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SUMMER 2021



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WELCOME

“A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats.”

– John F. Kennedy

I know the power of parasport. I've known it quite personally in fact in each of its five decades in Ontario. We found each other in the late 1970s. It's somewhat ironic though. As generous as parasport has been to me for most of my life, I resisted it at first. Granted, we were both young, very young, both finding our way in unmapped spaces and places.

I was a teenager, a relatively new amputee, and parasport in Ontario was even younger when we first met. Neither knew who or what we wanted to be really. And neither had any inkling of who or what we would become someday. But we were as idealistic and uncompromising as teenagers and pioneers could be.



Decade by decade we matured and evolved. We learned from others, challenged perceptions, and made bold predictions about what we would accomplish, together and independently. Reliably, new pathways continued to present themselves for both. Milestones ensued. For me, it was the Paralympic Games and a lifelong passion for sport. For parasport, it was about opportunities for all – an ever-rising tide in the form of a Movement.

Earlier this year ParaSport® Ontario released *The POWER of PARASPORT*, a remarkable publication that celebrates five decades of parasport in Ontario, the breadth of this organization. The book is monumental in its scope, telling the stories of hundreds of visionaries and pioneers and chronicling countless athletic milestones... each supported with legacy photography.

This publication, for me, is an extension of my own passion for parasport. A nod to the bounty that parasport afforded me in our time together years ago and ironically too, long thereafter. *The POWER of PARASPORT* celebrates five decades of believers and backers, and of course the athletes too... all who brought us to here!

Jeff Tiessen

Executive Director, ParaSport® Ontario

PS: Join us as a Member of the ParaSport® Ontario Family, and receive *ParaSport® magazine*, our monthly e-newsletters and much more, for FREE. Sign up at www.parasportontario.ca.

ParaSport® MAGAZINE

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The Official Publication of ParaSport® Ontario

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ParaSport® Magazine is published two times a year by DT Publishing Group, Inc. for ParaSport® Ontario (PO). PO accepts no responsibility for injuries, damages or losses arising out of the use or misuse of ideas, opinions, activities or products contained in this publication. Where appropriate, professional advice should be sought. All material submitted to the magazine becomes the property of ParaSport Magazine.

Canadian Postmaster: Please send address changes to ParaSport Ontario, 3701 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, ON M1N 2G2.

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ParaSport Ontario acknowledges the financial support from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) for ParaSport Magazine. MTCS is committed to inclusion and accessibility.



Publications Mail Registration #10293
Canadian Mail Agreement #40069170
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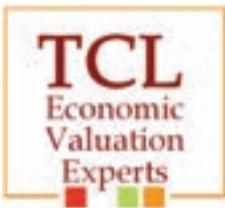




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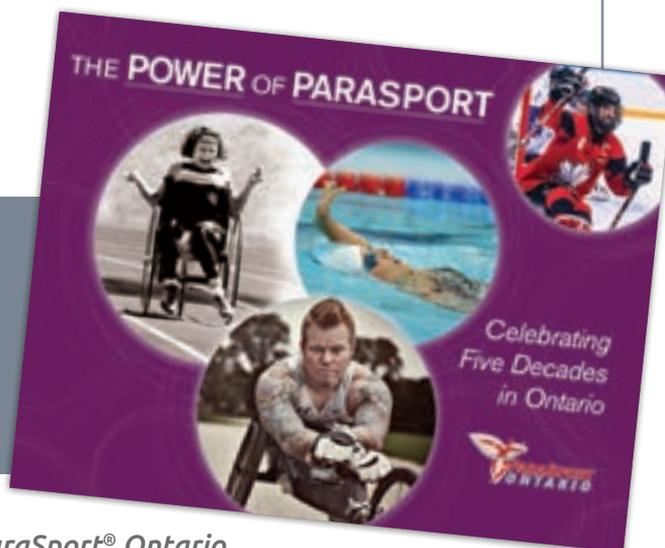
The POWER of PARASPORT

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WHO IS THAT SWIMMER?

It seemed to be on during every Olympic and Paralympic broadcast... the Toyota commercial with the amputee swimmer that repeatedly aired during the Games.

The ad, which actually debuted during the Super Bowl, showcased 13-time gold medal American Paralympic swimmer Jessica Long's journey from an orphan in Siberia to a Paralympian. Long was adopted at 13 months old. The commercial recreated the conversation her

mother, played by an actor, had with the adoption agency as she learned about the challenges she would face with amputation.

"I think what makes this so emotional for me is that there really were so many hard moments that people didn't see," Long said. Long was born with a condition that required her to have her legs amputated below the knees. "I didn't sign up to be an amputee; it was the life that I was given. And I have always made the best of it

but there were a lot of really tough moments," she said.

Olympic and Paralympic fans saw the short version of the commercial. A longer, 60-second ad appeared during the big game in February. "I think one thing about this beautiful spot that Toyota created is that it really does highlight so many moments of my life that I never thought would be showcased," Long said. Long is among the world's most decorated swimmers with 23 Paralympic medals in total, according to www.Paralympic.org.



EVERYONE ON WHEELS

Ten years ago a French company called Mobile En Ville contacted a team of London speed skaters with a really novel idea. They called it “Wheelchair Skating” whereby rollerbladers would push wheelchair users from Paris to London in celebration of the London 2012 Paralympics.

The idea stuck. Today, Wheels and Wheelchairs is a non-profit organization formed by a group of London skaters, rollerbladers and wheelchair users to aid in providing shared skating experiences and the rush of speed on paved, outdoor trails. Their Saturday Skate Groups meet every week. Members can participate in an easy-skate at a steady pace, or on a faster route past London’s major landmarks. Occasionally the group will get together for longer adventures and roller marathons. It’s a truly inspiring collaboration of community to provide a unique accessible sport experience which welcomes everybody.

An idea for your community? Learn more about Wheels and Wheelchairs at www.wheelsandwheelchairs.co.uk.



SPRINKLE SUPPORT



Kids Rehab Hospital, Sprinkle Support was able to boost its initiative with its own app! The app incorporates proven methods to help grow healthy habits while also tracking daily rides and earning sprinkles. Learn more about earning sprinkles at <https://sprinkle.support>.

Lockdowns have taken a toll on countless individuals and communities. Luckily, there are people still willing to take the time to sprinkle some support to others. Such is the case with two young girls, ages seven and nine, who created the Sprinkle Support organization and launched their first event – the Ride ‘n’ Roll fundraiser this summer.

The sisters wanted to “sprinkle” some kindness to help causes of human and animal welfare. Ride ‘n’ Roll, in support of kids with disabilities, encouraged kids and families to be active by riding, rolling or just simply moving around. With the support of KindHuman Bicycles, Pearl Interactives and Holland Bloorview





GAMING FOR COMMUNITY GOOD

The Ontario Charitable Gaming Association (OCGA) has launched its new public-facing website www.cgsgood.com. The website promotes the contributions that OCGA charities and non-profits make to local communities through funds raised from charitable gaming. This site was developed to represent the impact and benefits of charitable gaming across Ontario.

“Charitable gaming is an amazing partnership between charities and non-profits, our commercial operators, municipalities, Ontario Lottery and Gaming, and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario,” says OCGA Executive Director Lynn Cassidy. “Together we provide opportunities for charities and non-profits to carry out their good work in communities across Ontario... and now we’re spreading the word about the

amazing work that our charities and non-profits are doing even in these very challenging times.”

The site features stories from some of the 2,200+ charities and non-profits participating in cGaming and shows how the funds raised provide important services and programs in local communities. The site also lists the locations for all thirty-seven charitable gaming centres across Ontario.



OCPSA Celebrates Big Four-O!



The Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association (OCPSA) marked its milestone 40th anniversary across the province this year with virtual success... the Virtual Bocchia Series, that is. A free program, participants learn basic techniques and skills such as shot types and game strategies. Six 60-minute sessions are offered on Zoom. Players are challenged with weekly goals and receive ongoing instructions and leadership from experienced coaches. The Youth Edition is ideal for children and youth under 25 years of age who want to play for fun and/or those who want to better their skills!

Need bocchia equipment? No problem! Loaner kits and ramps are available upon registration or for purchase at www.ocpsa.com. Tune into OCPSA’s social media for more information and to register for this free program... Facebook and YouTube (Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association), Instagram (@ontariocpsports) and Twitter (@onCPsports).

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Lawn Bowling Legend Inducted in Hall of Fame



Kitchener's Vivian Berkeley is a two-time World Blind Lawn Bowling Champion who is recognized as the greatest Canadian athlete of all time in her category (B1 blind lawn bowler). She is now a member of the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame with her 2021 induction. After proudly carrying the Paralympic Torch on its way to Atlanta, this world-class competitor went on to win silver at those 1996 Paralympic Games. Her incredible career included many athletic achievements including 60 medals won, 17 at the international level. She claimed 21 national gold medals – which she defended for 16 straight years – as well as 22

straight provincial top finishes. Additionally, Berkeley is helping to continue to grow her sport for people who are blind and living with vision loss in Canada and abroad.

Coach Wanted

With support from the Ontario Parasport Collective, the Coaches Association of Ontario is now offering NCCP Coaching Athletes with a Disability (CAWAD) to Ontario coaches at no charge. If interested in completing this module, visit this link to access your free NCCP CAWAD eLearning code: www.coachesontario.ca/programs-resources/coaching-in-parasport/cawad. Share the news with your network of sport leaders.



ON YOUR MARKS VIDEO GAME BUFFS

The first Paralympic video game was released this summer for IOS and Android users. The Pegasus Dream Tour, developed by Hajime Tabata, is the first project from JP Games and the first video game to be officially licensed by the International Paralympic Committee. Tabata hopes it will bring younger audiences to Paralympic sport. Players complete online quests where they can talk to para-athletes and compete against them. The game features futuristic versions of nine real world para-athletes including Canadian wheelchair basketball icon Patrick Anderson. Check it out: www.pegasus-dream.com.

A man in a wheelchair is sitting on an outdoor basketball court. He is wearing a black tank top and dark pants, and he is holding a basketball in his right hand. In the background, there is a basketball hoop and bleachers. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a clear sky.

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WOMEN-ONLY EVENT W@WS

The Canadian Paralympic Committee hosted a virtual event called Connection 2021 in June for women with disabilities who are interested in parasports. Participants learned about a variety of sports that are available for people with differing disabilities.

Among many in attendance was Candice Combdon who jumped at the opportunity to attend the women-only event. "As a 30-something-year-old female playing wheelchair tennis, there is not a lot of us in the sport," she said. "Being part of an entire weekend with female athletes who shared the same experience and trials and tribulations that I did, and meeting women who got into sport as late as I did, meant a lot."

While Combdon came to Connection 2021 with parasport experience, Oanh Nguyen did not. Two years removed from an injury that resulted in the loss of her legs, Nguyen is still navigating her new reality and abilities. "For me personally, it was a safe space where I could really talk about what is affecting me as a woman," Nguyen said. "If it was a mixed event, I would not have felt comfortable talking about them. And there's so much space for men in sport; it's fun to have just women there to give advice and information." Nguyen hopes to try new sports that she didn't even know were available.





Rising Phoenix FILM SOARS

Launched in 2020, *Rising Phoenix* conveys the stories of nine Paralympians and their athletic journeys. The Paralympics sparked a global movement changing the way the world views disability, human potential, excellence and diversity. The film's release was to coincide with a one-year-to-go celebration for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

Featured in the film, Matt Stutzman is a well-known U.S. Paralympian recognized by his unique feet-shooting style in archery. Stutzman said, "Yes, we have physical disabilities but that does not stop us. We can still be the person who goes to the grocery store. We can live like everybody else." It was sports, says Stutzman, that gave him a place and a purpose.

Play to Podium Recipient Takes Top Apple Honours

Sooni Mohammed is a 15-year-old coding genius and a recent winner of the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference Challenge. Sooni is also a Play to Podium Fund recipient where he received a sports wheelchair from ParaSport® Ontario to pursue his basketball dreams.

After winning the Apple challenge, Sooni got to meet Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, and received a one-year membership in the Apple Developer Program, among other awards. The competition recognizes 350 young developers from 35 countries, including Sooni and five other Canadians.

During the 2020 stay-at-home order Sooni developed an app that helps people determine how much water intake their body needs. "I just want to help other people learn how to do coding, and one way to do that is by learning from Apple," he shared.

Sooni's mom Samia Ali added: "People see a boy in a wheelchair, but they don't really look at the person. Everyone has a story inside them. Everyone has a passion. Everyone has a voice, but sometimes they need a little help being heard and a little bit of time and patience."



#WeThe15



A global campaign described as a “game-changer” was launched to improve the lives of more than one billion disabled people by 2030.

WeThe15 wants to improve inclusion, raise awareness and end discrimination of disabled people around the world. It brings together a coalition of organizations from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to Unesco. Using the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games as a springboard, the IPC and the International Disability Alliance have joined forces with arts, business and human rights organizations including UN Human Rights and The Valuable 500 to “raise awareness, change attitudes and create more opportunities” for people with disabilities.

The campaign has been set-up to represent the 15% of the world’s population that have disabilities – about 1.2 billion people, according to the World Health Organization. For the launch, 125 landmarks around the world turned purple – the internationally-recognized colour of disability – from New York’s Empire State Building to Moscow’s Ostankino Tower, Rome’s Colosseum to the London Eye, and in Canada the CN Tower and Niagara Falls. The president of the IPC, Andrew Parsons, said: “WeThe15 aims to put disability right at the heart of the inclusion agenda, alongside ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. I strongly believe WeThe15 could be a real game-changer.”

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ParaSport Ontario Welcomes Kevin Rempel

ParaSport® Ontario is proud to announce that Paralympian Kevin Rempel has joined the organization's Board of Directors for a three-year term. Rempel has surmounted numerous life challenges to reach the Paralympic podium and now delivers his powerful message of hope and resilience to audiences through his speaking, writing, and The Sledge Hockey Experience team-building program.



A freestyle motocross accident resulted in incomplete paraplegia which seriously threatened Rempel's ability to walk again. Rempel's tenacity translated to his rehabilitation and recovery. Six weeks after his accident he wiggled his first toe, and four months post-injury he was walking again.

Rempel's successes continued as he became one of Canada's most talented and best-known Paralympic athletes, earning a bronze medal with Canada's Para Ice Hockey Team at the 2014 Paralympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

Today he works to give back to the sport and community he loves so much, making the world a more inclusive and welcoming place for others who live with disabilities. Prior to creating the Sledge Hockey Experience, Rempel helped lead others as a keynote speaker. After learning how to walk again, finding his way away from depression, and reaching the Paralympic podium, Rempel was constantly asked what he did to achieve those goals. From those conversations, The Hero Mindset keynote was born as Kevin teaches others how to "become a hero in your own movie."

"Each of us have Hero Moments, Hero Decisions, and Hero Actions where we can step up in our personal and professional lives," he explains. "It's about focusing on the small things that make a big difference" – the strategies that he used to propel his life forward that he brings to ParaSport Ontario.



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PARASPORT ONTARIO CHAMPIONS CELEBRATED

ParaSport® Ontario is proud to present its nine remarkable award winners of 2020, celebrated earlier this year in The Power Within virtual event. ParaSport Ontario award winners are selected based on outstanding effort in improving athletic skills within themselves or others, accompanied by contributions to the growth or awareness of sport or recreational activity for Ontario's disability community.

The **Dr. Robert Jackson Award** was presented to Aurora's **ALAN DEAN** who pioneered and led the parasport movement for amputee athletes over five decades. Recognized for his volunteer career, Dean was a founding member of both the Ontario and Canadian Amputee Sports Associations, following in the footsteps of his role model Dr. Robert Jackson. Dean's role as a technical advisor for the Toronto Olympiad in 1976 introduced him to Dr. Jackson and the possibilities associated with adaptive sports. Dean, a below-knee amputee, was a remarkable athlete himself who played an indelible role in developing parasport opportunities for others.

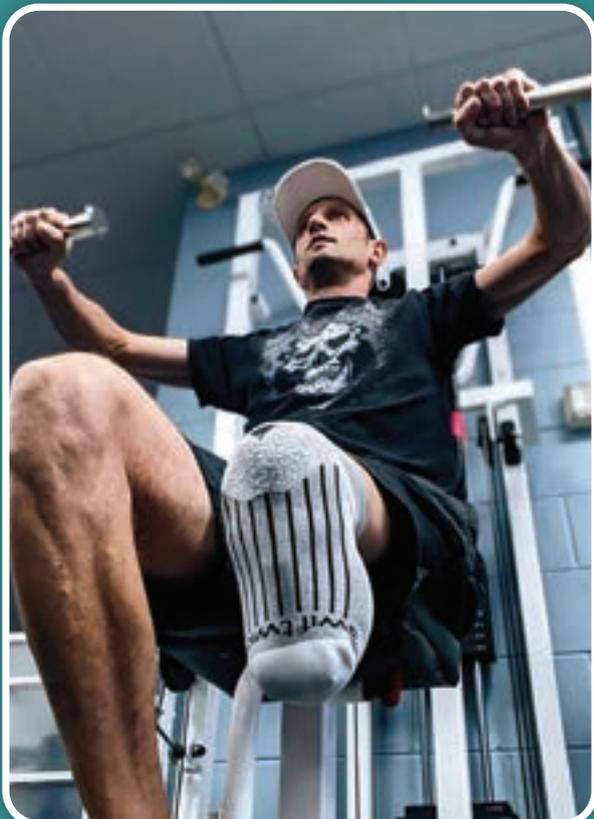


Another parasport pioneer dedicated to promoting inclusive sport and transforming the lives of athletes with disabilities is Ottawa's **AMANDA FADER**. Fader was the 2020 recipient of the **Justin Hines "Say What You Will" Award** which honours character, integrity and exceptional commitment to parasport. Recipients of this award are recognized for their dedication to advocacy and the support and promotion of athletes with disabilities while encouraging inclusive opportunities in sport and recreation. After just one summer of working in the sport of wheelchair racing, Fader knew she wanted to coach para-athletes. Her mentor, Bob Schrader, played a valuable role in ensuring that Fader accomplished that goal. Fader pioneered the World Wheelchair Basketball Challenge and now leads the Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association as its Executive Director.

The **Junior Athlete of the Year Award** went to Oshawa's **NICO IEMMA**, a Boccia all-star. At just 14 years old Iemma created the Boccia Busters program for athletes in the Region of Durham. Iemma's nickname of "Ironman" speaks to his passion for the sport of Boccia for him and for other youth with complex disabilities. He competed in the 2019 Ontario ParaSport Games in Durham and continues to make an impact within his community.



CHRIS GARNER of Niagara Falls received ParaSport Ontario's **Male Athlete of the Year Award**. Garner is a multi-sport athlete who, despite the ongoing challenges associated with his amputation, pushes himself toward excellence every day. Garner competes at the provincial level in sledge hockey, paragolf, and sitting volleyball, while supporting others with disabilities on their parasport pathways as well.



Paralympian **JOLAN WONG** was celebrated with ParaSport Ontario's **Female Athlete of the Year Award**. This award is presented each year to an individual demonstrating outstanding effort in her respective sport and contributing to its growth. Wong always passionately strives to engage others in the parasport community, particularly in her sport of sitting volleyball. An amputee, the Pembroke athlete has been a member of the National Sitting Volleyball Team for 13 years most recently to represent Canada at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.



Photo courtesy of Canadian Paralympic Committee



Toronto's **MARTHA SANDOVAL GUSTAFSON** exemplifies exceptional and enduring commitment to parasport and for that she was presented with the **Bob Secord Award**. Her lifelong commitment to the ParaSport Movement has positively impacted countless others. A ubiquitous figure in Ontario's parasport community, she still participates in wheelchair curling and wheelchair rugby at 70+ years of age. Prior to immigrating to Canada in 1981 Gustafson participated in the 1976 and 1980 Paralympic Games, winning 12 medals for Mexico. After arriving in Canada, Gustafson began training at Variety Village determined to represent Canada at the Paralympic Games... which she did at the 1984 and 1988 Games. With a total Paralympic medal count of 19 across the sports of track and field, swimming and table tennis, Gustafson stands as Ontario's most decorated Paralympian.

ARISTOTLE DOMINGO was recognized for his selfless dedication to community engagement and education with the **Ambassador of the Year Award**.

Toronto's Domingo is a double-leg amputee tri-athlete who participates in many sports including paragolf, para-athletics and sitting volleyball. He also connects with the community through his advocacy efforts as a peer mentor and media expert. Domingo is described as a "joy-filled athlete, communicator, teacher, advocate and actor." After his amputations he made it a personal goal to run a 5K road race and did just that. A role model for many, he embraces the opportunity to inspire other para-athletes.





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Also receiving the **Bob Second Award** was Ottawa's dynamic husband and wife duo of **REG MCCLELLAN** and **CHANTAL BENOIT**. Both are decorated Paralympians in wheelchair basketball. McClellan founded the Canadian Wheelchair Basketball Association in 1994, and with Benoit is the owner of wheelchair

company 49 Bespoke. He spent 20 years competing on national basketball teams and played on four Paralympic Games teams with six World Championship appearances as well. Benoit competed in the most-ever Paralympic Games by a Canadian wheelchair basketball athlete and is considered to be the best female athlete to ever play the game. Consistently the leading scorer, she earned three Paralympic gold medals from 1992-2000. Both McClellan and Benoit continue to help guide para-athletes and shape the parasport community.

And finally, the **Community Impact Award** celebrated **DEREK WASSER** and **THE FOOD DUDES** for the tremendous contribution to ParaSport Ontario's signature events, namely the annual Para Pro-Am Golf Tournament. This award honours Wasser and The Food Dudes for their quiet work of providing healthy, gourmet dinners and snacks to ParaSport Ontario's guests and athletes. A second-to-none culinary experience always, this award is a tribute to The Food Dudes' excellence in service and volunteerism and outstanding community impact.



To meet these athletes and witness their passion for parasport in their acceptance speeches watch [ParaSport The Power Within](#) on YouTube.



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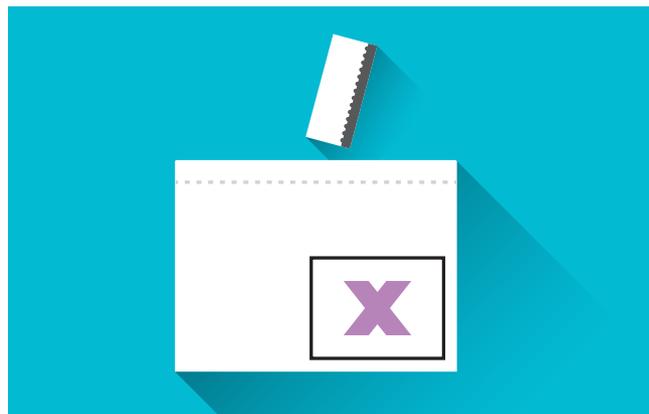
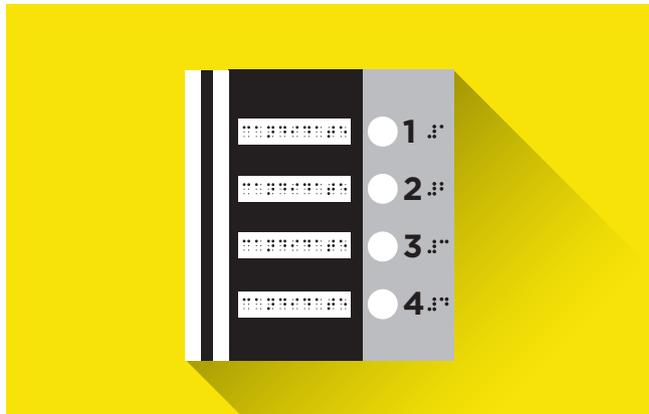
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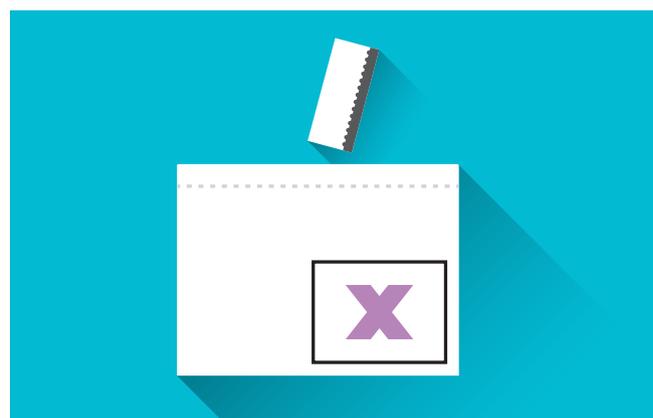
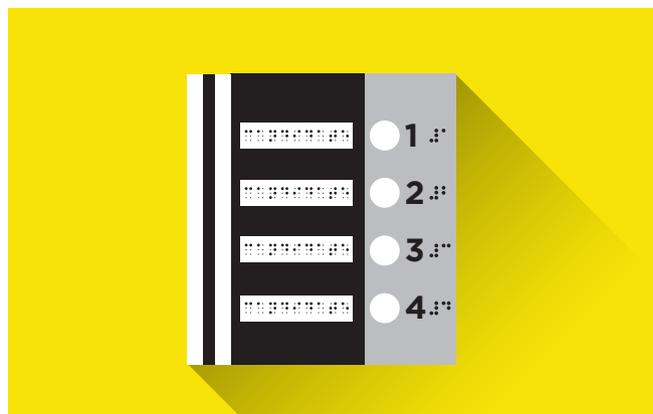
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A SHOWCASE OF EXCELLENCE

THE 2021 Para Pro-Am GOLF Tournament



Chris Garner

By Jeff Tiessen
*Executive Director,
ParaSport® Ontario*

The fourth installment of ParaSport Ontario's signature event – the Para Pro-Am Golf Tournament – was hosted by the Lebovic Golf Club, which ranked as the "Third Best New Golf Course" in 2016 by Golf Digest. The 18-hole championship golf course was designed by world-renowned course architect Doug Carrick. Its spectacular par 70 layout is set upon 150 acres of rolling hills on the Oak Ridges Moraine in Aurora, Ontario.

With this tournament's strongest field ever assembled set to compete, Mother Nature slammed the course with two inches of early morning rain washing out day one of the two-day July event. With the resilience that ParaSport Ontario sees in its athletes, the event's organizers quickly shifted to a one-day event, while its professional golfers scrambled to adjust their schedules or find replacements for the following day. Day two brought clear blue skies and welcomed an impressive roster of committed corporate players, professionals and paragolfers... a great day for golf and an even greater legacy for ParaSport Ontario's 2021 Para Pro-Am Tournament.

Among the impressive line-up of paragolfers showcasing their excellence at the Para Pro-Am Golf Tournament were these remarkable athletes and advocates.

Chris Garner became an amputee at the age of 38 after years of chronic pain. Now, three years later, he is a multi-sport athlete who competes provincially in sledge hockey and sitting volleyball. Chris is also an avid



(L-R) Tess Trojan, Ashley, Alexa and Justin Kulla



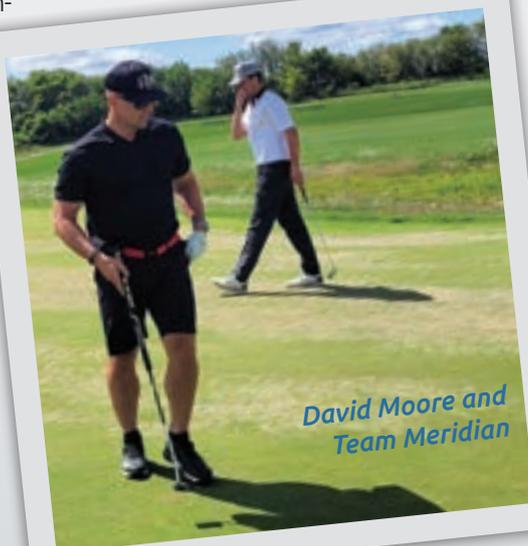
(L-R) Sonny Goldstein and Bernie Gluckstein

paragolfer. "It's my goal to be as active as possible as a paragolf athlete so I can share my story and help inspire other people with physical disabilities to be more active," he says.

Tess Trojan has been involved with sport through Special Olympics since she was 12 years old. Her long-time commitment to chasing her dreams has earned her two Canadian National Championships in golf, and a gold medal at the 2015 World Games in Los Angeles and at the 2019 World Games in Abu Dhabi. A strong advocate for the game, Tess is an athlete representative on the Special Olympics Ontario Board of Directors and volunteers with a special needs program at Brock University.

Paralympian Greg Westlake's name has become synonymous with Canadian Para Ice Hockey. The three-time World Champion became a bilateral below-knee amputee at 18 months old. At 15 years old he found his way onto the Mississauga Cruisers Sledge Hockey team, and just two years later made his first National Team. He plans to return to the National Team to compete in the 2022 Winter Paralympics in China, his

fifth Paralympiad. Off the ice he is an advocate for sports and accessibility, giving his voice in support of programs that enable kids of all abilities to play together. A talented golfer who regularly pounds drives over 300 yards, Greg uses his platform to create opportunities for others. He was a member of the winning team at the inaugural Para Pro-Am Golf Tournament in 2018 which went on to finish fourth at the RBC Scramble Finals at Cabot Cliffs in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.



David Moore and Team Meridian

Para Pro-Am CHAMPIONS

Congratulations to all and particularly to our top finishers:

Tournament Champions:

NeuroChangers moved on to the Provincial RBC Scramble Finals... Dave Berto, Yarinka Berto, Matt Sanchez, paragolfer Roman Tietz and pro golfer Izak Fouche.

Second Place: ParaGolf Ontario (Capt. Jerry Brandt)

Third Place (six teams tied): Team Westlake (Capt. Jim Westlake), Team Meridian (Capt. David Moore), Team Lofranco (Capt. Rocky Lofranco), Team Goldstein Financial (Capt. Sonny Goldstein), Team King International (Capt. Brian King) and Team PGA of Canada (Alternate "C" Rem Langan).

First Place Ladies Team: Durham Medical, captained by Natalie Sims, with Nancy Shaw and Sue Lupton, paragolfer Natasha Stasiuk and pro Emma DeGroot.

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Kurtis Barkley was born with scoliosis, causing his spine to curve in three directions. While this, and six fused vertebrae, affects his flexibility, torso, and organs, it has not prevented him from establishing himself as an elite golfer. Kurtis began playing golf at the age of three with his dad as his teacher. Now, his dad proudly supports Kurtis as his caddy. The three-time Golf Association of Ontario Disability Championship winner continues to rise on

the World Rankings for Golfers with a Disability with his sights set on the top eight. Just days after the Para Pro-Am Kurtis departed for Great Britain to play in two Hero Championship events earning his ranking in the top 12 golfers with disabilities in the world. Upon his return to Canada he won the first Canadian All Abilities Championship.

And Natasha Stasiuk... recently crowned as the inaugural winner of the Canadian All Abilities Champion-

ship on the Ladies side, and who also has won the Ontario Disability Open.

Always an inspirational event, the tournament boosted ParaSport Ontario's Play to Podium Fund which supports Ontarians with disabilities with the adaptive sports equipment they need to "get in the game" for fitness, fun and friendships.

ParaSport Ontario offers a sincere thank-you to our corporate sponsors, paragolfers and pros who made the 2021 Para Pro-Am Golf Tournament another showcase of excellence in the sport of golf. That support promotes the organization's ideal that "There is a sport for everyBODY!" encouraging persons of all abilities to participate in the game, or any sport, through all stages of life. And the organization extends the same thanks to the PGA of Canada for its commitment to this tournament and to the tournament's tireless co-chairs Joe Millage, Bernard Gluckstein, Tim Christie and Rocky Lofranco. And a very special thank-you to The Dr. Wolf Lebovic Charitable Foundation and The Joseph Lebovic Charitable Foundation for the generous donation of their course, facilities, amenities and staff for the event.

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*– Todd Keirstead
Founder & CEO, ParaGolf Canada*

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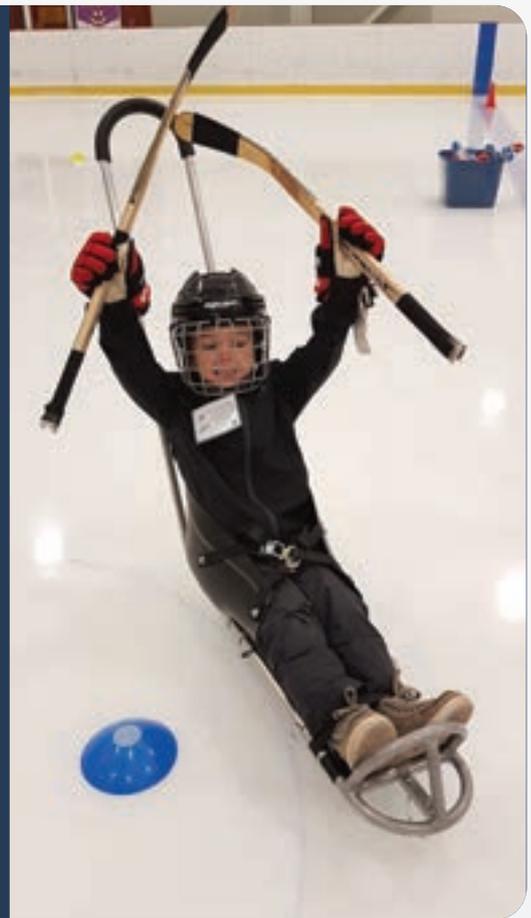


Play to Podium Fund

ParaSport® Ontario supports all members of the disability community in finding their sport or activity of choice. And that includes their equipment needs. For some, the desire to play basketball comes with the need of a sports wheelchair. Playing hockey... a sled. Biking with friends... a handcycle. To sprint around the track... a racing wheelchair. Boccia... an adapted ramp. So let's get them what they need! That's exactly what ParaSport Ontario's Play to Podium Fund is doing.

This year ParaSport Ontario, with the support of partners Sunrise Medical, Unique Inventions, Ossur, Cheelcare and others, supported the adaptive sport equipment needs of over 50 individuals and organizations with donations of a Cheelcare Companion, a racing wheelchair, Nordic sit-skis, ice hockey and skating sledges, a prosthetic running leg and more than a dozen boccia sets for all.

Meet our most recent recipient! Beckett, with his new ice sledge, is now a member of his community's skating program – Cornwall's Skate Seaway. Thank-you to ParaSport Ontario Board member Bernie Gluckstein and Vim Kochhar of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons for the donation to make Beckett's dream come true.



Lebovic Golf Club

(L-R) Natasha Stasiuk, Natalie Sims, Nancy Shaw and Sue Lupton



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With the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, ParaSport® Ontario is working with municipalities, community organizations, Niagara College, Brock University, the Brock Niagara Penguins and other parasport stakeholders to increase participation of those with disabilities in sport and recreation in the Niagara region. Here's a sampling of this summer's activities.

MILLION MINUTES ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

ParaSport® Ontario launched its first regional activity campaign for Niagara's disability community.

Participants in the Million Minutes Activity Challenge set activity goals and logged their minutes each day at www.millionminutes.ca, with a lofty goal of reaching one million minutes in total together. The campaign also raised funds for adapted sports equipment for participants through ParaSport Ontario's Play to Podium Fund. A total of **389,215 activity minutes** were recorded!

Many of the region's mayors championed the challenge with social media posts to encourage their constituents with disabilities to get active, or more active, and to create new activity habits for themselves throughout the summer months. July 7th was declared "**Million Minutes Activity Day**" in the City of Niagara Falls and in the City

of Welland, proclaimed by Mayor **Jim Diodati** and Mayor **Frank Campion** respectively, and each's City Council members. Mayor Campion took the challenge himself, posting his own activity video on social media, as did Port Colborne Mayor **Bill Steele**... check out their videos on ParaSport Ontario's Facebook page. St. Catharines Mayor **Walter Sendzik** featured the Challenge on his Insta-Chat Live.

Participants drew inspiration from motivational activity videos regularly posted on ParaSport Ontario's website and from the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. A favourite photo that captured an athlete in action came from St. Catharines' Lonnie Bissonnette, a skydiver and base jumper, who put claim to – in the spirit of a Paralympic track and field event – completing one of the longest long jumps ever seen!



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Niagara Pop-Ups with ParaSport Ambassadors

#NiagaraNoah (Noah Lane) and Athlete Ambassador Chris Garner travelled throughout the Niagara region this summer with ParaSport Ontario's new equipment trailer in tow, showcasing parasports in each of the region's 12 municipalities. From Niagara-on-the-Lake's Town Square to Grimsby's Southward Community Park, the dynamic duo demonstrated different parasports, answered questions and gave away parasport swag to visitors to the trailer. One of their Pop-Up highlights was the afternoon they spent at the Grimsby Peach King Centre with kids enrolled in the **Junior Mikinawk Sports Camp**. Campers had a great time learning about wheelchair basketball and roller sledge hockey.

MAYORS MEETINGS

Led by 12 municipal mayors, **the Niagara Region is a provincial frontrunner in accessibility** for its residents with disabilities. ParaSport Ontario's Executive Director Jeff Tiessen had the privilege of meeting with each of them in June as part of the Million Minutes Activity Challenge. "To a mayor, accessibility in their respective municipality was something very real for them, and not just a political platform pitch addressed with lip-service alone," applauds Tiessen. "From engaged Accessibility Councils to inclusive design across the region's enviable trail systems and to even more basic accommodations like wheelchair-accessible beach mats and adaptive sports equipment in rec departments' lockers, the mayors in Niagara are paying attention with a desire to do more," explains Tiessen. "It's very exciting for ParaSport Ontario to be working with the region's mayors and municipalities to establish **Niagara as a model for inclusive sports and recreation participation in the province!**"



ParaGolf Activity Clinic at SAWMILL



Nestled in picturesque Fenwick (Pelham), Sawmill Golf Course hosted a ParaSport Try Me Day in August facilitated by Todd Keirstead, an expert adapted golf instructor and founder of ParaGolf Canada. "This experience was an ideal way for kids to learn basic golf skills... and they were so excited to try out new sports like bocchia and sitting volleyball too," said course co-owner Carrie Julie. Keirstead demonstrated adaptive golf swings and other techniques and treated the young audience to some of his award-winning trick shots. Athlete Ambassador and Niagara resident Chris Garner provided the kids with more fun and a good laugh with his own trick shot... taking off his prosthetic leg and using it as a tee!



FRONT — AND — CENTRE with BROCK University

The Brock Niagara Centre of Excellence in Inclusive & Adaptive Physical Activity (BrockU CAPA) is among ParaSport Ontario's new partners in the Niagara Region. The purpose of the Centre is to promote and enhance awareness and development of inclusive and adaptive physical activity programming. The Centre also engages in research, scholarly activity and knowledge translation about inclusive and adaptive physical activity and its associated socio-cultural benefits and constraints. ParaSport Ontario was pleased to accept the Centre's invitation to take a seat on CAPA's Advisory Council.

NEW NIAGARA Sledge Hockey League

ParaSport Ontario is launching a first-of-its-kind community **sledge hockey league** in Niagara this fall! A developmental non-contact league open to all ages and abilities, it's all about participation, inclusion, fun and friendships for players with and without disabilities. Year One begins in November with four committed municipalities – Niagara Falls, Welland, St. Catharines and Grimsby. Players don't have to be from those municipalities to play but must be residents of the Niagara Region.



ParaSport Ontario is providing all of the equipment needed to alleviate that potential barrier to participation. With many supporters of the league including Meridian Credit Union and Niagara College – with students from the graphic design program designing the league logo and promotional materials – the new league is also thrilled to have the support of the region's established team, the Niagara Thunderblades. Operated by the Brock Niagara Penguins, the Thunderblades is a competitive team that travels to play in an Ontario Sledge Hockey Association division. Thunderblades players, led by Chris Garner, will help mentor newcomers to the sport with skills and drills. If interested in learning more about the **Niagara Sledge Hockey League** visit www.parasportniagara.ca or for **Thunderblades information: www.niagarapenguins.org**.

Heartland Forest is PHENOMENAL



ParaSport Ontario was joined by Loretta and Jim Davis, athletes and head coaches with the Brock Niagara Penguins, to visit the newly-appointed Heartland Forest in Niagara Falls. The incredible facility and its surrounding natural habit is completely accessible by design. Ambassador Chris Garner explored the entirety of the grounds in a handcycle, and Loretta demonstrated her dribbling and shooting wheelchair basketball skills in Heartland Forest's fully-netted outdoor court. ParaSport Ontario's Communications Manager Emily

Blackborow was in awe of the wheelchair-accessible treehouse and the beauty of the inclusive trails. **Heartland's commitment to outdoor adventure for all is an outstanding model for recreational spaces.** Go for a visit: www.heartlandforest.org.



WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

*The Push for Participation
of Girls and Women in Parasport*

By Emily Blackborow



*Pioneers and visionaries of the Paraspport Movement in Ontario have been forging pathways for female para-athletes for five decades. Many of those milestones were documented in the recently released table-top-style publication **The Power of ParaSport: Celebrating Five Decades in Ontario**, published by **ParaSport® Ontario**. The stories of influential female leaders like athletes **Chantal Benoit** and **Joanne Berdan**, coaches like **Faye Blackwood** and **Elizabeth MacCullum** and community builders like **Celia Southward** and **Shirley Shelby**, to name a few, grace the pages of the publication.*

These women empowered young females through sport. Their work certainly not for naught, but a harsh reality bearing out of contemporary research speaks to the many barriers to participation in sport that girls and women still face today.

Results published in *Canadian Women and Sport's The Rally Report 2020* show that one in every two girls drops out of sport in her teen years. This measures over three times the dropout rate of their male peers. The inequity is even larger for women athletes of varying abilities.

Approximately 14% of Canadians have either a sensory, intellectual, or physical disability (this includes persons with more than one disability). In a survey conducted by researchers at the University of Toronto, in partnership with Athletics Canada and the Canadian Disability Policy Alliance, it was determined that 25% of Canadian para-athletes have negative sport experiences and are disproportionately subject to abuse and discrimination. In 2016, the United Nations estimated that 93% of women with disabilities are not involved in sport or recreation at all, and that women represent only one third of athletes with disabilities in international competitions.

By providing women with disabilities the opportunity to compete and showcase their physical ability, sport can reduce gender stereotypes and the negative perceptions associated with athletes with disabilities. For girls, sport is a first step to leadership – aiding in the development of confidence and resilience that they bring to their education, careers and communities. ParaSport Ontario (PO)

advocates that now is the time for bold action and investment in women of diverse abilities. In partnership with SeeWhatSheCanDo and Flex for Access Inc., PO is working to increase





the awareness and availability of resources and programming for female para-athletes.

Para-athletes, caregivers, sport providers, healthcare professionals and parasport-loving organizations gathered this summer virtually through the SeeWhatSheCanDo ParAmazing Circle to discuss how Ontario athletes, coaches, industry and community leaders can encourage more women with diverse abilities to get, and stay, in the game.

Using the evidence-based criteria developed by the Canadian Disability Policy Alliance in partnership with Sport Canada to start a roundtable discussion about the existing sport programs and experiences (recreational and high-performance) for women with a disability in Ontario, workshop organizers and participants shared their expertise and lived experiences. Together they created a resource kit featuring insights on the unique opportunities and challenges for women with diverse abilities plus inclusive marketing, recruitment,



and adaptive program tips and best practices from elite para-athletes and industry pros.

ParaSport Ontario and SeeWhatSheCanDo plan to continue the conversation by hosting more roundtable discussions for the parasport community. As we return to play, we need to ensure that more girls and

women with disabilities are included and participating in sport. And in doing so, we will help women and girls with disabilities build confidence, develop independence, experience positive social connections, learn new skills, and empower some to join the ParaSport Movement's pioneers as agents of change for everyBODY.

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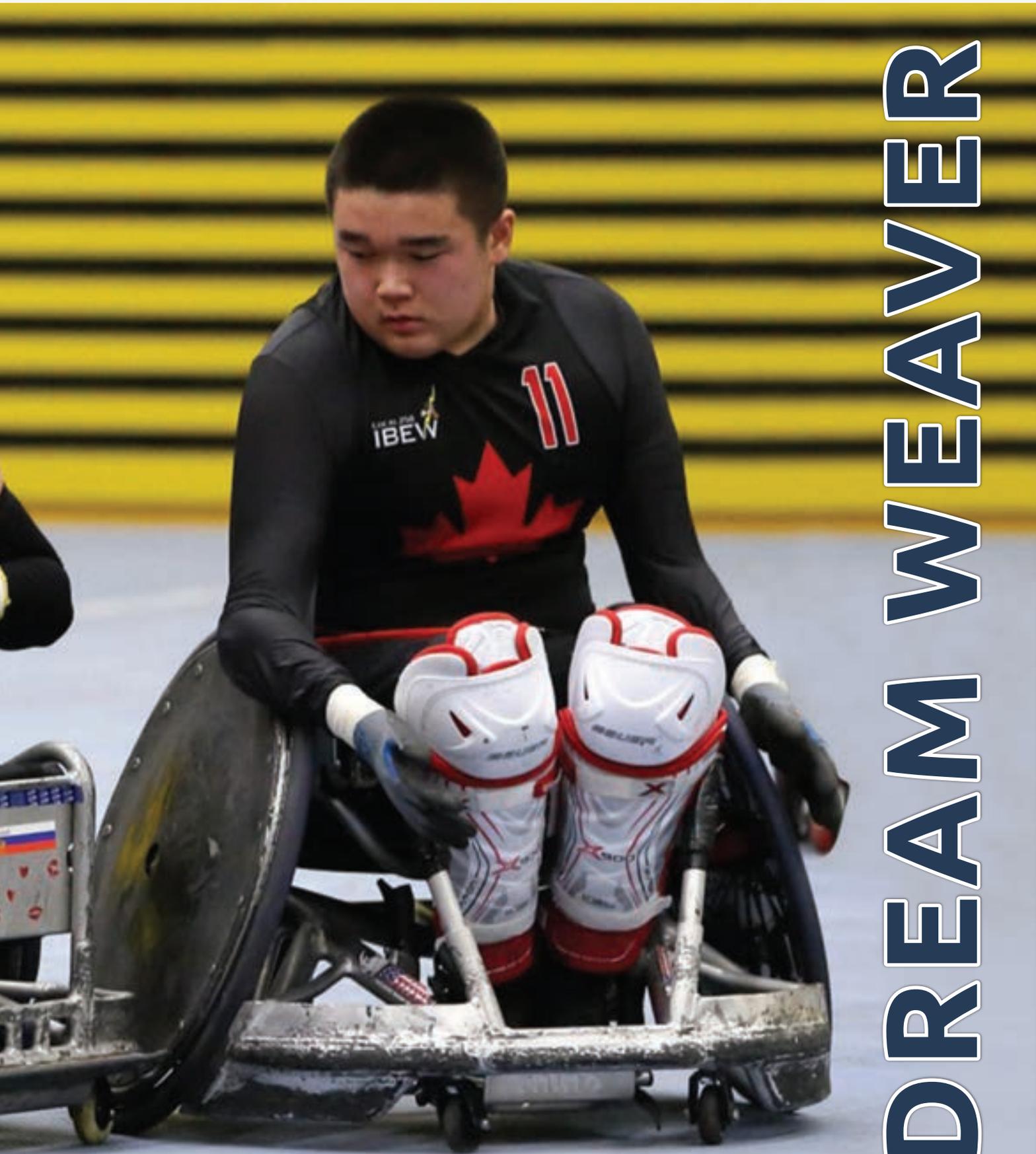
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DREAM WEAVER

Photo courtesy of Rio Kanda Kovac

Paralympics to Media Platforms

Rio Kanda Kovac

has BIG Plans

By Jeff Tiessen

There are some sports that are just not for everyone. These are generally the ones that the more conservative folk shake their head at and question "who would want to do that?" But it's those same sports for which a small faction of athletes share a passion as unique as the sport itself. Enter Wheelchair Rugby.

It's tough. It's rough. It's loud. It's fast-paced. And it's a bit shocking for the uninitiated spectator. It's all of that, plus the social environment and the camaraderie with his teammates that Rio Kanda Kovac loves about his sport.

At only 19 years old Rio, a recent high school graduate, is remarkably young to be representing Team Canada on the wheelchair rugby team. "Most of the players are in their mid 30s or even 40s," Rio explains, "but we are trying to build a younger team. I'm a pretty big hitter... that's my job to try and knock people over. That's part of the game."

For the unaware, wheelchair rugby is a tenacious game. A full-contact court sport, it was invented in the 1970s in Winnipeg by a small group of athletes with quadriplegia who were looking for an alternative to wheelchair basketball. They wanted a sport that would allow players with reduced arm and hand

function to participate equally. The sport they created, now known as wheelchair rugby, was originally called Murderball.

Born in Canada, living in Toronto, Rio lived in Japan at a young age where he underwent surgery related to his CMT (Marie Charcot Tooth disease) and resided in Japan with his dad for a couple years as a young teen. That's when he discovered wheelchair rugby and got interested in the sport. Ironically, the game he watched on TV that inspired him was being played in Canada.

It was Canada against Argentina broadcasting from the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto. "Sitting and watching," Rio shares, "it was the first time I felt like 'Hey, I could play this. I could do that.'" Rio also shares that growing up he couldn't play sports like hockey and soccer. "I was always on the sidelines. This [rugby] was it. I knew I needed to pursue it."

Rio didn't delay. He started training immediately and within a year, at 13, he was playing wheelchair rugby. And he hasn't stopped playing. He played in Japan for two years before deciding to come back to Canada. His first year back he received his athlete development card and has been training and travelling with the junior national team ever since. His sights are set on representing Canada at the 2024 Summer Paralympic Games in Paris. "I absolutely want to make that team. The World Championships next year in Denmark is my first goal with me being part of the senior team." Describing himself as determined, hard-working, enthusiastic and motivated, Rio recognizes that it took time to get to where he is now athletically, but is ready for the journey and the adventures that lie ahead.

Rio appreciates that there will be obstacles ahead, and equipment for rugby players can be one of them.

"It was tough for me growing up with a disability in an able-bodied world thinking that there just wasn't a lot out there for me."



Wheelchairs for rugby are costly. Understandably, they are custom-made and it's a very niche market. "My dad paid for my first chair and I'm really thankful because it wasn't cheap."

With a pricetag in and around \$10,000, the rough-and-tumble nature of the sport calls for a new wheelchair every two to three years. "I did a GoFundMe for my second chair, the one I currently use, and raised \$11,000 for it," he tells. "I'll need to do the same next year for my next chair. Some say it's a 'rich man's sport'," he laughs.

Rio uses his "everyday" manual wheelchair for daily mobility. His disability – CMT – is a degenerative disorder. Understanding that his hands, arms and legs will continue to weaken over time, Rio is focussed on fitness training now to combat that. "My dad has CMT too. He's been really helpful on my journey to parasport. My dad is my idol."

But outside of sport, it's important to Rio to be as active as he can be. "Outside of rugby, from a lifestyle standpoint, physical activity is essential for me. I have some mental health challenges. Wheeling around outside calms me down. It's been really important to stay active this year with everyone forced indoors."

To keep him on the move Rio uses a companion for grocery-getting and heading out with siblings and friends on bike and park paths. To save some wear and tear on his arms and shoulders, his quick-attach Companion does the wheeling for him. A zippy product from Cheelcare, the mobility device is a hand-throttle, power-driven add-on for manual wheelchairs. "It becomes part of the chair," describes Rio, "but there are times that I don't use it when I want some extra cardio exercise."

That extra cardio comes in many different forms for Rio as well. He enjoys going out for a wheel on the road, swimming, sailing in the harbour, and kayaking too. "With kayaking, because my CMT affects my hand strength which makes it hard

Photo courtesy of Cheelcare



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- **Joan Vernikos, PhD, former Director of the Life Sciences Division at NASA & author of *Sitting Kills - Moving Heals***



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“I want to create a fun media fitness or athletic platform for kids who have a disability to help them be active and healthy like me.”

to hold stuff, and sailing too, I’ve had to figure things out as I go. I come up with adaptations and solutions to make it work. The world is not going to change for me so I need to figure it out!

“But most importantly I do what I love to do. It was tough for me growing up with a disability in an able-bodied world thinking that there just wasn’t a lot out there for me. A really big part of childhood is playing sports and I didn’t have that. It was really hard. My mom put me in every possible sport, even golf and soccer... even though the golf clubs were flying out of my hands, I gave it a shot. But I finally found it in rugby. I tell others: ‘Be Patient. You’ll find it too’.”

With high school behind him now, Rio is scripting his To-Do List for the

next phase of his life. Of course, becoming a Paralympic rugby player tops that list. Taking a gap year to work part-time with Cheelcare makes the list. And so does applying to the University of Arizona and playing in the school’s wheelchair rugby program with a scholarship. There’s his interest in media too – directing short animation films. Add music production to that. Doing some physiotherapy to improve his walking is listed. He wants to try a winter parasport. And for the big picture item: “I want to create a fun media fitness or athletic platform for kids who have a disability to help them be active and healthy like me. That’s the dream one day.”

For more on wheelchair rugby in Ontario, visit www.onpara.ca.

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THE SCIENCE OF Accessible Wellness

*Nutrition Strategies for the
Disability Community*

By Emily Blackborow with Jackie Silver, Registered Dietitian, MSc.

Q: *Let's start with this. Please explain the difference between dietitian and nutritionist?*

A: A Registered Dietitian (RD) is a healthcare professional and holds the protected title of the two. If you're an RD, you've completed your undergraduate program and required examinations. We have a governing association that grants licenses which we are required to renew each year. A Nutritionist does not require a license and is not subject to following scientific, evidence-based methods of research. Registered Dietitians, unlike Nutritionists, can work in public health and for hospitals. Dietitians are required to submit yearly learning goals to show that we are continuing to educate ourselves on the ever-updating science of nutrition.

Q: *How do you begin the treatment process with a client? Walk me through the steps you take.*

A: My business – accessible wellness – is a virtual private practice and consulting service called Jackie Silver Nutrition. My services are centered on people with disabilities, mainly because I saw the gap in the market for individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities.

Once a client decides he or she wants to work with me, an intake form addresses standard questions regarding medical history, supplements, medications, allergies, digestive issues, and exercise habits. I look at all the data before our first session to get a sense of how I can support the client. Then I start a conversation about what their typical day looks like and what they eat during that day. I ask about any symptoms or discomforts after eating to help with my assessment. I learn about the client's cooking abilities, how often they get takeout and what type of takeout they're ordering, and how

often they grocery shop.

I ask lifestyle questions about their work schedule, roommates or dependents, and how much stress they experience daily. I take a multi-faceted approach to nutrition, lifestyle, and environment to determine how I can support the client.

I end our first session with a few practical suggestions on where they can get started. I give them access to a food and symptom journal on my virtual platform where they can track their eating and sleeping habits, while I am preparing a plan for the next sessions.

Q: *How do you motivate an unmotivated client?*

A: I use a technique called motivational interviewing which is a way of probing. It's a counseling technique that gets the client to really dig into their "why?" What is their "why" for making nutritional changes... is it that they want to be around for their grandkids, or be independent for as long as they can manage digestive issues, or just to feel good and live life?

If they can realize their "why", that can be a motivator. I ask them about their level of confidence in change and their ability to make changes on

a scale from one to ten. This helps me understand if they are not confident, or if they have a lot on their plate, or have a lot of life and family stressors. With that I can make appropriate adjustments to their nutrition plan and not make a recommendation that will be super time consuming for my client. I'll take baby-steps to lead them to long-term consistent change. So, if a client is unmotivated the best strategy is to start with a focus on one change.

Q: *Are there any specific populations that present unique challenges in your work?*

A: I love working with folks with autism, adults especially, because I find they don't have as much opportunity as kids do to receive help. It is a very underserved market.

Q: *How about populations you'd like to work with more?*

A: Athletes with physical disabilities and those who are wheelchair users like myself. One of my internship placements was with Special Olympics Ontario where I worked with athletes with intellectual disabilities. I taught basic nutrition skills. And then we went into proper nutrition



pre- and post-workouts, and nutrition while traveling. I've advised a wheelchair basketball team, but I haven't had the opportunity to work as a dietician for a para-athlete yet.

Q: What is a "healthy diet"?

A: There is no one-size-fits-all healthy diet. I mean, a healthy diet is one that someone is going to be able to sustain long-term and will be enjoyable for them. I want people to enjoy their food. We should enjoy what we're eating since we do it multiple times a day.

Q: How is nutrition relevant across all stages of life?

A: Nutrition definitely plays a role from birth until death but it changes with age. It's important for managing medical conditions, preventing complications and future conditions, maintaining proper digestion, helping energy levels, sleep, concentration and focus. And of course, you can improve your athletic performance with a nutritious diet as well.

Q: So, to increase the results of a workout is there anything that an athlete can do before or after a workout to help their body recover or prepare?

A: That's going to be a pretty long answer. What I would ask is "what is the role of certain nutrients in athletic performance?" Carbohydrates help to keep your energy up through endurance activities especially. You're moving for an hour and your body's using up its sugar glucose stores, which will be depleted after exercise. Carbohydrates help sustain your energy throughout the workout and help to restore those stores. After a workout you have micro muscle tears. Protein after a workout helps to repair those little tears and encourage muscle growth. Antioxidants found in fruits and vegetables aid in repairing damaged muscles and calm the inflammation that occurs from exercise.



Q: What about healthy fats? Some diets completely cut out fats and others incorporate an obscene amount. What's the role of fats and should they be in a competitive athlete's diet?

A: Fat helps to absorb valuable vitamins. So, let's say you're eating a lot of good greens like kale – full of vitamins. You're not going to absorb those vitamins effectively if there are no fats in your meal. Fat also has anti-inflammatory properties and is a good source of calories that will convert to energy for intense sport and activity. All in all, it's important to balance fats, carbohydrates and proteins before and after workouts for improved performance and recovery.

Q: How do you stay up to date on the changing science of nutrition?

A: I took a 12-week Mindfulness-Based Eating Awareness Training (MBE) session a year ago. Recently I took a four-week course on Extreme Picky Eating in kids with autism and how to treat that because I didn't have any practical training for that in my schooling. I am a member of Dietitians of Canada, and we receive access to Practice Evidence Nutrition (PEN) which is an educational platform. There are numerous whitepapers with new research, and Tool Kits on different medical conditions and the evidence behind the research.

I regularly review articles on PubMed on conditions that I am working with or really anything that interests me and my clients. I also research clinical practice guidelines for conditions like pressure wounds or neurogenic bowel. I also network on social media and look for webinars and podcasts to follow. For example, I learned about ADHD Nutrition from an Instagram account and was able to provide better help to my client.

Q: What's one of your important priorities in life?

A: I want my blog to evolve into a website for anyone with a disability looking for health and nutrition content. I want people to say, "Go to JackieSilverNutrition.com. She has the information you want." I want to be a go-to nutrition resource and known as a go-to dietitian. I also see myself growing my consulting services for brands and companies. I want to aid in the creation of products tailored for people with disabilities. I've done some consulting and blog posts for supplement companies. I want to be that go-to consultant in that industry too.

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Cans Jugs and Bags

Kitchen Solutions for Exercising at Home

By Aristotle Domingo

Fitness is important for everyone. Being active not only improves physical and mental health and overall well-being, but can also greatly boost your mood and improve sleep. Finding your precise exercise routine may take some time. Don't be afraid to try different sports and activities. You don't have to be a Paralympic athlete or frequently visit the gym to exercise.

In fact, there are plenty of exercise options right under your nose... at home that is, in the kitchen and the laundry room for starters. Here are some simple strategies for home-based fitness which are especially good for anyone with mobility or balance challenges.

1. Soup or Bean Cans

Many canned items, depending on their size, work perfectly to replace 1 lb. (16 oz.) to 3 lbs. (48 oz.) dumbbells used at the gym. They are great for arm workouts like biceps curls, triceps push-downs and arm presses. If you have healthy shoulders, they can also be good for overhead or shoulder presses.

TIP: Put rubber bands around them to improve grip and minimize slipping from your hands.

2. Produce, Rice or Flour Bags

A small bag of produce (like apples, oranges, onions, potatoes) makes for a great substitute for kettle bells. Use them for your 'dips' exercises and squats. If you are moving along in a rehabilitation or exercise program, they are great for mimicking occupational therapy exercises for balance. For example, hold one bag of oranges (weight that you can safely carry) on one side and walk slowly while keeping your balance. Make sure to only use weights of items that you can comfortably carry. If you are up for a challenge and are developing good balance, carry one bag in each hand.

TIP: If you are using a small bag of rice, flour or sugar for this exercise, use a reusable grocery bag as the handles are easier for lifting.





3. Water, Milk or Laundry Detergent Jugs

If you can use heavier weights like a jug of water, milk or laundry detergent, they convert to about 8 to 10 lbs. depending on the size of the jug (1 gallon of water weighs about 3.8 kg or 8.25 lbs.). These are good for advanced balance exercises. Check with your healthcare team about what exercises you can do with these weights.

TIP: *If you're using a milk jug, fill it with water in case of leaks or cracks.*

4. Sturdy Furniture and Kitchen Counters

Use the furniture around your house and even the spaces between them! For example, use a sturdy couch or dining room table to support you while you do standing exercises. Use it to support your balance similar to using the parallel bars in a rehab clinic. Kitchen counters work for these types of exercises too! Practice getting up and sitting down with a sturdy chair (or your wheelchair) behind you and the kitchen counter in front of you for support. You can do standing leg lifts, knee raises, hip extensions and even squats while holding on to the counter for support.



5. Sturdy Chair or Wheelchair

You can also do workouts using a sturdy chair or your wheelchair. Seated yoga for example is a good way to stretch, condition and strengthen muscles. It's a great way to strengthen balance, and a good way to relax and be mindful and release tensions in our bodies. Yoga for Amputees has an amazing collection of resources that can help you with adaptive and seated yoga poses. Make sure you check out Marsha Therese Danzig's YouTube Channel and Lucy Lomax's video – Amputee Yoga on YouTube to learn more.



6. Tea Towels for Stretching

Stretching is very important, of course, in any fitness regimen. Make sure that you stretch before and after your exercises to minimize the risk of injury to your muscles. Use a towel or tea towel to help you stretch those hard to stretch areas.

TIP: *Wash the tea towel after using it for your workout before putting it back in the kitchen!*



Ask an Expert These are just some examples of everyday household items that you can use to exercise and/or continue your rehab at home. There are many more around your house that you can use to substitute the equipment used in a rehab setting or at the gym. Resistance bands or therapy bands similar to the ones used by your therapist are a good investment for home use too.

Contact your physiatrist, physiotherapist or occupational therapist for other exercises that you can safely do at home. They are best equipped to provide you with a custom set of exercises that will address your strengthening and conditioning levels. Ask them about types of exercises that are best for you, how to do them, how many sets (number of times you need to do them) and repetitions (how many in each set).

ONE MORE TIP: Always consider your safety when doing exercises. Be aware of falls and make sure your phone is within reach in case of an emergency. If available, have a member of your household join you in your exercises to ensure your safety.

Good luck and stay safe and healthy!

Disclaimer: By participating in any exercise using the items described above you are voluntarily practicing these activities and assuming all risk of injury. It's always good practice to check with your rehabilitation team or family doctor before starting a new exercise regimen.

With thanks to the Amputee Coalition of Toronto for permission to publish an adapted version of this blog from the website amputeecoalitiontoronto.ca.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Para-athlete Aristotle Domingo is a double below-knee amputee and an avid runner who also competes in men's seated field events – shot put, discus and javelin. He also plays sitting volleyball and took home the gold at the Niagara Penguins Sitting Volleyball Classic in 2019. He also plays golf and is a member of PGA of Canada's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. He is the founder of the Amputee Coalition of Toronto.



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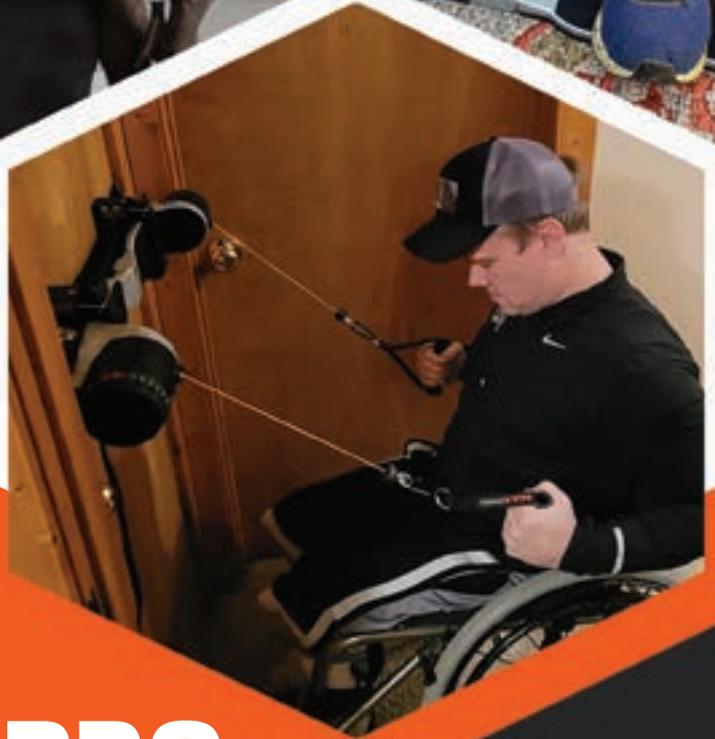
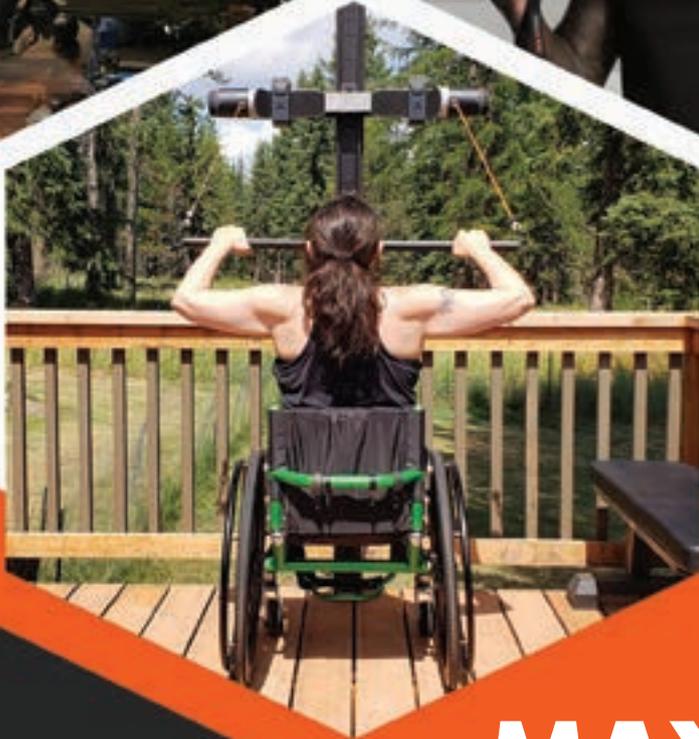
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- Equipment Loaning Program
- OBSA Sports Days
- OBSA Outreach Programs

Jolan Wong



Setting Up Canada's WOMEN'S Sitting Volleyball Team

By Emily Blackborow

Hailing from Pembroke, Ontario, Jolan Wong plays the position of libero for the Canadian women's sitting volleyball team. Also a coach, a ParaSport® Ontario athlete ambassador and a full-time homeschool teacher to her two children, she does still find free time to enjoy yoga, running, sunsets, reading, travelling, and going to coffee shops.

Her undeniable skill and leadership on the court has earned her National Team captain honours as well as the title of "Best Receiver" at the 2015 Parapan Am Games in Toronto. Jolan has also been presented with an MP Commendation in her local riding in recognition of her leadership and inspiration for Canadians of all abilities.

Jolan played a variety of sports at a young age but always had a passion for volleyball. She lost her right leg to bone cancer in high school which led her to a variety of parasports which she began playing at age 16. She started with cycling. At the same time, her standing volleyball coach reached out

Photo by Art by Agata



Photo courtesy of Jolan Wong

to Volleyball Canada to see if Jolan could try out for the sitting volleyball team, a women's program that was just beginning in Canada. Jolan was just 18 when she secured her spot on the squad and has been a key team player and promoter ever since.

At the time that Jolan joined the team, the women's sitting volleyball program was considered a grass-roots movement by many. Officially, Canada's national program launched in 2008, the year Jolan joined. Admittedly, Canada was quite late to the game considering Sitting Volleyball has been part of the Paralympics since 1980.

The sport itself is very inclusive. There is no need for customized equipment and it provides a game where para-athletes and able-bodied athletes can compete on a level playing field... or court, more specifically. Jolan shares that she chose

volleyball over other sports that she was competing in as a young woman because it was so adaptable. "We could take off our legs and just use what we have." And it was a program on the rise and she wanted to be a part of it.

Jolan has consistently used her love of sitting volleyball to encourage others to play, over the years helping to build the teams she has led. Her positive impact on the lives of many para-athletes, not just those whom she inspired to be her teammates, can not be overstated.

Katelyn Wright was just 12 years old when she was a patient in the hospital. The young girl from Edmonton shared a room with Jolan, who is from Alberta originally as well. Although they didn't talk much at the time, the girls reconnected at a sport clinic years later. They exchanged emails, with Jolan asking Katelyn if

she would be interested in playing with the Canadian women's sitting volleyball team. Katelyn had never played volleyball but jumped at the chance to play a new sport and be part of a team. Katelyn appreciates that introduction to parasports as one of the best things to have ever happened to her.

In high school, Amber S kyrpan played for the senior standing volleyball team. A member of an opposing team who had since graduated and was now playing sitting volleyball remembered Amber. That player was Jolan, who asked her coach to reach out to Amber's coach about playing sitting volleyball too. Although hesitant at first, Amber was 15 when she gave sitting volleyball a chance. She immediately embraced the sport and is now a Paralympian.

During Heidi Peter's recovery at the Edmonton Children's Hospital

“So, it’s not just working for yourself, but working for everyone to reach a common goal. And it’s little things that I do in my life that can have a big impact in someone else’s life.”

Jolan was a volunteer there. Just like Jolan, Heidi was a volleyball player who lost her leg to cancer at a young age. Jolan was already a member of the women’s sitting volleyball team when she introduced herself to Heidi. One year later, in 2013, Heidi tried out and joined the Canadian team.

What has kept Jolan on the team for nearly a decade? What keeps drawing her to competition? It’s a combination of passion for the sport, a love for her team and supporters, and her commitment to a greater goal for herself.

During the pandemic it has been a tremendous challenge for many high-performance para-athletes – especially those on teams – to remain as committed as Jolan has been to her sport. Team sports have become decentralized. National teams have players in different provinces training at different times, with funding to travel only once a month for a collective practice. Some teams have adapted by creating “training bubble camps” where players are grouped together with one to four teammates in the same hotel and transportation vehicles, training with their coaches at a safe distance. The nature of the times and the costs associated with training athletes for international competition has been a huge barrier and a deterrent for athletes looking to compete overseas.

However, the Canadian sitting volleyball women proved to themselves in their 2020 Tokyo qualifiers that they had the potential and the momentum to reach the podium and they were not going to let the

pandemic pessimism slow them down. Jolan and the team knew the competition would be tough, but the team set their goals high regardless.

The team was spread out from Ontario to British Columbia and previously trained together in Alberta. But the consistently changing travel restrictions and protocol associated with Covid-19 prevented the team from training together in preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games (postponed to 2021). They qualified for the 2020 Games on home soil in Halifax just before the lockdowns began in early 2020. And then they were unable to train together. They stayed in touch online and took on responsibilities of checking in on fellow teammates and supporting each others’ independent training regimens.

Jolan, as her teammates and family and many in the wider parasport community well know, is a highly dedicated para-athlete on a number of levels. In her words, her motivation comes from the sense of commitment to the greater good of the team. “It’s about all the little pieces that we must put together to eventually reach the big goal, which isn’t just a personal goal. It’s a team goal, right? So, it’s not just working for yourself, but working for everyone to reach a common goal. And it’s little things that I do in my life that can have a big impact in someone else’s life.”

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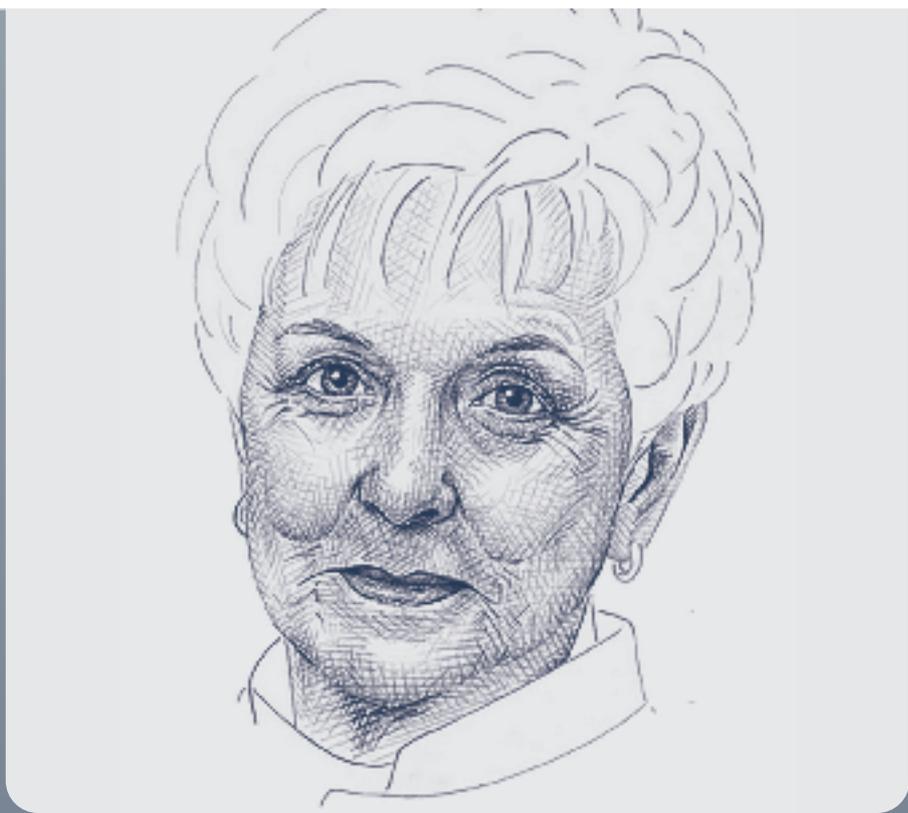
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Shirley Elizabeth Shelby

1936 – 2021

Shirley Shelby passed away on August 24, 2021 at her home in her beloved Don Mills community. A founding member of ParaSport® Ontario and the Ontario Blind Sport Association, Shirley was a pioneer of the parasport movement in Ontario and Canada, and a strong advocate for its growth.

Born in Parry Sound, Ontario, Shirley left for Toronto where she studied music at the Royal Conservatory of Music. It was here that she met and fell in love with fellow student Bill Shelby. Together they raised three children and created a home filled with classical music and the sound of the neighbourhood children taking piano lessons in the basement.

She travelled the globe, by air and sea, escorting groups, scouting hotels and vacationing when time permitted. When Bill suffered a stroke while on a family vacation, Shirley became aware of the obstacles that people with disabilities faced when travelling.

In the late 1970s she opened the ground-breaking travel agency, Travel Helpers, specializing and advocating in travel services for people with disabilities. She managed the travel needs for organizations like the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association, Canadian Amputee Association and the Canadian Blind Sports Association.

An inductee into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame and the recipient of many awards including the King Clancy Award and the Ontario Sport Award, Shirley's determined efforts helped to lay the solid foundation on which the Paralympic Movement continues to build today.



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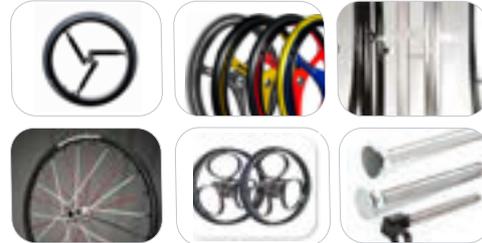
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