RIO 2016
A once-in-a-lifetime experience to witness unimaginable athletic performances
“For me, the Rio 2016 Paralympics are the best opportunity for a generation to make for a more inclusive America.”

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first edition of The Paralympian of 2016, a landmark year that will climax with Latin America’s first Paralympic Games.

Preparations for Rio 2016 are progressing well and our aim is to build on the success of London 2012 and Beijing 2008. I am confident that National Paralympic Committees will send their best prepared athletes ever to Rio ensuring that the sporting competition reaches new performance levels. Many of the athletes who could star in September’s Games are featured in this edition as we profile 11 of the 22 Paralympic sports.

Rio 2016 will be the most widely broadcast Paralympics to date and we expect a record cumulative TV audience of more than four billion to watch the Games.

NBC will show the Games live for the first time in the USA, and to coincide with this, earlier this year the IPC and US Paralympics undertook research on US attitudes towards people with an impairment, details of which can be found in this edition. The research revealed some slightly negative attitudes in the USA and highlighted there is still much work to be done.

For me, the Rio 2016 Paralympics are the best opportunity for a generation to make for a more inclusive America. This is why in March, together with US Paralympics, we embarked on a six-month PR campaign to raise awareness of the Games and leading athletes amongst the US public.

As with all Games, there are always issues of concern that crop up in the months leading up to them. The biggest issue we face this time is Zika, a virus that many people associate with Brazil, but is in fact an international problem. The IPC’s priority is the health and well-being of athletes, officials, staff, spectators and all those involved in the Games and therefore we remain in close contact with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and will follow their recommendations on this matter.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the IPC’s partnership with Allianz, an organisation which, over the years, has grown its support of the Paralympic Movement to cover not just the IPC, but also a number of NPCs, as well as IPC Athletics. On behalf of the whole Paralympic Movement I would like to thank them for their continued support.

I hope you enjoy this edition of The Paralympian.

Sir Philip Craven, MBE
IPC President
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NPCs celebrate anniversaries

The National Paralympic Committees of Azerbaijan, Colombia and Russia recently celebrated landmark anniversaries.

On 28 January in Moscow, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin, IPC President Sir Philip Craven and IPC Vice President Andrew Parsons joined the Russian Paralympic Committee in celebrating 20 years. Putin said in his welcoming speech: “Through the efforts of many enthusiasts and talented and caring people, the Paralympic Movement has made a huge leap forward. And in our country, it has reached a very significant, serious height. We are proud of the Russian Paralympians, their outstanding victories.”

The Colombian Paralympic Committee celebrated 15 years in February, recognising how far the organisation has come in developing para-sport in the country. The Colombian Paralympic Committee President described it as “It has been 15 years promoting the values of the Paralympic Movement: inspiration, determination, courage, equality and ensuring the human right to sport without discrimination of any kind, and helping to make the dreams of many who at first it seemed unattainable.”

NPC Azerbaijan celebrated 20 years on 7 February. Its President Ilgar Rahimov met with Sir Philip and British Paralympic Association Honorary Vice President Tony Sainsbury to discuss how to continue developing para-sport in the country.

Six athletes have been nominated for the prestigious 2016 Laureus World Sports Awards for the category Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability.

Two are former winners: Brazilian swimmer Daniel Dias, who won in 2009 and 2013; and French alpine skier Marie Bochet, winner in 2014. "I'm flattered for being nominated once again to the Laureus, an award so important and renowned," Dias said. "When I say I'm flattered, that's because I know how important it is to get an award like this. I'll be cheering so that I can bring another one home. To begin 2016, the Paralympic year, winning the Laureus would be spectacular." The winner will be revealed at the Laureus Awards Ceremony in Berlin, Germany, on 18 April.

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The 17th Laureus World Sports Awards, which recognises sporting achievement during the calendar year 2015, is the premier honours event on the international sporting calendar. Allianz, a world-wide partner of the IPC, has been named an official partner of the 2016 Laureus World Sports Awards.

Allianz 10-year anniversary

The Paralympic News

Allianz becomes GOLD PATRON with the IPC
- First Paralympic Day in Berlin (2007)
- First Paralympic Winter Games (2006)

Allianz becomes first INTERNATIONAL PARTNER with the IPC
- First sponsoring contract (2009)
- Partner of IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup Finals
- Partner of IPC Athletics World Championships (e.g. 2011 IPC Athletics World Championships, 2011 IPC Swimming European Championships)
- End of 2013, extension of contract to four-year cycle

Allianz becomes OFFICIAL PARTNER with the IPC
- Official partner of IPC Athletics
- Official partner of Paralympic Sports Council (PSC) - World Paralympic Games
- Official partner of IPC Athletics World Championships (e.g. 2015 IPC Athletics World Championships)
- Official partner of IPC Swimming European Championships
- Partner of IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup Finals

Allianz becomes first INTERNATIONAL PARTNER & GLOBAL PARTNER IPC ATHLETICS
- Actively involved in 13 countries
- Becomes official partner of IPC Athletics
- Partnering IPC Athletics Grand Prix, including European and World Championships
- Strong involvement in Paralympic partnerships for Allianz employees
Peru to stage biggest-ever Parapan American Games

The Lima 2019 Parapan American Games is expected to feature a record 1,850 athletes competing in 17 sports, two more than Toronto 2015. The announcement was made following a three-day meeting (28 February - 1 March) in the Peruvian capital between the Americas Paralympic Committee (APC) and Lima 2019 Organising Committee (COPAL). An agreement confirming that Lima would stage the biggest-ever Parapan American Games was signed by Jose Luis Campos, APC President; Luis Salazar, President of COPAL; Xavier Gonzalez, IPC Chief Executive Officer; Saúl Barrera, President of the Sports Institute of Peru; José Arista, Executive Director of the Special Project for Lima 2019 and Luisa Villar, President of NPC Peru. Campos said: “Following the success of the Toronto 2015 Games and this September’s Rio 2016 Paralympic Games it is vital that the Paralympic Movement continues to move forward in the Americas. This agreement will go some way to achieving this.”

The sports in the programme are: athletics, badminton, bocce, cycling, football 5-a-side, football 7-a-side, goalball, judo, powerlifting, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair tennis. Archery has been removed from the sports programme, whilst badminton, shooting and taekwondo all feature for the first time in the Games which will take place at the end of August 2019.

“Following their inclusion in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, both badminton and taekwondo will feature for the first time at a Parapan American Games alongside shooting,” Campos said. “We believe the sports programme for Lima 2019 features an exciting mixture of mass participation sports from the Americas.”

IPC expands its headquarters

The IPC officially opened a new building adjacent to its current headquarters building on 13 January in Bonn, Germany.

IPC President Sir Philip Craven, Lord Mayor of Bonn, Achok-Alexander Sridharan, Verena Benteiss, Commissioner for Matters Relating to Persons with Disabilities of the Federal Government of Germany and 12-time Paralympic champion, and Bernd Neuenfeld, State Secretary of North Rhine-Westphalia, cut the red ribbon to open the new building.

“The opening of this new building marks a new beginning. The IPC is much bigger now and our influence on making for a more inclusive society around the globe is far greater,” said Sir Philip.

“We now employ 85 people from more than 20 countries and have doubled in size in the last four years alone.”

The new building accommodates 30 staff from the IPC sports, the Agitos Foundation, Anti-Doping, Medical and Scientific, and Games and Events Technology departments.

The IPC first opened its headquarters in Bonn, Germany, in 1999, with just one full-time member of staff.

Women celebrate leadership in Paralympic Movement

Representatives from across the Paralympic Movement celebrated the success of the Agitos Foundation’s WoMentoring project on 12-13 February in Bonn, Germany.

Established to contribute towards the Movement’s goal of having 30 per cent of women in leadership positions, WoMentoring involved 16 pairs of mentors and mentees in a 16-month long programme of education and development.

Tine Rindum Teilmann, Chairperson of the IPC’s Women in Sport Committee, said: “At the heart of the Paralympic Movement’s goal of having 30 per cent of women in leadership within sport. WoMentoring has helped them develop in their career, including gaining promotions and various positions of influence within NPCs and para-sport organisations.

The wrap-up event featured testimonials from mentors and mentees on how WoMentoring has helped them develop in their career, including gaining promotions and various positions of influence within NPCs and para-sport organisations.

The following month in March, Carla Qualtrough was awarded the IPC International Women’s Day Recognition for her impact and leadership within sport.

The three-time Paralympic swimming medallist was appointed as Canada’s Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities in November 2015.

“When the Prime Minister offered me my current role, he challenged me to take two of my life’s true passions and ‘go change the world,’” Qualtrough said. “Every day, I’ll work to live up to that challenge, in ensuring more active and inclusive communities for all Canadians.”

Women in Sport

Agitos Foundation’s WoMentoring project on 13 February in Bonn, Germany. "The opening of this new building marks a new beginning. The IPC is much bigger now and our influence on making for a more inclusive society around the globe is far greater."

The IPC first opened its headquarters in Bonn, Germany, in 1999, with just one full-time member of staff. The new building accommodates 30 staff from the IPC sports, the Agitos Foundation, Anti-Doping, Medical and Scientific, and Games and Events Technology departments.

The IPC announced that it will reward the athletes who win medals at the 2016 Paralympic Games, expecting to distribute approximately EUR 3 million (about EUR 686,988) in rewards.

The IPC announced that Polish TS4 wheelchair racer Tomasz Hamerlak has been suspended for four years for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation. Hamerlak returned an adverse analytical finding for stanozolol metabolites in a urine sample provided on 8 July in Switzerland.

Powerlifting: Paralympian champion Amelia Perez was presented with her Third National Sports Award by Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico. The award from the National Commission for Physical Culture and Sport (CONADE) is given annually to athletes to recognise their sporting achievements.

Athletics: IPC Athletics opened the bid process for the 2019 World Championships, the final major international track and field event prior to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. The bid documents for the event can be requested from ipcatletics@paralympic.org and the deadline to submit bids is 1 September 2016.

NPO: The Austrian Ministry of Sports is placing EUR 20 million into “Project RIO” to help Austrian athletes prepare for the upcoming Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Of the 70 Austrian athletes being supported, 15 are para-athletes.

IPC: The final version of the 2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code is available at www.paralympic.org/the-ipc/handbook, in section 2, chapter 1.3.2.

NPO: Former US swimmer and 14-time Paralympic champion Erin Popovich will serve as the athlete representative on the IPC Classification Committee.

IPC: Cadbury will contribute NZD 200,000 (EUR 114,784) to support the New Zealand Paralympic team on the road to Rio 2016. Cadbury also donated AUD 1 million (EUR 671,07) to the Australian Paralympic Committee.

IPC: The Brazilian Paralympic Committee will reward the athletes who win medals at the 2016 Paralympic Games, expecting to distribute approximately BRL 3 million (about EUR 696,988) in rewards.

The IPC is much bigger now and our influence on making for a more inclusive society around the globe is far greater,” said Sir Philip.
Yannick Bourseaux and Stefan Daniel share their thoughts about triathlon’s Paralympic debut, the stiff competition in their PT4 class and more.

**Yannick Bourseaux**

I was in a camp with the French Nordic ski team. I was surprised and immediately told my coach I will do my best to be at Rio. He told me to focus on Sochi but in my mind I was already focused on Rio.

My weakness is definitely the swim section. In the PT4 category I’m the only one swimming with one arm so it’s difficult for me to be at the front straight after the swim. Last season my favourite was the bike because I train a lot on it and because my disability doesn’t affect my performance a lot on the bike.

Both (Stefan Daniel and Germany’s Martin Schulz) are very talented. They are young and very motivated. Both (Stefan Daniel and Germany’s Martin Schulz) are very talented. They are young and very motivated. They are young and very motivated. They are young and very motivated. They are young and very motivated. They are young and very motivated.

Relieved, (as I finished third). I was injured before the race and I wasn’t confident about being able to cross the finish line when I was on the start. And it was very important for me to finish the race for the Paralympic ranking.

**Stefan Daniel**

I was in a camp with the French Nordic ski team. I was surprised and immediately told my coach I will do my best to be at Rio. He told me to focus on Sochi but in my mind I was already focused on Rio.

I thought it was something I could do. I was doing swimming beforehand. When the Games came around, that’s what kind of motivated me to take triathlon seriously.

My reaction to finishing on the podium was pretty cool. It was a pretty cool feeling, going down that finish line realising I won the World Championships and qualified for Rio. It was a really close race and I expect another one at Rio.

It was a pretty cool feeling, going down that finishing chute realising I won the World Championships and qualified for Rio. It was a really close race and I expect another one at Rio.
Breaking into America!

“The Rio 2016 Paralympics will be a catalyst to grow disability awareness in the United States.”

This was the message from IPC President Sir Philip Craven to around 250 US media in Los Angeles on 7 March as he marked six months to go until Latin America’s first Paralympic Games.

Sir Philip was in the United States for one week as part of a joint offensive between the IPC and US Paralympics to raise awareness of NBC’s coverage of Rio 2016. The US broadcast will be scrupulously unprecedented 66 hours of coverage of the Rio 2016 Paralympics and the IPC President believes it will have a significant impact.

“Over the years, the Paralympic Games have developed a strong track record for changing and challenging deep-rooted views in society regarding disability,” said Sir Philip. “Thanks to widespread media coverage of Beijing 2008 and London 2012, the Paralympics have established themselves as the world’s number one sporting event for driving social inclusion.

“The United States has always been a global leader in social change, including in regards to disabilities; however, research indicates there is still room for the US to grow, and Rio 2016 can be the catalyst for another level of education and inclusion. I am confident that with more TV coverage than ever before in the US, the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games are the best opportunity for a generation to further transform US attitudes.”

In addition to speaking at the USOC Media Summit, Sir Philip was also part of a roundtable discussion in Washington DC discussing how to improve employment opportunities for people with a disability in the United States.

Track and field stars Jarryd Wallace (left) and Richard Browne in action during the 2016 Team USA Media Summit held 8 March in California

The IPC/US Paralympics research findings

92% of Americans think there are problems with the way people with disabilities are treated in the US.

71% of Americans think people with disabilities are often ignored or forgotten about.

50% of Americans have witnessed someone being discriminated against because of a disability.

84% of Americans believe attitudes toward people with disabilities would change if people saw them competing in sports at a high level.

95% of Americans say Paralympians are good role models for both disabled and non-disabled Americans.

Source: Incorporated London Ltd
Athlete Profiles

Get to know some of the stars in each of the 22 sports in the Rio 2016 Paralympic programme. The first 11 sports will be covered in this issue, and the other half in the next edition.

Zahra Nemati (IRI)

Nemati made history by claiming Iran’s first-ever Paralympic and Olympic gold. She is not only looking to defend her W1 recurve Paralympic title in Rio, but also compete in the Olympics.

How has your life changed since making history at London 2012?
During these four years my activity and my practice have gone to a very high level. They have gotten very intensive. ... I’m doing all this because I want to defend my Paralympic gold medal at Rio 2016.

I’ve been practicing with the able-bodied players. But I am also practicing with para-athletes.

What was your reaction to being named Iran’s Rio 2016 Olympic flag bearer?
I was very, very happy and excited. I think being a flag bearer is the hope and wish of many able-bodied and disabled people in the world. There is no difference actually; many athletes would love such an honour to be the flag bearer of their country at the Olympic or Paralympic Games.

 venues: Sambódromo
 dates: 10-17 September
 medal events: 9
 athletes: 140
 games debut: 1960
 classification
 open: standing and/or resting on a stool.
 W1: Athletes have impairment in the legs and make use of a wheelchair. Limited function may also be seen in the upper limbs and trunk.

MATT STUTZMAN (USA)
The “Armless Archer” is a world record holder and London 2012 silver medallist.

ELEONORA SARTI (Italy)
The 2015 world champion and world No.1 in women’s compound open.

OUK SOO LEE (South Korea)
The 2015 world champion in men’s compound open has not won a Paralympic medal since 2000.

MORE ONLINE: Each sport on the Rio 2016 Paralympic programme is having a dedicated week of featured content published on the IPC’s website. Visit paralympic.org/rio-2016/sports to learn about each sport’s history, read athlete stories and even watch video clips overviewing each sport.

QUICK FACTS

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www.archery.org
Yuk Wing Leung (HKG)

Ranked No. 1 in the BC4, the Laureus nominee is aiming to avenge himself from London 2012, where he left without a medal.

You will also compete in BC4 pairs in Rio, how different is your approach to that versus individual events? I will spend more time on the pairs event with my boccia partner, and a medal in the individual event at Rio 2016.

How has the perception of disability changed in Hong Kong? I think nowadays the public understand more about people with disabilities. There are sufficient accessible facilities and transport modes which improve convenience in daily life.

I feel depressed about my result of London 2012. My goal is to perform better.

You left London 2012 without a medal. How did you feel about that? I feel depressed about my result of London 2012. My goal was getting a medal in the BC4 pair event but failed. I could not exert my skills due to too much stress and the pressure of wanting to win. I had evaluated my performance with my coach and team members, and learned not to focus on winning or losing.

Rio will be your fourth Games. What do you attribute your success to? I would say my passion to the sport leads to the success. I started playing boccia when I was small and developed my skills in Special School. Then I had more opportunities to build up my techniques after being admitted on the Hong Kong national boccia team.

Canoe

With five European and six world titles, the KL2 canoist is only missing Paralympic gold. He can change that in Rio, where the sport will debut.

CanoeBoccia

How does it feel to finally get to compete in the Paralympics? I honestly can’t say since it is the first time. It will definitely be different because until now there have always been para-athletes and able-bodied athletes competing at the same events, and I’m really happy about that because para-athletes profit from the attention the able-bodied get. The Paralympics are just para-athletes, so that’s a first for me.

You have dominated your class for years. What has been key? I have been paddling since 2000 when I was 10-years-old, and there was no para-canoе. So I had to compete with the able-bodied canoeists from early on and did a lot of national and international races in K1, K2 and K4. I was lucky that I had a lot of support from my club and my family.

I think the Australian Curt McGrath and the Brazilian Fernano Rufino de Paulo. Curt switched last year from the outrigger (vaa) to the kayak and was second at the World Championships… Fernando is big and strong like a bull but a really nice guy. He always tries to talk to me but he doesn’t speak English and I don’t speak Portuguese, unfortunately.

What can be done to continue developing para-canoе? I think we should drop the special requirements for the para-canoе-boats, at least for the KL2 and KL3 categories. It was a good idea at the beginning of para-canoе because there were many beginners, and it was easier for people to get into the sport. Now after six years, a lot of nations have programmes for scouting and pretty good structures with more experienced athletes.

Most of these athletes can already use the normal racing boats. I believe that normal boats are fairer because there are different sizes for athletes with different weights. With current regulations, I think heavier athletes have an advantage. Additionally para-athletes could train with able-bodied athletes because they wouldn’t be slowed by their boats anymore.
The 2015 world title in the road race slipped from her hands but the veteran will aim to make it up in Rio.

We had a right-hand turn to come into the stadium and leading into that turn she had been sitting on me and had a lot of energy left (and then) she overtook me at the corner.

It taught me a lot about racing. I’m glad it happened last year and not this year.

To have somebody who has a disability say hey I can do it is important I think, even if it’s not me. Uniek wants to work for you. It’s not always easy, but we train very hard, almost every day. We try to enjoy it the most we can and it’s amazing. I hope in the years to come we see more of that.

That makes me feel proud of what I’m doing.

London 2012 was a mixed T1-T2 race. I think the best thing about Rio is that I don’t have to race the men this year. That is changing at Rio 2016. It’s great to see I can race against women even if we’re T1-T2 combined. We have to watch out for (Canada’s) Marie-Eve (Croteau). She’s a T1 rider. So it’s not just the T2 racers who I’m usually racing at the World Cup level.

We have the least. Athletes with impairments affecting coordination, muscle power or range of motion, and impairments affecting coordination and impairments affecting coordination and muscle power.

If we show good achievements in our sport, then more people are going to become aware. It’s also important that, in general, the Paralympics are recognised as the highest level of para-sports. And when people see equestrian on the Paralympic global stage, than that can help spread the sport outside Europe. Also we have the best horses in Europe, so we need to develop horses around the world.

Quick Facts

Venue: Olympic Equestrian Centre

Dates: 11-16 September

Events: 6

Athletes: 130

Games debut: 1994

Classification

A: Athletes with physical impairments affecting sensation or loss of sensation.
B: Athletes with visual impairments.
C1-5: Paralympic athletes and amputees who use a handbike.
T1-2: Athletes with impaired balance who use a bicycle.

Quick Facts

Venue: Olympic Velodrome

Dates: 3-15 September

Events: 19

Athletes: 230

Games debut: 1984

Classification

1a, 1b, II, III and IV

Based on the riders’ impairments, athletes are classified based on their ability to cycle using tandem, handbike, bicycle or tricycle. The lower the athlete’s number, the greater the impact of their impairment on their ability to cycle.

A: Athletes with visual impairments.

Quick Facts

Venue: Pontal (Road)

Dates: 14-17 September

Events: 18

Athletes: 33

Medal events: 14-17 September

Games debut: 1984

Classification

Road and track

Athletes are classed based on their ability to ride a horse, they compete in one of five grades (1a, 1b, II, III and IV). Riders in 1a have the greater activity limitations and those in IV have the least. Athletes with visual impairment compete in grades III and IV.

A: Athletes with visual impairments.

Quick Facts

Venue: London 2012

Events: 8

Athletes: 11

Games debut: 2004

Classification

London 2012 was a mixed T1-T2 race.

A: Athletes with visual impairments.

Quick Facts

Venue: London 2012

Events: 8

Medal events: 8 -11 September (Road); 19-22 September (Track)

Athletes: 52

Games debut: 1996

Classification

A: Athletes with visual impairments.

Quick Facts

Venue: Rio Olympic Velodrome (Track)

Dates: 8 -11 September

Events: 14

Medal events: 11-16 September

Athletes: 17

Games debut: 2016

Classification

Road and track

Athletes are classed based on their ability to ride a horse, they compete in one of five grades (1a, 1b, II, III and IV). Riders in 1a have the greater activity limitations and those in IV have the least. Athletes with visual impairment compete in grades III and IV.

A: Athletes with visual impairments.
Russia 1 0 0

France 0 1 0

Spain 0 0 1

The “Paralympic Pele” will go for a Paralympic three-peat.

Jefferson “Jefinho” da Conceicao Goncalves (BRA)

What has contributed to Brazil dominating every major event?

There’s a whole organisational structure, with the CBDOV (Brazilian Sports Confederation for the Visually Impaired) and clubs, dedicated to help us do our best. There is organisation, capacity and reliability in all the work done by all who make up the football 5, including managers, technical staff and especially athletes; this is why Brazil is such a large force in the sport.

Are there any changes to the national team since London 2012?

A lot has changed in this four-year interval. We have a new coaching staff who brought new and great ideas and added to our selection. So although our group of players have not changed much, our football has evolved considerably...Today we play with a different, more dynamic style, both on offence and defence.

Describe the emotions from winning gold at London 2012. It was my second Paralympic medal, but it felt more meaningful than Beijing 2008. In 2008, I participated in the conquest, but not actively as I was in 2012. London was the hardest race I competed. From the beginning to the final...It was only at the final whistle I could celebrate and it was only on the podium, the sound of my national anthem when it hit me that the gold was ours.

How popular is football 5 in Brazil? There was a great football growth for the blind in Brazil from Athens 2004, not only for investments, but the visibility of our sport. The inclusion of the sport in the Paralympics was a watershed for all these developments. From there, people really began to meet, inform and ask about our football. Today, many people stop me on the street recognising and know that I am an athlete.

Matches against Argentina have been nail-biters. The rivalry, Brazil vs. Argentina is the great classic, so every game against them will always be difficult. In addition, we have played with each other for several years, so we know each other’s games well.

TO WATCH

SILVIO VELO (Argentina) Captain who was part of the 2004 and 2008 Paralympic silver medal teams.

EMRAH OCAL (Turkey) Inspired his side to the European title in 2005.

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QUICK FACTS

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Dates: 9-17 September
Medal events: 1
Athletes: 112
Games debut: 2004
Qualified teams: Argentina, Brazil, China, Iran, Mexico, Morocco, Russia, Turkey
Classification All players have a visual impairment and have no visual acuity and/ or light perception. During matches, they must wear eyeshades.
www.ibsafootball.org

Kostyantyn Symashko (UKR)

The Ukrainian is arguably the best goalkeeper in the sport and is seeking his second Paralympic gold in three appearances.

What advice would you pass on to others?

People always should aim bigger and better, and sport is a good tool to temper your will-power and body.

TO WATCH

EDUARD RAMONOV (Russia) Voted Most Valuable Player at the 2015 World Championships.

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## Football 5-a-side

The “Paralympic Pele” will go for a Paralympic three-peat.

Jefferson “Jefinho” da Conceiao Goncalves (BRA)

What has contributed to Brazil dominating every major event?

There’s a whole organisational structure, with the CBDOV (Brazilian Sports Confederation for the Visually Impaired) and clubs, dedicated to help us do our best. There is organisation, capacity and reliability in all the work done by all who make up the football 5, including managers, technical staff and especially athletes; this is why Brazil is such a large force in the sport.

Are there any changes to the national team since London 2012?

A lot has changed in this four-year interval. We have a new coaching staff who brought new and great ideas and added to our selection. So although our group of players have not changed much, our football has evolved considerably...Today we play with a different, more dynamic style, both on offence and defence.

Describe the emotions from winning gold at London 2012. It was my second Paralympic medal, but it felt more meaningful than Beijing 2008. In 2008, I participated in the conquest, but not actively as I was in 2012. London was the hardest race I competed. From the beginning to the final...It was only at the final whistle I could celebrate and it was only on the podium, the sound of my national anthem when it hit me that the gold was ours.

How popular is football 5 in Brazil? There was a great football growth for the blind in Brazil from Athens 2004, not only for investments, but the visibility of our sport. The inclusion of the sport in the Paralympics was a watershed for all these developments. From there, people really began to meet, inform and ask about our football. Today, many people stop me on the street recognising and know that I am an athlete.

Matches against Argentina have been nail-biters. The rivalry, Brazil vs. Argentina is the great classic, so every game against them will always be difficult. In addition, we have played with each other for several years, so we know each other’s games well.

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## Football 7-a-side

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Goalball

Akiko Adachi (JPN)

One of the team’s key scorers and motivators, Adachi aims to lead Japan back to Paralympic gold.

- How did you first get into para-sport?
  After I became visually impaired, the institution I entered for re-habilitation and job training was providing some club activities that I joined.

- Japan defeated China for the 2015 Asian title by one point. How intense was that match?
  We had some pressure, but we had a strong will to win and played with all our heart.

- What sort of changes regarding para-sport have you noticed in Japan since London 2012?
  Since London 2012, goalball has a bigger media exposure, and a higher level of recognition. However, there are only few infrastructures adapted to this sport, so there isn’t significant increase in the player population.

- Who is your toughest opponent?
  Turkey, until now we have never been able to win our matches against them.

- What challenges will Japan face in defending its Paralympic gold?
  It is true that we won the gold medal in London, yet, instead of thinking that we have to defend our title, we rather have a challenger’s spirit, aiming to be at the world’s top level once more. Since there are many powerful world level teams, I think the challenges we will face will be being perseverant and showing a real Japanese-style of play.

- What are your expectations at Rio 2016?
  I, and the goalball team, are receiving a lot of support from plenty of people. Thus, I want to show my gratefulness for their support through my play.

- What is your future plan?
  I would like to continue playing goalball. If I can’t play anymore, I think I would be a coach.

- How did you get into judo?
  I was sad because I wanted to lead Japan back to Paralympic gold. One of the team’s key scorers and motivators, Adachi aims to lead Japan back to Paralympic gold.

- What are your expectations at Rio 2016?
  Of course the gold, but at least a medal.

- How did you feel about your bronze from London 2012?
  I was sad because I wanted the gold medal; I think I had a chance for it.

- What do you like to do when you are not competing?
  After I became visually impaired, the institution I entered for rehabilitation and job training was providing some club activities that I joined.

- Who has influenced you the most in your career?
  My coach József Keseru.

- What sort of adjustments have you made since London 2012 to ensure success at Rio 2016?
  I have tried new workouts, such as aqua fitness, especially the Aquawallgym, an elastic equipment used for training in the pool. I love it; it’s very useful.

How did you get into judo? It was required once a week in the elementary school to participate in judo. I fell in love with this sport, and my teacher said I had talent. I was about 14 years old when I went to a sport club and started competitively.

I was sad because I wanted the gold medal; I think I had a chance for it.

After taking bronze at the London 2012 Paralympic Games, Szabo came back strong in 2014 by winning the world title in the women’s up to 70kg.
ATHLETE PROFILES

Powerlifting

The Mexican will appear in her fifth Games after winning gold in the women’s up to 60kg in London 2012.

I hope little by little I can continue helping women realise we can be successful at national and international levels. Being a woman should not mean we minimise ourselves or think we do not have the capacity to succeed because it seems we are the apparent ‘weak sex’.

What impact will Rio 2016 have on Latin America? At the end of the day, we (Mexicans) are on the same continent, and we will feel closer to home. All Latin Americans will feel proud of being Latin American for hosting such a respectable event. Despite so many current international issues, the most primordial elements are love and sport, a common activity that everyone can be inspired and excited about.

Anti-doping has been an issue in powerlifting. Why is it important to stay clean? Artificial substances can hurt your body in short and long-term. Doping not only damages the individual, but also the nation you represent. It creates an image of an unhealthy, unclean nation.

I have always stayed clean because I know one can reach maximum goals only through discipline and persistence. I appreciate having a body with the capacity of improving, for example, one day I can lift 50kg more, or make one more repetition.

You almost broke the up to 55kg world record in February’s World Cup in Malaysia. How did you feel about that? Changing to another class was not easy. However, I wanted to change for two reasons: one, for health. Being in a wheelchair, our bodies tend to deteriorate more. We need to take care of our bodies by watching our weight. Two: for exploring my limits and the records I can achieve in this class.

What is it like growing up with 13 siblings? With 13 siblings, we had a hard time orienting ourselves in an auditory environment so impressive. I was frequently diving the wrong way and had a hard time orienting myself. At this particular time it’s ‘no rest for the weary’. But it will be an immense relief when I’m able to finish those races in Rio and especially end up on the podium again.

Who is your toughest competition? China’s Bozun Yang whom I lost again. Especially end up on the podium.

At the end of the day, we need to be from a performance standpoint. I also brought on corporate partners, so there’s a lot of travel and speaking.

Swimming

Brad Snyder (USA)

After winning London 2012 gold on the one-year anniversary of losing his sight in Afghanistan, the US Navy veteran is aiming to defend two Paralympic titles at Rio 2016.

I feel there is more pressure than the previous three years because there’s a lot to accomplish in a short amount of time – in and out of the pool. In the pool, I want to make sure I’m where I need to be from a performance standpoint. I also brought on corporate partners, so there’s a lot of travel and speaking.

What was it like growing up with 13 siblings? Social change is slow and I think we haven’t necessarily felt that growth quite yet. I think it will be another few years until we identify other athletes. I’ve met a few younger blind athletes who can develop in the next years. But there are many potential world champions who don’t know about para-sports.

What impact did London 2012 have in the USA? I think it will really catch on. I see that when I speak. I see that corporate partners.

Who is your toughest competition? China’s Matthew Souza, in front of a home crowd, is going to have a great Paralympics.

You tried goalball once during your rehab. How was that? It was enlightening because there are so many skills involved with being visually impaired that I had struggled with and I’m still not as good as athletes who are congenitally blind. The things they can hear and the way they orient themselves in an audible environment is so impressive. I was frequently diving the wrong way and had a hard time orienting myself.

At this particular time it’s ‘no rest for the weary’. But it will be an immense relief when I’m able to finish those races in Rio and especially end up on the podium again.

What impact did London 2012 have in the USA? I see that corporate partners.

How can Rio help? Being on TV in a prime time spot is going to help out in the US. There’s going to be a lot of direct interest. Once we get the
Great Britain’s Gordon Reid won his first Grand Slam singles title with a 7-6 (7), 6-4 victory over Belgian Joachim Gerard at the Australian Open. It was both Reid and Gerard’s first appearance in a Grand Slam singles final. Reid also defeated Japan’s Shingo Kunieda – who had won every Australian Open singles and doubles match he had played – in the quarter-finals. Australian Dylan Alcott beat US rival David Wagner 6-2, 6-2 to defend his quad singles title. Jiske Griffioen defended her women’s singles title, beating Aniek van Koot 6-3, 7-5, in an all-Dutch final. The Netherlands’ Marjolein Buis and Japan’s Yui Kamiji won the women’s doubles title. French duo Stephane Houdet and Nicolas Peifer triumphed on the men’s side, while Wagner and South Africa’s Lucas Sithole left with the quad doubles title.

Russia retained their world title after defeating Norway 7-4 in the finals in Lucerne, Switzerland. South Korea came back to defeat Switzerland 6-5 for the bronze medal. Down 5-2, South Korea scored three points in the seventh end. In the final end, Switzerland was forced to attempt a difficult runback as South Korea held shot stone. The Swiss’s stone would over curl, taking their stone wide and giving South Korea the single point steal for the win.
Great Britain topped the medals table at the 2016 UCI Para-Cycling Track World Championships at the Montichiari velodrome in Italy. Amongst all their highlights was Megan Giglia, who won two gold medals, both in world-record breaking fashion.

The British rider took the women’s C3 pursuit final, defeating Germany’s reigning world champion Denise Schindler. During her qualifying race, Giglia clocked a world record of 4:6.756. Giglia then set another world record, this time in the women’s C3 time trial (41.761) for the gold. She surpassed the previous world record of 42.955 held by the USA’s Jamie Whitmore Cardenas, who finished third.

The Netherlands’ Alyda Norbruis – who won all three of her events in the 2015 World Championships – left Montichiari with two medals: gold in the C2 time trial and silver in the individual pursuit.

The USA’s Joseph Berenyi continued to stamp his authority in the men’s C3 events, defending both his world titles in the individual pursuit and time trial.
IPC Alpine Skiing World Cup
15 January – 4 March
With her unbeaten run of 13 races, France’s Marie Bochet secured the overall World Cup for women’s standing. The 21-year-old – who also collected globes in slalom, giant slalom, downhill and super-G – was just one of the overall winners as the season wrapped up on 4 March in Aspen, USA.

Great Britain saw the rise of 17-year-old Menna Fitzpatrick, with guide Jen Kehoe, who wrapped up on 4 March in Aspen, USA.

IPC Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing World Cup
2 December 2015 – 20 March
Russia dominated the season as the World Cup series came to a close in Vuokatti, Finland. Russia topped the overall rankings in every category but the women’s cross-country sitting. The USA’s Oksana Masters closed the season with a triple victory in cross-country skiing races, to take home the women’s cross-country overall World Cup globe.

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IPC Snowboard World Cup
19 November 2015 – 18 March
The Netherlands closed the 2015-16 IPC Snowboard season on a high note, as a duo of Dutch athletes secured banked slalom globes with wins at the World Cup Finals in Trentino, Italy.

World champion Chris Vos (men’s SB-LL1) and Renske van Beek (women’s SB-UL) topped their respective podiums, as well as the overall titles.

Compatriot Bibian Mentel-Spee was stunning since returning to competition in February, as the world and Paralympic champion won the women’s SB-LL2 banked slalom in Trentino, to finish atop the overall rankings in her class.

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GOALBALL: Host Algeria took double gold after their men and women’s teams won their respective finals, defeating Egypt on both occasions in the IBSA Goalball Africa Regional Championships finals on 5 March. The victories secured both Algerian teams a spot in September’s Paralympics.

ATHLETICS: Iran’s Ahmad Ojaghlou helped his country top the medals table at the IPC Athletics Asia-Oceania Championships (6-12 March). Ojaghlou completed a hat-trick of wins in Dubai, UAE, with victories in the 300m, 200m and 400m T47. Iran totaled 23 golds, 10 silver and seven bronze. China finished runners up with 16 golds, nine silver and five bronzes.

POWERLIFTING: Iran’s Paralympic and world champion Siamand Rahman lifted 296kg to set a new world record in the men’s over 107kg at the IPC Powerlifting World Cup in Dubai, UAE, on 19 February. It is the ninth time the Iranian has broken the world record and means he remains on course to reach his ultimate goal of 300kg. Rahman is expected to attempt the feat at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

CANOE: Curtis McGrath, Amanda Reynolds and Susan Seipel earned nominations to the Australian Paralympic Committee after winning their respective K1 200m finals at the National Championships in Perth on 3 March.

SHOOTING: Abdulla Sultan Alaryani put on a show for his home country, as he won three gold medals: the R7 (men’s) 50m rifle three positions SH1), R1 (men’s) 10m air rifle standing SH1) and the team event R3 (10m air rifle prone mixed SH1), and the IPC Shooting World Cup in Al Ain, UAE, in January.
Rio 2016

To mark six-months-to-go on 7 March, IPC President Sir Philip Craven stressed the importance of the Rio 2016 Paralympics building on the success of previous Games to continue the Paralympic Movement’s growth.

“It has been just over seven years since Rio was historically elected to host Latin America’s first Paralympic Games in Copenhagen, Denmark. A lot of hard work has been undertaken since that decision, but now Rio is almost ready to stage what will be an unmissable Games,” said Sir Philip.

“The Rio 2016 Paralympic Games will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for all those who attend and a chance for the whole of South America to unite and celebrate a sporting festival that will transform the continent forever. Rio 2016 must show to the world that Beijing 2008 and London 2012 were not exceptions, but the norm.”

To build off the momentum from the previous Games, Sir Philip emphasised that Rio 2016 must aim to set new records in terms of performance and social legacy.

Four years ago, London 2012 sold a record 2.76 million tickets and attracted a cumulative global TV audience of 3.8 billion people. Sir Philip said he expects to reach a record cumulative TV audience of more than four billion people from Rio 2016. He is also confident the Brazilian public will turn out in force and throw their full support behind the Brazilian team and the other 170 plus competing countries.

“I can promise you a life-changing experience that will make you re-evaluate what you believe is humanly possible,” said Sir Philip.

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PyeongChang 2018

The PyeongChang 2018 Organising Committee (POCOG) celebrated two years to go until the Paralympic Winter Games with Paralympic Day on 9 March, followed by a week of festivities and promotions to raise awareness of the Games.

The public got a taste of ice sledge hockey, with an exhibition match held at the venue site. During the week, POCOG featured articles, photos and videos of athletes on its website with the theme “Paralympic Week – Meet the Heroes 2.” A documentary programme was also aired, about Borami Seo, a Korean cross-country skier.

Australian ice sledge hockey player Seung-Hwan Jung was also appointed as PyeongChang 2018 ambassador.

Agitos Foundation, POCOG partner

The Agitos Foundation and POCOG will deliver a series of workshops and grants for equipment to develop winter para-sports around the world as part of POCOG’s Actualising the Dream project.

Five workshops for sport managers, coaches and athletes in alpine skiing, snowboard, cross-country skiing, biathlon, ice sledge hockey and wheelchair curling have been organised from January 2016. Funding will also be made available for NPCs to purchase equipment, helping them grow the next generation of athletes.

Tokyo 2020

IPC CEO Xavier Gonzalez said the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games are on course to be the best ever. His remarks came following January’s first ever IOC-IPC Project Review with the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee.

During the two-day meeting, productive discussions took place, covering a range of Games-related topics: competition venues, marketing, people management, the engagement strategy, the new emblems’ selection process, sports, sustainability, accessibility and legacies.

“There are just over four years to go until the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games and I have to say they are the best prepared Organising Committee to date,” Gonzalez said.

“The enthusiasm and support we experienced when we first came here in January 2014 has further increased over the last two years … We had two days of productive meetings in conjunction with the IOC and we are pleased with the outcomes. Tokyo 2020’s commitment for the Paralympics is infectious and this is best illustrated by the support from the city and national government, corporate sector, media for the Games.”

Whilst in Tokyo, the IPC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kyodo News to serve as the host national news agency for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

Beijing 2022

Following Beijing’s election as host city of the 2022 Paralympic Winter Games in July 2015, the IPC held an Orientation Seminar with the Organising Committee (BOCOG) in January to share in-depth views and discussions regarding the Games.

At the seminar, the IPC delegates walked their BOCOG colleagues through the evolution of the Paralympic Winter Games; the history and governing structure of the IPC; and the IPC’s vision, aspiration and values. The two sides also discussed various topics: the sports programme, accessibility, inclusion, branding, broadcasting, communication and promotion; media operations; requirements of different clients; legacy and milestone timings of the Paralympic Winter Games.

Zhang Jiandong, Vice President of BOCOG, said: “A successful 2022 Paralympic Winter Games need joint efforts from BOCOG and the IPC. The seminar marks a good start of the close co-operation between the two sides.”
The 2016 World Championships in Duisburg, Germany, will be the last stop for athletes to capture Rio 2016 qualification slots, and also fine tune themselves ahead of their sport’s Paralympic debut. Host Germany will have plenty to cheer for. While Great Britain’s Jeanette Chippington looks to defend her KL1 gold medal she won in Milan, Italy, the 2015 runner-up and home favourite Edina Muller is expected to contend.

Another German in Tom Kierey will also look to take advantage on home waters, as he aims to defend his KL3 world title. Expect Muller is expected to contend.

In the sonar fleet, the Australian crew of Colin Harrison, Jonathan Harris and Russell Boaden will look to rebound from last year’s disappointment when they finished runner-up to Great Britain’s John Robertson, Hannah Stodel and Stephen Thomas. Defending French world champion Damien Seguin will look to continue his strong form in the 2.6mR ahead of Rio 2016. But Germany’s Hoiko Kroeger, who took the 2015 World silver in the 2.4mR, is expected to contest. Australia’s Dan Fitzgerald and Liel Teisch are the clear favourites in the SKUD18.

The 2016 ITU Para-Triathlon World Championships will be the last major stop for triathletes before their sport’s Paralympic debut. This year, para-triathlon will have its own stand-alone World Championships. One of the most competitive races in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, will be in the men’s PT4 class. Canada’s Stefan Daniel and Germany’s Martin Schulz are expected to give a taster of what is to come at Rio. The two were neck-in-neck and both faced equipment issues at last year’s Worlds in Chicago, USA, with Daniel winning the race by a narrow margin. While the race does not offer points for Rio 2016, it will serve as a last stop for athletes to shake off any rust before heading to the Paralympics.

Great Britain’s swimmer-turned-triathlete Lauren Steadman won every race she competed in 2015 in the women’s PT4 class. The women’s PT2 class may feature another USA sweep, with Hailey Danisewicz leading. The women’s PT4 class may feature another USA sweep, with Hailey Danisewicz leading. The women’s PT2 class may feature another USA sweep, with Hailey Danisewicz leading.

ONES TO WATCH

TOM KIEREY GERMANY
EDINA MULLER GERMANY
LUIS CARLOS CARDOSO BRAZIL
DAMIEN SEGuin FRANCE
SKUD18 TEAM AUSTRALIA
SONAR TEAM GREAT BRITAIN
GORDON REID GREAT BRITAIN
JISKE GRIFFIDEN NETHERLANDS
JOACHIM GERARD BELGIUM
STEFAN DANIEL CANADA
HAILEY DANISEWICZ USA
LAUREN STEADMAN GREAT BRITAIN

17-19 May
Canoe World Championships

 Nations have one last chance to secure qualifying spots ahead of canoe’s Paralympic debut in Rio, as the 2016 World Championships take place in Duisburg, Germany. The 2016 World Championships in Duisburg, Germany, will be the last stop for athletes to capture Rio 2016 qualification slots, and also fine tune themselves ahead of their sport’s Paralympic debut. Host Germany will have plenty to cheer for. While Great Britain’s Jeanette Chippington looks to defend her KL1 gold medal she won in Milan, Italy, the 2015 runner-up and home favourite Edina Muller is expected to contend.

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The top sailors from around the world will get to fine tune their skills with three months to go until the Rio 2016 Paralympics.

The top sailors hit the waters just six months after last year’s World Championships in Melbourne, Australia.

Medal events in the single-person keelboat (2.4mR), two-person keelboat (SKUD18) and three-person keelboat (sonar) will be up for grabs in Medemblik, Netherlands.

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I think the biggest challenge with the current swimming classification system is that it was devised almost 20, 30 years ago, when less complex impairments were involved. So it was very much swimmers with cerebral palsy, missing limbs or visual impairments. Now we have lots of different, intricate impairments that need to be in the system, but the testing procedures do not cover them.

In turn, there has been a lot of going back to the drawing board, and seeing what is it that makes an elite disabled athlete. They do not pass as being ‘disabled enough.’ It is frustrating for those in that sense. But that does not mean the athlete is not entitled to swim at the Paralympics or they are not ‘disabled enough.’ It just means the current system has not catered to them.

I think you get two types of athletes. A majority accept the system because you have to trust the classifiers know their stuff: they put you where you should be. And then you get some who think that they are in the wrong place, and they have been hard-done. For me personally, I am not competitive in the freestyle, backstroke or even medley events. But it is not that the women are in the wrong class. I am not in the wrong class. They are just more suited for that stroke or that distance than I am.

In able-bodied sports, like swimming, it requires a systematic approach. First, you collect data on the impairments. With all that said, work is being done to improve the current swimming classification system.

Over time, with the actual system being in place since the early 1990s, swimming has evolved and we gained further knowledge of the determining factors of performance. Every classification system is different because it is sport-specific. For swimming, we have to consider drag and propulsion, which define the optimal movement through the water for athletes with physical impairments. We have to look at the resistance in the water for athletes with visual impairments, and athletes with intellectual impairments are challenged by pacing and complex movements such as turning.

We also know that start, clean as length and turning each have a specific impact. And this must be looked at over four disciplines: freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke and butterfly. In addition, (competitive) swimming is a sport that is accessible to a diverse range of impairments, and athletes with intellectual impairments are challenged by pacing and complex movements such as turning.

It requires a systematic approach. First, you engage with the athletes and coaches to learn more about the accuracy of the actual system. In parallel, you analyse the existing scientific knowledge of the sport performance. With this information as basis, you then conduct research to determine the impact of impairment on this performance.

This most likely requires the development of very specific measurement methods (e.g., length of stroke, range of movements, vision or cognition require different measurements). Once you have data on the above, you again engage athletes and coaches in the interpretation of the findings, ultimately resulting in a proposal of revised classification system. In a final stage, you have to re-train classifiers and plan for all athletes to be reclassified.

This is a process that takes time.

We do not know from the onset how a revised system will look like, nor do we start from the assumption that there should be a pre-set number of classes. We are aiming for an objective, reliable and transparent system that meets the requirements of the IPC Classification Code.

We want to be able to understand classification in swimming so that they can enjoy the competition.

We learn more about each sport day by day, and training programmes are adjusted continuously to improve the current swimming classification system.

However, once a system is in place, it is very hard. In other words: one cannot train him or herself into another class. In a good classification system, effective coaching should only increase an athlete’s competitive standing within their class.
Females in visually impaired skiing …

… and how to increase participation.

A barrier was broken. Suddenly, the idea that someone ‘blind’ can’t ski at 40 miles per hour down a mountain was smashed.

It became obvious that females have the guts to do that as well.

My advice would be to join a programme and give it a try.

But once a young woman joins and begins skiing on the circuit, it’s also so important for them to be supported, not just from family, friends and fellow skiers, but also from National Federations to IPC Alpine Skiing. We desperately need the coverage in order for our sport to be attractive to sponsors and it’s in this area where the National Federations and media can help. In addition, we look to IPC Alpine Skiing to lead the way for the athletes to professionalise our sport, supporting us with great competitions and progress in classification.

I was skiing without radio communications to begin with, and my guide was just shouting the voice commands. Danelle Umstead, a visually impaired skier from the USA, then sold me a really cheap pair of radio comms, and I could hear my guides commands better.

It’s a glimpse of the camaraderie you develop with other visually impaired skiers on the road.

If everyone works together, from coaches and National Federations to IPC Alpine Skiing and even the athlete community, we can continue to grow the field.

First skied when I was 17 years old on a family holiday. My mum thought it was a really bad idea because, obviously, I can’t see. My dad was encouraging, and after the first lesson, everybody seemed to be happy enough.

I enjoyed how people would spend almost all day on the mountain skiing and taking a break for lunch. People just really enjoyed themselves, skiing with family and friends.

From the moment I started skiing competitively everyone on the circuit was really welcoming, which encouraged me to continue.

But getting more young visually impaired athletes, especially girls, into alpine skiing is a challenge. The barriers, however, can be overcome.

First, it’s understandable why alpine skiing isn’t a parents’ top choice for their children who have disabilities, especially with visual impairments.

Parents are sometimes told such negative things in hospital and educational settings that their child won’t be able to do this or that, which can come across as good advice. So, sometimes parents can be anxious about encouraging their children to do very active or physically demanding tasks, like skiing.

Another issue is that young girls tend to drop out of sport in their teens. It’s particularly problematic when you add an impairment. Maybe that’s why it’s hard to find many girls who want to throw themselves down a mountain at high speeds.

To get more girls, and people generally, into skiing, I truly believe the coverage we got at the Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi in Great Britain in particular was crucial. It showed that there’s so much more attention and interest in winter para-sports.

It’s important for people to be aware about what we’re doing on the slopes.

It’s important for them to understand that yes, females with visual impairments can and do ski.
IPC Vision:
“To enable para-athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world.”