

The Paralympic Games: Making a Difference!

Important to Know



**A Learning and Evaluation Situation to Help
with the Teaching of the Related Content**

Secondary Cycle One ESL Core Program

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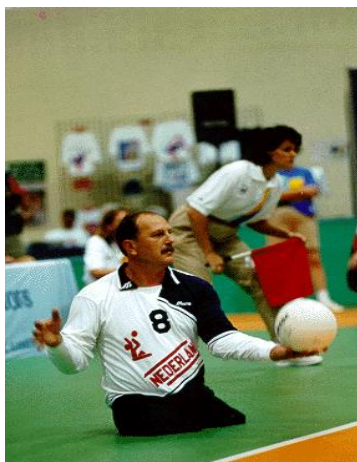
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Paralympic Games: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why were the Paralympic Games created?

The Paralympic Games originated in Aylesbury, England, where games for people with spinal injuries were first held in 1948. The games were organized to coincide with the London Olympic Games. The competition was organized by Dr. Ludwig Guttman, who originally planned them as part of a rehabilitation programme for people with spinal injuries from World War II.

The first Paralympic Games were held in Rome (Italy), in 1960. A total of 23 countries and 400 athletes took part in these summer games. Since then, the Olympic and the Paralympic Games have almost always moved across the globe together, being held in the same country. Paralympic athletes competed in a total of 20 summer sports at the last Paralympic Games in Beijing 2008. The Winter Paralympic Games have a fairly short history. The first Winter Games took place in 1976 in Ornskoldsvic, Sweden. In 2006, in Torino (Italy), 39 countries took part in the Paralympic winter sports: alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, sledge hockey and wheelchair curling.



Sitting volleyball and Nordic skiing
Photos © Bob Peterson from
Robert Steadward and Cynthia Peterson



2. Where did the term Paralympic originate?

The word *Paralympic* comes from the Greek word **para**. It means that the Paralympic Games are parallel to the Olympic Games. The Paralympic Games are the key international competition for athletes with a disability just as the Olympic Games are for able-bodied athletes.

Para: To compare or liken; beside or alongside.

3. What are the Paralympic Games?

The Paralympic Games are the most elite sporting competition in the world for athletes with a physical or a visual disability and are linked to the Olympic celebration every two years. The Paralympic Games, in terms of complexity, duration and the number of competitors, are second only to the Olympic Games. The fundamental philosophy guiding the Paralympic movement is that athletes with disabilities should have opportunities to pursue their goals in sports equivalent to those of able-bodied athletes. The Paralympic Games represent a commitment to excellence that allows elite athletes to achieve their personal best.

4. Why are they important?

The Paralympic Games provide premier athletes with a disability an opportunity to showcase their talent on a world stage equal in stature to the Olympic Games. The Paralympic Games make an important social statement about the abilities of people with disabilities. They emphasize the participants' athletic achievements rather than their disabilities.

5. What is the difference between the Paralympic Games and the Special Olympics?

The Paralympic Games are an international sporting competition for athletes with a physical or visual disability. The Special Olympics are a sporting competition specifically for athletes with intellectual disabilities. Put simply, the Paralympic Games are a multi-disability international event focused on high performance while the Special Olympics conduct various levels of participatory events.

6. How are athletes chosen for their Paralympic team?

Athletes must meet strict qualifying standards established by the International Paralympic Committee, their own national sport organization and the host country Paralympic Games Organizing Committee.

7. What are the disability categories in the Summer and Winter Paralympic Games?

- **Amputee:** Athletes with a partial or total loss of at least one limb.
- **Cerebral Palsy:** Athletes with non-progressive brain damage, for example cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, stroke or similar disabilities affecting muscle control, balance or coordination.
- **Visual Impairment:** Athletes with vision impairment ranging from partial vision to total blindness.
- **Spinal Cord Injuries:** Athletes with spinal cord injuries, for example paraplegic (no function of the lower body) or quadriplegic (no arm and leg movement), usually perform in a wheelchair Paralympic sport.
- **“Les Autres”:** Athletes with a physical disability that does not fall strictly under one of the other four categories, such as dwarfism, multiple sclerosis or congenital deformities of the limbs. The name for this category comes from French, one of the two official languages of the Paralympic Games.

Sources:

- www.paralympic.ca
- www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paralympic_Games

Evolution of the Summer Olympic Games vs. Summer Paralympic Games

Olympic Games	Paralympic Games
1960 Rome 17 sports 83 countries 5 348 athletes	1960 Rome 8 sports 23 countries 400 athletes
1964 Tokyo 19 sports 93 countries 5 140 athletes	1964 Tokyo 9 sports 22 countries 390 athletes
1968 Mexico 18 sports 112 countries 5 531 athletes	1968 Tel Aviv 10 sports 29 countries 750 athletes
1972 Munich 21 sports 122 countries 7 156 athletes	1972 Heidelberg 10 sports 44 countries 1 000 athletes
1976 Montreal 21 sports 88 countries 6 085 athletes	1976 Toronto 13 sports 42 countries 1 600 athletes
1980 Moscow 21 sports 81 countries 5 326 athletes	1980 Arnhem 12 sports 42 countries 2 500 athletes
1984 Los Angeles 21 sports 140 countries 7 078 athletes	1984 New York/Stoke Mandeville 17 sports 42 countries 4 080 athletes
1988 Seoul 23 sports 159 countries 8 465 athletes	1988 Seoul 17 sports 61 countries 3 053 athletes
1992 Barcelona 26 sports 169 countries 9 367 athletes	1992 Barcelona 15 sports 82 countries 3 020 athletes
1996 Atlanta 26 sports 199 countries 10 849 athletes	1996 Atlanta 17 sports 103 countries 3 195 athletes

Olympic Games	Paralympic Games
2000 Sydney 28 sports 199 countries 10 651 athletes	2000 Sydney 18 sports 123 countries 3 843 athletes
2004 Athens 28 sports 201 countries 10 625 athletes	2004 Athens 19 sports 136 countries 3 806 athletes
2008 Beijing 28 sports 204 countries 10 5000 athletes	2008 Beijing 17 sports 83 countries 3 951 athletes
2012 London sports countries athletes	2012 London sports countries athletes

Evolution of Winter Paralympic Games

Year	Location	Disabilities Included	Number of Countries	Number of Athletes	Shared Venue Sites with Olympic Games
1976	Ornskoldsvik, Sweden	Blind, Amputee	14	250+	No
1980	Geilo, Norway	All disabilities	18	350+	No
1984	Innsbruck, Austria	All disabilities	22	350+	No
1988	Innsbruck, Austria	All disabilities	22	397	No
1992	Tignes-Albertville, France	All disabilities	24	475	Yes
1994	Lillehammer, Norway	All disabilities	31	550	Yes
1998	Nagano, Japan	All disabilities	32	571	Yes
2002	Salt Lake City, USA	All disabilities	36	416	Yes
2006	Torino, Italy	All disabilities	39	474	Yes
2010	Vancouver, Canada	All disabilities	40	650	Yes

Source: www.paralympic.ca

The Olympic and Paralympic Logos

The Olympic Games Logo

The official Olympic logo was created by Baron Pierre de Coubertin in 1913. It consists of five interlacing rings of blue, yellow, black, green and red. At least one of these colours is found in the flag of every nation. According to the Olympic Charter, the five-ringed symbol represents the union of the five continents and the meeting of athletes from throughout the world at the Olympic Games: Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas and Oceania.

Source: www.colormatters.com/factoid_2001_2.html



Official Olympic Games logo

The Paralympic Games Logo

The Paralympic logo consists of three elements in red, blue and green - the three colours that are most widely represented in national flags around the world and representing the three elements of the Paralympic motto, "Spirit in Motion". The shape of the three elements (*Agitos*) symbolizes the new vision of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) "To Enable Paralympic Athletes to Achieve Sporting Excellence and to Inspire and Excite the World". The universality of the Paralympic Movement is shown through the round shape of the entire logo - symbolizing the globe.

Note: Each host city creates a unique logo to represent the Paralympic Games by adding a personalized symbol to the three *Agitos* (e.g. national flag, other symbols, etc.).



Vancouver 2010 version
of the Paralympic Games logo

"Spirit in Motion" is the new **Paralympic motto**, expressing the inspirational character of the Paralympic Movement as well as elite performance of Paralympic athletes. It also stands for the strong will of every Paralympian. The word "Spirit" implies that the IPC is not limited to only staging high performance sport, but that there is a strong message behind the movement. "Motion" on the other hand implies that the IPC is an organisation on the move.

Sources: www.allstates-flag.com/fotw/flags/oly@ipc.html
http://www.paralympiceducation.ca/Groups/Paralympic%20Summer%20Sports/TOR_Lesson_ENGLISH.pdf

Statistics about Disabilities

1. People with Disabilities in Canada

In 2001, approximately 3.6 million Canadians or 12.4% of the population reported having a disability. This number is expected to increase to 7 million by 2020. Of the 3.6 million:

- 305,750 or 8% are between 5 - 24 years of age.
- 626,610 or 17% are between 24 - 44 years of age.
- 53% female, 47% male
- 8% are from Quebec (600 000 people)

Source: Prevalence of disability in Canada: Statistics Canada: 2001

www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-577-XIE/canada.htm

2. People with Disabilities in the USA

According to the 2000 U.S. Census:

- 50 million Americans have a disability
- 898,355 American youths ages 5-15 have a disability

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Disability Status: 2000 www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-17.pdf

Disability Glossary

Disability	A mental or physical condition that restricts an individual's ability to engage in one or more major life activities (e.g. seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, working or caring for oneself).
Blindness	Partial or “legal” visual impairment based on standard vision being defined as 20/20 visual acuity and an average range of 180 degrees in peripheral vision; thus, people are defined as being legally blind if after methods of correction, such as glasses or contact lenses, they have a visual acuity of 20/200 or higher, or a range of peripheral vision under 20 degrees.
Cerebral palsy	A functional disorder caused by damage to a child's brain during pregnancy, delivery, or shortly after birth. Cerebral Palsy is characterized by one or more movement disorders, such as spasticity (tight limb muscles), purposeless movements, rigidity (severe form of spasticity), or a lack of balance. People with cerebral palsy may also experience seizures, speech, hearing and/or visual impairments, and/or mental retardation.
Developmental disability	A long lasting cognitive disability occurring before age 22 that limits one or more major life activities (self-care, independent living, learning, mobility, etc), and is likely to continue indefinitely (e.g. autism).
Down syndrome	A chromosomal condition (Trisomy 21) caused by the presence of one extra chromosome, and characterized by delayed physical and mental development, and often identifiable by certain physical characteristics, such as a round face, slanting eyes, and a small stature.
Dwarfism	A genetic condition resulting in short stature. In general, people with short-stature prefer the term “little person” to describe their physical condition. The term “dwarf” is considered derogatory.
Inclusion	A set of practices and beliefs that all children should be educated, regardless of disability, in an age appropriate, local, general education setting with appropriate supports and services.
Paraplegia	The paralysis of the legs and lower part of the body, and is usually caused by injury or disease in the lower spinal cord, or by brain disorders such as cerebral palsy.
Parkinson's disease	A progressive disorder caused by the brain's inability to manufacture a chemical that signals the muscles to move. The symptoms include involuntary tremors, stiff movements, and/or lack of balance.
Prosthesis	An artificial device used to replace a missing body part, such as a limb, tooth, eye or heart valve.
Quadriplegia	The paralysis of a person's four limbs.
Visual impairment	A form of eyesight impairment that varies in severity and in more acute cases cannot be corrected by glasses or contact lenses.

Source: http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/fall_2005/fall_2005_lesson5_sb_glossary.asp

Paralympic Sports

Summer Paralympic Sports

Archery	This sport is a test of accuracy, strength and concentration. Competitors shoot at a target marked with ten scoring zones, from a set distance.
Athletics	This very popular sport includes track, throwing and jumping events.
Boccia	Similar to lawn bowls, this game is designed for people with severe physical disabilities and is played from a wheelchair.
Cycling	Events are divided into three groups for road racing with a special tandem cycle developed where a blind athlete is paired with a fully sighted athlete.
Equestrian	Riders compete in two Dressage events; a Championship Test of set movements and a Freestyle Test to music.
Goalball	Played by visual impaired/blind athletes, a ball is rolled into the opponent's goal while the opposing players try to block the ball with their body.
Judo	Visual impaired players using international rules with only slight modifications.
Powerlifting	This sport differs from Olympic competition in that the only discipline is the bench press.
Rowing	This is the youngest sport in the Paralympic Games and is divided into four boat categories.
Sailing	Athletes race using a Single-Person, two-Person or a Three-Person Keelboat.
Shooting	Rifle and pistol events in air gun and .22 calibre categories are programmed in this sport.
Soccer 5-a-side	For people with a visual impairment, 5 players on each team.
Soccer 7-a-side	For people with Cerebral Palsy, 7 players on each team.
Swimming	Swimmers compete in physical, vision impairment and intellectual disability categories.
Table Tennis	Men and women compete individually or in doubles. A match comprises five sets of eleven points, winners taking three of the five sets.
Volleyball (sitting)	Amputees play seated on the ground with a lower net.
Wheelchair Basketball	Athletes in wheelchairs try to score into the opponents' basket and prevent the other team from gaining control of the ball or scoring.
Wheelchair Fencing	Fencers compete in wheelchairs fixed to the floor, using foil, sabre and epee.
Wheelchair Rugby	In this very physical sport, athletes in wheelchairs attempt to carry the ball over the opponent's goal line.
Wheelchair Tennis	Athletes in wheelchairs compete in this sport; but compared to conventional tennis, the tennis ball may bounce twice.

Winter Paralympic Sports

Alpine Skiing	Athletes ski, either standing or sitting, on a mono-ski and compete in the Downhill, Super-G, Giant Slalom and Slalom.
Nordic Skiing	Includes cross-country skiing and biathlon.
Sledge Hockey	Instead of skates, players use two-blade sledges and two sticks.
Wheelchair Curling	It is played like curling but with no sweeping. Each team must be comprised of male and female players in wheelchairs.

Source: www.paralympic.ca

Who Can Compete?

Summer Paralympic Sports

Sports	Amputee	Spinal Cord Injuries	Cerebral Palsy	Visual Impairment	Les Autres (MS, MD, Polio, SB)
Archery	•	•	•		•
Athletics	•	•	•	•	•
Boccia	•	•	•		•
Cycling	•	•	•	•	
Equestrian	•	•	•	•	
Goalball				•	
Judo				•	
Powerlifting	•	•	•		
Rowing	•	•	•	•	•
Sailing	•	•	•	•	•
Shooting	•	•	•		•
Soccer 5-a-side			•	•	
Soccer 7-a-side			•	•	
Swimming	•	•	•	•	•
Table Tennis	•	•	•		•
Volleyball (sitting)	•	•	•		•
Wheelchair Basketball	•	•	•		•
Wheelchair Fencing	•	•	•		
Wheelchair Rugby	•	•	•		•
Wheelchair Tennis	•	•			

Winter Paralympic Sports

Sports	Amputee	Spinal Cord Injuries	Cerebral Palsy	Visual Impairment	Les Autres (MS, MD, Polio, SB)
Alpine Skiing	•	•	•	•	•
Nordic Skiing	•	•	•	•	•
Sledge Hockey	•	•	•		•
Wheelchair Curling	•	•	•		•

Source: www.paralympic.ca