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Winter Paralympics turn 50

New Concussion Tools
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Curling Push

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JANUARY 2026
THE MAGAZINE FOR WHEELCHAIR
SPORTS AND RECREATION

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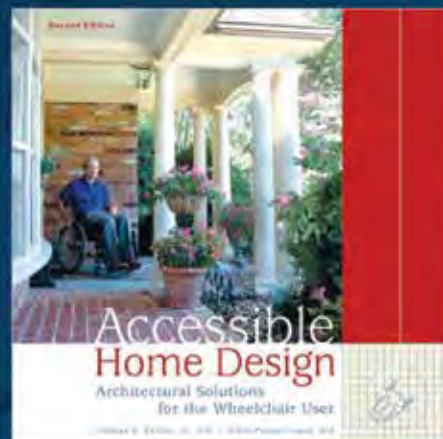
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Christopher Di Virgilio

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Wheelchair curler Sarah Parker, left, prepares to launch a stone down the ice at Coyotes Curling Club in Tempe, Ariz. Photo by Christopher Di Virgilio.



sportsNspokes

january 2026

VOLUME 51 | NUMBER 1



Published by Paralyzed Veterans of America
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Now in its 51st year of publication, *Sports N Spokes* is the nation's premier magazine for wheelchair sports and recreation, primarily for those with spinal-cord injury, spina bifida, amputation and some congenital defects.

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Sports N Spokes (ISSN 0161-6706) is published in January, March, May, July, September and November by Paralyzed Veterans of America, 7250 North 16th Street, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85020-5214.

Email address changes to cindy@pvamag.com or mail to *Sports N Spokes*, 7250 North 16th Street, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85020-5214.

Subscription rates: \$12 annually. Foreign orders: \$18 (U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank).



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Digital Highlights



U.S. WINTER PARALYMPIC SELECTIONS

Keep an eye out on sportsnspokes.com for which athletes make the U.S. Winter Paralympic teams. From skiing to sled hockey, we'll have updates on the athletes heading to the 2026 Milano Cortina Paralympics in Italy.



PVA RUGBY INVITATIONAL

Paralyzed Veterans Of America (PVA) is hosting its PVA Wheelchair Rugby Tournament Jan. 30-Feb. 1 in Louisville, Ky. Keep an eye on the Sports N Spokes Facebook page (facebook.com/sportsnspokes) for photos and highlights.

**CHECK OUT ALL THIS AND MORE AT
SPORTSNSPOKES.COM**



More Than A Pretty Cover

BY AL KOVACH JR., EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



IN 1975, THE LATE CLIFF CRASE believed the rising world of wheelchair sports simply wasn't getting the coverage it deserved. With his wife, Nancy, doing the graphic design and helping with printing, they launched a modest yet bold venture called *Sports N Spokes* (SNS).

Before SNS, Cliff was writing sports columns in what was then titled *Paraplegia News* (now PN), a publication for Paralyzed Veterans of America, but the space was cramped. So, they decided to start a separate magazine.

What began as a homemade production grew into a globally recognized magazine for wheelchair sports and recreation.

From the start, SNS covered wheelchair sports at all levels, celebrated its niche audience and consistently served as a connection point for athletes, competitors and adaptive sports organizations around the world.

For the next 50 years, SNS documented equipment advances, competition results, adaptive innovations and the community of determined athletes. Today, SNS is recognized as the *Sports Illustrated* for wheelchair sports.

So, if we're as great as I say we are, why redesign a magazine with such a successful track record? Why change after such a long, successful run? A few reasons pop up that are as much about practicality as they are about honoring the mission.

SNS remains committed to providing readers with top-notch coverage of all news relating to adaptive sports and recreation. But you'll notice some changes in the appearance of the magazine, as well as how to access our exclusive content.

Simply put, a redesign allows the magazine to refresh its visual identity, align with modern production values and cater to both our current readers and potential newcomers.

Regarding the magazine's new appearance, I hope you noticed the new look for our cover, including the first change to our logo in 27 years! We've also made changes to the guts of the magazine that may be less obvious to some readers, but the changes are significant. We're confident that by the time you reach the last page, you'll find the modern layout easier to navigate, while making it a more reader-friendly experience.

However, the redesign isn't just about looking different; it's about flexibility. While digital media provides immediacy, accessibility and interactive features, SNS recognizes that some readers still love holding a physical magazine and flipping pages, and we believe there's the enduring value of printed copies of SNS magazines in waiting rooms of rehabilitation centers around the world. After all, that's where I saw my first copy of SNS.


Nevertheless, SNS subscribers and those who we're trying to reach are

shifting their preferences. Today, SNS digital subscriptions are 10 times greater than that of our printed subscriptions. With that said, our strategy is to continue printing the magazine, but we've been enhancing our presence on social media, including Facebook, X, Instagram and YouTube. This allows the magazine to better incorporate multimedia, cross-platform content and accessibility features.

With the publishing environment more competitive and fragmented, a redesign signals renewed commitment, clarifies brand identity and helps SNS stand out.

So there you have it — from a husband and wife starting a magazine because the sports world wasn't talking about wheelchair athletes, to a global publication, to a redesign aimed at ensuring the next 50 years are as full of impact as the first 50 years have been.

We didn't put SNS through the almost yearlong process of redesign to look pretty. We redesigned the magazine because its audience is changing, technology is improving and the SNS mission continues. And that's something worth celebrating.

As always, please share your thoughts with me at al@pvamag.com. 



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- Practice mock interviews to hone your skills before you interact with employers.
- Regularly communicate with you to track progress and identify other resources to assist in the job search process.
- Be a **Partner for Life** to assist you for the duration of your career.

ARCHERY

Chunyan Makes History

CHINA'S WU CHUNYAN RECORDED A BIG-time feat.

A two-time Paralympic gold medalist, Chunyan captured the women's recurve open final at the Sept. 22-28 biannual Para archery World Championships in Gwangju, Korea, becoming the first athlete to win four world para titles with the same bow. She defeated teammate Gao Zihan, 6-0, in the championship to earn her fourth straight world women's recurve open.

Additionally, India's Sheetal Devi knocked off the reigning world and Paralympic champion for an upset to capture her second major individual para archery title.

Devi defeated Turkey's Oznur Cure Girdi to win the compound archery title. After being tied following the first end, she took control in the second and held on for the win. Her other major title came at the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games, and she also earned silver at the

Pilsen 2023 Worlds and a mixed team bronze at the 2024 Paris Summer Paralympics.

And Korea's Kim Ok Geum, at 65 years old, won her first world title in the women's doubles team event with teammate Lee Eunhee. Geum started para archery in her 50s and has also earned a Paralympic silver team medal.

Other highlights included China's Tianxin Zhang, a two-time Paralympic champion, recording three podium appearances.

For full results, visit worldarchery.sport/competition/28320/gwangju-2025-world-archery-para-championships.

ATHLETICS

Debrunner Wins Five Golds

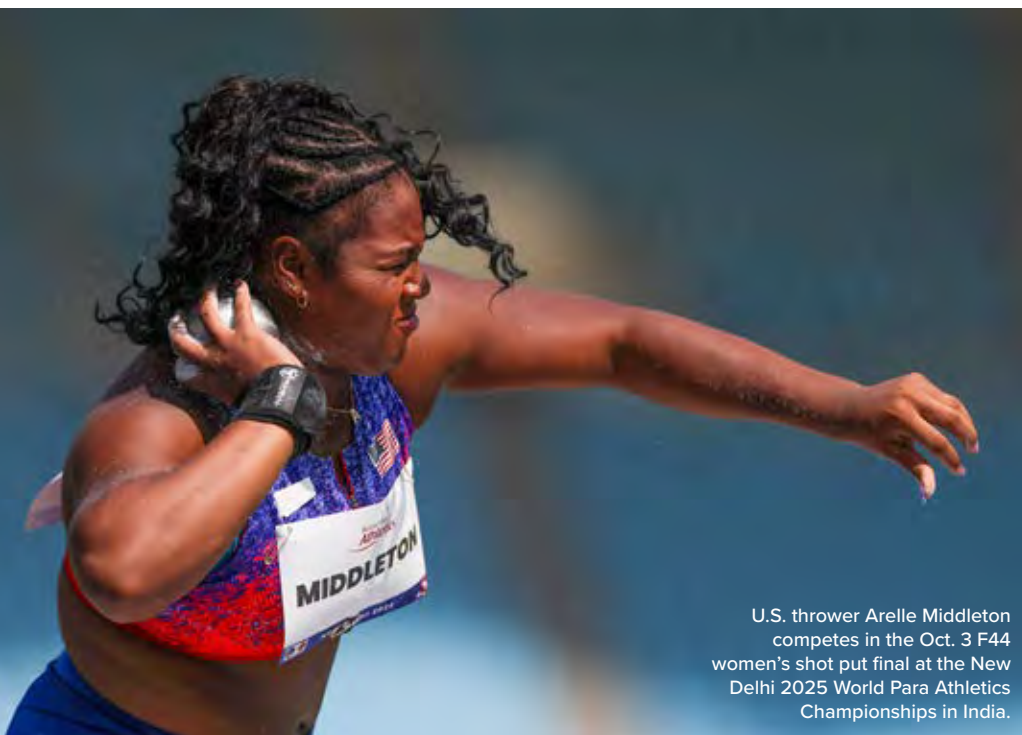
SWITZERLAND'S CATHERINE DEBRUNNER raced to five gold medals, sweeping all five of her events and continuing her world championship success.

Debrunner took the women's T53 400, 800 and 100 meters and the women's T54 5,000 and 1,500 events, winning the 100 and 400

Switzerland's Catherine Debrunner competes in the women's T54 1,500 meters Oct. 1 at the New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships in India.

© Getty Images/Dean Mouhtaropoulos





U.S. thrower Arelle Middleton competes in the Oct. 3 F44 women's shot put final at the New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships in India.

© Getty Images/Dean Mouhtaropoulos

in world championship-record times at the 2025 World Para Athletics Championships held Sept. 27-Oct. 5 in New Delhi.

Debrunner won the women's T53 400 in a championship-record 50.58 seconds, more than 3 seconds ahead of Turkey's Hamide Dogangun, a day after winning the 100 in a championship-record 15.50 seconds over Dogangun by .46 seconds. This all comes after winning six medals, including five gold, at the 2024 Paris Summer Paralympics.

Great Britain's Hannah Cockroft won three gold medals. She took the women's T34 800 in record fashion, setting a new world championship record (1:49.88) and taking the title by more than 14 seconds. Cockroft also won the women's T34 100 and 400 events.

But the younger generation, including the U.S.' Arelle Middleton and Hannah Dederick, had some success in India, too. A California high school senior, Middleton is launching herself into new territory. Her 12.95-meter throw on her fourth attempt in the women's F44 shot put lifted her to the top of the leaderboard, and she stayed there.

Middleton, who has a lower leg impairment, won her first world championship gold medal after recording silver medals at the 2024 Summer Paralympics and 2024 Para Athletics World Championships in Japan.

Meanwhile, Dederick squeaked out a bronze medal, taking it in a near photo finish in the women's T54 400. She finished in 53.29 seconds for third by two-tenths of a second. It marked her first medal in a women's senior championship.

Thailand's Pongsakorn Paeyo highlighted the men's wheelchair racing side, as he took the men's T53 100, 400 and 800 events, while Switzerland's Marcel Hug won the men's T54 5,000.

For more information, visit paralympic.org/news/new-delhi-2025-world-championships-here-are-all-medallists.

CURLING

U.S. Mixed Doubles Paralympic Team

Team Laura Dwyer and Steve Emt are headed to the Paralympics in wheelchair mixed doubles curling for the United States.

Dwyer and Emt captured the Nov. 12 U.S. Paralympic Team Trial wheelchair mixed doubles curling title, taking the Nov. 15 championship over Penny Ricker and David Samsa in two games in a best-of-three final in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Dwyer and Emt won the first game (9-1) and then built a 7-1 lead in the second end before Ricker and Samsa rallied to



© Getty Images/Jamesmc24

tie the game at 7-7 and force an extra end. But Dwyer and Emt scored two points in the extra end to win 9-7 to advance to March's Milano Cortina Winter Paralympic Games.

"I'm excited to show others what it's like to work hard towards a goal and achieve something," says Dwyer in a Nov. 15 press release.

Emt echoed his teammate.

"I just found out we're the first two athletes to be named to the team for the Paralympics, and that is an incredible honor. Knowing many other Paralympians makes that an incredible honor, and we're going to do some good stuff in Italy," he says in the press release.

PARA ICE HOCKEY

Japan, Slovakia Into Paralympics

JAPAN AND SLOVAKIA HAVE SECURED THE final two para ice hockey team spots for the March 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Paralympic Games after finishing as the top two teams at the Nov. 5-10 World Para Ice Hockey Paralympic Winter Games Qualification Tournament in Jessheim, Norway.

Both Japan and Slovakia each won four of their five qualification tournament games at the Is-og Flerbrukshall in Jessheim and will join teams from the United States, Canada, Czechia, China, Germany and Italy, which had previously qualified for the Paralympic Games.

After falling 2-1 to Korea in its opening game, Japan won its final four, defeating

Slovakia (3-2), Kazakhstan (4-0), Sweden (3-0) and Norway (8-2).

Slovakia defeated Kazakhstan (6-0), Sweden (2-1), Norway (3-1) and Korea (2-1) and lost to Japan.

Slovakia's Martin Joppa was named Most Valuable Player and led all scorers with 14 points, including seven goals and seven assists. Japan's Itsuki Ito was named Best Forward, while Norway's Audun Bakke was selected as Best Defenseman and Japan's Wataru Horie (86 saves, 93.48 save percentage) earned Best Goalkeeper honors.

© Getty Images/Marc Brukelle



PARA POWERLIFTING

Big Highlight For U.S.' Body

BOBBY BODY NOT ONLY LIFTED HIMSELF TO his first world championships medal, but the U.S. para powerlifter also broke a Parapan American Games record with one of his lifts at the Cairo 2025 World Para Powerlifting Championships in October in Egypt.

Body recorded a personal-best 237-kilogram lift, which set the new Parapan American Games record. China finished with 13 total medals to finish atop the medals podium. China also won the men's team event and the mixed team event finals, while Brazil won the women's team event final.

PICKLEBALL

Three National Titles For Anthony

AFTER ANTHONY RYAN RECORDED ALL three division titles at last year's inaugural USA Pickleball wheelchair division national championships, Ryan Anthony did it this time around.

Anthony (Bogota, Colombia) won three wheelchair divisions, taking the wheelchair singles over 4.0 division, along with the wheelchair doubles and hybrid doubles titles, at Barnes Tennis Center in San Diego.

Anthony took the Nov. 21 wheelchair co-ed singles over 4.0 title, defeating Michael Smith Sr. (Phoenix), 11-2, 11-4, in the final.

Then, Anthony teamed with Zack Wentz (Marina Del Ray, Calif.) to defeat Jason Keatseangsilp (Tucson, Ariz.) and Michael Tingstrom (Colorado Springs, Colo.), 15-9, in the Nov. 22 co-ed wheelchair doubles final. Finally, Anthony and Nicklaus Vu (Villa Park, Calif.) defeated Keatseangsilp and Tingstrom, 11-2, 11-4, in the Nov. 23 wheelchair hybrid doubles final.

Additionally, in the wheelchair co-ed singles under 4.0 division, Edgar Vidriales (San Diego) defeated Kim Sangmok (Anseong-si, Korea), 12-10, 11-7, for the Nov. 21 title.



Christopher Di Virgilio

Ryan Anthony, shown in this 2024 file photo, won three USA Pickleball national titles at this year's USA Pickleball national championships at Barnes Tennis Center in San Diego.

© GETTY IMAGES/ISHIKA SAMANT

RACING

Hug Continues Record NYC Streak

SWITZERLAND'S MARCEL HUG CONTINUES to dominate the men's wheelchair division of the TCS New York City Marathon. He extended his record-breaking streak, winning his seventh consecutive men's wheelchair division title by finishing in 1 hour, 30 minutes and 16 seconds to beat Great Britain's David Weir (1:34:09) and Japan's Tomoki Suzuki (1:36:28) on Nov. 2 in New York City.

Meanwhile, on the women's side, the United States' Susannah Scaroni captured her third straight women's wheelchair division title. She finished in 1:42:10, ahead of the U.S.' Tatyana McFadden (1:47:54) and Switzerland's Catherine Debrunner (1:47:56).

The United States' Susannah Scaroni, left, and Switzerland's Marcel Hug won the men's and women's wheelchair divisions, respectively, of the TCS New York City Marathon Nov. 2 in New York City.



Hug, Scaroni Cruise In Chicago

Switzerland's Marcel Hug shows off his 2025 Bank of America Chicago Marathon trophy after winning his seventh straight men's wheelchair division title, this time in 1 hour, 23 minutes and 20 seconds on Oct. 12.



© Getty Images/Geoff Stelfox

SWITZERLAND'S MARCEL HUG SET A RECORD in the men's wheelchair division, while the United States' Susannah Scaroni recorded her second women's wheelchair division title at the Oct. 12 Chicago Marathon.

Hug finished in 1 hour, 23 minutes and 20 seconds — the second-fastest wheelchair division time in history — and became the first male to win the Chicago Marathon wheelchair division six times. Hug finished well ahead of Great Britain's David Weir (1:27:26) and Japan's Tomoki Suzuki (1:27:29).

Despite some windy conditions, Scaroni took the women's wheelchair division in a personal-best race time of 1:38:14.

Scaroni finished more than a minute ahead of runner-up Manuela Schär from Switzerland (1:39:03) and the U.S.' Tatyana McFadden (1:39:04).

SURFING

U.S.' Bettencourt Claims Fifth Title

THE UNITED STATES' SARAH BETTENCOURT has surfed her way to a bit of history. She claimed her fifth world title in the women's prone 1 division at the Nov. 2-7 International Surfing Association World Para Surfing Championships in Oceanside, Calif.

Bettencourt recorded a 16.43-point two-wave total, hitting 8.00 and 8.43 scores on her final two waves, to lift her to the victory over Spain's Paloma Onate and Australia's Grace Kennedy.

She wasn't the only one to add to a title total. Canada's Victoria Feige recorded her sixth women's kneel division title, defeating Brazil's Vera Quaresma and Australia's Emma Dieters. She's now tied Bruno Hansen (Denmark) for the most surfing division titles.

Meanwhile, the United States' Meira Nelson won the women's sit division, knocking off

Jersson Barboza



The United States' Sarah Bettencourt won her fifth women's prone 1 division title at the Nov. 2-7 International Surfing Association World Para Surfing Championships in Oceanside, Calif.

The U.S.' Susannah Scaroni celebrates her 2025 Bank of America Chicago Marathon women's wheelchair win Oct. 12 in Chicago. It was her third straight title.



© Getty Images/Geoff Stelfox

three-time world champion Alana Nichols (United States) and teammate Alina Garbuzov.

Additionally, France's Guillaume Colin won the men's sit division, finishing ahead of the United States' Jeff Munson and Chris Oberle. Wales' Llywelyn Williams took the men's kneeling division, beating out Brazil's Dijackson Santos and Mexico's Juan Martin Diaz Martinez.

Brazil's Davi Teixeira won the men's prone 2 division over the United States' Jose Martinez and Costa Rica's Mathius Vanderhoogh.

France won the overall team title, and third straight, while the U.S. finished second and Brazil placed third.

TENNIS

New Masters Doubles Winners

CHINA'S ZHENZHEN ZHU AND JAPAN'S YUI Kamiji became one of three new doubles teams to record titles at the Nov. 10-17 NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters in Huzhou, China.

Zhu and Kamiji took the women's wheelchair doubles title, recording a 1-6, 6-0, 10-8 victory


over China's Wang Ziying and Li Xiaohui. It marked their sixth doubles title together.

After losing 6-2, 2-6, 10-8, in their round-robin group match earlier in the week, Zhu and Kamiji rallied for the title-match victory.

World No. 1 Tokito Oda from Japan rolled to a 6-1, 6-1 title in the men's wheelchair singles final, recording his sixth men's singles title.

Spain's Martin de la Puente and the Netherlands' Ruben Spaargaren knocked off Alfie Hewett's bid for a men's wheelchair doubles title with partner Gordon Reid, as the duo defeated the Great Britain pair, 6-4, 1-6, 14-12. It marked de la Puente's third men's wheelchair doubles title in four years.

And in quad doubles, Guy Sasson became Israel's second player ever to earn a singles or doubles masters title, after he and partner Niels Vink (Netherlands) defeated Australia's Heath Davidson and Great Britain's Andy Lapthorne, 6-2, 6-0. It marked the pair's first title as doubles teammates.

The Netherlands' Sam Schröder took the men's quad wheelchair singles title, defeating Sasson, 6-4, 6-3, while Kamiji won the women's wheelchair singles title, defeating Xiaohui, 6-2, 6-2, in their title tilt. 



Courtesy of United States Wheelchair Rugby Association

WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

U.S. Low-Pointers Place Seventh

The U.S. Rampage placed seventh, with a 3-3 record, in the October 2025 Wheelchair Rugby Low Point Challenge in Nottwil, Switzerland.

Breaking Out Of Her Shell

BY RACHEL SOKOL

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA FRESHMAN
Sabina Czauz has become an international wheelchair tennis breakout star.

The 19-year-old aerospace engineering major recently made American history by netting herself two Grand Slam US Open Junior Girls titles and has developed into a force to be reckoned with on the court.

Czauz, whose first language is Polish, grew up in Thornton, Colo. She was born three months early with neuropathy, although doctors have never been able to pinpoint an exact diagnosis. Meanwhile, her twin sister wasn't born with the same medical condition.

"One doctor told me I'm like a puzzle with missing pieces," she says.

In early childhood, Czauz walked short distances and used braces that eventually restricted her movement more than they helped. A cousin encouraged her to try different sports for fun, even if she wasn't great at them — it was all about just trying and getting out of the house.

As she got older and more interested in sports, Czauz began relying more on her wheelchair, especially once she discovered wheelchair tennis.

The first time Czauz picked up a racket, she was 13.

"I kind of just hit the ball and instantly fell in love," she says.

NOT JUST A HOBBY

Czauz assumed tennis would just be a hobby. However, soon after, she was unexpectedly invited to compete in the US Open Junior Girls wheelchair division and didn't even realize how big the tournament was until relatives in New York shared how awed they were.

"When I got to the US Open in Queens, [New York], I was like ... 'Oh my God, this is actually such a big deal!'" she says.

Her early US Open runs were tough. She lost both matches her first year, then struggled again the second. But each fall in Flushing Meadows, she realized something crucial — she was improving. A lot.

As they say, practice makes perfect, and this past year she broke out. Czauz reached January's Australian Open and May-June's French Open Junior Girls wheelchair division singles and doubles finals.

In Australia, Czauz fell 0-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4) to Brazil's Vitoria Miranda in girls wheelchair singles and she and partner Alina Mosko (Latvia) lost 6-1, 6-1 to Belgium's Luna Gryp and Miranda in girls wheelchair doubles. At Roland-Garros in Paris, she lost 6-3, 6-2 to Miranda in girls wheelchair singles, and she and Sweden's Emma Gjersth lost 6-3, 6-2 to Gryp and Miranda in girls wheelchair doubles. Later in May, though, Czauz earned a silver medal for Team USA at the BNP Paribas World Team Cup in Antalya, Turkey.

Sabina Czauz is ranked No. 3 in the Girls Juniors wheelchair tennis division.



Aidan Gravelle

That propelled her takeover.

In September, she returned to the US Open again to make history, becoming the first American to win both the Junior Girls' singles and doubles titles since the event's introduction three years ago.

She defeated the No. 2-seeded Gryp, 7-5, 6-2, for the singles championship and teamed up with Japan's Seira Matsuoka to dominate the doubles field, as they defeated the U.S.' Lucy Heald and Germany's Ela Porges, 6-0, 6-1, in the final.

Impressively, Czauz did it all while juggling schoolwork and a chemistry test. Her victory took some time to sink in.

"For the first hour, I didn't even realize what I'd done," she says. "Then, suddenly it hit me: 'I just won a Grand Slam.'"

University of Arizona wheelchair tennis coach Bryan Barten is impressed by Czauz's tennis evolution.

"She's focused, driven and open to learning," he says. "Sabina leads by actions, not words, and she's a pleasure to coach."

Currently, Czauz is No. 188 in the women's international rankings and No. 3 in Girls Juniors, though she was ranked as high as No. 56 in the women's division before temporarily dropping due to not playing many tournaments.

In her most recent International Tennis Federation (ITF) event in mid-October in Indian Wells, Calif., she finished runner-up after defeating Canada's Anne-Marie Dolinar, 6-0, 6-1, before falling, 6-1, 6-0, to Great Britain's Lucy Shuker.

TEAM SUPPORT

Before arriving in Arizona, Czauz attended school online; transitioning to a bustling campus took adjustment. Still, she loves it.

"I'm not super social," she says. "But I like being around people."

She also instantly connected with the university's adaptive athletics community. The wheelchair tennis team is small with just four undergraduates, but Czauz believes that's what makes it extra special.

"We train as a team, travel as a team, even eat as a team," she says. "It's really supportive."

Barten agrees.

"Tennis is an individual sport, but having a team behind you is vital," he says. "A system like

this lets athletes focus on their goals, knowing their off-court needs will be met."

Additionally, Czauz enjoys helping her teammates. Barten has seen her changing tires, repairing chairs and mentoring some younger players.

"She has a quiet way about her," he says. "But her actions speak volumes."

Czauz's advice for players curious about pursuing wheelchair tennis at the University of Arizona stems from her parents' longtime support. They always encouraged their daughter to try anything — but just be careful.

"Just come try it," Czauz says. "Don't decide based on one day. Give it a month, keep coming back and see how it feels."


When she's not training or studying, Czauz unwinds with books. She loves fantasy, fiction, mystery, anything that lets her decompress.

Looking ahead, Czauz hopes to climb the women's rankings and continue proving, and happily surprising, herself.

With the competitive season on pause until March, Czauz and her teammates are currently training.

"My ultimate goal is the Paralympics," she says with her fingers crossed.

She's left Barten impressed so far.

"In just a few years, I watched her go from barely getting the ball over the net to becoming a US Open Junior Champion. The sky's the limit for Sabina," he says. 

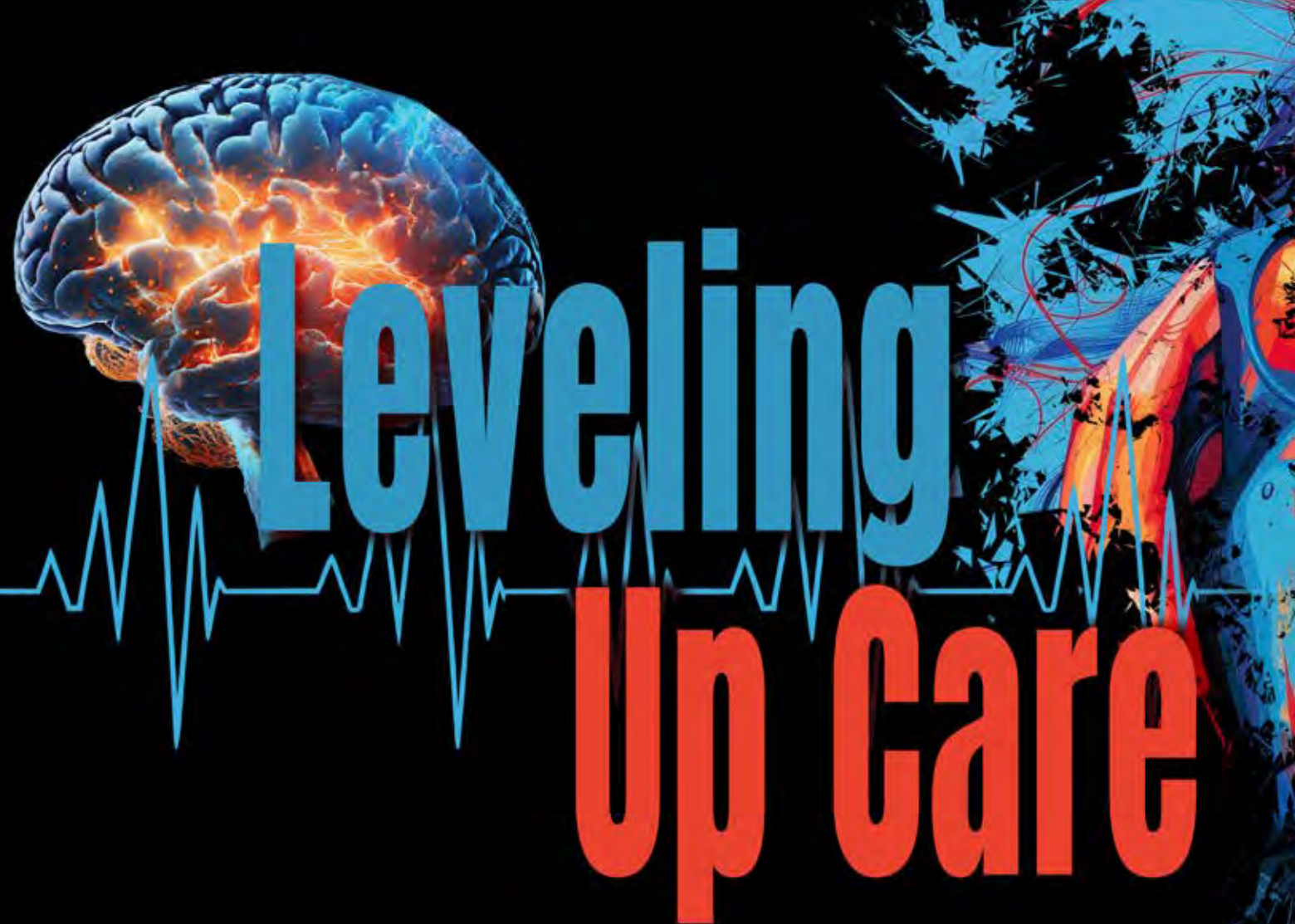
“
For the first hour, I didn't
even realize what I'd done.
Then, suddenly it hit me: 'I
just won a Grand Slam.'”

”
[Sabina Czauz]



In September, the University of Arizona's Sabina Czauz became the first American player to win both Junior Girls wheelchair singles and doubles divisions at the US Open since the event's introduction three years ago.

Aidan Gravelle



Leveling Up Care

Doctors and researchers plan to have new early concussion detection tools online this year.

BY JENNIFER BEST

THE STUDY OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES, MORE specifically concussions, among athletes has topped the headlines on sports pages across the country in recent years.

NFL players have the option of donning bubble-wrapped helmets to decrease their risk for head injury. The National Hockey League has adopted new safety standards. There are wearable impact sensors, smart helmets, artificial intelligence-driven apps and early detection tools all addressing mainstream athletes' needs.

Now, attention is turning to the specific issues faced by athletes with disabilities, their specific needs and the complexities of assessing, preventing and treating traumatic brain injuries. These tools, coming online a few months after this year's Winter Paralympic Games and later this summer, could also impact nonathletes with disabilities that increase their fall risk.

"The tricky thing with concussion is that there is no diagnostic marker for it. It's ultimately a subjective diagnosis. Every athlete, impairment or no, is going to respond differently. Then layer on injury to an adaptive or para athlete with underlying medical symptoms, and it becomes more difficult to interpret any test results," says U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) Manager of Sports Medicine Research Eric Post, PhD.

Looking At Para Athlete Concussions

Since 2002, Concussion in Sport Group, an international organization of multidisciplinary, multisport professionals, has worked to analyze, aggregate and interpret scientific studies on the evaluation, management and prevention of sports-related concussions.

The conference process also yields assessment tools including, most recently the Concussion Recognition Tool 6 (CRT6), the Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 6 (SCAT6, Child SCAT6) and the Sport Concussion



For wheelchair athletes, there is no distinct marker for a concussion. Each athlete, depending on his or her impairment, will respond differently depending on his or her underlying medical symptoms.

Office Assessment Tool 6 (SCOAT6, Child SCOAT6). At the 2022 conference, the group adopted an additional focus: “the para athlete, the athlete’s perspective, concussion-specific medical ethics and matters related to both athlete retirement and the potential long-term effects of sport-related concussion, including neurodegenerative disease.”

“The group gets together about every four years to assess new studies, new information and update the tools. That’s great, but there’s a whole population of adaptive and para sport athletes that certain components of this test don’t work on,” Post says. “We’re trying to make sure that para athletes, adaptive sports athletes, receive the same level of health care as any athlete has a right to.”

For instance, existing tools require an athlete to stand on one leg, or balance on one leg, or assess a tandem gate or visually follow an evaluator’s finger in space.

“Picture a roadside DUI test. For an amputee, an individual in a wheelchair, an individual

with visual impairment, many parts of the existing assessment can’t be applied,” Post says.

First-Of-Its Kind Tool

With early financial support from Alabama’s Lakeshore Foundation Sport Science and Performance Center and the American Medical Society for Sport Medicine, the USOPC and a multinational group of experts are developing a first-of-its-kind concussion assessment tool specifically designed for athletes with disabilities. Led by Post and U.S. Soccer Manager of Research and Innovation Travis Anderson, PhD, the team has developed Para SCAT6-Wheelchair (Para SCAT6-WC), with work beginning in late 2025 on a test accommodating visual impairments.

For instance, rather than the tandem-gate tests, the project came up with wheeling tasks athletes perform in their everyday chair. Walking a line on the ground has been replaced by wheeling the line. Wheelchair users may be asked to turn around obstacles. Then, dual



For wheelchair rugby players, collisions against other players can happen, possibly resulting in a concussion.

tasks are added, such as reciting a numerical sequence backward. Seated balance tests replace the standing balance tests. Ocular tests have been adapted to accommodate subjects with limited side-to-side head movement.

“All athletes are different, and none more so than athletes with widely differing impairments,” Post says.

The new tools not only include assessment updates, but also education for providers to help them consider underlying medical conditions to use the best assessment for the individual athlete facing them.

Sled hockey players have risks of getting concussions from hitting their heads against the boards, shown at right, another player's helmet, stick or the ice.



© Getty Images/Steph Chambers

“The really cool thing about this project: Within the sports medicine and medical community, SCAT is known as the gold standard. Concussion in Sport Group has agreed we’re allowed to use the SCAT trademark for branding and imaging, and our assessments will be made freely available, open and accessible through the same sources online that the SCAT is made available, so medical providers not just in the U.S., but worldwide will have access to this, too, in a free, open way,” Post says.

Pressure-Mapping Research

Another Lakeshore Foundation grant is supporting the work of University of Alabama Professor Ryan Moran, PhD. His research in the Department of Health Science and the Athletic Training Research Laboratory explores innovative methods for detecting sport-related concussions in wheelchair athletes with a focus on wheelchair basketball, tennis and track and field competitions.

Throughout 2025, Moran focused on assessing postural control using high-precision pressure-mapping systems as a potential tool for detecting concussions in adaptive athletes. His work has the potential to influence how sport-related concussions are detected, managed and ultimately prevented in wheelchair sports, filling a critical gap in sports medicine and athlete safety.



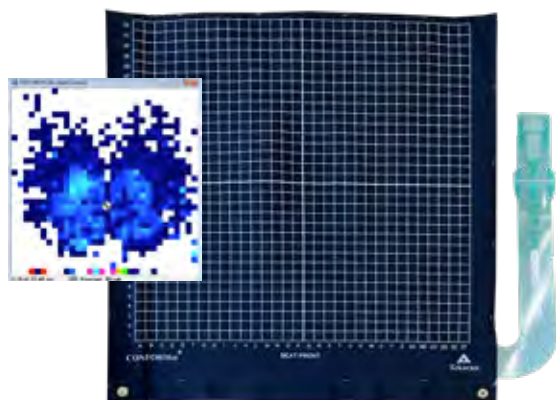
Courtesy of Lakeshore Foundation

Ryan Moran, PhD

“We know that concussion signs and symptoms can look different in wheelchair athletes, and the current tools aren’t designed or validated with that in mind,” Moran says. “This project is about ensuring our athletes receive the same level of care and inclusion in basic science research as their intercollegiate athletics peers.”

Possible Health Care Gaps

And at University of North Carolina-Charlotte’s College of Health and Human Services, J.P. Barfield, professor and chair of the Department of Applied Physiology, Health and Clinical Sciences, has been focusing on discovering whether gaps in health care follow concussion



Ryan Moran is working on pressure-mapping research for detecting sport-related concussions in wheelchair athletes involving the CONFORMat, shown at top fit onto a wheelchair, and above, flat. At left, is a screenshot example of what is recorded on the software displaying a wheelchair user's center of pressure.

for para sports athletes and nonathletes with certain disabilities.

“Wheelchair users are a fall risk, so it doesn’t have to be sport that causes the injury. Concussion, or mild brain injury, can just be from falling. And when you look at wheelchair sports, even the contact piece between athletes, whether or not their skulls make impact, can result in concussion,” Barfield says.

For instance, when two wheelchair basketball players hard-charging down the court crash into one another, the sudden stop may cause their heads to jolt forward then back again, causing the brain to hit the skull — the very definition of a concussion.

“So, when you watch wheelchair rugby or basketball or other sports where you see people pitching with their chair when they hit an immovable object, and you see their head do that coup-contrecoup movement just like a car accident, you’re seeing a possible concussion,” Barfield says. “We want to look at how much injury occurs during those contact sports over the long term.”

Still, the challenge with all the studies and tools remains the lack of baseline assessment, regardless of impairment or lack thereof.

Barfield says standard, sport-specific baselines exist, but they’re imperfect. Just as each sport differs, so do the natural movements and baseline

“
This is a high-need area to
better protect athletes during
competition, training and practice.
It’s clear para sport doesn’t have it
as buttoned up as it needs to be.
”

[J.P. Barfield]

Wheelchair basketball players are at risk for concussions from hitting their heads on the court, below, or colliding with another player.



Azmanl



Wheelchair athletes must determine their baseline for concussions, which means they must do a variety of tests and tasks.

skills of their athletes. Studies have also shown those able-bodied sport baselines don't relate to the adaptive community.

"Baseline concussion scores are typically slower in wheelchair athletes. We initially thought they were more age-related with older athletes being less responsive. But while our youngest athletes had the fastest times, their norms compared to able-bodied test responses were still worse," Barfield says. "So, impairment is impacting the response somehow, and it wouldn't surprise me if it started at the onset of their injuries. It may have as much to do with what happened before sports. So, we're looking at establishing norms, so teams can look at what's typical and atypical."

Ideally, teams would administer tests to each athlete at the beginning of each sport season to establish a personalized baseline.

The costly affair would provide the most accurate tool when compared with post-injury assessment.

"There's a need for better monitoring of head injury in adaptive sport and para sport," Barfield says. "I'd love to hear about people with head trauma and concussion."

To contribute information for use in his studies, contact Barfield at abarfie5@charlotte.edu. Videos of impacts during play are of particular interest, as are test results, ensuing medical care and outcomes.

"This is a high-need area to better protect athletes during competition, training and practice. It's clear para sport doesn't have it as buttoned up as it needs to be," Barfield says. 

Besides looking at brain scans, it's important for doctors to know wheelchair athletes' injury levels and underlying medical conditions.



The Editorials from **Sports N Spokes**

1975 to 2007 | Cliff Crase

Edited by Nancy Crase

Take a peek into the history of wheelchair sports written as the events unfolded in a new book, *The Editorials from Sports N Spokes 1975 to 2007*.

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Jean Driscoll, Olympic and Paralympic medalist, University of Illinois alumna

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ROCKING OUT



Wheelchair curlers say accuracy, strength and spin are important while hurling rocks down the ice.

BY JOHN GROTH

LAUNCHING HUGE 42-POUND GRANITE stones down an ice rink in wheelchairs — now that sounded like fun to Tim Surry.

So, six years ago, when volunteer Tracy Heuermann suggested it as a team-building activity for Ability360 Sports & Fitness Center staff in Phoenix, Surry was in. Wheelchair curling in the desert? Now that's wild and different.

After warming his tires up and wheeling onto the ice, Surry pushed his first stone with a delivery stick toward the large bull's-eye-like target. He was enamored. Just like shuffleboard, but with way more angles.

"But I just like that. I like that challenge of it. Because it's definitely a challenge. You know, how hard you throw it, where to throw it, and the ice is always going to be different," says the 56-year-old Surry, who sustained a

level T10 spinal cord injury (SCI) in a car accident in Wichita, Kan., when he was 18 years old. "... Just the skill and the technique that you have to have to throw the rock to get it to curl. It was the challenge of knowing, 'hey, if I throw this hard, this fast at this right, this left, and it's gonna curl in there.'"



Sarah Parker, in gray coat, wears plenty of layers while she participates in wheelchair curling at Coyotes Curling Club in Tempe, Ariz.

Christopher Di Virgilio



Illustration by Kerry Randolph
© Getty Images/ _Zhe Ji/
Graphics by Freepik



curling league at the Coyotes Curling Club in Tempe, Ariz. And there are many clubs — from coast to coast — throughout the United States.

Curling's challenge comes from getting those 42-pound granite stones closest to the center of the four-ringed target, or house, and inside the smallest ring, called the button.

While the other rings (12-foot, 8-foot and 4-foot) offer some leeway, the button is just 1 foot in diameter.

Wheelchair curling started in the late 1990s in Europe, and its first major team introduction came at the 2000 World Handi Ski Championship in Crans-Montana, Switzerland. Later, the sport was added into the 2006 Winter Paralympic Games in Turin, Italy, with the mixed team competition event, and it's run in each of the last five Paralympics. This

MAKING THE DELIVERY

Now, the Ability360 customer service specialist is the one running clinics and getting other wheelchair users involved in the unique sport. He's even started up a team to play against able-bodied individuals in a weekend



Zack Wharton, green shirt, gets some advice on turning his delivery stick from former U.S. Paralympic wheelchair curler Patrick McDonald in October at the Coyotes Curling Club in Tempe, Ariz.

March in Italy, mixed doubles (one male and one female) will be featured in the Paralympics for the first time.

Able-bodied and wheelchair curling are played on the same ice surface, have those same heavy stones called “rocks” (which cost \$1,000 to \$2,000 apiece) and also feature the same scoring system and 10-end play. In traditional curling, teams have four players—including the skip (captain), vice skip and two sweepers—while in the new mixed doubles curling, teams feature just two players (one male and one female).

During each half end, both teams curl each of their eight rocks, and each player from each team delivers two stones back-to-back. Whichever team finishes with the rock closest to the target’s button wins that end. The winning team is awarded a point for each of its rocks that lies closest to the button. Only stones that are within the house, touching at least one ring, can earn points.

But able-bodied and wheelchair curling have two major differences.

First, in wheelchair curling, players can use a delivery stick, a plastic stick or pole with

brackets that hook onto a curling stone’s handle, instead of just their hands to help push stones down the ice. A teammate can also hold onto a curler’s wheelchair while he or she pushes the stone down the ice, versus in able-bodied curling where curlers slide as they throw.

Second, there are no other teammates clearing the ice with a broom, known as “sweeping,” to help guide a path as the stone is thrown. For wheelchair curlers, it’s an all-or-nothing shot.

Gabe Gerbic understands that all too well. The 55-year-old Mesa, Ariz., resident had finished up just his second curling session at the Coyotes Curling Club and still couldn’t find the right touch with the delivery stick. Although he sustained a level L1-T12 SCI in a 1988 motor vehicle accident in upstate New York, he still packs power in his 6-foot, 7-inch frame.

“I’m very strong. And of course, it’s not just about strength. It’s about, you know, attenuating the strength and also trying to put the spin on the rock. So, getting all of those things in sequence is very difficult. It’s not as easy as it looks. So, you know, you



need a lot of rote learning, where you do it over and over again,” Gerbic says. “Hopefully, by the time I do this for a few more weeks, I’ll get to the point where I’m good enough to, you know, land it, and then it’ll be about being accurate after that. ‘Cause first and foremost is just getting it to the circle, and then it’s placing it where you need it to go.”

That placement is essential. On some shots, the stone needs a clockwise rotation to make it turn right. On others, it must have a counter-clockwise rotation, so the shot goes left.

After missing one of his first shots way off to the right at a wheelchair curling practice, 30-year-old Zack Wharton learned he needed to find an object to aim at instead of the target. Wharton, a Mesa, Ariz., resident who was born with spina bifida, picked a

trash can off to the left side and aimed for the left corner of it.

“Just angle and visually see it,” Wharton says.

Thanks to that visual cue, his next shot attempt curled to the left and landed inside the target among other stones.

Heather Hoffmeister, who was born with spina bifida, says it’s a lot of trial and error.

“If you push it too hard, it’ll go too far. But if you don’t push it enough, it’s not gonna go as far as you want it to go,” says Hoffmeister.

The Phoenix resident decided to try curling about a half-decade ago because it looked interesting. If the 36-year-old didn’t like it, she wouldn’t have to do it again. Turns out, she enjoyed the camaraderie and making friends, and it got her out of the house.

“I mean, I figured, why not? I’m sort of an adventurous person. Why not try it?” Hoffmeister says.

Ability360 Customer Service Specialist Tim Surry, in vest, slides a rock down the ice with a delivery stick. Surry started an adaptive curling club in Phoenix.





Above, Heather Hoffmeister, in purple coat, gets some help from a Coyotes Curling Club volunteer as she prepares to curl her rock down the ice. Wheelchair curlers are allowed to have someone hold the back of their wheelchair while curling. At right, Diego Suazo uses a delivery stick to push a curling stone.

SURFACE & ANGLES

Besides figuring out throwing mechanisms, wheelchair users should plan on adjusting to a few other nuances, including a wheelchair warmup — or actually, a cool down.

With ice rink temperatures hovering at or near freezing, it's important for wheelchair users to cool down their tires before starting to curl. But the length of the warmup depends on

for it to cool down,” Surry says. “Because I have seen people that have been on the ice that didn't cool their tires down long enough, it'll definitely melt into it a little bit for sure.”

Clothing is also important. Since some wheelchair users, especially those with SCIs, struggle with body temperature control, layers are key. That could mean a moisture-wicking T-shirt with a sweatshirt over it, sweatpants,

“Cause first and foremost is just getting it to the circle, and then it's placing it where you need it to go.

[Gabe Gerbic]

what type of tires you have. If you have solid rubber tires, Surry recommends wheeling around the rink for 10 to 15 minutes to let the tires cool down, while if you have pneumatic tires, he says, you'll only need five minutes or so.

“So, like, a solid tire is like a hard, solid tire, hard solid plastic. And then pneumatic has the air in there. And just because these [solid] tires are just so solid, it just takes a little bit longer

possibly a winter coat, a winter hat and gloves. Gloves shouldn't be too thin or too thick and should still enable you to grip, while providing enough warmth and protection.

Sarah Parker, who was born with spina bifida, made sure she was bundled up. The 37-year-old wore plenty of layers, including a shirt, heavy winter coat, sweatpants, a knitted winter hat, boots and winter gloves. For years,

Rock Yourself Out

Interested in wheelchair curling and don't know where to look? Here are some websites to check out to help you find a curling club or group near you.

- **USA Curling** (usacurling.org/find-a-club) — This site has a map with rocks showing each of the curling clubs throughout the United States. There are 33 states with curling clubs: Arizona, Nevada, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Alaska, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, California, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Montana, Utah, Colorado, Tennessee, Kentucky, New Jersey, Maine and Vermont.
- **Move United** (moveunitedsport.org/sport/curling) — This site lists history, equipment that's needed and various organizations throughout the United States that are affiliated with curling.




she primarily focused on adaptive archery. That is, until she saw curling — and the U.S. men's curling team — in the Olympics four years ago. Once she found out there was wheelchair curling, she wanted to try it.

Parker likes the strategy behind the sport. Instead of only aiming for the bull's-eye, she's trying to knock stones out of the way and curl her rock into tiny areas, too.

"I just like figuring out the different angles," Parker says. "I'm just mathematical."

Gerbic admits it's tougher than it looks. An upstate New York native and wheelchair sports enthusiast, he grew up seeing curling and just played around with the game as a kid. But now, he's learning it for real. Understanding angles, power and spin are all keys, he just wants to rock at all three.

"For me, I think right now anyway, it's about the amount of force that you put on it," Gerbic says. "The first time I did it, I just kept shooting it too long because I was putting too much force onto it. Now, I'm trying to slow that down a little bit, but then I keep finding that I'm going short or something like that." 



Christopher Di Virgilio

Going Golden



Oksana Masters still remembers having to sleep in her car while training for her first Winter Paralympics in 2014 in Sochi, Russia.

This year marks the Winter Paralympics' 50th anniversary and plenty has changed, including the number of athletes, technology and housing.



Aaron Pike plans to compete in alpine sit-skiing and biathlon for the United States.

BY ALEX ABRAMS/
RED LINE EDITORIAL

OKSANA MASTERS CAPTURED HEADLINES across the United States in 2012 when she teamed with Rob Jones to win a bronze medal in rowing at the Paralympic Games in London. Less than two years later, while training to make her first Paralympic Winter Games as a Nordic skier, Masters found herself under a different type of spotlight.

"I misjudged the rent, so I ended up sleeping out of my car," she says. "I found the brightest streetlamp light in the parking lot, thinking it was going to be safe, and I slept in my car."

The sacrifice proved to be worth it, as Masters went on to win silver and bronze medals in Sochi, Russia. Now, 12 years later, life is different as the Ukraine-born, Louisville, Ky.,-raised star prepares for her eighth Paralympics.

Masters, 36, is a 19-time Paralympic medalist in Nordic skiing, cycling and rowing. Her 14 medals in cross-country skiing and biathlon make her Team

USA's most decorated winter Paralympian. And her success and charisma

have helped her become one of the world's most recognizable para athletes.

As athletes, coaches and officials around the world prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Winter Paralympics in March with the opening of the 2026 Winter Games in Milan and Cortina, Italy, Masters reflected on those dark days sleeping in her car.

Though Masters and her peers stress there's still a long way to go, the Paralympic Movement has surged in recent years. Adaptive athletes occasionally still have to correct casual sports fans and remind them there is a difference between the Winter Olympics and Winter Paralympics. There is no doubt, however, that para sports such as skiing, snowboarding and sled hockey have become more visible over the past 50 years. And with increased funding and sponsorship opportunities, para athletes have more support than ever.

The days of sleeping in her car, in other words, are long gone.

"Now, athletes don't have to know what that is like anymore, and that is incredible to know that," Masters says. "It's just the start."

Rise Of The Winter Paralympics

After World War II, injured soldiers and civilians returned home and were interested in competing in sports again. This led to the first Paralympic Games in 1960 in Rome, which included summer sports such as track and field, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair fencing. The rise of para winter sports soon followed.

In 1974, the inaugural world championships for para alpine and Nordic skiing were held in Le Grand-Bornand, France. The races featured visually impaired skiers and athletes who were missing limbs.

Two years later, 198 athletes from 16 countries competed in the first Winter Paralympics in Örnköldsvik, Sweden. It was a weeklong event held in February 1976, and all 53 events were in either alpine or Nordic skiing. Only 37 of the athletes who raced in Örnköldsvik were women.

The Winter Paralympics have since expanded to become a much more diverse event, with a record 136 women competing at the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing. Nearly three times as many athletes competed in Beijing (558) than in Örnköldsvik, including athletes from Azerbaijan, Israel and Puerto Rico, who were participating in the Winter Paralympics for the first time.

Top: Winning Winter Paralympic athletes will receive this 2026 Milano Cortina gold medal. Left: The U.S.' Kendall Gretsche hopes to defend her skiing gold medals at this year's Paralympics in Italy.



Oyuna Uranchimeg will be one of the U.S.' Winter Paralympic female athletes and will compete in wheelchair curling.

In another sign of how much things have changed, this year's Winter Paralympics in Italy will include 79 events in six sports compared to 53 events in only two sports in Örnköldsvik.

Aaron Pike is a multisport star who competes in cross-country skiing and the biathlon during the winter and track and field in the summer. Like his fiancée, Masters, he's on track to qualify for an eighth consecutive Paralympics next year.

The visibility of para athletes today versus when he made his Paralympic debut in 2012 in London is immense, he says.

"Honestly, the biggest thing I've seen is the coverage and athletes being recognized, and I've been able to see it firsthand with my fiancée, Oksana," Pike says. "[She's] been incredibly successful in every sport that she's been a part of, and I've seen her and her sport being elevated and people knowing about [them]."

And she's not alone. Fellow Team USA Winter Paralympians such as sled hockey player Declan Farmer, alpine skier Andrew Kurka and snowboarder Brenna Huckaby are among those who are expected to garner much attention in Milan and Cortina, where NBCUniversal once again plans to break new records with its TV and streaming coverage.

"When you see an Olympic athlete, you're seeing a Paralympic athlete side-by-side,"

© Getty Images/Emmanuele Ciancaglini

© Getty Images/ Zhe Ji

© Getty Images/Michael Steele

Masters says. “Just seeing the equality more. I think this is just the start.”

Better Technology, Better Results

As with nearly every sport, technology has improved the equipment used by adaptive athletes over the past 50 years, leading to better results, faster times and the ability for more adaptive athletes to get involved in the sport.

Sepp Zwicknagl, an Austrian skier who had both of his legs amputated, is considered an early innovator in para winter sports. He developed a way for athletes to go skiing with prosthetic legs.

The creation of three-track skiing — in which a person who’s missing a leg uses two handheld outriggers to have three points of contact on the snow — allowed more people with physical disabilities to get on the course.

“Equipment has continued to evolve, and that’s been awesome to see because it’s pushed our sport, and it’s made everything better for us,” Pike says. “It’s brought in more athletes, and what you’re seeing on the field has become better and better over time because of the improvements in equipment.”

For example, Pike made adjustments to his sit-ski this past summer, including getting a new seat made for it and tweaking the angle in which he sits while skiing. He then tested out the changes to his sit-ski during a week-long training camp inside an underground ski tunnel in Torsby, Sweden.

Pike hopes the adjustments he made to his sit-ski will improve his times this season. However, as with practically everything when it comes to para sports, athletes are continuing to push for equality, awareness and more support.



U.S. sit-skier Aaron Pike made adjustments to his sit-ski this summer, getting a new seat and tweaking the angle in which he sits while skiing.

© Getty Images/Michael Steele



Sled hockey started at the 1994 Lillehammer Paralympics in Norway. The U.S. team has won the last four Paralympic sled hockey titles.



United States skier William Bowness placed fifth in men's giant slalom at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Paralympics in Norway.



Ice sledge speed racing was a Winter Paralympics event at the 1980, 1984, 1988, 1994 and 1998 Games.

Masters says she would still like to see more opportunities for adaptive athletes in the U.S., specifically when it comes to access to better equipment. She says other countries such as the Netherlands are prioritizing the research and development of equipment to ensure their skiers, from club teams to the highest levels, can compete with top-of-the-line gear.

In the meantime, Masters and Pike, who are teammates on the U.S. Paralympics Nordic Skiing national team, are helping to bring new fans to their sport. In November, they appeared together as guests on NBC's *The Kelly Clarkson Show*.

"All of our national team athletes do an amazing job providing exposure of our sport to many more people," Beth-Ann Chamberlain, a development coach for U.S. Paralympics Nordic Skiing, told USParaNordic.org. "It is exciting to have more people learn about the sport and the opportunities there are to get involved, no matter the age or ability. It is a

Winter Paralympic History

The Winter Paralympic sports program has grown considerably from the first Games 50 years ago.


1976 – First Winter Games (Örnsköldsvik, Sweden)

- ▶ Alpine Skiing
- ▶ Cross-Country Skiing

2026 – Upcoming Winter Games (Milano Cortina, Italy)

- ▶ Para alpine skiing
- ▶ Para Nordic skiing
- ▶ Para biathlon
- ▶ Sled hockey
- ▶ Para snowboarding
- ▶ Wheelchair curling

great community of people and wonderful to see it grow, in part because of the exposure our top athletes provide."

Alex Abrams has written about Olympic and Paralympic sports for more than 15 years, including as a reporter for major newspapers in Florida, Arkansas and Oklahoma. He is a freelance contributor to Sports N Spokes on behalf of Red Line Editorial, Inc. 

Adaptive skiing has been in the Winter Paralympics since the event's inception in 1976 in Sweden.

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iwbf.org

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Menands, NY 12204
fwgoebel@aol.com
awba.org

FENCING

U.S. Fencing Association
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
(719) 866-4511
usfencing.org

FLYING

Freedom's Wings International
60 Old Lakeside Rd South
Hewitt, NJ 07421
Chris Lynch, Pres. (973) 417-7841
William Thar, Sec./Treas.
(973) 507-6072
freedomswings.org

FOOTBALL

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451 Hungerford Drive, Ste. 608
Rockville, MD 20850
moveunitedsport.org

Universal Wheelchair Football Association
U.C. Raymond Walters College
Disability Services Office
9555 Plainfield Road
Cincinnati, OH 45236-1096
(513) 792-8625
john.kraimer@uc.edu

GOLF

U.S. Golf Association
1631 Mesa Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
(719) 471-4810, ext. 15
usga.org

National Amputee Golf Association
11 Walnut Hill Road
Amherst, NH 03031
(800) 633-6242
info@nagagolf.org
nagagolf.org

HOCKEY

U.S. Sled Hockey Association
710 N. Lake Shore Drive, 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 908-4292 / 908-1051 (fax)
info@sledhockey.org
usahockey.com/sledhockey

HORSEBACK RIDING

North American Riding for the Handicapped Association
P.O. Box 33150
Denver, CO 80233
(800) 369-RIDE/
303) 252-4610 (fax)
pathintl.org

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Wheelchair Lacrosse USA
4245 West Overlook Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 807-9327
wheelchairlacrosse.com

MULTISPORT

Casa Colina Adaptive Sports & Outdoor Adventures
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Pomona, CA 91769
(909) 596-7733 / 593-0153 (fax)
casacolina.org

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World T.E.A.M. Sports
4250 Veterans Memorial
Highway, Ste. 420E
Holbrook, NY 11741
(855) 987-8326 / 288-3377 (fax)
worldteamsports.org

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Berkeley, CA 94703
(510) 849-4663 / 849-4616 (fax)
info@borp.org
borp.org

United States Wheelchair Rugby Association
4000 Ridgeway Drive
Homewood, AL 35209
(205) 999-3092
uswra.org

RACQUET SPORTS

International Tennis Federation (Wheelchair Tennis Department)
Bank Lane, Roehampton
London SW15 5XZ, England
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National Wheelchair Shooting Federation
102 Park Avenue
Rockledge, PA 19046
(215) 379-2359 / 663-0102 (fax)

NRA Disabled Shooting Services
11250 Waples Mill Road
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 267-1495 / 267-3941 (fax)

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451 Hungerford Drive, Ste. 608
Rockville, MD 20850
moveunitedsport.org

Ski for Light, Inc.
1455 West Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55408
(612) 827-3232
info@sfl.org
sfl.org

SOFTBALL

National Wheelchair Softball Association
13414 Paul Street
Omaha, NE 68154
913-205-4628
softball@midwestadaptivesports.org
wheelchairsoftball.org

TABLE TENNIS

American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association
23 Parker Street
Port Chester, NY 10573
(914) 937-3932
johnsonjennifer@yahoo.com

TRACK & FIELD

Adaptive Track & Field USA (ATSUSA)
https://www.atfusa.org

WATER SPORTS/RECREATION

American Canoe Association
7432 Alban Station Boulevard
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Springfield, VA 22150
(703) 451-0141 / 451-2245 (fax)
americancanoe.org

Handicapped Scuba Association
1104 El Prado
San Clemente, CA 92672
(949) 498-4540 / 498-6128 (fax)
hsa@hsascuba.com
hsascuba.com

Water Skiers With Disabilities Association
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usawaterski.org

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Sample email



Christopher Di Virgilio

ECONOMICS

Financial Impact Of Adapted Sports

THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF ADAPTIVE SPORTS

This is extending beyond the participants with one study showing a big increase in their economic effect.

The study, *Adapted Sport: Economic Impact Survey Findings Report*, found the total economic impact of adapted and para sport-related events across the United States reached an estimated 163.97 million people in 2024. Released last October by All In Sport Consulting in partnership with Stitch Marketing Research and Huddle Up Group, the study says that's a 14% increase over the previous year's findings.

The findings were announced at the sixth annual Adapted Sport Leadership & Business Symposium, a two-day virtual conference presented by All In Sport Consulting Oct. 29–30. The 2024 findings demonstrate the industry's steady growth since the study began in 2020.

Among the highlights from the 2024 adapted sports study include:

- ▶ The economic impact of events reported by participating organizations alone totaled \$14.67 million, a 17% increase over 2023.
- ▶ The findings were based on data from 230 hosted events and 94,548 event participants, including spectators, athletes, coaches and others.
- ▶ Continued revenue growth is expected by 73% of survey respondents.
- ▶ Survey respondents anticipate an 85% increase in program hours.
- ▶ Zero survey respondents reported any program hour decreases in 2025.
- ▶ Driven by the 2028 Paralympic Summer Games in Los Angeles (LA28), 81% of survey respondents expect some level of increased participation in their programs and events.
- ▶ Respondents also expect the LA28 Games to drive volunteerism, sponsorship and awareness for adapted sports nationwide.

The study remains the only research effort of its kind focused on capturing the

measurable financial footprint of the U.S. adapted sport industry. Organizers collected detailed expenditure and budget data between July 16 and Sept. 30, 2025, from U.S.-based adapted sport entities to capture and project the economic power of the national adapted sports industry. The year also saw a 20% increase in survey completion, further strengthening the reliability of the findings.

LA28

First Look At The LA Games Schedule

THE 2028 PARALYMPIC SUMMER GAMES IN Los Angeles (LA28) are still a ways away, but we're already getting our first look at the competition schedule.

Last November, the LA28 organizing committee marked 1,000 days until the opening of the first Paralympic Games in Los Angeles by sharing an initial preview of the 2028 schedule, outlining competition days and sessions across the 23 sports and 560 medal events.

There were several key highlights of the Games' schedule preview:

- **First LA28 Paralympic medals:** Five sports will be awarding gold medals on day one of the Games (Aug. 15), including para athletics (track and field), wheelchair fencing, shooting para sport, para equestrian and para cycling track.
- **Paralympic opening and closing ceremonies:** The 2028 Paralympic Opening Ceremony is set for 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT, Aug. 15, 2028, in SoFi Stadium, and the Closing Ceremony will take place at 9 p.m. ET/6 p.m. PT Aug. 27, 2028, at LA Memorial Coliseum.
- **Para climbing's Paralympic debut:** Para climbing will make its historic Paralympic debut across four days of competition, starting on Aug. 23, 2028.
- **Starting the action before the opening ceremony:** LA28 will be the first Paralympic Games to have sports starting before the Opening Ceremony, with wheelchair rugby starting Aug. 13, 2028, and boccia starting Aug. 14, 2028.
- **Extended formats:** Both wheelchair rugby and sitting volleyball will feature

extended formats with the addition of a play-in round, where teams that don't automatically qualify for the semifinals after the preliminary round have one more chance to qualify in a thrilling winner-takes-all matchup.

- **Finals-filled finale:** The final weekend of the Games, spanning Aug. 24–26, 2028, will feature finals in an unprecedented 17 sports taking place across nearly every competition zone.

LA28 organizers say the schedule reflects their commitment to an athlete-first approach by prioritizing the needs and well-being of participants at the forefront of the 294 sessions, while making strategic choices to maximize spectator and viewership opportunities for all sports, both domestically and internationally.

The competition schedule will continue to evolve as planning progresses, with a more detailed event schedule to be released sometime this year.

More information, including downloadable PDFs of the current Paralympic competition schedule by day and by session, are available at la28.org.



Games Volunteers

OTHER THAN PARTICIPAT- ing in the 2028 Paralympic Summer Games in Los Angeles (LA28), one of the best ways to put yourself in the middle of the action will be as a volunteer.

The LA28 Organizing Committee launched the LA28 Volunteer Program presented by Delta Air Lines last November. The program enables participants to get involved as soon as this year with service opportunities throughout the LA region leading up to the LA28 Games.

Details on Games-time volunteer roles will be shared sometime this year as the program continues to evolve leading up to 2028. Registration of interest for LA28 volunteer opportunities is now open on the LA28 Volunteer Program page.

Volunteers are an essential aspect of a successful Games, serving as a meaningful touchpoint for visitors from around the world and shaping memorable experiences for athletes, fans and the local community. Launching the LA28 Volunteer Program more than two years ahead of the Games enables LA28 to offer a variety of opportunities to serve and create a lasting impact through the power of community volunteerism, while also expanding the region's volunteer base leading up to Games time.

Launched earlier than standard Games timelines, the LA28 Volunteer Program is supporting meaningful causes for the surrounding region and will set an elevated benchmark

for community engagement while inspiring broader participation and driving lasting impact across the region.

As volunteer events become available in the LA region, registered volunteers will receive email invitations to sign up for specific events based on their location and interests.

The Paralympic Summer Games in Los Angeles are set for Aug. 15–27, 2028.

For more information or to sign up for the program, visit la28.org/en/volunteer.

Google The Games

DOING A GOOGLE SEARCH TO FIND INFORMATION during this year's Paralympic Winter Games in Italy or the 2028 Summer Games in Los Angeles (LA28) is getting easier and quicker.

The LA28 Organizing Committee, Team USA and NBCUniversal announced last October that they're partnering with Google to deliver what a press release calls "a more personal and interactive experience for Olympic and Paralympic Games athletes and spectators."

An October press release from Google says the partnership is bringing together the latest advancements across Google Search, Gemini and Google Cloud to bring fans closer to all of the action.

Google says it'll support the analysis of Team USA's training and provide new ways for fans to search for information during NBCUniversal's coverage. The company also says it'll help LA28 organizers as they prepare for the Games, while NBCUniversal will also partner with YouTube to provide fans with even more exciting content.

"This partnership is a testament to our commitment to innovation and delivering a technologically advanced, engaging and digitally accessible Games when we welcome the world in 2028," says LA28 Chairperson and President Casey Wasserman in an October LA28 press release. "Google's suite of products and tools will support our vision for uplifting the athlete, fan and workforce experience, and ultimately make it easier for attendees to navigate venues, share their experiences and stay informed in real time."

The Milano Cortina Winter Olympics Games are set for Feb. 6–22, while the Winter Paralympics will follow March 6–15.



USOPC

Online Safety

TEAM USA ATHLETES HAVE A NEW WAY TO protect their privacy, security and well-being in the digital space.

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) announced last November the launch of Team USA Safe Online, a new platform developed in collaboration with online safety organization Moonshot.

The platform provides Team USA athletes, their families and national governing bodies with clear, evidence-based tools to address online harassment, artificial intelligence-generated deepfakes, doxxing, intimate image abuse and other emerging online threats.


It includes step-by-step guidance for prevention, response and support, as well as resources for parents, coaches and agents.

“With Team USA Safe Online, we’re enhancing and modernizing how we protect Team USA athletes,” says Nicole Deal, USOPC chief of security and athlete services. “This collaboration with Moonshot ensures America’s athletes



teamusasaferonline.com

can safely and confidently share their stories and celebrate their experiences while maintaining their privacy and mental well-being.”

The initiative expands the collaboration between the USOPC and Moonshot to monitor and mitigate online abuse during major competitions through the 2026 Milano Cortina Olympic and Paralympic Games and beyond. This is accomplished through a combination of automated monitoring, human expert review and content mitigation in partnership with social media platforms and law enforcement, when necessary. For additional information, visit teamusasaferonline.com. 



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Spin & In

BY JOHN GROTH

U.S. NATIONAL POWER SOCCER TEAM members Riley Johnson and Pete Winslow turned one spinning and wild set piece into the lone goal that lifted them to the American Powerchair Football Confederation (APFC) America's Cup title.

What started as a fun little play while messing around at practice one day has turned into a major go-to move.

Johnson deflected the championship game-winning goal home off a bounce off Winslow's kicking guard in the 18th minute in a 1-0 win over Argentina Nov. 19 at Ability360 Sports & Fitness Center in Phoenix.

The U.S. had already qualified for the 2026 Internationale de Powerchair Football Association Powerchair Football World Cup, thanks to Johnson's stoppage-time goal in its semifinal win, and it capped the six-team America's Cup Nov. 16-19 tournament with another exciting one-goal victory.

It was the third straight America's Cup for the U.S. national power soccer team, and that set piece is one the two teammates practice all the time. They've played together for the past 20 years, including the last 10 on the U.S. national team.

"I mean, it's one of those things where, you know, like it's the chemistry that we have and we've built that long, and you can't teach that. I mean, that just happens, you know," Winslow says.

PLACEMENT IS EVERYTHING

With Argentina called for a two-on-one violation in the 18th minute, the U.S. was awarded a free kick at the top of the penalty box. U.S. coach Tracy Mayer, Winslow and Johnson easily picked the play they'd run.

On the free kick, Winslow came to the top of the box and did a reverse 360-degree spin



Riley Johnson lifted the U.S. to the American Powerchair Football Confederation America's Cup title Nov. 19 at Ability360 Sports & Fitness Center in Phoenix.



Christopher Di Virgilio

turn to the right, while Johnson spun from his left. The ball kicked off Winslow's kicking guard, bounced off the right of Johnson's chair, down the middle of the court and then off the left post for the goal.

For Johnson, it was all about placement.

"I don't think about anything other than, 'Which direction am I going?' And Pete and I looked at each other. Pete said, 'Middle.' I said, 'Yep.' We went middle," says Johnson, who was born with arthrogryposis, or a con-

“

I mean, it's one of those things where, you know, like it's the chemistry that we have and we've built that long, and you can't teach that. I mean, that just happens, you know.

”

[*Pete Winslow*]

dition that causes multiple joint contractures and muscle weakness throughout the body.

The two longtime teammates know each other well. They started on the same junior power soccer team, the Minneapolis Blizard, through the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in Minneapolis. Then, they moved up to the club team, the Minnesota Shockwave, coached by Mayer, in 2011.

"We know when we get a call like that where the ball is going to be placed in that area, we know exactly what play we're running. We can change it on the fly if we need to. But, I mean, it's one of those plays that's, you know, a high-percentage shot for us," says Winslow, a congenital amputee who was born without legs or a right hand and has three fingers on his left hand. "And Riley and I have practiced that so many times, and we've converted it so many times. So, we knew we had it."

After years of practice, they've locked it in. Mayer says it's a set play, and they've put in a ton of communication, practice and understanding each other.

"They play together at home. So, it's a huge timing thing. They've got themselves pretty much down to a science on that," Mayer says. "When Pete makes his first spin and Riley

times it out, and when they connect, that ball is going very fast, and they can pretty much know where it's going. But there's one of those times that you only hope it's going in the right spot. We were in the right spot at the right time, right in the middle there. And it went in right where we needed it to go."

STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS

Mayer's son, Nathan, who has spinal muscular atrophy, plays goalie on the U.S. national power soccer team, which is made up of athletes who use power chairs and qualify from conditions including Duchenne muscular dystrophy, arthrogryposis, spinal muscular atrophy and cerebral palsy.

Mayer started coaching him 21 years ago as an opportunity for them to bond. Along with coaching the U.S. national team, he still coaches the Minnesota Shockwave power soccer club team, which has won five straight national power soccer club team titles.

Now, Mayer will help prepare the U.S. for the World Cup. And he says there's still plenty to work on. He says the team has to improve its passing offense and maximize its passing.

"I mean we're an excellent set piece team. But when we get into those set pieces, there's times that it's really difficult because if they

can figure out our set piece ... if they figure it out, then we can't do it. And then we have to figure out something else," Mayer says.

Both of the U.S.' America's Cup victories against Argentina came in one-goal games. Johnson says there's a reason.

"Theirs is the hardest defense to get past. They know how the goalie is so integral to how that defense flows. So, they do it really smart," Johnson says.

Winslow says they're one of the most disciplined defensive teams.

"And I think that makes it really hard because, you know, obviously you want the defense to move around and move when you're playing offense. But they do a really good job of just standing their ground and making it very hard to get around," he says.

But Johnson thinks the United States will be ready for the World Cup in October in Argentina.

"Yeah, I mean we're excited," Johnson says. "We took third in the last one [in 2023 in Australia]. So, we're looking to improve our finish. We're just really excited." 

Riley Johnson, white jersey by ball, and Pete Winslow, white jersey, teamed up to score the U.S.' game-winning America's Cup championship game goal.

Christopher Di Virgilio





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October 2025

PVA Intro to Paracycling Series: Denver	October 3-4, 2025	Denver, CO
PVA Wheelchair Football Camp - Augusta	October 10-11, 2025	North Augusta, SC
PVA Off-Road Paracycling Camp: Pocahontas State Park	October 16-18, 2025	Chesterfield, VA
PVA Billiards Tournament Series: Mid-South	October 17-18, 2025	Memphis, TN
PVA Pickleball Camp	October 18-19, 2025	San Antonio, Texas
Paracycling: High Performance Road Racing Camp	October 27-31, 2025	Colorado Springs, CO

November 2025

Intro to Paracycling Series: Phoenix	November 12, 2025	Phoenix, AZ
PVA Off-Road Paracycling Camp: Phoenix	November 13-16, 2025	Phoenix, AZ
PVA Billiards Tournament Series: Buckeye	November 14-15, 2025	Westerville, OH

December 2025

PVA Bowling Tournament Series: Nevada	December 4-7, 2025	Las Vegas, NV
PVA Boccia Tournament Series: New England	December 6-7, 2025	Brockton, MA

January 2026

PVA-USA Boccia Regional Tournament	January 24-25, 2026	Tampa, FL
PVA Wheelchair Rugby Invitational	January 30-February 1, 2026	Louisville, KY

February 2026

PVA Boccia Tournament Series: Bayou Gulf States	February 7-8, 2026	Gulfport, MS
PVA Airgun Tournament Series: Central Florida	February 14-15, 2026	Orlando, FL
PVA Bowling Tournament Series: Florida Gulf Coast	February 25-27, 2026	Tampa, FL
PVA Outdoor Experience: Maine Winter Sports	February 25-March 1, 2026	Carrabassett Valley, ME

March 2026

PVA Bowling Tournament Series: Tri-State Tournament	March 13-15, 2026	Beaverton, OR
PVA Billiards Tournament Series: Mid-Atlantic	March 14-15, 2026	Midlothian, VA
PVA Bass Tournament Series: Southeastern Challenge	March 27-29, 2026	Appling, GA

April 2026

PVA Bass Tournament Series: Bluegrass Bass Bash	April 10-12, 2026	Kuttawa, KY
PVA National Air Gun Camp	April 13-17, 2026	Centreville, VA
PVA Off-Road Paracycling Camp: Pocahontas State Park	April 16-18, 2026	Chesterfield, VA
PVA Bass Tournament Series: Citrus Slam	April 17-19, 2026	Kissimmee, FL
PVA Bowling Tournament Series: Texas	April 22-24, 2026	San Antonio, TX
PVA Billiards Tournament Series: Mid-America	April 23-25, 2026	Oklahoma City, OK
PVA Wheelchair Pickleball Tournament	April 25-26, 2026	Franklin, WI

May 2026

PVA Bass Tournament Series: Land of Lincoln	May 1-3, 2026	Sesser, IL
PVA Bocchia Tournament Series: Puerto Rico (Year-End)	May 2-3, 2026	San Juan, PR
Intro to Paracycling Series: Salt Lake City	May 4-5, 2026	Salt Lake City, UT
Intro to Paracycling Series: Milwaukee	May 20-21, 2026	Milwaukee, WI
PVA Trapshooting Tournament Series: Vaughan	May 22-24, 2026	Whittington, IL
PVA Bass Tournament Series: Buckeye Bash	May 29-31, 2026	Cortland, OH
PVA Airgun Tournament Series: Texas	May 30-31, 2026	San Antonio, TX

June 2026

PVA Bass Tournament Series: Capital Clash	June 5-7, 2026	Marbury, MD
PVA Wheelchair Basketball Camp	June 8-14, 2026	Arlington, TX
PVA Trapshooting Tournament Series: Wisconsin	June 12-14, 2026	Green Bay, WI
PVA Outdoor Experience: Teton	June 22-26, 2026	Jackson Hole, WY
PVA Bowling Tournament Series: National Championship	June 25-28, 2026	Omaha, NE
PVA Trapshooting Tournament Series: Iowa (Year-End)	June 26-28, 2026	Cedar Rapids, IA

July 2026

National Veterans Wheelchair Games	July 9-14, 2026	Detroit, MI
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Golden History

History will be made as the 50th Winter Paralympic Games are set for Milan and Cortina, Italy, in March, but this month's Final Frame looks at the history made by the United States' Kendall Gretsch at the 2018 PyeongChang Paralympics in South Korea. Gretsch won the first Olympic or Paralympic biathlon gold medal for a U.S. athlete at those Games and also won gold in two other events. Photo by Joe Kusunoto.



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