The Rio 2016 Paralympic Games surprised us all and surpassed all expectations, despite the unique circumstances in which they were staged.

Never before has a Paralympics been held in the face of such economic and political turmoil, but the Games delivered against all odds.

Paralympians are no strangers to overcoming challenges and I was overjoyed at how the Paralympic Movement came together to ensure the Games were a success.

To go from 200,000 ticket sales two weeks prior to the Opening Ceremony to 2.15 million by the time of the Closing was a huge achievement and testament to the outstanding support of the Cariocas.

The Rio 2016 Paralympics will be remembered as the People’s Games and the memory of the first Saturday, when more than 170,000 people filled the Barra Olympic Park, will live long into the memory. The noise was incredible and the atmosphere like nothing I have ever experienced before at a Paralympics.

The one thing that did not surprise was the level of athletic performance; Rio 2016 was the best ever in this regard with athletes pushing their bodies to the absolute limits. A record 83 NPCs won a medal and one of the standout performances came from Iranian powerlifter Siamand Rahman. To lift 310kg – the equivalent of a large Siberian tiger – was one of the most remarkable performances ever seen in sport.

Another highlight for me was the appearances of Ibrahim Al-Hussein and Sharad Nasajpour as part of the first Independent Paralympic Athletes team. Their performances delivered a message of hope and inclusion to the whole world.

The Games were the most broadcast in history with over 154 countries showing the action, whilst more than 1.5 billion people engaged in Rio 2016 via the IPC’s online channels.

I am confident Rio 2016 will leave a lasting legacy for Latin America and March’s Youth Parapan American Games at the Brazilian Paralympic Committee’s Sao Paulo training centre is a fine example of that legacy in action.

Sadly Rio 2016 was not without tragedy; the passing of Iranian cyclist Bahman Golbarnezhad on the penultimate day was a tremendous loss for the whole Paralympic Movement. Our thoughts remain with his family and friends and I encourage you all to read the fitting tribute to him in this magazine.

Finally, next year The Paralympian will have a new look and will be published twice a year.

I wish you all the best for 2017.

Sir Philip Craven, MBE
IPC President
The IPC extended its partnerships with Allianz, BP and Ottobock; Proud Paralympian education programme re-launched and other major headlines in the Paralympic Movement.

Thanks to the Cariocas, Latin America’s first Paralympic Games had an atmosphere like no other and left a lasting impact on the region and global Movement.

Thanks to the Independent Paralympic Athletes’ Team took part at Rio 2016. Hear from Ibrahim Al-Hussein and Sharad Nasajpour about their experiences.

How did Rio 2016’s digital numbers compare to London 2012? The figures will amaze you.

A wrap-up of all 22 Paralympic sports, including medals tables, personal athlete accounts and stunning images.

PyeongChang 2018 Test Events are set, while the Paralympic flag is touring Tokyo.

Norwegian rower Birgit Skarstein and World Taekwondo Federation’s Olof Hansson share their thoughts on what sports making their Paralympic debuts should do to continue developing.

In memory of Iranian cyclist Bahman Golbarnezhad.
On 7 August the IPC suspended the Russian Paralympic Committee (RPC) due to its inability to fulfill its membership responsibilities and obligations, in particular its obligation to comply with the IPC Anti-Doping Code and the World Anti-Doping Code (to which it is also a signatory).

The IPC’s decision, which resulted in Russian athletes not being allowed to compete at the Rio 2016 Paralympics, was taken following the publication in mid-July of the McLaren report – an investigation led by Professor Richard McLaren commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) – and after allowing the RPC to present its case in both writing and in person.

McLaren’s report and subsequent investigations found that at least 11 positive drugs tests from Russian athletes involved in Paralympic sports were covered up by the Moscow anti-doping laboratory on orders from Russia’s ministry of sport between 2012 and 2015. Evidence that 18 samples from Russian athletes competing at the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games had been tampered with was also found.

“Tragically this situation is not about athletes cheating a system, but about a State-run system that is cheating the athletes.”

“Although there is no timeline for the RPC to implement the changes required, we want to work closely with them in order to bring about the necessary changes sooner, rather than later.”

The IPC is an important part of the Paralympic Movement and its athletes want to be competing against the world’s best athletes on the international stage. With the IPC’s full co-operation and understanding, we will continue to be, met in full.”

The IPC aims to bring together athletes involved in Para sport administration from all over the world, giving them the tools they need to take the values of Paralympic sport back to their countries and organisations.

More chances for athletes to get involved through the National Paralympic Committees and International Federations will also be available, and an entirely new set of learning materials will be launched in 2017.

Athletes who registered to receive updates from Proud Paralympian will be kept informed of any exciting new developments and news from the programme.

Proud Paralympian can be followed on social media:

@ProudPara
ProudParalympian

ProudParalympian

www.paralympic.org/athletes/proud-paralympian

#ProudParalympians inspire at Rio 2016

Hundreds of athletes from around the world got their first experience of the newly re-launched athlete education programme, Proud Paralympian, at Rio 2016.

A dedicated space in the Athletes’ Dining Hall was visited every day by athletes eager to have some fun and find out more about how they could be Proud Paralympians themselves. They had the chance to play games, receive career advice, learn about the Paralympic Movement, and most importantly, engage with and vote in the Athletes’ Council elections.

US swimmer Ileana Rodriguez, alpine skiers Pietro Marek of Poland and Arly Velasquez of Mexico, Japanese Nordic skier Miki Matheson and her compatriot Eri Yamamoto were on hand to speak to athletes as Proud Paralympians themselves.

Mexican javelin thrower Eliezer Gabriel and Ecuadorian runner Darwin Castro, who have benefitted from sports training given in the Americas by the development arm of the IPC, the Agitos Foundation, had their photo taken for a giant cover of the IPC’s magazine The Paralympian. Independent Paralympic Athletes’ Team members Ibrahim Al-Hussein and Shahrad Nasajpour also received some career counselling from Adecco.

Pope Francis highlighted the importance of the Paralympic Movement has for social inclusion at October’s ‘Sport for the Spirit of Humanity’s First Global Conference on Sport and Faith.’

The Pope said: “The Paralympic Movement and other sporting associations sustaining those with disabilities, such as the Special Olympics, have had a decisive role in helping the public recognize and admire the extraordinary performances of athletes with different abilities and capacities.”

SHOOTING PARA SPORT: World Shooting Para Sport extended its partnership with ISSF, the world’s leading producer of electronic scoring systems, as the Official Results and Target Systems Provider for the sport at regional, world and World Cup events until 2024.

CYCLING: Ireland’s Colin Lynch established the first ever officially sanctioned UCI Hour Record for Para cycling, since its regulations were extended to the discipline in 2016. The mark of 43.133km was achieved on 1 October at the National Cycling Centre in Manchester, Great Britain.

WADA: The World Anti-Doping Agency published its 2017 List of Prohibited Substances and Methods, along with the 2017 Summary of Major Modifications and Explanatory Notes. The List can be found at www.wada-ama.org.

WORLD PARA ATHLETICS: World Para Athletics reached a five-year agreement with ASICS, the true sport performance brand as an Official Partner through to 2020. ASICS will provide apparel for all international officials and World Para Athletics staff and focus on the development and promotion of the sport and the Paralympic Movement.

WORLD PARA POWERLIFTING: Berck-sur-mer, France, will host the 2018 World Para Powerlifting European Open Championships between 25-30 May.

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL: Tenerife, Spain, will host the European Championships for Men and Women Division A, to be held 12 June – 1 July. The International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWWB) also launched a new website www.iwlb.org.

*** NEWS IN BRIEF ***

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The IPC extends partnerships

The IPC extended its partnerships with a number of organisations in the days during and after Rio 2016.

Ottobock underlined its “Passion for Paralympics” by extending its worldwide partnership until the end of 2020. A worldwide partner since 2005, Ottobock is the longest serving partner to the Paralympic Games and has been committed to growing paralympic programmes with technical services for equipment used by Paralympians since the Seoul 1988 Paralympic Games.

Over the next four years the two organisations are committed to growing participation at every level and using sport to improve the quality of life and socioeconomic opportunities for people living with an impairment.

Building on 10 years of successful partnership to increase awareness of Paralympic sport, Allianz expressed its partnership to increase awareness of Paralympic Games and since making her Paralympic debut 12 years ago, she has done much to raise the profile of Paralympic sport around the world.

Inclusion Summit

More than 200 people attended the 2016 IPC Academy Inclusion Summit which took place during two days of the Rio Paralympics.

Opened by a video address from Ban Ki-Moon, the UN Secretary General spoke about how sport is a catalyst for inclusion and how the Paralympic Movement has been a close ally in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The summit was divided into three themes – understanding inclusion, inclusive leadership and delivering inclusion – and attracted delegates from Organising Committees, Candidate Cities, government bodies and suppliers to major events and educational institutions.

Speakers at the Inclusion Summit, which formed part of the 2016 IPC Academy Campus, included Sir Philip Craven, Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo, Disability Adviser of the World Bank, and Shanthi Flynn, Chief HR Officer, Adecco, one of the inclusion summit’s partners. The event was hosted by Paralympians Lord Chris Holmes MBE, Helene Raynsford and Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo. Disability Adviser of the World Bank, and Shanthi Flynn, Chief HR Officer, Adecco, one of the inclusion Summit’s partners.

Visa Paralympic Hall of Fame

Four Paralympians, with 66 Paralympic medals between them, and a leading coach were inducted into the Visa Paralympic Hall of Fame during Rio 2016.

Having competed at six Paralympics between 1992 and 2012, Junichi Kawai is Japan’s most successful male Para swimmer who, during his athletic career, founded the Paralympians Association of Japan in 2003.

Wheelchair racer Chantal Petitclerc is the most-decorated female track Paralympian having won 14 Paralympic titles between 1992 and 2008. In Rio, she was the Chef de Mission of the Canadian team.

The IPC is a strong signal for a further four years of growing mutual understanding and an increasing awareness of the special strengths of people with an impairment. Apart from the global co-operation, 14 Allianz subsidiaries support National Paralympic Committees in Australia, Argentina, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, Slovakia, Sri Lanka and Switzerland.

BP has renewed its international partnership through to the end of 2020, having first joined forces with the IPC in 2013. In addition to its support for the IPC, BP currently supports 10 NPCs – Angola, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Netherlands, Turkey, Trinidad and Tobago, Great Britain, USA, Germany and Switzerland.

Away from sponsorship, the IPC announced it had signed a letter of intent with Channel 4 for the broadcaster to remain as Great Britain’s Paralympic rights holder until 2020.

In line with the broadcaster’s unique public service remit, it is anticipated that Channel 4 will cover the PyeongChang 2018 and Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, as well as the London 2017 World Para Athletics Championships.
OIS provides breathtaking images of Rio 2016 Paralympics

The Rio 2016 Paralympics were the setting for a ground-breaking programme in which images captured by some of the world’s best sports photographers were made freely available to news organisations, online and across social media platforms.

For the first time in Paralympic Games history, the Olympic Information Service (OIS) provided this unique, professional sports photography experience to spread the colour, passion and excitement of the Paralympics around the world.

Behind the lenses were four multi-award winning Sports Illustrated photographers: Bob Martin, Simon Bruty, Al Tielemans and Tom Lovelock.

The photos produced by these extraordinary photographers embodied the Paralympic Spirit and displayed the Paralympic values of courage, determination, inspiration and equality.

All photos were made available via a custom website www.OISPhotos.com license-free to NPCs, International and National Para Sport Federations and the media worldwide.

The Associated Press, Reuters, AFP, Getty Images and EPA news agencies each distributed OIS images on their wire services, which gave the Paralympics unprecedented global media reach.

OIS photos reached millions through Facebook, being shared by IPC, NPCs, IFs, athletes, their friends and families.

Anthony Edgar, Head of Media Operation and Head of the OIS for the International Olympic Committee said: “OIS is an exciting new way forward delivering a turnkey solution for OCOGs. The OIS in Rio did not replace the importance of the press; it simply supported their reporting of the Paralympics.”

“We look forward to furthering the possibilities in PyeongChang for the Winter Games in March 2018,” Edgar said.

Bob Martin, OIS Chief Photographer, added: “OIS photos were far more successful than we had expected with publications across the world such as the Japan Times to The Chicago Tribune publishing the photos, culminating in three double pages in Sports Illustrated and four double pages in L’Equipe Magazine. Many news websites also extensively used our Paralympic photos such as BBC, Mail online, Yahoo, CNN, to mention just a few.”

Craig Spence, IPC Media and Communications Director, said: “We were excited about the idea of providing images of the highest quality free of charge to media, athletes, NPCs, IFs, and Paralympic fans worldwide. The results in terms of the quality of the images as well as the global reach exceeded our expectations and we are very pleased that OIS photos will come back for the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games.”

The OIS is a professional sports information service established under Olympic Agenda 2020 to support and cover the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games and Youth Olympic Games.

View more OIS photos from the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games at www.oisphotos.com
The first refugee athletes formed part of the Independent Paralympic Athletes’ (IPA) Team at Rio 2016. Syrian born swimmer Ibrahim Al-Hussein and Iranian discus thrower Sharad Nasajpour comprised the team and shared their Rio experience.


How would you describe your first Paralympics?

Sharad Nasajpour: Rio was my biggest ever sport event and being part of such a big event was a great experience. You compete with the best in the world, and it made me more determined to keep going and try harder in all I do.

Ibrahim Al-Hussein: It was a great opportunity to participate in Rio and opened my horizons. I was depending only on myself and some local support in order to solve issues concerning my training and participation in sport events before the Games. Thanks to Rio, now I have a bigger support group.

What did it mean for you to be on the IPA Team and share the experience with your teammate?

Sharad Nasajpour: It means sending my message that we are ready to compete and achieve good results, like any team or athlete. Yes we are refugees, but we can also be athletes, poets, professionals in many other areas. You learn a lot when you share the experience with someone. With Sharad, I learned many humanity and sporting lessons.

Ibrahim Al-Hussein: Both of us have had the same situation as a displaced person in a new country. We have had many barriers to get over. But we didn’t give up and continued our career and fought through all difficulties, then made it to Rio.

How much has changed after Rio?

Sharad Nasajpour: Everything in my life has changed after Rio. I feel like I have more freedom, more dreams, more desire to complete my sporting experience every day and achieve better results.

Ibrahim Al-Hussein: It caused a big transition again in my life. I moved from the East Coast in USA to the West Coast in Phoenix, Arizona, to train and get better results in upcoming competitions. I have to begin everything again, since I had no family and friends in Phoenix, which made everything harder.

What did you make of your results from Rio?

Sharad Nasajpour: I had better marks in training but couldn’t get there in the competition due to my insufficient training over last year. Rio was my second competition in the year after the US Paralympic Trials. I am disappointed with my result because I had better marks in training but couldn’t get there in the competition due to my insufficient training over last year. Rio was my second competition in the year after the US Paralympic Trials.

Ibrahim Al-Hussein: I had no family and friends in Phoenix, which made everything harder.

My athletic goal was to perform in my sport at the highest international level, which I achieved at Rio 2016. During the Games, I did not expect to achieve results that would win me a medal. But I am trying to get better and I am training every day.

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Are you looking to compete at Tokyo 2020?

Sharad Nasajpour: Next for sure is the World Championships in London. I want to get ready for it and also other Grand Prix events, then Tokyo 2020.

Ibrahim Al-Hussein: Yes, the next step is Tokyo 2020, and it has been a goal for me since my first day returning from Rio.

#AskAnAthlete

Facebook.com/IndependentParalympicAthletes

Then & now

The Rio 2016 Paralympic Games was a digital success! The IPC’s various social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) saw significant growth from four years ago.

Check out how Rio 2016 compared digitally to London 2012.
Loud and clear — Rio 2016 the People’s Games

The Cariocas created an atmosphere like no other as the Paralympics left a lasting legacy on Brazil, Latin America and the global Movement.

Brazil’s most popular Para athlete Daniel Dias was nowhere in sight, but fans were already chanting his name minutes ahead of his first race inside the Aquatics Stadium.

When he touched the wall for his first of four gold medals, the noise exceeded any level the Paralympic Games, arguably, had experienced before.

Perhaps the closest would be from London 2012, when an 80,000-capacity crowd at the Olympic Stadium chanted Jonnie Peacock’s name before the British sprinter won gold in the 100m T44 final.

But that electric, ear-piercing atmosphere was replicated for nearly every Brazilian athlete during Rio 2016, exemplifying just what made it the People’s Games.

People’s passion

Infant ear-protectors were a popular sight at the Aquatics Stadium.

At the Riocentro — Pavilion 6, Brazilians stomped on the metal-rattling bleachers to cheer on their men’s and women’s sitting volleyball teams in their bronze medal matches.

Spectators packed the Olympic Arena from bottom to top, and erupted when their men’s wheelchair basketball team won a thrilling one-point game over Australia.

“The crowd was like a sixth player for us — they really helped us,” said wheelchair basketball player Leandro de Miranda.

Sprinter Petrucio Ferreira said after his 100m T47 heat race: “I came here today to give my best and go into the final. But at the time I entered the stadium and I saw it was packed, and the supporters shouting, suddenly my legs became so happy and they ran alone — and I went behind them.”

Silvania Costa de Oliveira, champion in the women’s long jump T11, said after her victory: “Since August I’ve felt the great support from the Brazilian people and this victory is like a cake where everyone who contributed with an ingredient can join the celebration party.”

It was also a special experience for non-Brazilian athletes.

“I’ve never been booed in my lifetime, but Brazil put it on,” Australian wheelchair rugby player Ryley Batt said. “They are passionate fans and it was probably the best crowd I’ve played in front of.”

The people’s jovial spirit did not stop at sports as thousands packed into the Maracana Stadium for both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

With the passion the Cariocas brought to their home Games, IPC President Sir Philip Craven awarded them the Paralympic Order, the highest honour a person or group of people connected with the Movement can receive.

“Welcome as members to the Paralympic Movement. Muito Obrigado, Cariocas,” Sir Philip said.
A major milestone was achieved at Rio 2016 with more countries than ever before winning Paralympic medals to underline the growing strength of Para sport around the world.

In total 83 countries finished on the podium at least once. Cape Verde, Mozambique, Qatar and Uganda all won their maiden Paralympic medals while Kazakhstan (one gold), Georgia (one gold), Malaysia (three golds), Uzbekistan (eight golds) and Vietnam (one gold) topped the podium for the first time.

Having won a solitary silver medal at London 2012, Uzbekistan arguably finished Rio as the most improved nation having claimed 37 medals (eight gold, six silver and 17 bronzes). “London 2012 was the country’s third participation at the Paralympic Games so we still had to learn a lot. And we did,” Navruz Yuldasheva, Uzbekistan National Paralympic Association Executive Director, explained.

Uzbekistan, who made its Paralympic debut in 2004 with just one athlete, sent 32 athletes to Rio, 22 more than it did for London 2012. “We talked with other NPC staff and coaches, and learned what they were doing to win more medals,” said NPC Uzbekistan President Umid Akhmatjanov. “How are they training with athletes, what are they doing for achieving good results?”

There were also more medals, “said NPC Uzbekistan president Umid Akhmatjanov. “How are they training with athletes, what are they doing for achieving good results?”

Sombre moment
Amid the joys and thrills of the Games, there was a moment of silence during the Closing Ceremony in tribute to Iranian cyclist Behman Golbarnezhad, who died while competing in a road cycling event. The Iranian men’s sitting volleyball team paid tribute to their teammate before and after their gold medal match, creating a picture of him during the national anthems and medal ceremony.

During the Closing Ceremony the IPC President said that Golbarnezhad’s death affected us all and left the whole Para Movement united in grief. Tonight, I would like you to join me in paying our condolences to his family, friends, his teammates and the people of Iran.”

“A new national Paralympic training center, which provides both indoor and outdoor facilities for 14 Para athletes, will host March’s Youth Parapan American Games.”

The newly built Olympic Tennis Centre, with its shades of yellow, orange and red, stood out at the Park, with ramps spiraling around the venue. Home of wheelchair tennis events, the permanent centre court is one of the Games’ biggest sporting legacies. The Future Arena, a temporary venue that hosted goalball, will be dismantled and put toward the construction of four public schools in the city.

Paralympic champions Felipe Gomes, Daniel Tavares Martins and Ricardo Costa Oliveira were also honoured by having schools named after them.

A newly built and accessible transportation hub “the Paralympic Terminal” linked the fully accessible Transolimpica BRT with an accessible Transolimpica BRT passageway that helped fans and athletes get from one cluster to another.

The Games also prompted the building of the Brazilian Paralympic Training Centre in Sao Paulo, something unique in South America, where future Para athletes can benefit from world-class training facilities. The training centre, which provides both indoor and outdoor facilities for 14 Para athletes, will host March’s Youth Parapan American Games.

Sustainability was another key legacy, and that was evident when the sculpture of the Paralympic symbol was unveiled on Copacabana Beach.

The Ajitos were made of recycled plastic with different textures and smells, thus being a source of inclusion and interactivity. It was part of the effort to raise awareness of the impact on the planet caused by the use and improper disposal of plastic.

Media mania
The Paralympic Games generated record levels of media and broadcast coverage. A record 154 countries, 39 more than London 2012, covered the Games by television, radio and online outlets.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) recorded new highs in viewing figures, as 54 EBU members – more than half of the broadcasters employing a number of people with an impairment. Paralympic.org also showed live coverage of 13 sports and live results from all 22 sports; the IPC’s digital media activities engaged more than one billion people.

Leaving a legacy
As Rio de Janeiro prepared to welcome 4,316 athletes from 159 countries, accessibility was a priority.

More than 15,000 children were able to attend the Paralympic Games after the global crowdfunding #FilltheSeats campaign raised more than USD 450,000 and surpassed all initial goals.

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Latin America’s first Paralympic Games came to a close with plenty of memorable sporting performances. Here is a look back at what happened in each of the 22 sports.

RIO 2016 by the numbers

- 220 world records
- 1,669 female athletes
- 2.46 metres high
- 6 countries
- 7 medals
- 83 countries won
- 2 sports
- 2 countries
- 2.15 M sold tickets
- 154 countries
- Engagement of 1.5B people

... made their Paralympic debuts: canoe and triathlon.

... were won by Belarus’ swimmer Ihar Boki, who ended as Rio 2016’s most decorated Paralympian.

... is the Iranian sitting volleyball player Morteza Mehrzadselakjani, the tallest Paralympian in history.

... made their Paralympic debuts: Aruba, Congo, Malawi, Somalia, Sao Tome & Principe and Tonga.

... competing in Rio, a record number which doubled the one from Atlanta 1996.

... by the IPC’s digital media activities around the world.

... making Latin America’s first Paralympic Games the second biggest ever in this regard, only behind London 2012.

... by television, radio and online outlets.

... at least one Paralympic medal, the most ever in the history of the Games.

... by television, radio and online outlets.

... in review
Archery

Great Britain topped the medals table whilst Iran’s Zahra Nemati repeated her historic gold medal success from London 2012.

The British had their most successful Paralympic showing, especially in the women’s individual W1 category where Jessica Stretton, Jo Frith and Vicky Jenkins completed a sweep of the podium. Frith and John Walker then partnered up for gold in the mixed team W1.

China was not far behind in the medal standings. The women’s individual compound open was an all-Chinese showdown for gold and saw Zhou Jiamin defeat her teammate Lin Yuehuan in a thrilling shootout.

After competing at the Olympics weeks earlier, all eyes were on Nemati who, at London 2012, made history by becoming the first Iranian woman to win Olympic or Paralympic gold. She lived up to the hype, defending her women’s individual recurve open title.

Athletics

Chinese athletes once again topped the athletics medals table for a fourth successive Paralympics with T53 racer Zhou Hongzhuan leading the way, winning three golds and one silver.

The USA’s Tatyana McFadden was the standout athlete of the Games winning four golds and two silvers in the T54 class to round-out her best Paralympics.

The men’s 1,500m T13 final provided the biggest talking point however, with the top four finishers all clocking times faster than the gold medallist in the Rio Olympics.

For the home fans, there was much to cheer. Petrucco Ferrera took gold in the 100m T47, and smashed a 16-year-old world record along the way, whilst siblings Ricardo and Silvania Costa de Oliveira both won their respective long jump T11 events.

One of the most engaging events for the crowd was the men’s high jump T42 which was eventually won by India’s Mariyappan Thangavelu.

In total 69 world records were set at the Olympic Stadium during 10 days of competition which attracted 1,136 athletes from 146 participating countries.

TOP 3 PERFORMERS

ZHOU JIAMIN (CHN)
Won double gold (women’s individual compound and mixed team compound open) in her Paralympic debut; only one of two archers to bag two gold medals in Rio.

JOHN WALKER (GBR)
Beat the Czech Republic’s No. 1 David Drabonovsky in a tight 141-139 victory, left Rio with two golds (men’s recurve and mixed team W1).

ZAHRA NEMATI (IRI)
Iran’s flagbearer during the Olympics Opening Ceremony reaffirmed her dominance in the women’s individual recurve open with gold; was also part of the mixed team that won recurve open silver.

OMARA DURAND (CUB)
The T12 sprinter lived up to the expectations by sealing a hat-trick of titles. She set blistering world records in the 100m (11.40) and the 400m (51.77), and a Games record in the 200m (23.05).

MARCEL HUG (SUI)
The Swiss world record holder and multi-world and European champion finally won gold, topping the podium in both the men’s 100m and marathon T54 events.

LIAM MALONE (NZL)
At his debut Paralympics, Malone won medals and set Paralympic records in each of his three events. He took gold over 200m and 400m T44 and silver in the 100m.

TOP 3 PERFORMERS

Great Britain 3 2 1 6
China 3 2 0 5
Iran 2 1 1 4

Archery

Great Britain topped the medals table whilst Iran’s Zahra Nemati repeated her historic gold medal success from London 2012.

The British had their most successful Paralympic showing, especially in the women’s individual W1 category where Jessica Stretton, Jo Frith and Vicky Jenkins completed a sweep of the podium. Frith and John Walker then partnered up for gold in the mixed team W1.

China was not far behind in the medal standings. The women’s individual compound open was an all-Chinese showdown for gold and saw Zhou Jiamin defeat her teammate Lin Yuehuan in a thrilling shootout.

After competing at the Olympics weeks earlier, all eyes were on Nemati who, at London 2012, made history by becoming the first Iranian woman to win Olympic or Paralympic gold. She lived up to the hype, defending her women’s individual recurve open title.
My favourite moment from Rio 2016 was definitely when I was standing top of the podium, while staring at the Chinese flag being risen and listening to my country’s national anthem. I will never forget that.”

The T53 athlete won three golds (400m, 800m and 4x400m relay) and a silver in 100m, while breaking two world records.
Great Britain stole the show in the sport’s Paralympic debut, as Jeanette Chippington (KL1), Emma Wiggs (KL2) and Anne Dickins (KL3) all won their respective races.

Swimmer-turned-canoer Chippington edged Germany’s Edina Muller by just 0.114 seconds in a thrilling finish to seal gold and her 13th Paralympic medal.

Two bronze medals from Ian Marsden (KL1) and Nick Beighton (KL2) in the men’s events added to the British haul.

The great rivalry in the men’s KL2 between Australia’s Curtis McGrath and Austria’s six-time world champion Markus Swoboda lived up to expectations. McGrath showed that his gold medal from the 2016 International Canoe Federation (ICF) World Championships was no fluke, as he beat Swoboda by 1.5 seconds for the gold.

The men’s KL1 was the most unpredictable, with neither Brazil’s Luis Cardoso (2015 world champion) or China’s Xiaowei Yu (2016 world champion) making the podium. In fact, it was Poland’s Jakub Tokarz, the runner-up in both the last two Worlds Championships, who topped the podium.

Thailand emerged as the sport’s powerhouse, winning every medal event they competed in, including the all-Thai individual BC2 final. Compatriots Worawut Saengampa and Watcharaphon Vongsa dueled for the gold, with Vongsa defeating the defending world champion 5-4.

Hong Kong’s Yuk Wing Leung, the 2004 champion and 2008 silver medalist in the individual BC4, made up for not medaling at London 2012 by claiming his second Paralympic gold in Rio.

After winning four medals, including three golds at London 2012, Brazil was hoping for similar success on home soil. Although they did not manage any individual medals, they enjoyed success in the pairs events.

Antonio Leme, Elvani Soares da Silva and Evelyn de Oliveira clinched Brazil’s lone gold in the pairs BC3. Defending BC4 champions Eliseu dos Santos, Dirceu Pinto and Marcelo dos Santos had to settle for silver as the trio of Samuel Andrejcik, Robert Durkovic and Michaela Balcova won gold and Slovakia’s first Paralympic medal in the sport.

**TOP 3 PERFORMERS**

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<tr>
<th>Thailand</th>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
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**TOP 3 PERFORMERS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WATCHARAPHON VONGSA (THA)</th>
<th>Left Rio as a double gold medalist, defeating reigning world champion Worawut Saengampa in the individual BC2 final and helping his team win the pairs event.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YUK WING LEUNG (HKG)</td>
<td>Took his third Paralympic medal (first gold since Athens 2004) in the individual BC4, the most competitive category.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAVID SMITH (GBR)</td>
<td>Won his third Paralympic medal in the individual BC1 category, beating Thailand’s No. 1 ranked and defending Paralympic champion Pattaya Tadtong along the way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURTIS MCGRAITH (AUS)</td>
<td>After handing Markus Swoboda his first finals loss at the 2016 Worlds, McGrath followed up five months later with another upset at Rio 2016 to stamp his authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERHII YEMLIANOV (UKR)</td>
<td>Defeated Germany’s three-time world champion Tom Kierey in the KL3 by just 0.114 seconds, about the same margin he lost to Kierey back at the 2016 Worlds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEANETTE CHIPPINGTON (GBR)</td>
<td>Defeated Germany’s Edina Muller to take the highest of all margins for her first Paralympic medal since she was a swimmer at Athens 2004.</td>
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After the Dutch threatened Great Britain’s dominance at the 2016 European Championships, British riders responded by winning seven out of 11 medal events in Rio. British success included the coveted team title, an event they have won at every major Championships since the early 90s.

The Netherlands’ lone gold came from Sanne Voets in the individual freestyle grade III. European champion Rixt van der Horst was just a point shy of gold in the individual free-style grade II, which went to Great Britain’s Natasha Baker. Teammate Demi Vermeulen also had to settle for silver behind Baker in the individual test grade II.

Brazil’s grade Ia rider Sergio Oliva was his country’s best medal prospect in the sport and did not disappoint. Fractions short of winning silver in both the individual champion and freestyle tests grade 1a, his two bronze medals meant the world to him as he dropped to his knees with emotion after winning his second medal.

Great Britain led the cycling track medals table and finished third in the cycling road events to top the sport’s overall standings. They picked up three gold medals courtesy of Sarah Storey, who became Britain’s most decorated female Paralympian amassing 14 golds, eight silvers and three bronzes.

Ukraine enjoyed medal success through Yegor Dementyev, who claimed two golds in the C5 class, whilst Italy’s former Formula 1 driver Alex Zanardi added two golds and one silver to his Paralympic haul.

15 years after the life-changing accident that cost him his legs. The Brazilian crowd who attended the Rio Olympic Velodrome for the track events and Postal for the road competition also had reason to celebrate as Lauro Chaman won his country’s first two cycling Paralympic medals, a bronze in the men’s road time trial C5 and a silver in the road race C5.

On the penultimate day of the Games, Iranian cyclist Bahman Golbarnezhad died in an accident in the men’s C4-5 road event.

THE PARALYMPIAN 03 | 2016

THE PARALYMPIAN 03 | 2016
Three-time Paralympian, key offensive player who helped Brazil win their fourth straight title.

The match against China, in which I scored the two winning goals, was my best ever playing for the national team. I am not sure if those were the two nicest goals I have ever scored but definitely the most important ones.”

“I did not expect so many people to attend the Paralympic Games. They went to watch athletes competing and not people with disabilities.”

It is hard to stay on top for a long time. This ongoing challenge makes me want to win more.”
Following a 1-0 victory over Iran in the final, the Rio 2016 hosts maintained their 100 per cent record in this sport since it was introduced into the Paralympics in 2004. With Jefinho living up to his billing as the “Paralympic Pele” by scoring a number of outstanding goals that went viral on social media, Brazil triumphed over the Asian champions. After an eight year absence, Argentina made the podium once again securing bronze with a penalty shoot-out win over China.

**TOP 3 PERFORMERS**

**JEFINHO (BRA)**
His stunning two goals in the semi-final against China made him the talk of social media with online users in awe at his skill level.

**SILVIO VELO (ARG)**
The Argentinian legend, a two-time world champion, ended his successful career in the sport by winning his third Paralympic medal.

**BEHZAD ZADALIASGHARI (IRI)**
His goal against Morocco after dribbling past the entire African team had to be seen to be believed, a sensational strike.

**TOP 3 PERFORMERS**

**VOLODYMYR ANTONIUK (UKR)**
The 37-year-old was undoubtedly the most valuable player of the competition, ending as the top scorer with seven goals and leading Ukraine to the Paralympic title.

**LEANORO GONCALVES DO AMARAL (BRA)**
He was fundamental in the host nation winning bronze, scoring a hat-trick as Brazil defeated the Netherlands 3-1.

**MEHDI JAMALI (IRI)**
The midfielder was Iran’s key player. He netted three goals in the semi-finals against Brazil and scored the equaliser in the final against Ukraine to force extra-time.

**TOP 3 PERFORMERS**

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His stunning two goals in the semi-final against China made him the talk of social media with online users in awe at his skill level.
**Goalball**

New Paralympic champions were crowned at Rio 2016 with Lithuania’s men and Turkey’s women winning their maiden titles. Lithuania have been consistently amongst the top teams in recent years, taking silver at both Sydney 2000 and Beijing 2008, and finishing fourth at London 2012 and the 2014 World Championships.

They finally claimed Paralympic gold following a 14-8 win over the USA in the final. World champions Brazil completed the podium with victory over Sweden for bronze.

After winning the European title last year, Turkey’s women added the Paralympic crown as they ensured China had to settle for a bittersweet silver medal for a third consecutive Games. The USA collected bronze after beating Brazil.

**TOP 3 PERFORMERS**

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<tr>
<th>Lithuania</th>
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<th>Women Turkey</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>USA</th>
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**Judo**

Uzbekistan surprisingly topped the medals table in judo with 10 medals, three of which were gold thanks to male judokas Sherzod Namozov (-60kg), Utkirjon Nigmatov (-66kg) and Adiljan Tuledibaev (+100kg).

China’s over 70kg world champion Yuan Yanping extended her winning streak to three Paralympic Games as she added Rio 2016 gold to the crowns she had won at Beijing 2008 and London 2012.

A final that will long be remembered is the women’s up to 57kg between Ukraine’s world No.1 Inna Cherniak and Brazil’s Lucia Araujo, with the former taking the title in front of a huge vocal crowd.

Mexico’s Lenia Ruvalcaba claimed the vacant women’s up to 70kg throne following the retirement of Spain’s triple Paralympic champion Carmen Herrera, whilst Brazil’s four-time Paralympic champion Antonio Tenorio made history by sealing his sixth consecutive medal at a Paralympic Games, a silver in the up to 100kg.
Rowing

Both the men and women’s single sculls (ASM1x and ASW1x) featured the unexpected as new Paralympic champions emerged.

Reigning world champions Moran Samuel of Israel in the ASW1x and Erik Horrie of Australia in the ASM1x were coming off strong seasons, however both failed to win gold. The titles went to Great Britain’s former cyclist Rachel Morris and Ukraine’s Roman Polianskyi, respectively. Morris overcame a slow start to power through for the win. Polianskyi’s only major competitions prior to Rio were World Cups in Poznan, Poland (silver medal finish) and one in 2015 in Varese, Italy (fourth place).

Overall, Great Britain dominated the regatta, winning three of the four boat classes. Tom Aggar’s bronze in the ASM1x meant the British medalled in every event. Their strongest boat was the mixed coxed four crew (LTAMix4+) of Grace Clough, Daniel Brown, Pamela Relph, James Fox and coxswain Oliver James, who defended their title from four years ago.

Powerlifting

Siamand Rahman’s performance at Rio 2016, becoming the first powerlifter to break the 300kg barrier, was undoubtedly one of the best performances ever seen at a Paralympic Games.

The Iranian went on to lift 305kg and finished the day with an unprecedented 310kg lift, the equivalent of a large Siberian tiger, to set a new world record in the men’s over 107kg and secure his second successive Paralympic gold.

He was not the only powerlifter to stand-out. Nigeria’s Josephine Dry, in the women’s over 86kg, and Paul Kehinde, in the men’s up to 65kg, both won their respective categories with world-record lifts.

Egyptian Sherif Osman claimed his third successive Paralympic gold, in the men’s up to 59kg, as did Mexico’s Annalia Perez in the women’s up to 65kg. Chinese powerlifters also proved to be strong, taking three golds, six silvers and three bronze medals.

Nigeria 6 2 1 9
China 3 6 3 12
Egypt 3 4 3 10

MAJID FARZIN (IRI)

Overshadowed by his compatriot Siamand Rahman’s achievement, Farzin still delivered an outstanding performance winning gold in the men’s up to 80kg with a world record lift of 240kg.

LIDIA SOLOVIOVA (UKR)

Ukraine’s only ever powerlifting Paralympic champion bowed back from her bronze medal performance four years ago in London to take her third Paralympic gold.

CONG LE VAN (VIE)

The 31-year-old won Vietnam’s first ever Paralympic gold by breaking the world record (283kg) to win the men’s up to 49kg.

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RACHEL MORRIS (GBR)

Captured her second Paralympic title but her first as a rower.

ROMAN POLIANSKYI (UKR)

Flowed under the radar to claim gold, having competed in only two World Cups prior to Rio.

GREAT BRITAIN LTA MIXED COXED FOUR

Continued their dominance in the event, winning their second straight Paralympic title.
class as expected, winning eight of the 10 races, to finish ahead of Canada’s John McRoberts and Jackie Gay, Great Britain’s Alexandra Rickham and Niki Birrell won bronze.

Australia’s other gold came in the three-person Sonar, with Colin Harrison, Jonathan Harris and Russell Boaden (26 points) finishing way ahead of the US (44) and Canadian (51) crews on the podium.

The stunning Marina da Gloria, surrounded by the world-famous Sugar Loaf and Corcovado mountains, hosted the thrilling sailing competition which Australian sailors dominated.

Dan Fitzgibbon and Liesl Tesch retained the Paralympic podium in the two-person SKUD18 class as expected, winning eight of the 10 races, to finish ahead of Canada’s John McRoberts and Jackie Gay, Great Britain’s Alexandra Rickham and Niki Birrell won bronze.

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French sailor Damien Seguin returned to the top of the Paralympic podium in the 2.4m Norlin OD, 12 years after winning gold in Athens. Australia’s Matthew Bugg and Great Britain’s defending champion Helena Lucas completed the podium.

DAMIEN SEGUIN (FRA)
He won gold at Athens 2004, silver at Beijing 2008 and could not reach the podium at London 2012, but bounced back to take the top spot in Rio.

DAN FITZGIBBON AND LIESL TESCH (AUS)
Won their first Paralympic title at London 2012 and have dominated the SKUD18 since, winning two world titles and multiple World Cups.

PAUL TINGLEY (CAN)
The Canadian, who took gold in the 2.4m Norlin OD at Beijing 2008, won bronze again in the Sonar at Rio 2016, as he did 16 years ago at Sydney 2000.

TOP 3 PERFORMERS

Australia 2 1 0 3
France 1 0 0 1
Canada 0 1 1 2

Sailing

Competitions were dominated by female shooters, with women collecting seven out of a possible 12 Paralympic titles.

Chinese athletes were the most successful with five golds, eclipsing other nations. Slovakia’s Veronika Vadovicova was the sport’s joint most decorated athlete with two golds and one silver.

Cuiping Zhang excelled for China, equalling Vadovicova with two wins and a silver on the rifle range in both women’s and mixed competitions.

RIO 2016 saw the dawn of a new era in the men’s SH1 class. Sweden’s 17-time Paralympic champion Jonas Jacobsson left what many believe to be his last Paralympic Games without a medal.

The Swedish shooter was beaten in his favourite event by, amongst others, Serbian gold medallist Laslo Suranji in the R7 (men’s 50m rifle three positions SH1). However Jacobsson remains one of Para sport’s most decorated athletes with 30 medals from 10 Paralympic Games.

SAREH JAVANMARDIDODMANI (IRI)
Made history by becoming the first female Para sport shooter to win gold for Iran; won the P2 (women’s 10m air pistol SH1) and P4 (mixed 50m pistol SH1).

MCKENNA DAHL (USA)
The 20-year-old’s bronze medal in R5 (mixed 10m air rifle SH2) was historic, becoming the first female Para athlete to win a shooting medal for the USA, claiming her country’s first medal in the sport since Athens 2004.

VeSekLa PevEc (SLO)
Set a new qualification and finals Paralympic record to claim gold in P4 (mixed 10m air rifle standing SH4) on her Paralympic debut.

TOP 3 PERFORMERS

China 5 2 1 8
Slovakia 2 1 0 3
Iran 2 0 0 2

Shooting

China 5 2 1 8
Slovakia 2 1 0 3
Iran 2 0 0 2

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France 1 0 0 1
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TOP 3 PERFORMERS

HEATHER ERICKSON (USA)
The captain was named “Most Valuable Player” and “Best Receiver” with a team-high of 65 points.

MORTEZA MOHREZADEHLAKJAN (IRI)
The latest Paralympian at the Games was top scorer with 28 points in the gold-medal victory.

JANAINA CUNHA (BRA)
Scored a team-high 22 points (17 spikes) as Brazil claimed their first medal in the sport in front of a home crowd.

CARLOS SERRANO (COL)
The 16-year-old of Colombia’s first gold medal in 36 years in the men’s 100m breaststroke SB8, in a new world record time.

DANIEL DIAS (BRA)
The 15, SB4 swimmer consistently delivered to the home crowd, winning four golds, two silvers, and a bronze as part of the relay team’s comeback effort.

ANNA STETSENKO (UKR)
Broke the 20-year-old world record of Germany’s Yvonne Hopf in the women’s 50m freestyle S2, shaving 0.04 seconds off the time from Atlanta 1996.

TOP 3 PERFORMERS

Sitting volleyball

The women’s side saw the end of a dynasty, as the USA deposed China for the gold medal. China had beaten the USA for gold in every Paralympic final since the women’s competition was added to the programme for Athens 2004, however in September, the US secured a famous 3-0 victory.

The men’s final was a different story. Iran and Bosnia and Herzegovina have won the last two major international titles for a generation and it was no surprise when the two met for the third straight Paralympic final. This time, Iran took back the gold medal with a 3-1 win over their rivals.

With home support behind them, both Brazil’s men’s and women’s teams made the bronze medal matches. The women’s team won the nation’s first ever medal in the sport with a 3-0 win over Ukraine, whilst the men’s team lost a five-set thriller to African champions Egypt, who captured their first medal in the sport since Athens 2004.

History was made in the men’s 50m freestyle S12 as Ihar Boki represented Belarus in the final ever African women’s sitting volley team at the Paralympics.

Swimming

Belarus’ Ihar Boki was the most decorated athlete at the Paralympic Games for the second time running, as China dominated the medals table.

The 22-year-old Belarusian won six golds and one bronze medal to own the men’s S13 events. On top of those, he broke world records in the 50m and 100m backstroke, and 100m butterfly.

Host nation Brazil put on an exceptional show for the thousands of vocal spectators at the Olympic Aquatics Stadium. They took four gold, seven silver and eight bronze medals. Every single one was cheered as if it was their first.

Clodoaldo Silva, the athlete who inspired Brazil’s most decorated Paralympian Daniel Dias to take up swimming, retired after a warm embrace with his teammate and a final victory lap of the pool.

Wenpan Huang left with five golds and five world records to headline China’s swimming campaign. The USA’s Bradley Snyder lowered the 30-year-old world record in the men’s 100m freestyle S11, winning three golds and one silver.

The results produced first swimming medals for countries such as Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, whilst Cuba and Colombia won their first gold medals in decades.
Dimosthenis Michalentzakis

The teenager surprised many when he won the 100m butterfly S9 by a quarter of a second.

My mind clicked and I just remembered all the encouraging messages and wishes that I got before coming here. I had all of these in my heart as I swam and that is how I finished.”

I certainly respect my opponents. Both Federico Morlacchi from Italy and Tamas Sors from Hungary are very accomplished swimmers.”

During our race I fought with my body and soul and I wanted this medal really bad.”

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2016 IN REVIEW
Triathlon

The first Paralympic champions were crowned in the sport’s Games debut.

Germany’s Martin Schulz stamped his authority in the men’s PT4 with the gold, finishing ahead of 19-year-old Canadian rival Stefan Daniel, who had upset Schulz at the 2015 Worlds. Spain’s Jairo Ruiz Lopez claimed the bronze.

The women’s equivalent saw the USA’s Grace Norman, 18, complete a perfect race to upset Great Britain’s favourite Lauren Steadman. France’s Gwladys Lemoussu rounded off the podium.

The US women had more glory as they swept the PT2 category, when Alyssa Seely, Hailey Danisewicz and Melissa Stockwell went 1-2-3, respectively.

Australian Katie Kelly and her guide Olympian Michelle Jones remained dominant in the women’s PT5 with the gold. Great Britain completed the podium, as Alison Patrick and guide Hazel Smith claimed silver, Melissa Reid and Nicole Walters took a sprint finish for third.

The Netherlands’ Jetze Plat and Geert Schipper took gold and silver, respectively, in the men’s PT1, and Italy’s Giovanni Achenza clinched bronze.

Great Britain’s Andrew Lewis was victorious in the men’s PT2. The battle for silver was tight, but Italy’s reigning world champion Michele Ferrarin was runner-up, and Morocco’s Mohamed Lahna, the lone African athlete in the field, took home the bronze.

Table tennis

China flexed their strength, with 13 of their 21 medals being gold. Three singles finals featured an all-Chinese showdown. Perhaps their most notable victory was in the women’s class 1-2 with Jing Liu defending her Paralympic title against South Korea’s No. 1 Su-Yeon Seo.

The men’s class 6 was one of the most anticipated match-ups. In a repeat of the 2015 European finals, Denmark’s Peter Rosenmeier avenged his loss to Spain’s Alvaro Valera with a thrilling five-set victory. Meanwhile, Belgian teenage sensation Laurens Devos made headlines when he captured the men’s singles class 9 title at just 16-years-old.

After bursting onto the scene in 2013, Croatia’s world and European champion Sandra Paovic made her long-awaited Paralympic debut. A former able-bodied player who competed at eight World Championships, Paovic overcame a life-threatening car accident to win the women’s singles class 6.

Polish standout Natalia Partyka took her fourth singles Paralympic gold in the women’s class 10. Her only scare came when she faced Brazil’s Bruna Costa Alexandre in the semi-finals but pulled away 3-2.
Wheelchair basketball

The USA secured double gold as both the men and women’s teams won their respective finals. It was the first time in 28 years that both teams claimed both gold medals at a Paralympic Games.

The USA’s Rebecca Murray had sensational scoring, shooting 60 per cent from the field as her team dethroned the defending Paralympic champions Germany 62-45.

Jake Williams and Brian Bell also showcased their offensive prowess, combining for 35 points as the US men defeated Spain 68-52. Spain however emerged as the surprise finalists of the tournament and left Rio with their heads held high, claiming their country’s first medal in the sport.

Both Great Britain’s teams showed significant improvement from London 2012. After just missing the podium four years ago, the British men took Turkey to a thrilling 82-76 overtime victory for the bronze medal. The young British women’s team was no match for the experienced Dutch squad, who took a bittersweet bronze having been tagged as pre-competition favourites.

Many eyes were on Italy’s Beatrice Vio, the overwhelming favourite in the women’s individual foil category A. The 19-year-old did not disappoint, as she defeated China’s Jingjing Zhou, who was coming off individual epee gold, for the 15-7 win.

But it was all China throughout the competition. Their fencers captured 17 of the 27 available medals; this included two all-Chinese gold medal bouts.

China’s world No. 2 Jing Rong denied Hong Kong’s Yu Chui Yee an eighth Paralympic gold in the women’s foil category A. But Yu’s silver medal still meant she equalled the record for the most Paralympic medals held by a female fencer.

Ruyi Ye was another one of China’s key victors, as he claimed back-to-back Paralympic titles with a win over Hungary’s world No. 2 Richard Osvath in the men’s category A foil. Gang Sun upset Great Britain’s world No. 1 Piers Gilliver to take the men’s epee category A competition, a sweet victory, after defeating Gilliver by just a point in the final of the 2015 World Championships.
Gold medalist in the women’s foil category B at 19 years old.

“Before my departure from Italy, I was really scared because the pressure was at a very high level. But I promised myself to enjoy every single moment and to have fun, and I did that.”

“I was really nervous (to take a selfie with US President Barack Obama) but excited at the same time. Everything was a dream when I received the inviting email. I thought it was a joke.”

The most important thing is to transform fear to adrenaline, adrenaline to competitiveness and competitiveness to happiness.”
Wheelchair tennis

For the seventh successive Games, the women’s single final was an all-Dutch affair with Jiske Griffioen succeeding the legendary Esther Vergeer as the Paralympic champion. Griffioen beat Aniek van Koot in three sets for gold. The two later won doubles gold together against compatriots Marjolein Buis and Diede de Groot, the third Games in a row the women’s gold medal doubles match had consisted solely of Dutch players.

The men’s singles finals saw Gordon Reid defeat teenager Alfie Hewitt in an all-British showdown. The pair teamed up in the doubles, but had to settle for silver as the French veterans of Stephane Houdet and Nicolas Peifer proved too much.

Australian Dylan Alcott topped Great Britain’s Andy Lapthorne in the quad singles finals, then joined Heath Davidson for another gold in the doubles over the USA’s defending champions David Wagner and Nick Taylor. Wagner took quad singles bronze, while Lapthorne and Jamie Burdekin captured bronze in the doubles.

Japan’s Yui Kamiji clinched the women’s singles bronze, while Great Britain’s Lucy Shuker and Jordanne Whiley took home doubles bronze. Japan’s Shingo Kunieda and Satoshi Saida partnered to claim the men’s doubles bronze medal.

Wheelchair rugby

In arguably the most evenly and closely contested wheelchair rugby final ever seen, Australia defeated the USA 59-58 in double overtime to claim their second consecutive Paralympic gold. In front of a deafening crowd at the Carioca Arena, Ryley Batt’s stellar performance was fundamental in the champions’ success, scoring 27 goals in the gold-medal match, including the decisive score 49 seconds before the end of the game.

Australia remained undefeated throughout the competition, finishing top of Group B after beating Great Britain, Brazil and Canada to advance into the semi-finals, where they beat Japan.

Tokyo 2020 hosts Japan went on to make history by securing a first medal in the sport with a hard-fought 52-50 victory over Pan American champions Canada in the bronze medal match.

Even though they finished bottom of their groups, France and Brazil also produced some good performances, proving the gap with the powerhouses is rapidly closing.
Just a few days after the closing of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, the Paralympic flag completed its long journey from Brazil and arrived in Tokyo on 21 September.

The Olympic, Paralympic and Japanese national flags were hoisted and flown together at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Plaza in Shinjuku, one of the Japanese capital’s liveliest areas, marking the latest in a series of milestones bridging the two host cities.

The IPC Governing Board provisionally approved the inclusion of bobsleigh for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games at a meeting in Rio on 5 September.

Bobsleigh will line-up alongside the six existing Paralympic winter sports – Para alpine skiing, Para biathlon, Para cross-country skiing, Para ice hockey, Para snowboard and wheelchair curling – to be part of the Beijing 2022 programme. The application for skeleton to be included in the Games was not successful due to the sport not fulfilling a number of the criteria needed.

For bobsleigh to be given full approval for inclusion in Beijing 2022, the sport must meet a number of minimum requirements laid out by the IPC Governing Board in both the 2016/17 and 2017/18 seasons.

The decision is subject to final written approval by both the IOC and the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee.

Interest in the Tokyo 2020 Games is also strong in many other countries and made the Tokyo 2020 Japan House in Rio one of the most popular hospitality houses in the Brazilian capital during the 2016 Games. It welcomed more than 82,000 visitors from all over the world, helping to showcase Japan’s culture and raise enthusiasm towards the host country of the 2020 Games.
22-31 January
World Para Alpine Skiing Championships

The first winter sport World Championships of the year will be held in Tarvisio, Italy, bringing together 140 of the world’s best Para alpine skiers from 30 countries.

France’s Marie Bochet, who suffered a leg injury in October, will be hoping to return in full fitness as she aims to continue the run that has seen her win 11 world titles in a row in the women’s standing class.

On home snow, Italian teenager Giacomo Bertagnolli will try to convert his first place finish in the overall World Cup standings into his first world medals.

As this is the last major Championships before the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games, Russia will start as defending world champions in the 3,500 seat capacity Gangneung Curling Centre but will face strong competition from the likes of Paralympic champions Canada and 2016 world silver medallists Norway. South Korea, who took Worlds bronze, could also surprise.

On home ice South Korea will be looking for key man Seung-Hwan Jung to have an impact on the tournament. At the 2015 B-Pool World Championships Jung was named Best Forward after scoring 13 goals and contributing nine assists as South Korea was promoted back into the world’s elite.

In total eight teams will compete in the 10,000 seat arena that has been purpose built for next year’s Games.

Ten teams will contest the 2017 event which will act as a Test Event for the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games. Russia will start as defending world champions in the 3,500 seat capacity Gangneung Curling Centre but will face strong competition from the likes of Paralympic champions Canada and 2016 world silver medallists Norway. South Korea, who took Worlds bronze, could also surprise.

www.worldparasnowboard.org

10-19 February
World Para Nordic Skiing Championships

Finsterau, Germany, will host the world’s best Para biathlon and Para cross-country skiers as 120 athletes from 22 countries compete for 38 world titles.

On home snow, Andrea Eskau will look to defend the three titles she won in 2015 but will find it hard against teammate Anja Wicker.

www.worldparanordicskiing.org

4-11 March
World Wheelchair Curling Championships

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Norway has shown rapid growth, being promoted from the B-Pool in 2015 to taking silver at the 2016 World Championships.

www.worldcurling.org

20-25 March
Youth Parapan American Games

The Brazilian Paralympic Committee’s state-of-the-art training centre in Sao Paulo will stage the fourth edition of this event. Around 1,000 athletes, aged 12-21 years old, are set to compete in 12 sports with CP Football and sitting volleyball as new additions from 2013.

Two-time Sochi 2014 gold medallist Andrea Eskau will have home snow advantage

www.worldparaicehockey.org

ONES TO WATCH

MARIE BOCHET
FRANCE

GIACOMO BERTAGNOLLI
ITALY

JAE RIM YANG
SOUTH KOREA

SEUNG-HWAN JUNG
SOUTH KOREA

JOSH PAULS
USA

BRAD BOWDEN
CANADA
Olof Hansson
Manager, Head of Para Taekwondo Department World Taekwondo Federation (WTF)

Para taekwondo will debut at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. That announcement alone in 2015 has already sped the growth and development of the sport. It has also helped us internally.

The WTO governs both taekwondo and Para taekwondo. Para taekwondo is now included on the biggest stage for Para sports, and that has encouraged internal promotion throughout our organisational and membership structure. By using an organisational structure that is already in place in 206 countries, Para taekwondo has surely developed more rapidly than if Para taekwondo was governed by a Para sport "only" IF.

We have improved contacts with IPCs and WTF Member National Associations. It also helps attract sponsors. Our global reach has strengthened.

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Now just because we are set to debut at Tokyo 2020, we cannot take our foot off the pedal.

The popularity of Para taekwondo is continuously increasing worldwide. There is no worry from the WTO's side of being able to ensure that Para taekwondo will still be competitive by 2020. The main concern however is coping with the increased administrative and organisational demands of the rapid increase in popularity and participation in the sport.

Other challenges that have come up include the increase in the number of training of high-level international Para taekwondo events (e.g. regional Championships). But by creating strong partnerships with the Continental Unions and making the World Championships a biennial event, it has become easier to promote more high-level events in the different regions.

But we also have to continue to increase participation. We know the sport can fit many athletes with impairments worldwide.

The able-bodied version is widely practiced globally. So far, Para taekwondo is strongest in Europe. But by actively promoting Para taekwondo with the National Federations and Continental Unions, more regions have laid the foundations for the sport to show in the medal standings come Tokyo 2020.

After Tokyo 2020, it’s a matter of keeping pace with the increased exposure and not falling backwards.

Para taekwondo has already sped the growth and development of the sport. It has also helped promote the sport, attract more competitors and create role models.

From an International Federation (IF) perspective, I think inclusion on the Tokyo 2020 programme and an IPC-member status gives the WTO further credibility. In turn, it has been "easier" to promote Para taekwondo at a world level. We have improved contacts with IPCs and WTF Member National Associations. It also helps attract sponsors. Our global reach has strengthened.

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Para taekwondo will debut at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. That announcement alone in 2015 has already sped the growth and development of the sport. How? Well, according to Para taekwondo athletes I spoke with, they said it has led to recognition of the sport not only from the Para community but also from the taekwondo community. It has also helped us internally. The WTO now includes the biggest stage for Para sports, and that has encouraged internal promotion throughout our organisational and membership structure. By using an organisational structure that is already in place in 206 countries, Para taekwondo has surely developed more rapidly than if Para taekwondo was governed by a Para sport "only" IF.

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I think Bahman tried to prove that it is worth living as an empowered person. He believed in eternity in its abstract form; the eternity he was feeling with his soul and mind. This is the difference between an ordinary man and a legend and today Bahman Golbarnezhad is fondly remembered as a war hero and a sports legend.

A legend can be anyone worth remembering for a very long time even after they have left the world. Legends are remembered and their tales are cherished; they leave behind a legacy, not in terms of monetary value, but in moral values.

Legendary nature comes not from one’s image but from what one stands up for and believes in. It is not about becoming famous; it is about being someone worth remembering and being looked upon for inspiration and growth. Finally, it is about being free, for only those who are truly free can become legends. Those whose life and skills are part of their ancient culture which is to remind people of the world what rich human nature and culture they come from, a culture of unity, solidarity, love, and peace.

They send out a message of friendship and happiness to the world. Them taking part in international arenas indicates how everyone, even those with disabilities can overcome hardship and stand on top. They manifest that you can be ‘a leg to stand on’, not ‘a shoulder to cry on’.

Bahman fought for not being futile and ineffective; not living senselessly. He was in search for meaning, for empowerment and inclusion.

What motivated him through all the years of bearing pain and devastation was to achieve the sense of beauty life could give us; the characteristic spirit of a culture, the ethos that contains the most discussed line in all of Keats’s “Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all/’ye know on earth, and all ye need to know”.

In the poem, death is the price one has to pay to live life to the full.

The Iranian poet Ibtehaj wrote a poem titled ‘Life’:

“Life is beautiful for those seeking for that
“Life is beautiful for those thinking like that
“Life is a once-lifetime experience to live
“Life is worth everything you afford to give”

The answer I believe is life; the most precious irretrievable blessing one could ever attain.

It was all over the news, Iranian Paralympic cyclist Bahman Golbarnezhad lost his life when making a determined effort to secure glory for his nation.

Bahman was a man who had lost his leg in war, a man who lost his beloved wife to cancer whilst preparing for London 2012, and a man whose story sadly ended at Rio 2016.

Although his tragic death left everyone wondering what nominated him as the victim of the sole fatal accident in the 50-year history of the Paralympics, the most question to be addressed is what could have gone through his mind not to surrender to devastation, loss, and loneliness?

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Bahman Golbarnezhad 1968 – 2016
Obituary by NPC Iran

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IPC Vision:
“To enable Para athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world.”