bodied team in Wiehl for a while and had the idea to develop my own Ice Sledge Hockey team - the Wiehl Yetis. The club supported my idea and I started contacting potential players and sponsors. I already knew some companies and was successful in securing sponsorship. We started competing in 2003 and I had a great time with the team before I went to Chicago in 2005.

How important was sponsor support?

Sponsor support was very important as the sport involves a lot of travelling and the equipment is rather costly. With the financial support from the sponsors I could offer the equipment for free and give interested players time to decide whether they want to continue, without having to spend a large amount of money.

What are you concentrating on at the moment?

At the moment I play for the German National team and the Chicago Blackhawks in the USA. In addition to my daily job I train six to eight hours every week, either in Germany or in the USA. That involves flying back and forth every few weeks.

What competitions are you looking forward to?

Of course I am excited to be part of the Paralympic Winter Games in Torino, which will be the first Paralympic Games for me and the German team. Earlier this year, Germany qualified for Torino by winning the first European Championships in the Czech Republic. In Torino we will be in the same group with Sweden, USA and Japan, all

strong opponents but I am confident that we have a good chance to win a medal.

You can shoot with either hand. What skills are necessary to play Ice Sledge Hockey?

I actually only learnt how to shoot with both hands when I started to play in Chicago. It helps to have the skill but you don't have to be ambidextrous to play Ice Sledge Hockey. As I was born with my disability I have learned early to use my hands to propel myself. But in general it can take a few years to become proficient with the sledge and technique.

What advice could you give to people who are considering taking up the sport?

Ice Sledge Hockey is a sport that you either like or dislike. There is nothing in between. It is very challenging and you should not mind the physical contact. When I am on the ice I forget everything around me. I get 'tunnel vision' and concentrate only on the game. Sledge hockey is unpredictable. You have to be assertive, take control of the situation and know how to improvise.

With your busy schedule you still have time to attend demonstration events?

You have to take the time to promote and support the sport. If every athlete only cares about his own career, Ice Sledge Hockey will not exist for a long time. You have to represent the sport at every possible event to give people the chance to discover it.

What is the appeal for spectators?

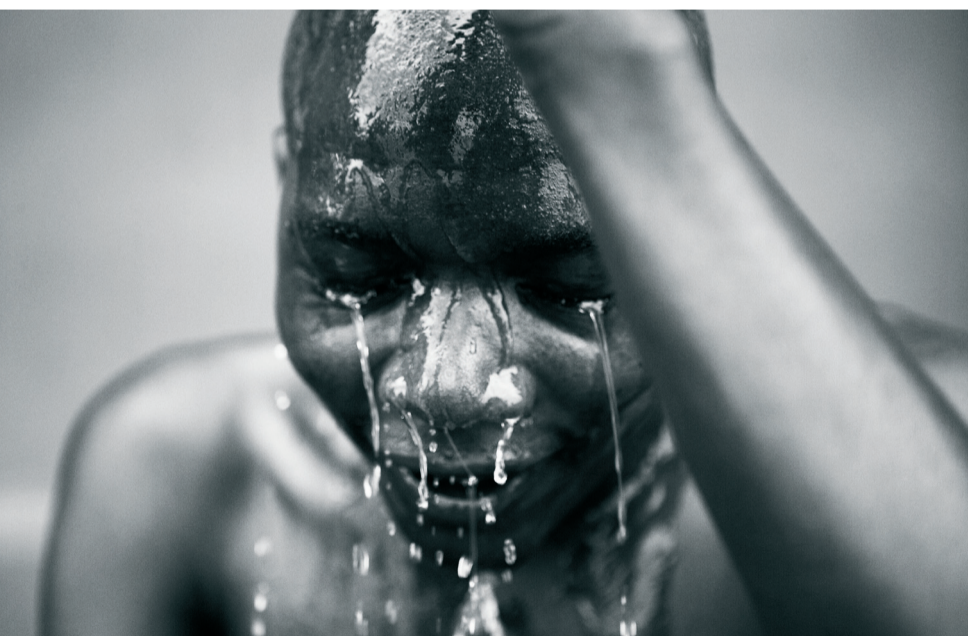
The game is fast and hard and therefore, very exciting to watch. It is always popular with the audience. I know that the finals at the Salt Lake 2002 Paralympic Winter Games were sold out. I think it is good that the rules resemble the ones of able-bodied hockey, with only a few exceptions. That makes it easier for the audience to follow.



HEALTHY PARALYMPIANS

In 2005, the IPC began a long-term development project, entitled 'Healthy Paralympians'. Over the past six months, over 100 athletes have been involved in the project, which aims to transfer knowledge and understanding about HIV/Aids and healthy behaviours to persons with a disability in less developed countries through sport and to create sustainable community-based networks to support persons with a disability in their endeavour to become active participants in society, pursue personal goals and seek opportunities for advancement in sport.

- photos by Mark Zibert



DEVELOPMENT

Magglingen Marks End of IYSPE 2005

As the cumulative event for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE) 2005, the 2nd Magglingen Conference, was a tremendous success. The Conference, held from 4 to 6 December 2005 in Magglingen, Switzerland, was the closing event for IYSPE 2005 which has seen the establishment of many new partnerships and initiatives.

Around 400 participants from 70 countries, including high-ranking officials and top athletes, participated in the conference, which marked the beginning of several new initiatives.

IPC President, Sir Philip Craven, was one of the keynote speakers at the conference. His speech, entitled "Sport Development and Sustainable Development through Sport: Twin Catalysts for a Better World" emphasized the importance of sport, especially Paralympic Sport, in the development of a better world.

The conference closed with the adoption of the "Magglingen Call to Action 2005", resolving to use sport to improve the quality of education and health, eradicate poverty, and foster peace and tolerance. Like the 1st Magglingen Conference in February 2003, the second conference provided a platform for all players - sports organizations, the United Nations, governments, NGOs, business, media and science - to join forces in the interests of development and peace, to foster new partnerships and to strengthen existing ones.

As part of IYSPE, the IPC will be publishing a collection of research in association with the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE). The collection will feature scientific and academic research in numerous areas, focussing on sport for persons with a disability. The book is due to be launched at the VISTA 2006 Conference to be held in Bonn, Germany, from 6 to 7 May.



Photo © Sauter/Sport and Development

Building the Next Generation

"Paralympics here we come...." say nine young Equestrian dressage riders with a disability who, together with their coaches, are participating actively in a one year training course, established by the International Paralympic Equestrian Committee (IPEC) with a grant from the Christopher Reeve Foundation (CRF) in mid 2005.

Participants were nominated by their NPCs on the basis of their potential for future international competition, with priority for those with a more serious disability (a majority of the participants are classified as Grade 1 riders).

CRF provided the Grant to IPEC to assist countries with special financial and/or economic needs. Croatia, Poland and South Africa were chosen because they met the criteria and had already demonstrated that they have infrastructure, riders and trainers to benefit from participation in the course. In addition, they have the commitment to expand and share the development process in their country and beyond.

The course has already enabled the coaches to attend a three-day International Trainers Convention in Great Britain, the South African riders (who are all juniors) to compete in a



One of the role models of the International Paralympic Equestrian movement, Lee Pearson. Photo © Lieven Coudeneys

major International Competition, and the Croatian and Polish riders and coaches to participate at an International Training Course in the Czech Republic.

This year, all will participate in further training and competitions in their own country and Great Britain under the guidance of international coach Jane Goldsmith. With assistance from IPEC Officials, South Africa plans to combine its event at the beginning of April with additional special training courses for Judges, Classifiers and Trainers from the African continent.

The project is an important part of Equestrian's long-term plan to increase the number of countries participating in major International Paralympic Equestrian events while at the same time increasing the representation of riders with a severe disability in such events.

IPEC Chairperson, Jonquil Solt, said, "I look forward to watching these CRF participants competing at international events in the coming years." In acknowledging with much gratitude the CRF Grant said she hoped "this project will provide a firm basis and sound model for future training and development in other countries."

MISCELLANEOUS

Film Festival Brings Paralympics to the Big Screen

Weija Sun, Media Director of the Beijing 2008 Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (BOCOG), Tony Garrett (BBC) and Dr. Franco Ascani (International Federation of Sport Television and Cinema) will be the three guest experts from the media industry invited to judge the first International Paralympic Sport Film Festival. The festival, entitled 'Budapest Bridge' will be held in Budapest, Hungary, from 30 March to 1 April.

IPC President, Sir Philip Craven, will officially open the festival, at which around 100 films from 80 countries are expected to be entered, providing a glimpse into the Paralympic Movement and the life of persons with a disability.

The films will be shown in different thematic blocks, including 'Feature Films', 'Documentaries', 'Portrait Films', 'Commercials' and 'Music Clips'. The purpose

of the Budapest Bridge Festival is to improve the integration and social acceptance of persons with a disability at all levels.

Organized by the Hungarian National Paralympic Committee and under the patronage of the IPC, the festival programme will also include many additional events such as sport demonstrations (Archery, Goalball, Powerlifting, Table Tennis, Wheelchair Fencing and Wheelchair Tennis), and an international conference entitled 'The Media and the Paralympic Movement'. The award-winning film and Oscar nominee 'Murderball', about the Paralympic sport of Wheelchair Rugby, will also be screened to the public.

For more information, please visit www.budapestbridge.hu.



Image © NPC Hungary

Paralympic Athletes Star at Commonwealth Games

The XVIII Commonwealth Games will be held in Melbourne, Australia, from 15 to 26 March 2006.

For the second time, and following the success of the Commonwealth Games in Manchester 2002, elite athletes with a disability (EAD) will compete in several sporting events. The EAD programme features 12 events across four sports: Athletics, Powerlifting, Swimming and Table Tennis. These sports are integrated in the general competition schedule.

The inclusion of EAD events on the Commonwealth Programme follows the decision taken at the 1997 Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) General Assembly. The EAD programme is intended to function as a catalyst for increased attention, awareness and investment in sport for persons with a disability within the Commonwealth countries. In Manchester 2002 the inclusive sporting programme set a precedent. The medal tally of athletes with a disability will contribute equally to their country's total.

The first Commonwealth sporting competition was held in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in

1930. Since then, the Commonwealth Games have been organized every four years. Athletes from the 71 Commonwealth countries come together, to celebrate their shared values, traditions and language in a friendly competition throughout the British Commonwealth.

At the XVIII Commonwealth Games in Melbourne 2006, 12 individual and four team sports, with a total of 24 disciplines will be contested. Athletics, Bowls, Rugby 7s (Men), Netball (women) and Swimming are an obligatory part of the Games. Badminton, Basketball, Boxing, Cycling, Gymnastics, Hockey, Shooting, Squash, Table Tennis, Triathlon, Weightlifting and Wrestling are additionally scheduled in Melbourne. The EAD programme is predicted to involve more than 200 athletes.

Tickets for all events can be purchased on the official Melbourne 2006 website (www.melbourne2006.com.au), if required with assistance of the customer service. Prices start from EURO 9 (AUS\$15).



Benoît Huot (CAN), winner of the "Outstanding Male Elite Athlete with a Disability Award", presented by the Commonwealth Games Federation. Photo ©: Ker Robertson/Getty Images

2006 Visa Paralympic World Cup Launched

Following the success of the inaugural event in 2005, the 2006 Visa Paralympic World Cup will be held from 1 to 7 May in Manchester, Great Britain. In 2006, four sports will again form the events programme: Athletics, Cycling (Track), Swimming and Wheelchair Basketball.

The Wheelchair Basketball tournament will now be staged at the increased-capacity Manchester Velodrome. The venue has been selected in consultation with BBC Sport and the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) to increase BBC production capabilities and to allow for increased coverage of the competition. The venue will also stage Cycling. Swimming events will be staged at the Manchester Aquatics Centre, while Athletics events will be held at the Manchester Regional Arena, Sportcity.

In 2005, 334 competitors from 44 countries competed in the first Visa Paralympic World Cup, which achieved television coverage in 154 countries worldwide.

IPC President, Sir Philip Craven, said: "This is a wonderful opportunity for the spectators to get to know some of the top

Paralympians that might also be competing in the London 2012 Paralympic Games. I look forward to watching an exciting level of competition in Manchester in 2006."

The event is organized by Fast Track and the British Paralympic Association (BPA) and sanctioned by the IPC. The key partners are Visa, BBC, UK Sport, the Manchester City Council and the Northwest Regional Development Agency.


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