

# Athletes and Abilities

IN COOPERATION WITH



## RISING UP

Para-triathlon and Para-canoe introduced at Rio 2016 Games

## SPEAKING UP

EU Commissioner Thyssen on actions for social inclusion

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## Imprint

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**Title:** German para-triathlete Martin Schulz gets out of the water. In the background: Sugarloaf Mountain in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo: Imago/Pressefoto Baumann

# EDITORIAL



Photo: Rainer Jensen/dpa

I commend the Paralympic Post and its energetic global team of young reporters for working to promote the substantial achievements of the Paralympic Movement.

The Paralympic Movement and the United Nations share fundamental values. We both stand for equality, dignity, inclusion and respect. Sport is a wonderful catalyst for inclusion. It helps to transcend barriers and highlight our common humanity.

That is why we hold that access to sport, physical activity and play is a fundamental human right. Sport has a particularly important role to play in promoting and implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Paralympic Movement is a key ally. Not only do the Paralympic Games showcase the extraordinary abilities and potential of athletes living with a disability, they promote the rights of all persons with disabilities and provide a catalyst for lasting change.

Paralympic athletes are change makers and role models. They are symbols of courage and aspiration for us all. With Rio de Janeiro hosting the first Paralympic Games to be held in South America, we have a tremendous opportunity to inspire awareness and positive social change around the continent. I count on the Paralympic Post and the Paralympic Movement to continue to inspire the world with examples of courage and determination that emphasise our inherent equality. Let us work together for a just and inclusive world of dignity and opportunity for all.

**BAN KI-MOON**

**Secretary-General United Nations**



Photo: DGUV

Time does not change us. It just unfolds us. This beautifully phrased thought by Max Frisch can also be applied to the new title of this journal. In "Athletes and Abilities" we put the spotlight even more on the ability and performance of persons with disabilities. At the same time, the journal continues to be closely linked to the Paralympic Games, which it has followed since 2004.

From the journal's inception the young editorial teams endeavoured to tell stories and depict the backdrop in each case. The topic was not limited to sport, but also included its relevance to social rehabilitation and inclusion. We remain faithful to this depth of content and will continue to develop it under a bold new banner.

The latest edition from Rio brings you critical analyses and exciting interviews on the background to the Games. The journal's familiar quality remains the same, as does the particular perspective of the young journalists responsible for its content. Enjoy reading it!

**DR JOACHIM BREUER**

**Director General**

**German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV)**

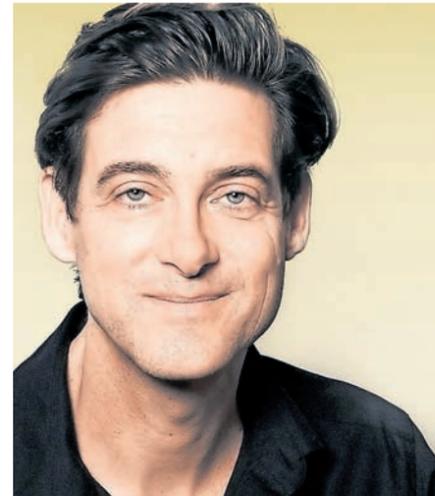


Photo: Kai-Uwe Heinrich

Anyone wandering around Rio these days can't help but notice how powerful the Paralympic Games are as a motor for inclusion. The Brazilian spectators, who seemed so sceptical at first, are flocking into the stadiums in thousands. They are seizing the opportunity to take their families to the Olympic Park once again – and cheer on world-class athletes they hadn't even heard of moments before. Leaving the current momentum aside, we need to keep in mind that inclusion is still not a matter of course, but something we can all see as a task to work on together. Sometime it doesn't take more than a slight impetus – making the Paralympics even more important. Every two years, they send out an impulse that resonates much further than just at the Games. The spectators have seen athletes master various challenges with their respective abilities. They have also watched barriers being dismantled, physically and, almost more importantly, psychologically and emotionally. This is a valuable development because inclusion is not yet self-evident in Brazilian society. And if we are honest, inclusion is more an objective than a matter of course in Europe as well. Our newspaper "Athletes and Abilities" contributes to this change – with its passion for sports and the belief in the power of sports for rehabilitation and cohesion. Even fans might be a little bit surprised: On some days the stadiums were even fuller than a few weeks ago during the Olympics. A great success for the city of Rio, for sports and, most of all, for an inclusive society.

**LORENZ MAROLDT**

**Editor-in-Chief Tagesspiegel**



Photo: Thilo Rückels

## Our Team 2016

Paralympic spirit, enthusiasm and excitement in every character – the informative issue of 'Athletes and Abilities' you are reading was written by 22 young talents from Germany, Brazil and Great Britain. They have put their hearts into their articles to bring you gripping news and fascinating background information you can find in the joint newspaper project by 'Der Tagesspiegel' and the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV). The international team also writes for the German Paralympics Zeitung und the Brazilian Jornal Paralímpico. The young 18 to 23 year old journalists are not only incredibly talented but also a pleasure to work with. They are always happy to write additional articles, translate for their colleagues, watch another event or get an extra quote. If they are not being interviewed themselves, that is. Keeping up with their activities and interviews is nearly impossible, the team's WhatsApp group is the best live ticker imaginable - medals, records and results are shared immediately with a complementing snapshot, of course.

CLARA KAMINSKY

**F**ighting the waves, conquering steep mountains by bike and battling the streets in a run amid one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. This is triathlon – one of the new sports at the 2016 Games taking place at the incredible Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro. Para-canoe will make its debut at this marvellous venue, being one of two sports that are part of the paralympic programme for the first time.

Compared to the Olympics, para-triathlon is a sprint distance race. It includes a 750 metre swim, 20 kilometre bike ride and a five kilometre run, making it an exciting sport to watch. The International Triathlon Union (ITU) says that the subdisciplines of triathlon are "three of the most prolific and recognisable medal sports in the history of the Paralympic Games." This is why the ITU has worked hard since 2008 to include para-triathlon in the paralympic programme. Demonstrating that triathlon is a thrilling sport that clearly deserves to be part of the Paralympic Games has not

## TRIATHLON IS NEW AT THE GAMES

been a challenge. Because of its three subdisciplines, it is a great sport for athletes with various types of impairments. Athletes like German Stefan Lösler are convinced: "Triathlon is the best sport in the world!" And everyone else in the movement is really passionate about it. The ITU's paratriathlon manager Eric Angstadt Torres states: "The sport is going to add a tremendous value to the paralympic movement."

Yet, in order to become a paralympic sport, para-triathlon had to meet the three main criteria of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC): universality, quantity and quality. The first two refer to a certain number of regions and nations in which a sport has to be widely practised. According to the third criteria of the IPC, quality, "parameters and conditions necessary for success" have to be in place and classification is one of these critical parameters. To ensure that competitions are fair and only athletes with similar abili-



# Triathlon is the future

Triathlon clearly **deserves to be part of the Games** – it is a great sport for athletes with various types of impairment

Photo: Pilar Olivares/itr

ties compete against each other, the IPC set up a classification system. By the time triathlon was included in the paralympic programme for Rio the classification was not established. "One of the critical aspects of including triathlon in the Paralympics was the requirement to change the current classification system," says Angstadt Torres from the ITU. It is necessary for athletes to be able to plan their training according to their class in which they will be competing.

Many experts and volunteers worked hard to provide a solid base for a classification system. Torres says: "We communicated with the IPC and other national federations and tried to accommodate in the best and fastest way." By mid-2014, the classification system for para-triathlon was finalised with five classes, PT1 to PT5.

Of course, a two-year time frame does not provide ideal conditions for athletes to prepare in time. But many of today's elite athletes have already done at least one of the subdisciplines before triathlon became a part of the paralympic programme. But triathlon is not only supposed to be a competitive sport. It is important to the ITU to promote inclusion and establish role models in triathlon. In Great Britain triathlon competitions are open to people of all abilities, no matter whether they have one arm or leg, two or none at all. Another example is the "tri for inclusion" race, a public run for children of all abilities to experience sport together, regardless of their physical differences. Also the American para-triathlon club "dare2tri" offers free training equipment to everyone who has an interest in para-triathlon. Initiatives like this attract newcomers of all abilities to the exciting sport of triathlon. "We truly believe triathlon is for one and all, no matter the age or ability," says Marisol Casado, President of the ITU.

Maybe the champions of para-triathlon's debut will be an inspiration for others. "There are so many athletes that came before us, who really paved the way and made this possible," says Hailey Danisiewicz, silver medallist of the women's PT2 triathlon. And she is one of the many athletes who are inspired by the diversity of triathlon. HANNAH HOFER, 18 YEARS

## The goal is not to cheer

**When watching sports, Brazilians love to cheer. So watching goalball was quite a new experience for them.**

Even Tom, the Paralympic Games mascot, was welcomed to the Future Arena with a warm round of applause before Brazil's first goalball match against Sweden. However, goalball proved to be a challenge for more than 3,000 excited Brazilian fans. To judge the ball's position and movement, the athletes with a visual impairment rely on the sound the ball makes. Therefore, the audience must remain completely silent while the ball is in play. Patricia Cruz, who like many spectators watched her first ever goalball match, admits this was difficult because "we Brazilians like to be loud. We don't know the sport very well, so we don't know when we are allowed to cheer and when not to."

The referees of this particular game had to call several official breaks, to ask

those who could not remain silent to leave the stadium.

After understanding the importance of being quiet while the ball is in play, the fans used every interruption of the game to make their voices heard. "Brazil" chants echoed throughout the stadium whenever a substitution took place, and

## THE REFEREES HAD TO CALL OFFICIAL BREAKS

during the 45-second timeouts Mexican waves went through the arena. After Brazil scored the final goal two seconds before the match ended, the cheering and clapping continued until the team left the field.

During the Brazilian women's wheelchair basketball match against arch-rival Argentina on the other hand, there was not a single moment of silence. The fans ex-

pressed their pride in being Brazilian in a popular chant and celebrated every successful Brazilian action. Inevitably, there was some booing when Argentina won a free throw, but overall the atmosphere remained positive throughout the Brazilian victory.

However, nobody can animate Brazilian fans as much as swimmer Daniel Dias. Around 10,000 spectators watched the 200 metre freestyle final in the S5 category, in which Dias won his 16th paralympic medal. When the 28-year old appeared on the screens, cheers erupted that drowned the announcer's voice. Nobody remained seated as the Aquatics Stadium vibrated with every stroke Dias made towards his gold medal. Leaving the pool, Dias was met with chants of "we are the champions" by the jubilant crowd. One thing is clear: no matter which sport, Brazilians love to celebrate.

MILAN MARCUS, 19 YEARS



Loud - and sometimes too loud. Brazilian fans (picture above) at the first goalball match of the Brazilian team (below).



Photos: Thilo Ruckes, Imago



Photo: Stephane Lecocq/dpa

# "Promote pathways to integration"

**Do you think Paralympic Games like the London 2012 Paralympics can influence inclusion in Europe? What impact do you think we can expect from the Rio 2016 Games?**

Sports play a crucial role in promoting social inclusion of persons with disabilities. Since 1960, when the first Paralympic Games took place, awareness has been increasingly raised on disability. Undoubtedly, the Paralympics provide athletes with a disability an opportunity to showcase their talents, raise awareness, challenge commonly-held stereotypes and foster inclusion. At the Rio 2016 Games, there are new sports in the Paralympic programme - this proves that Paralympic Games want to include more athletes with disabilities from around the world. Within the EU, too, people become more aware of the Paralympics as Member States organise more national events on sports that include people with disabilities. The London 2012 Paralympics have been a good example because they featured also events for the intellectually disabled in selected categories.

In addition, countries having organised the Paralympics make a great effort to improve accessibility of their cities and sport venues. This facilitates interaction between persons with disabilities and those without. At the same time, improvements on accessibility help to enhance the sustainability of our cities, making them more inclusive for older persons. I believe and I hope that the subsequent countries responsible for the next Olympic Games will keep the Games in Rio and London as good examples on inclusion, so that in the future even more athletes with disabilities can get involved.

**How do you see the EU's performance on a global scale in terms of inclusion? What can we learn from other regions or nations in order to become a more inclusive society?**

The European Union and the vast majority of its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as other countries around the world, including Brazil. The Convention enables persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities. The European Commission's overarching objective is upward convergence of Member States' social policy. This social policy binds society together, creating solidarity and a sense of belonging. There are a number of EU actions focusing on social inclusion, particularly in relation to people with a disability.

**Marianne Thyssen is the Member of the European Commission responsible for employment, social affairs, skills and labour mobility. She spoke to Athletes and Abilities about EU actions focusing on social inclusion of people with a disability**

For instance, the European Social Fund regulation places a special emphasis on people with disabilities, and it promotes pathways to integration and re-entry into employment of people with disabilities. During the period 2014-2020, at least 20% of the European Social Fund should be allocated to social inclusion. This is a good example how Member States can better use EU money and become more inclusive.

Another example is Erasmus+, the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Erasmus+ 2014-2020 supports sport for people with disabilities through incentive measures in the field of dual careers for athletes and social inclusion in and through sport. For example, the Commission has supported the European Special Olympics Summer Games in Poland in 2010, the World Special Olympic Games in Greece in 2011, the European Paralympic Youth Games in the Czech Republic in 2012, and most recently, the Special Olympics European Summer Games in Antwerp in 2014. The games in Brazil are not over yet. However, the feedback from the games in London was very positive in terms of inclusion, participation and raising awareness about disabilities and sport. I hope that Brazil will set one extra step in that direction.

**One of your missions is to improve conditions in labour and equal job opportunities. What are the main projects directed at people with a disability in this regard? What are the EU's next steps?**

One of the priorities of the European Commission, led by President Juncker, is to strengthen Europe's competitiveness and to stimulate investment for the purpose of job creation. We need to create more jobs so that EU citizens, including persons with disabilities, can live with

dignity and prosperity. This is also one of the priorities of our European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and fully in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Our Employment Equality Directive prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability in the fields of employment and occupation. It has been transposed by all 28 Member States into their national law and the Commission is strictly monitoring the correctness of national laws and their application. Discrimination in the work place is not acceptable. The Commission will continue to work to ensure the full application of the Employment Equality Directive by Member States.

In that regard, the Commission promotes a partnership approach involving all stakeholders. Public authorities can help people gain skills to get jobs and contribute to growth; companies can commit to diversity and, as a result of diversity, benefit from enhanced productivity, innovation and performance. Trade unions, NGOs and academia can contribute valuable insights and help spreading best practices on diversity and non-discrimination. The Commission is also prioritising the issue of accessibility, with our proposal for a European Accessibility Act. Accessibility is indispensable for social inclusion, especially against the background of demographic ageing and the digital transition. It is expected that in 2020 120 million Europeans will experience a degree of disability. This increases the need for accessibility in everyday life. Via technological innovation many everyday services and products are digitalised. This offers new opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in society and in the labour market. But the condition is that the digital products and services are made accessible to all people, regardless of their abilities. We want to endorse innovation, but we also want to make sure that no one is left behind.

Member States can use the European Structural and Investment Funds to support the active inclusion of people with disabilities in society and the labour market. In particular, many persons with disabilities belong to the group of long-term unemployed persons. I am convinced that we will see a positive development of the employment situation of persons with disabilities when Member States will apply our recently adopted recommendation on long term unemployment.

**Commissioner Thyssen, thank you for the interview.**



Written history. Covers of former issues of the Paralympics Zeitung – in Sochi 2014 (centre above) we even had a Russian issue. Photos: PZ

# Another chapter

It felt like the start of something big in the summer of 2004 when German President Horst Köhler visited the editorial offices at the German School in Athens. Starting from the premier issue in 2004, published in A4 format and distributed locally, the Paralympics Zeitung (PZ) grew to become the international, multilingual, and inclusive project it is today.

The PZ has been writing history in sports journalism for more than a decade – thanks to the project’s co-publisher, the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV). The DGUV has always seen para-sports as key to a successful rehabilitation process. Long before the Paralympics gained today’s popularity, the DGUV initiated PZ as a youth media project, putting across the message that paralympians are role models and an inspiration to us all.

The PZ is a unique project with an exceptional approach: the articles are written by young talents whose authentic, unbia-

## Young, inclusive and international – the Paralympics Zeitung’s project



On the spot. Young journalists covering the Beijing 2008 Paralympics.

sed and enthusiastic coverage is appreciated by their readers. The young journalists writing for the premier edition were all young students living in Greece. In 2006 an international team reported for the multilingual issue. The Paralympics Zeitung Beijing 2008 was the first newspaper to be published without censorship in China – allowing the team of German and Chinese reporters to cover the Games and the social change they brought about.

Since the London 2012 Games, the PZ has also been published as a supplement to major newspapers in the host country of the Games – in addition to the German edition supplemented to Die Zeit, Handelsblatt, Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten and publisher Tagesspiegel since 2008.

The print issues are complemented by online coverage and social media.

The Paralympics Zeitung and its emotional sports journalism impact more than its readers. Former PZ-journalists are

studying medicine or journalism, they are involved in medical technology or with the National Paralympic Committee of Germany, DBS. Friendships spanning countries and continents develop in the international teams, keeping the spirit alive long after the paralympic flame is extinguished. Contributing their enriching perspective, reporters with a disability are members of the editorial teams at every Games as a matter of course. The inclusiveness of the project on every level is also very important to the co-publisher DGUV.

The project has been internationally recognised, for example by the "European Language Label 2006" awarded by the EU-Commission and the honour of being a lighthouse project of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. In 2010 the Paralympics Zeitung from Vancouver received the "World Young Reader Prize" in the category "Making the News" by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers WAN/IFRA. In 2015 the PZ received the DBS's honorary award. But the best reward are statements from our young reporters such as: "The project was the best experience of my life."

ANNETTE KÖGEL, Tagesspiegel

## Curiosity and flexibility

### The memories of my time as a youth journalist for the Paralympics Zeitung Vancouver 2010 are still vivid.

And I am not an exception. Nico Feißt was on the London 2012 team as well as in Sochi for the 2014 Games and is now spokesperson for the German athletics team. "Now the Paralympics have become part of me," he says. The Paralympics Zeitung project 2016 is, once again, a chance for 22 young people to experience what it means to be a journalist. A journalist needs curiosity, flexibility and something to write about. This holds even more true for social media editors who are included in this year's team for the first time. They are former print editors who are still part of the Paralympics Zeitung family and still reporting on the



From Vancouver to Rio: Anne Balzer has worked for the PZ since 2010.

Paralympics – just in a faster medium. Since May, the six editors have been promoting the project and the Rio 2016 Games online. This task presents diverse challenges. It is not only auto-correct that drives some members to the limits of their patience. What to do when the Brazilian SIM cards aren't working and the WiFi connection is down? How to stay up to date and take the time difference into account?

Information has to be adjusted for various channels; film material must be produced and cut. And how to cope with bad weather which makes filming impossible? Maybe just follow the advice of our hostel manager: "No sun? No work!" This is, of course, never an option.

And, when the last post is out, there is only one thing to do: charge the mobile and be ready for the next day.

ANNE BALZER, Social Media Editor



More articles and videos:  
[tagesspiegel.de/paralympics](http://tagesspiegel.de/paralympics)  
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# Aiming for change

Zahra Nemati, the **first woman** representing Iran in both Olympics and Paralympics hopes the Games will influence society's **perception**

**T**he famous Sambodromo in Rio de Janeiro at midday. The sun is beating down on the home of the Brazilian carnival parade, the place is almost unrecognisable. The sounds of celebration are gone, what is left is concentrated silence. The asphalt is covered by artificial lawn. Targets are neatly arranged in a row at the end of the field. A woman wearing a red shirt and a white headscarf with a white cap on top of it is in the middle of the field. She is sitting in a wheelchair and has 'Iran' written on the back of her shirt. She lifts her bow, nocks an arrow, aims at the target and shoots. The arrow hits its mark. The woman's chubby face shows a tinge of contentment underneath her glasses

**"I LOVE THIS SPORT AND IT GIVES ME INSPIRATION"**

as she drives her wheelchair back to the tent. Someone hands her an ice-cream, she has a relaxed chat and laughs. Nothing indicates that she is in the middle of a competition - and not just any competition. Zahra Nemati, one of the best paralympic archers in the world, is competing in the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. 18 year-old Nemati was training for the Olympics. She wanted to compete in taekwondo. She was quick to win her black belt and make the Iranian national team. In 2015, an accident which left her unable to move both her legs, changed her goals. She decided to participate in ar-

chery, as she told the IPC: "I love this sport and it gives me inspiration." She won a gold medal at the London 2012 Paralympic Games and became the first woman from the Islamic Republic of Iran to win a gold medal at a Paralympic or Olympic Games. Finally, she still made it to the Olympic Games in 2016, where she was flagbearer for the Iranian delegation in Rio's famous Maracanã stadium. Nemati is the first woman from the Islamic Republic of Iran to compete in both Paralympic and Olympic Games. After qualifying for the Olympic Games 2016, she decided to tell her story to the world. Her life is subject of a documentary film coming up in October 2016. The International Paralympic Committee and Japanese pay-tv broadcaster WOWOW are producing a documentary series about Paralympians worldwide, including Nemati. She is not only a role model for people with a disability, conveying the message that everything is possible. She is also a symbol of empowerment for women in countries like Iran. Therefore, she was appointed United Nations Ambassador for her role in empowering women through sport. According to her, inclusion and sports are closely linked. As she said to a United Nation panel, she thinks that sports do not only encourage athletes with a disability, but also impact society's perception of people with a disability: "From one side, it changes people's perceptions and from the other side, it changes a disabled person's view towards themselves."

MIRIAM KAROUT, 21 YEARS  
and ISABELLA WIMMER, 21 YEARS



Photos: Kai Pfaffenbach/rtr, Leonhard Foeger/rtr

Good run. Zahra Nemati of Iran leads her country's team into the stadium (above). Nemati during competition.



## Alex Zanardi - a role model in the sporting world

**Alex Zanardi, like many other athletes who are competing in Rio 2016, didn't let the adversities limit his life and became a role model in the sporting world. Now, Zanardi competes at his second Paralympic Games to defend his title even greater motivation now: to race on the 15th anniversary of his accident.**

As a teenager, Zanardi saw a friend working on a kart and became interested in the sport. With the consent of his parents, he began his motor racing career with a racing kart that he built himself. The peak of his racing career was in the 90s. In 1991, he made his debut in Formula 1, where he raced until the 1994 season. Until 2001, he kept switching between Formula 1 and the CART series, where he became a two-time Champion in 97 and 98.



Photo: Leon Neal/AFP

Fast. Zanardi heading towards victory in the time trial cycling finals in London 2012.

But on September 15, 2001, Zanardi's life changed. It was the American Memorial race, held at Euro Speedway Lausitz, in Klettwitz, Germany. On lap 142, when exiting the pit lane, Zanardi lost control of his car, spun and stopped on his side. He got hit by Alex Tagliani, who had a speed

of over 300 kilometers per hour. Zanardi was sent to the BG Clinic Berlin-Marzahn (UKB), one of the clinics belonging to the Hospital Group of the Statutory Accident Insurance where he underwent surgery after losing 75 percent of his blood and had both legs amputated. It took him six weeks to get out of the hospital, after a successful rehabilitation process. Only two years later, in 2003, he realised that his auto racing career wasn't over and with the help of hand-controlled accelerators and brakes, he became a driver in the European Touring Car Championship. In five years, he won four races. And in the meantime, his interest for hand-cycling developed.

With his physical fitness and only four weeks of training, Zanardi finished fourth in the 2007 New York City Marathon, with

a handcycle. From that point, he began dividing his time between auto racing and hand-cycling.

One of his most memorable moments in cycling occurred at London 2012. With the road cycling taking place at the iconic circuit of Brands Hatch, Zanardi won three medals; two golds and a silver. His victories were voted the most outstanding moments of the games. "Looking back at these 15 years, I have to say that my accident has become one of the greatest opportunities of my life," said the cyclist in an interview for the YouTube Channel of the International Paralympic Committee. Now, Zanardi's focus is on his competitions in Rio de Janeiro. And he comes trying to achieve what he couldn't do while racing in kart: winning in Brazil.

GUILHERME LONGO, 23 YEARS

# Games to remember

From the **Opening Ceremony** into the Games: Our young reporters had some great experiences at the **Rio 2016 Paralympics**. For sure, none of them will forget those thrilling days in Brazil, where they reported on great sports in a fantastic atmosphere



Alyad Norbruism, Dutch gold medalist in Cycling Track.



The Team of young German, British and Brazilian reporters at the Opening Ceremony in Maracanã.



India's Mariyappan Thangavelu jumps in the high jump final.



"Action at the beach," like stand up paddling was also shown at the Ceremony.

PHOTOS: Ueslei Marcelino/rtr, Antonio Lacerda/dpa, Thilo Ruckeis (7), Yasuyoshi Chiba/AFP, Jens Büttner/dpa, Christophe Simon/AFP



Yes, it's real gold. Vanessa Low celebrates after winning long jump.



Unforgettable! An exclamation repeated by many spectators when asked what they thought about the Opening Ceremony of the Rio 2016 Paralympics. The show balanced paralympic spirit, inclusion and hope. More than 70,000 people created a magical atmosphere in the Maracanã stadium. Brazilian culture, dance and music were showcased by performers with and without a disability. Nonetheless, there was also space for the audience to express political protests against Michel Temer, Brazil's new president who declared the Paralympic Games open. The emotional climax was reached when the torch bearer and former athlete Márcia Malsar fell, halfway before handing over the paralympic flame to the second-to-last torch bearer. The whole stadium rose from their seats when she stood back up to finish the last few steps, supported by ear-piercing roars and clapping. "These are God's tears. He is thrilled." That is Márcia Malsar's explanation about the heavy rain during the Ceremony. Her torch relay and the reaction of the crowd when she continued her walk was really an unforgettable moment.

LEONARDO LEVATTI, 22 YEARS and GUSTAVO ALTMAN, 18 YEARS



Having fun - Japanese fans in Rio.



Australian Brayden Davidson in front of the records panel after breaking the long jump record.



Samuel Asiedu Poku from the social media team concentrating on filming the reporters at work.

# MIXED ZONE

## Veterans at volleyball

When asked about the German sitting volleyball team's chance of qualifying for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, attacker Lukas Schiwy answered: "Our chances are quite good, but as we are playing against Bosnia-Herzegovina in the qualifier, second place would probably be the best result."

At the past four Paralympics Bosnia-Herzegovina won two gold and two silver medals. During the 2014 Volleyball World Cup the Bosnians only lost a single set. It's the only sport in which the country has won Olympic and Paralympic medals.

This fact explains why the Bosnian players are celebrated heroes in their country. But there is another very important reason. Many of the players were left with a disability after the Bosnian war ended in 1996. The volleyball team captain Sabahudin Delalic (42) lost his left leg in combat for Bosnia at the age of 19. The sport keeps the



Photo: Imago/Conny Kurth

former fighters fit and boosts their self-esteem. Being a soldier, Delalic also understands how important the success of the volleyball team is for national pride. "We owe our people a lot, their support motivates us a lot. In Beijing we won the silver medal, and they considered it a failure. They are expecting gold and nothing less."

Iran, Bosnia-Herzegovina's greatest opponent and held responsible for the disappointing result, is first in the world rankings for sitting volleyball. Since 1988, when Iran competed at the Paralympics for the first time, they have nearly been undefeated. Only twice has Iran lost the gold medal to another team: Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2004 and 2012. In the 2014 World Cup, Iran was defeated in the semifinals, while Bosnia-Herzegovina won the tournament.

JÓÃO SOARES, 22 YEARS and  
MIRIAM KAROUT, 21 YEARS



Photo: Jason Cairnduff/rt

## #FillTheSeats

Ten thousand seats are being filled with joy and inspiration at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. The #FillTheSeats fundraising campaign provides Brazilian kids with the opportunity to witness the Games at the actual venues. Besides contributing to ticket purchasing, the remainder of the #FillTheSeats donations are going to be directed to initiatives for people with a disability in Brazil. The campaign was created by Greg Nugent, former brand, marketing and culture director at London 2012. He originally expected to raise 15,000 dollars. This number was exceeded by more than 300,000 dollars.

JORGE SALHANI, 22 YEARS

## Nordic pride

The flag of the Faroe Islands flies at the Aquatics Centre in the Olympic Park in Rio. This means that, in contrast to the Olympic Games, the Nordic country is officially represented at the Paralympics. At the Olympics Faroese swimmer Pál Joensen competed for Denmark. At the Paralympics swimmer Krista Mørkøre is able to represent her home country.

"The Faroes were present when the IPC was founded and since then we've been members. The IOC, on the other hand, won't recognise us as a sovereign country, hence our absence," explains Tróndur Ravnsfjall, Chef de Mission.

HUGO L'ABBATE, 22 YEARS

## Priceless experience

In preparation for the Games 15,000 volunteers received online training regarding medical instruction as well as an English language course. All volunteers have to cover their own expenses, such as airplane ticket and accommodation, but their experience and the legacy are priceless. "It is so rewarding to give back to the public and help the press," says a volunteer.

FERNANDA LAGOEIRO, 22 YEARS



Photo: Thilo Ruckels

## Altered ambassadors

The fashion magazine Vogue Brazil launched a campaign for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games which resulted in a huge public debate. The advertising piece, created by PR agency Africa, featured photos of the Paralympic ambassadors which were digitally altered. Cleo Pires and Paulo Vilhena, who are actors and models, are shown without an arm and with a prosthetic leg respectively. They took the lead in a campaign promoting the biggest sports event for people with a disability - which they are not. Critics ar-



Screenshot: Instagram Vogue Brasil

gued that the images are not representative. Vogue Brazil chose to edit Cleo and Paulo with the bodies of Paralympic athletes: table tennis player Bruna Alexandre and sitting volleyball player Renato Leite, instead of showing the athletes themselves. In answer to the criticism, Cleo Pires said that they had just lent their images to give the movement visibility.

Marinalva de Almeida, a Brazilian Paralympic sailor, said: "Brazil does not need Photoshop to represent our disabilities since we already know they are everywhere." She thinks that the campaign should have featured athletes with their beauty and strength, showing that anything is possible for people with a disability.

On the other hand, the campaign also received praise on social networks and was endorsed by the Brazilian Paralympic Committee.

NATÁLIA BELIZARIO, 20 YEARS



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In the dark, a single man is standing outside the Maracanã stadium in Rio. His face is painted red, white and blue; a Russian flag protects his body against the evening cold. He has just left the Opening Ceremony of the 2016 Paralympics - the first Games in his lifetime at which he doesn't have a country to cheer for.

Of course he could have stayed home and watched the alternative Paralympics that Russia is celebrating, in defiance of the IPC's ruling to exclude Russian athletes. But perhaps he would have found the thrill of sports to be rather dampened by the absence of international competition. Just two years ago he would have been in Russia, cheering his home nation to the top of the medal table at the Sochi Winter Games. But behind the glory was the biggest systematic doping cover-up in the history of paralympic sport. The McLaren Report found the Russian government to have been actively involved in masking the urine test results of over 30 athletes at the Sochi Games, amid a four-year state-run doping programme.

## “WE HAVE GREAT SYMPATHY FOR THE ATHLETES WHO WILL NOW MISS THE GAMES”

The revelation led to the IOC banning all Russian athletics and weightlifting competitors from the Rio Games, as well as banning selected athletes from seven other sports. In contrast, the IPC decided to issue a full ban to the Russian team - extending to the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang.

“The IPC's decision underlines our strong belief that doping has absolutely no place in paralympic sport, and further improves our ability to ensure fair competition and a level playing field for all para-athletes around the world,” said Craig Spence, the IPC's director of media and communications.

The World Anti-Doping Agency agrees with the IPC's no-tolerance stance. “WADA supports the decision taken by the IPC, which we believe is in the inte-

# See you in four years?

The IPC took a stand **banning** the entire **Russian team** from the Rio and Pyeongchang Paralympics for systematic **doping**



Photo: AFP

An analyst in the anti-doping laboratory (above). A member of the Byelorussian team carries a Russian flag during the Opening Ceremony protesting against the Russian ban (below).

rest of clean athletes and the clean sport movement,” said Maggie Durand, communications co-ordinator at WADA.

But not everyone agrees that the full ban was necessary, with President Putin branding it “outside the bounds of law, morality and humanity.”

And while this is no doubt a devastating decision for athletes who were not implicated in the doping, the IPC hopes this will have a positive impact on sport in the long term, ensuring the integrity and credibility of paralympic sport in the future.

Craig Spence added: “We have great sympathy for the athletes who will now miss the Games, but we hope the lasting legacy of our decision is that the state-sponsored doping system existing in Russian sport, and extending to Russian paralympic sport, stops.”

“We look forward to the day when we can welcome back the Russian Paralympic Committee and Russian athletes to compete on the world stage.”

LUCY MICHAELOUDIS, 21 YEARS,  
KERI TRIGG, 21 YEARS, and  
JONATHAN FRIDMAN, 18 YEARS



Photo: Iliya Pitalev/dpa



Paralympic athlete Ibrahim Al Hussein during the Opening Ceremony.

Photo: Marcelo Sayão/dpa

## Independent athletes

**Two refugees were the first athletes to enter the Maracanã stadium at the Opening Ceremony of the Paralympics.**

On possibly the most important day of his life, Ibrahim Al Hussein wears a white shirt, black trousers and red shoes. In his right hand he carries the paralympic flag, swirling it, surrounded by the intense noise of thousands of people clapping and screaming at the Opening Ceremony of the Paralympic Games in Rio.

Al Hussein is the first athlete to enter the Maracanã stadium on this day as part of the Independent Paralympic Athletes Team. Next to him walks his teammate Shahrads Nasajpour. “This is one of the most beautiful moments of my life. I still cannot believe that I am in Rio,” the 27-year-old Al Hussein said after the Opening Ceremony.

Al Hussein was born in Deir ez-Zor, a town in East Syria. His father is a swim-

ming teacher; the house was located right next to the Euphrates River. Dreaming of competing at the Olympic Games, Al Hussein trained in the river nearly every day.

This dream was shattered in 2011 when a bomb hit him during the ongoing war in Syria. He lost his right foot and shank. Soon after, he was granted asylum in Greece. There, after working 12 hours a day, he would practise in the pool. “The pool is like home for me,” he said. Now he swims the 50 metre freestyle faster than before losing his leg. The other refugee on the team is the Iranian Shahrads Nasajpour. He competes in discus throw and is very close-lipped regarding his personal story.

“I didn't achieve what I was hoping for,” he said after finishing his first competition at the Paralympics. “But now I know I need to work harder, much harder. I ne-

ver thought I could make it to the Paralympics. It was really huge for me because I didn't have much training and I was focusing on other things: paperwork and getting the U.S. citizenship - it was not easy.”

Nasajpour and Al Hussein are the only athletes not representing their home country, but rather millions of people worldwide.

“It's not good that you don't have a country to represent, but I am thankful and I hope other athletes, refugees like me, will be able to make it as well,” Al Hussein said.

Having a refugee team in Rio is surely wonderful. But it would be even more wonderful to have no refugee team in Tokyo 2020 - if the war ended and people did not have to flee their home.

MIRIAM KAROUT, 21 YEARS,  
and MARC BÄDORF, 21 YEARS



Giving up has never been an option. David Behre from Germany at the 2016 Paralympic Games in the Estádio Olímpico in Rio de Janeiro.

Photo: Imago/Beautiful Sports

# Being inspiring

**Paralympians** are not only admired by spectators and other athletes, they are also inspired by their **own heroes**

It was 2007, five days since David Behre had lost both legs after a train accident. He was lying in a German hospital bed, depressed and sad, the morphine barely moderating his pain, when he saw Oscar Pistorius on TV. A man with two prostheses, muscular thighs and arms, dressed in green and yellow. A man who looked like Behre. A man, who was fast, faster than nearly

## BEING TOLD YOU ARE SOMEONE'S HERO IS SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL

every man in the world. Behre told the doctors that he wanted to do the same. This is one typical example how paralympic athletes are even more than role models for other people. They inspire people, they give them the strength to live their life to the fullest – even if the situation may be difficult. They show that almost nothing is impossible. There are many other examples of paralympic role models. Stefanie Long, a swimmer who won 12 paralympic gold medals was inspired by US paralympic

swimmer Erin Popovich. "I remember being a little girl and having heroes like Erin Popovich, who was and still is a paralympic athlete," she says. Now she tries to be a role model for young kids herself: "Winning gold medals is incredible and obviously it's what I want to do, but there's something so special about having a little girl who has just lost her leg from cancer come up and tell me I'm her hero."

Or Heinrich Popow - the German athlete travels around the world to show young amputees how to handle a prosthesis, how to jump with it, how to sprint with it. "The project is everything for me. I can help, the people help me," he says.

Sometimes paralympic athletes are even role models for other great sportsmen. After David Weir, a British paralympian, won gold in London 2012, Usain Bolt tweeted: "Simply inspiring."

David Behre made his dream come true. Today he is one of the fastest men in the whole wide world. In 2015 he won the World Cup in Dubai in the 400 metre sprint.

After the race he told the reporters: "I don't know if Oscar is happy that I took away his record. But I believe that he is happy seeing me winning the 400 metre medal." **MARC BÄDORF, 21 YEARS**

## Inclusion in the mixed zone

**A photographer with a visual impairment shows that everything is possible.**

João enters the press area of the Aquatics Stadium in Olympic Park. A volunteer supports him until he meets two other colleagues. He sits down and adjusts his camera equipment with their support. Now he is ready to work. João Maia (41) is a photographer with a visual impairment who covers paralympic sports.

Since he was 28 years old, João has had bilateral uveitis, an intraocular inflammation. It's not possible to precisely define how much his vision is affected. As he can recognise colours, Maia has spatial notion, but the world isn't clearly focused in his eyes. "I see life as a watercolour painting. With my shots I'm composing it," he says.

Until last year, he used to practise shot put in the category F12, in which athletes with a visual impairment compete. After a surgery to remove three herniated disks, he decided to cover the competitions instead of taking part in them. In a



Photo: Thilo Ruckeis

course created by Professor João Kulcsár, he improved his photographic skills. That was when he realised there were no limits for what he is able to do. "I don't need to have perfect vision to photograph. I just have to feel it. As an ex-athlete I know the moves they have to do, just like the facial expressions. If someone is crossing the finish line, the fee-

ling of happiness is enormous. I've felt it myself," he explains. A great motivator for Maia is Vitão Wang (47), a photographer who uses a wheelchair. The Rio 2016 Games are the third Paralympics he is covering. Just like Maia, he participated in sports before discovering the world of photography. He has been in a wheelchair for 30 years. At

big events he tries to create unconventional views. "In London I stayed away from the centre in order to feel the city. I covered sports like rugby and fencing, which don't get much attention in Brazil. I'm not worried about medal ceremonies. With my knowledge about the modalities, I capture new angles," states Wang.

Having taken part in three Paralympics as an athlete before starting to report on them, Vitão has always wanted to experience the Games in his country. Now he feels ashamed.

"I haven't even returned to the Olympic Stadium because it was a disaster when I went there for the test event in May. The photo positions aren't prepared for people in a wheelchair at all. Besides that, it took eight minutes to get on the bus with the lifter. While the driver helped me, the passengers asked him to hurry up. Nevertheless, I'm happy to be doing what I love," he says.

**JOÃO SOARES, 22 YEARS**  
and **LISA KUNER, 21 YEARS**

Brazil's Vera Lucia Mazzilli smiles at her coaches during a dressage team test in the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.



Photo: Yasuyoshi Chiba/AFP

# Debutant at 65

Does the thrill of winning **medals** keep paralympians **young**? Brazilian equestrian Vera Lucia Mazzilli is just one of many successful athletes **over 40** competing at the Rio 2016 Games

**A**s they approach the end of their thirties, many athletes have already bowed out of professional sports. Only a handful of Olympians at the Rio Games had seen their 40th birthday, with most sports having no over-40s competing at all. In the Paralympics, however, all sports except seven-a-side football have at least one, with some of the highest numbers in shooting (51 percent), archery (42 percent) and equestrian sports (37 percent). Australian shooter Libby Kosmala is the oldest and most experienced paralympian at Rio, competing in her 12th Games at the age of 74. Kosmala has been a force to be reckoned with in the sport for over four decades, af-

ter competing internationally in swimming and athletics in her younger years. Representing Great Britain, John Cavanagh is showing no signs of hanging up his bow just yet. Having competed in archery at every Summer Paralympics since 2000, the 60-year-old puts his continued success down to the thrill of competition - and who has time to get old when there are medals to be won? "It feels like it was only yesterday when I competed in my first Games in Sydney," he says. "Each Games has its own unique flavour and they continue to improve in quality. Overall they are just great fun to compete in." Another athlete still going strong into retirement age is Vera Lucia Mazzilli, making her Paralympics debut at her home na-

tion's Games at the age of 65. The equestrian star is also Brazil's oldest competitor. Eduardo Carmona, a physical education professor and specialist in adapted sports, says that a lack of opportunities for paralympic athletes in some countries is one reason why so many don't get into professional sport until much later in life than their able-bodied counterparts. "Most athletes just get to know sports through associations, and it generally hap-

## THEY ARE JUST GREAT FUN TO COMPETE IN

pens while they are teenagers or adults," he says. "Besides that, few places work with adapted sports. Therefore, taking part in these sports is still a privilege and, because of that, the number of people competing is lower than in conventional sports." He also explains why more older athletes opt for sports that are less energetic, saying: "It's more difficult to compete in sports that require a lot of movement and dynamism. That's why we can see older people competing in sports that require low levels of energy - like shooting, for example." Despite this trend, sailing has the highest proportion of athletes over 40 at the Rio Paralympics, at 58 percent. Other physically demanding sports like cycling and triathlon also have a high turnout of older competitors. German cyclist Hans-Peter Durst, 58, says the key is to strike a balance between meeting the high physical and mental demands of his sport. As the reigning world champion, he has set his sights on a podium finish despite being one of the oldest cyclists. "Cycling demands a high level of physical condition and power," he explains. "But in addition there is, especially in tricycling, a need for technical experience and the right mentality. My dream is, of course, a medal, but the others have also trained well - and most of them are younger than me!" **KERI TRIGG, 21 YEARS, and THÁIS CONTARIN, 22 YEARS**

# Accessibility and culture on the Boulevard

In a country known as much for its **carnival spirit** as for its love of football the Paralympic Games would not be complete without a cultural program to **round off the sport**. Seven months after carnival season the streets have come alive once again in Rio with a series of events and performances organised by the Rio 2016 Organising Committee and Rio's City Hall. There was the news of scaling back the Paralympic Games due to lack of funds. But at a time when interim president Michel Temer had suggested merging the Ministry of Culture with the Ministry of Education, the cultural offerings during the Games show Brazil's diverse heritage would not be undermined by politics and lack of finance. Indeed, some have seized the Paralympic Games as a prime opportunity

to begin conversations about accessibility and put inclusion firmly on the political agenda both in Brazil and internationally. The Goethe Institute in Rio launched the first 'International Week of Accessibility and Culture' and kicked off the event with a screening of the documentary 'GOLD - you can do more than you think', which follows the stories of three paralympic athletes: Kirsten Bruhn, Kurt Fearnley and Henry Wanyoike. From Germany, Australia and Kenya respectively the film offers a diverse look at athletes' journeys as they prepared for the London 2012 Games. The week promises a varied programme of discussions and performances in the Biblioteca Parque Estaduais and the Biblioteca Parque Manguinhos in Rio's newly developed Olympic Boulevard in the city's port area.



Photo: Oliver Hosleit/opa

Posing for selfies - in front of one of the five giant faces by Brazilian graffiti artist Eduardo Kobra on the Olympic Boulevard.

Director of Rio's Goethe Institute Robin Mallick has embraced the city's commitment to regeneration as part of the legacy of the Games. "When discussing the success or failures of the Paralympic Games in Rio this [the Olympic Boulevard] is the important thing, there has been a lot of criticism that is justified, but if you look at that space it is the revitalisation of

Rio." Robin Mallick hopes the 'International Week of Accessibility and Culture' will have a legacy of its own and that using visual arts to begin a political debate will ensure that the spirit of the paralympic movement isn't extinguished along with the flame at the Closing Ceremony. "Culture is about the overall perception within a society. The Paralympic Games are a huge opportunity, maybe the most important opportunity of the century in Brazil to raise awareness regarding inclusion. "But more importantly the question is how to sustain awareness and action after the Paralympic Games. In our joint challenge to keep the spirit alive, inclusiveness in combination with diversity is not always something to proclaim at the opening and closing of the Paralympics, but is something really important." Only time will tell if the impact of the first 'International Week of Accessibility and Culture' will last longer than seven days. **LUCY MICHAELLOUDIS, 21 YEARS**

# Kicking off inclusion

**Professorship for paralympic sports at German Sport University Cologne initiated by DGUV and German NPC**

Lars Hoffmann's heart rate increased steadily as he lay in the hand-cycle ergometer. When it reached the peak, Professor Abel analysed the data and was pleased with the results: "You can't compare these endurance performances to the results in regular cycling. Handcycling is an exertion solely of the arms. Therefore, we need this specific research in paralympic sports in order to adapt professional training and diagnostics for para-athletes." In 2015 Hoffmann ranked amongst Europe's top handcyclists, yet failed to qualify for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

The German Sport University Cologne (GSU) is dedicated to all aspects of sports. Through Abel's professorship the university gains an additional field of expertise specifically focusing on paralympic physiology and performance.

Basically, Abel examines the effects of physical activity on the human body. German paralympians, such as the men's wheelchair basketball team, have already benefited from his adapted diagnostics techniques for their preparation for the Paralympics.

Not only elite athletes benefit from the paralympic professorship. Future physical education teachers who study at GSU receive hands-on training to teach joint physical education classes for students with and without a disability. "Many PE teachers in Germany are GSU graduates.



Handbiker Lars Hoffmann during a diagnostic investigation with Professor Abel, German Sport University Cologne.

So if inclusive PE lessons are an integral part of our curriculum, this has a tremendous domino effect regarding inclusion in schools," said Abel. And this reflects one of the German Social Accident Insu-

## "SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF REHABILITATION"

rance's (DGUV) core values to promote and foster inclusion. "Sports and physical activities are an essential part of the rehabilitation process after accidents," explained Joachim Breuer, Director General of the DGUV.

Practising sports not only contributes to

physical fitness for people with a disability, but it also boosts self-confidence and encourages interpersonal exchange. Abel's research also contributes to an improved rehabilitation process in hospitals and clinics by adjusting sports therapies to meet the specific needs of people with a disability.

Another step towards inclusion in sports is the fact that students with a disability can take up studies at the Sport University. Together with his colleague Anke Raabe-Oetker, Abel set up a rating system for the physical entry test. This is a challenging physical test that average athletes struggle to pass and more than 50% of the applicants fail each year. They have to pass the test in at least 18 of 19 different disciplines. Veit Schopper made it – regardless of his unilateral leg ampu-

tation and a paralysed arm. "Obviously I can't do a handstand with only one arm. Instead of passing a gymnastics course, I had to write a paper about it. Honestly, I would have preferred to take a gymnastics examination," he said. Abel and Raabe-Oetker developed an evaluation and examination system that offers students and applicants with a disability a level playing field.

Professor Abel also supports inclusive sports education at an international level, such as the German-Brazilian PULSAR project which educates instructors in teaching and training people with a disability. "I believe it is my duty to support such initiatives. In this regard, I see the German Sport University setting an example for inclusion in sports education."

MIRIAM KAROUT, 21 YEARS

## Rediscovering his passion

**Playing for the German national team was a dream Bastian Pusch had given up on after he lost one of his legs - but then he discovered amputee football.**

"I never thought we would last 20 years," smiles Pusch, remembering the first time he met Peter Dorn from the German Social Accident Insurance institution for local authorities in the Braunschweig region (BS GUV). Peter Dorn visited Bastian Pusch, who was 18 at the time, in the hospital after he had lost his leg in a car accident on his way to vocational school. Like all students and employees in Germany, Pusch is automatically insured through the German Social Accident Insurance. Right from the start, Peter Dorn explained what support he was entitled to.

Pusch's rehabilitation process began in the BG Clinic Hamburg (BUK Hamburg), one of the clinics belonging to the Hospital Group of the Statutory Accident Insurance. The BUK Hamburg provided every-

thing he needed for a successful rehabilitation process under one roof. During his rehabilitation he tried a few team sports such as wheelchair basketball and tennis. But football had always been Pusch's passion. "I grew up on the football field," says the 38-year old. Training five days a week and games on the weekend were his life. His football training and physical fitness also helped him during his rehabilitation process. He knew how much impact muscle training can have and how quickly progress can be achieved. This motivated him to keep on working and training towards the next positive results. Pusch was quickly able to resume his vocational training and take on the job at the bank he was offered afterwards.

For the next few years his physical activities were limited to cycling and workouts at the gym. The only place where he was able to act out his love for football was as a fan in the stadium of his favourite football club. But in 2013, 17 years after his



Football had always been Bastian Pusch's (r) passion. 17 years after his accident, he came to amputee football.

accident, he came across the website of the German amputee football association.

The sport is played by people with similar impairments using crutches which make them more flexible than when using prostheses. He left a comment on the website and a couple of weeks later he was invited to a training session. From that day on, he has been strongly involved in his new passion, he even became one of the coordinators of the association. Since 2013 he has been part of Germany's national team. Wearing your country's jersey, scoring the crucial goal and having the crowd cheering for you, what else could you ask for? Bastian Pusch from Königslutter is one of the lucky ones. Pusch's vision for the future is to establish a proper amputee football division in Germany. There is still a long way to go, but until then he just feels thankful to be back on the field.

ISABELLA WIMMER, 21 YEARS



Photo: Thilo Rückeis

The wheelchair-accessible buses will be used for public transport after the Games.

Infrastructure coupled with changing attitudes towards a more inclusive society have the potential to leave a powerful and enduring legacy on the streets of Rio and beyond.

However, the build-up to the Games has been tumultuous with the president awaiting an impeachment trial, the outbreak of Zika virus and accusations of mispending all threatening to overshadow the competition. With this going on in the background, it may be difficult to view a positive lasting legacy for Rio and indeed Brazil, but this would be short-sighted. The Olympic Games held earlier in August were successful and allowed sport to take centre stage. The Paralympic Games have followed suit, proving once again that sport has the power to inspire a generation.

Sir Philip Craven, IPC President speaking ahead of the Games was optimistic: "I believe the performances of the para-athletes will act as a catalyst for social

### "PERFORMANCES WILL ACT AS A CATALYST FOR SOCIAL CHANGE"

change. The Paralympics have a strong track record for changing global attitudes towards people with an impairment, and are now widely regarded as the world's number one sporting event for driving positive societal change and social inclusion.

"The opportunity we have here to make Rio, Brazil, Latin America and the world a more equitable place for all does not come around very often, so we have to grab it with both hands."

The wheels are already in motion in Rio so what can Cariocas expect in the long run? The metro system has been extended; metro line 4 will connect the northern and southern areas of Rio with Barra da Tijuca, where most of the sporting venues are located. This will help the immediate running of the Games, reducing congestion on the roads by providing a quick alternative for spectators but is also a long-term improvement for those living and working in Rio de Janeiro.

Furthermore, the 'nomadic architecture' design that has been used for the Future Arena where handball and goalball are hosted means part of the venue will be transformed into four public schools providing education for 2,000 children in Rio. The rest of the stadium along with five other venues will become Brazil's Olympic

Training Centre, providing top class training facilities for Brazil's athletes in the future, meaning they can build on their success in their home Games.

Apart from offering facilities to world-class athletes, Rio's inhabitants will have the chance to swim, cycle and sail when the Deodoro Olympic Park is transformed into X-park and the canoe and BMX venues will offer recreational facilities in an area previously underserved. But before the Games are over, spectators have the chance to learn new skills at the Barra Olympic Park where visitors have the chance to try out goalball and sitting volleyball for themselves. Whether you're differently abled or not, these sports are accessible to all once you know the rules! It's these kinds of events where fans watch their differences fade away as they engage in a new sport that has the potential to pave the way for integration.

While it may be too early to measure the exact legacy of the Rio Games, it has been four years since London and a new generation of athletes competed in their first Paralympic Games.

The Organising Committee for the London Games wanted to bring the Games experience to young athletes and thus developed the Paralympic Inspiration programme. Chef de Mission at Paralympics GB Penny Briscoe explains:

"The Paralympic Inspiration Programme is aimed at providing aspiring paralympians with a taste of the Games environment, everything from village life to seeing sports competition.



Kids testing goalball at the Olympic Park during the Rio 2016 Paralympics.

"It aims to demystify the Games and provide familiarisation for athletes so that when they come to compete at their first Games they have experience which promotes confidence and helps them to thrive in the Games environment."

Sophie Carrigill, who took part in the programme, was so determined to make the women's wheelchair basketball team that watching them lose in London only encouraged her more.

"It was watching the GB women compete against Germany and narrowly losing that really inspired me to want to be part of that team and hopefully help them to win the next time they played that team in the Paralympics."

Robyn Love is another member of the women's wheelchair basketball team for Great Britain and London left her a very personal legacy.

"Without London 2012 I would not have got involved in wheelchair basketball when I did, and I would certainly not be representing GB in Rio. The London legacy has certainly had a major impact on my life."

Let's hope young Brazilian athletes will be just as inspired by the Rio 2016 legacy!  
LUCY MICHAELLOUDIS, 21 YEARS

# A look at legacy: London to Rio

Paralympics don't only **promise** to be an amazing event but also bring **lasting change**. But do they really?

**W**hile many of us will only ever be spectators, tuning in at home or lucky enough to be cheering in the stands for two weeks every four years, the Paralympic Games themselves have a more long-lasting effect. Playing host to the Paralympic Games can literally transform the landscapes of cities and mould the minds of its dwellers. Physical changes, the building of stadiums, railways and in-

## History of the Games

Before the first Paralympic Games were held in Rome in 1960, sport for people with a disability was solely seen as a form of treatment and rehabilitation measure, especially for the millions of wounded soldiers after World War II. One of the pioneers who pushed forward rehabilitation sports was German doctor Sir Ludwig Guttmann. Of Jewish origin, he had to emigrate to England. In 1943 the British government asked him to establish the National Spinal



Sir Ludwig Guttmann in Stoke Mandeville

Injuries Centre for soldiers in Stoke Mandeville. Guttmann developed a new philosophy in rehabilitation, bringing together functional exercises and the fun aspect of playing sports. Popular disciplines were basketball and archery. Little by little, the exercises were adapted and former patients performed them recreationally and as competitive sports. Thus, the idea of the paralympic movement was born.

GUILHERME LONGO, 23 YEARS



Paralympics countdown event in front of the Tokyo Metropolitan government building in Tokyo.

## Annyeong Pyeongchang

**While medals are still being awarded in Rio de Janeiro, the organisation of the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang is well underway.**

Athletes travelling to South Korea will compete in six sports, including snowboarding as an individual sport after its debut in alpine skiing in 2014. Competitions will be held in five venues located in the Pyeongchang Mountain Cluster and the Gangneung Coastal Cluster.

Michael Shin, Head of the Integration and Coordination Team of the Pyeongchang Organising Committee, is observing the Rio Paralympics closely. Traveling through Rio to reach a venue can be very time consuming, he notes, adding that the venues in Pyeongchang are no further than 30 minutes apart. In contrast to previous Winter Games, this will allow all athletes to be housed in one village.

Hosting the Games will help the integration of people with a disability in Korea because, according to Mr. Shin, "Koreans are crazy about sports." In the past there was a clear separation between people with and without disabilities in Korea, but since winning the bid to host the 2018 Winter Games, "new laws were passed and many facilities are becoming more accessible." This goes hand in hand with the Actualising the Dream Programme, for which Mr. Shin's team is responsible. It promotes paralympic sports in Korea, and improves the recognition of people with a disability. Big campaigns are promoted by famous Korean actors and the programme's effects should last long after the 2018 Games.

The organisers are positive that the Pyeongchang Games will promote inter-Korean reconciliation, cooperation and peace. North Korea, which partici-



The Gangneung Hockey Centre will be one of the two venues for ice hockey.

**A**s the Rio games draw to a close, the eyes of the world turn to Japan and the 2020 host city of Tokyo as it prepares to make history as the first city to host the Paralympic Games twice.

Preparations are already underway, but the Tokyo Organising Committee needs to have some tricks up its sleeve if it hopes to live up to the legacy of Rio.

Three new permanent venues are to be constructed for the Games, and there are plans to improve transport and access across the city, using the Games as a catalyst for a host of positive changes that will also see a surge in funding and promotion of adaptive sport.

Bringing a flavour of Tokyo to Brazil, the Japan House in Rio put on an impressive open exhibition throughout the Olympics and Paralympics, introducing the Tokyo Committee's vision for what its Games will bring.

### THE JAPAN HOUSE IN RIO WAS TO SHOW THE WORLD WHAT TO EXPECT FROM TOKYO

"The idea of the Tokyo 2020 Japan House here in Rio was to show the world what to expect from Tokyo," said Masatoshi Ishii, representing the Committee at the House. "The exhibitions here give a taste of what Japan's Olympics and Paralympics will be like - and they will be great." One of the highlights to look forward to at the Tokyo Games is the Paralympic debut of two rapidly growing sports - badminton and taekwondo.

Badminton, played by wheelchair, standing and short stature athletes, has been competed in internationally since the 1990s, with the first world championships held in 1998.

It is now one of the fastest growing para-sports, currently played in over 60 countries. The most recent world cham-

## Konnichiwa Tokyo

**The 2020 Paralympic Games in Japan promise various highlights – like the debut of two rapidly growing sports: badminton and taekwondo**

pionships in 2015 saw 35 of these send a total of 232 athletes to compete in 22 medal events.

"On every level there was an extremely positive reaction to badminton's inclusion in Tokyo 2020," said Andy Hines-Randle, para-badminton and integrity manager at the Badminton World Federation.

"Players in particular could now see a



Para-taekwondo will debut at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

complete competition pathway to the Paralympic Games."

Similarly, taekwondo has seen its popularity snowball since the sport was first adapted for athletes with a disability.

"It's been an extremely rapid develop-

ment," says Olof Hansson, para-taekwondo manager at the World Taekwondo Federation. "We did bid to be on the programme for 2016, but at that time para-taekwondo was run a little bit as a side project. After that failed, we took on people full time to work with it.

"That of course led to a lot of reforms in classification procedures and competition rules and even statutes - everything was pretty much gone through and corrected for the promotion of para-taekwondo.

"And then the sport was pushed and brought to the IPC at the precise time that they were looking for more exciting, more demanding sports for the Paralympic Games."

Since the announcement that taekwondo will be included at the Tokyo Paralympics, the sport has seen a surge in popularity that even the WTF didn't expect.

"Before being introduced to the Paralympics, we still had a steadily growing population of athletes," adds Mr Hansson.

"It's a very strong development, of course the inclusion in the Paralympic Games has helped a lot, but this is more than we expected in terms of development this year. I think that the main gain will be seen next year, after the Rio Paralympics, when countries start focusing on the Tokyo 2020 Games."

KERI TRIGG, 21 YEARS

Photo: Promo

Photo: WTF

Photo: Imago

MILAN MARCUS, 19 YEARS