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Healthy & Clean Workouts

With the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and many gyms closed, working out has become a bit of a challenge. But here are some ways to adapt — and suggestions to reduce the germs, too.

by Shelly Anderson

Crosse-ing Things Up

With 11 teams and more than 20 programs throughout the United States, wheelchair lacrosse is gaining traction in the adaptive sports world.

by Jennifer Best

Tourney Crusher

COVID-19 cut the wheelchair basketball season short and canceled other sports championships, but disappointed players and coaches think organizers did the right thing.

by Dave Royse

Digital Highlights on sportsnspokes.com

OFF THE COURT
Check out our new video series where we go in-depth with athletes and people who, despite being in isolation because of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), still have amazing stories to share.

JUNIOR ATHLETE OF THE YEAR
There’s still time to nominate an outstanding young athlete for SPORTS ’N SPOKES (S’NS) Junior Athlete of the Year. The winner receives a $1,500 educational scholarship, S’NS digital subscription and his or her photo on the cover of the September issue. The deadline is June 30.
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Complete the nomination form no later than June 30, 2020.

www.sportsnspokes.com/nomination-form  #2020SNSJrAthlete
Disappointment & Hope

Let’s see if I can get through this month’s column without saying the name of the elephant in the room. I’m certain you’re as tired as I am of hearing about it every waking minute of every day.

Canceled seems to be the word most used, not only in wheelchair sports but in seemingly every aspect of life over the last couple of months. I’m sure there are many opinions among our readers as to what should be canceled and what should be allowed to proceed as scheduled.

I have a T2 level spinal-cord injury (SCI), and as much as I hate to admit it, I and many others with SCI fall into what are classified as “high-risk” individuals. While gyms may be closed and team sports aren’t playing or practicing, I hope you can still take some steps to maintain your level of fitness all while keeping yourself as safe as possible.

If you’re a handcyclist who loves fresh air and the wind in your face, you hopefully will be able to continue your training as usual. I’m certain the idea of cranking away on an arm ergometer in your garage is far from appealing, nor are the options, if any, for many other athletes, especially for those who participate in team sports.

Personally, I had just received my registration confirmation to compete in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) that was scheduled to take place the first week of July in Portland, Ore. This would have been the first NVWG in which I had competed since the 1995 Games in Atlanta.

I registered to compete in five events. Four of those — trapshooting, 9 ball, bowling and table tennis — required little to no physical conditioning but needed considerable skills and practice. The fifth event, the 20K handcycling race, I chose for one reason only — it required that I get my butt outside to train in an attempt to shed a few pounds and regain some semblance of strength and endurance.

In light of current events, handcycling may also have been the easiest one to prepare for, as the facilities required to practice my other four events are no doubt closed for purposes of social distancing. Bowling centers, billiards halls, recreation centers and gun clubs are, at the very least, operating under greatly altered rules and schedules, if not shuttered all together.

The inability to train was really not as big of a deal to me. I know it’s been for many of our readers, though — those of you who are actually accomplished athletes, athletes who had plans to compete in Tokyo at this year’s Summer Paralympics or other major sanctioned events.

Many of the athletes at the NVWG are also accomplished in their sports, train fervently and truly relish the spirit of competition.

For me, this trip to compete in Portland was more about camaraderie and seeing old friends — a trip where I’m certain I’d have consumed more calories than I’d have burned and would have spent more time connecting with old friends than developing strategies to propel me to the win.

On one hand, this may very likely be a summer full of heartbreaking disappointments, but on the other hand, I’m hopeful we’ll find opportunities to fill possible voids in other aspects of our lives.

Try to enjoy the beginning of summer, and I hope a sense of normalcy returns soon.

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ARCHERY

Alim, Pavlik Earn Titles

Singapore’s Nur Syahidah Alim, women’s compound open world No. 1 and world champion, stayed atop her division as she captured the sixth Fazza Para Archery World Ranking Tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in late February. Alim defeated Italy’s Maria Andrea Virgilio, 135-131, in the championship.

Slovakia’s Marcel Pavlik edged out Italy’s Alberto Simonelli to defend his men’s compound open title. Pavlik won, 143-142, rallying in the fifth and final end to win.

Romania’s Patru Eugen upset Turkish Paralympian Sadik Savas, 6-2, for the men’s recurve open title. Turkey’s Merve Nur Eroğlu defeated Italy’s 2012 Paralympic silver medalist Elisabetta Mijno, 7-1, for the women’s recurve open title. Hungary’s Tamas Gaspar defeated Finland’s Jean Pierre Antonios, 134-126, to win the men’s W1 Open title, while Japan’s Aiko Okazaki rallied for a 115-111 win over Great Britain’s Victoria Rumary in the women’s W1 Open.

In team events, Italy led the way with two gold medals (compound men’s open team and mixed team W1).

BASKETBALL

NWBA Adult Division Tourney Winners

Despite the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) still held its 2020 Toyota Adult Wheelchair Basketball National Championship tournament in Wichita, Kansas, in mid-March.

The Dallas Wheelchair Mavericks knocked off the defending champion New York Rollin’ Knicks, 80-72, for the Division I title. Dallas’ Bobbie Nickleberry Jr., was named the Division I tournament’s Most Valuable Player.

Dallas Wheelchair Mavericks player Bobbie Nickleberry Jr., was named the National Wheelchair Basketball Association Toyota Adult Division I Wheelchair Basketball National Championship tournament’s Most Valuable Player.
In Division II, the Tampa Bay Strong Dogs, out of Florida, defeated the TIRR Memorial Hermann Hotwheels, out of Houston, 58-50. The Strong Dogs’ Robert Gordon was named the tournament Most Valuable Player.

Brooks Ballers (Florida) captured the Division III title, with a 55-51 victory over the Rockford Chariots (Illinois). Brooks’ Tim Houston was named the Division III tournament’s Most Valuable Player.

The tournament was shortened to two days from three because of the coronavirus, and the NWBA canceled its junior di-
The Tampa Bay Strong Dogs defeated the TIRR Memorial Hermann Hotwheels, 58-50, to capture the mid-March 2020 National Wheelchair Basketball Association Toyota Adult Division II Wheelchair Basketball National Championship tournament title in Wichita, Kansas.

vision tournament just days before because of COVID-19.

For more photos and stories from the tournament, visit sportsnspokes.com.

**CURLING**

**Russia Wins World Championships**

Russia captured March’s World Wheelchair Curling Championship title in Wetzikon, Switzerland, defeating Canada, 5-4, in the gold-medal match. Russia scored a point in the eighth and final end to earn the victory and the title.

**SLED HOCKEY**

**U.S. Wins Women’s Showcase**

Team USA’s women’s sled hockey team defeated Team Canada in a penalty shootout to take February’s Women’s Showcase Series at the Richmond Olympic Oval in Richmond, British Columbia. The U.S. won two of three games in the series.

Catherine Faherty and Kelsey DiClaudio each scored on penalty shots in the shootout to help the United States win the third and final game to take the series.

Canadian captain Christina Picton scored two goals and had an assist, and Nandini Sharma added another goal to lift Team Canada to a 3-2 win in game one. Team USA evened things up with a 3-1 victory in game two, as Erica Mitchell, Faherty and DiClaudio each scored goals.

The series celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the 2010 Vancouver Paralympic Games and was part of a larger project funded partially by the Hockey Canada Foundation called The TrailblazeHERs Project — Growing Female Para Hockey.

Contribution: Stuart Lieberman

**Norway, Italy Win Series**

Norway and Italy each captured a para ice hockey series in late February.

Norway swept its series against Sweden with 3-1 (5-4 overtime) and 2-1 victories. Norway’s Ola Oiseth scored four goals in the series, and Morten Værnes added two, including the overtime game-winner, and also had four assists. Per Kasperi and David Nilsson scored two goals each in the series.

The reigning Paralympic silver medalists, Italy won two of three games over Germany. Italy won its two games (2-0 and 4-3), while Germany earned a 2-1 victory.

**U.S. Takes Exhibition**

Team USA took a two-game para ice hockey exhibition series in mid-February against Team Canada. After finishing in a 2-2 (1-1 three-round shootout) first game tie, Team USA picked up a 2-0 win over Canada in the second game in Elmira, Ontario.

The U.S. rallied from 1-0 and 2-1 deficits in the first game, as Brody Roybal and Declan Farmer each scored goals. Billy Bridges and Rob Armstrong scored goals for the Canadians. The teams went scoreless in overtime, and each team scored once in a three-round shootout — Josh Pauls for the U.S. and Aurel Halbert for Canada.

Travis Dodson and Jack Wallace each scored third-period goals to lift the team to a 2-0 shutout win in the second game. U.S. goalie Steve Cash finished with 10 saves, and Canadian goalie Dominic Larocque had 13 saves.

**Vegas Wins PCSHL Title**

The Las Vegas Golden Knights sled hockey team defeated
reigning champ Arizona Coyote Parahockey to earn its first Pacific Coast Sled Hockey League (PCSHL) championship in mid-March.

Las Vegas defeated Arizona, 8-1, in the championship game at the Ice Den in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Ahmad Karimzada led Las Vegas — and all scorers — with two goals and three assists in the title game, while Isaac Escobedo had two goals. Miguel Vargas scored in the Coyotes’ lone win, with Coyotes captain and coach Paul Crane getting the assist.

Las Vegas will now host the 2021 PCSHL championship. Dates have not been announced.

WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

Paralympic Berths

Canada and France each earned Paralympic wheelchair rugby berths at the early-March Paralympic Qualifier in Richmond, British Columbia. Both will head to the now-2021 Paralympic Games in Tokyo. Because of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the 2020 Summer Paralympic Games were postponed in mid-March.

Canada finished the qualifying tournament undefeated, beating Colombia, 57-46, to win the tournament and advance to Tokyo. Canada defeated Switzerland (53-38), Colombia (62-35), Brazil (58-36), Sweden (55-39), Germany (59-31) and France (50-40).

France, which finished 6-1, earned the first Paralympic berth, as it defeated Germany, 54-30, in its final game. France also defeated Germany (52-31), Sweden (48-31), Colombia (54-36), Brazil (53-36) and Switzerland (52-36) and lost to Canada (50-40).

Australia, Denmark, Great Britain, New Zealand, the United States and host country Japan had already qualified for the Paralympic Games.

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS

Chile, Argentina Advance

Chile’s men’s wheelchair tennis team and Argentina’s women’s wheelchair tennis team each advanced to the 2020 BNP Paribas World Cup finals in Portugal after earning mid-February victories in the Americas Qualification in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Chile defeated second-seeded Colombia, 2-0, in the men’s championship.

Chile’s Jaime Sepulveda defeated Colombia’s Manuel Quitian, 6-2, 6-3, 6-3, while Chile’s Alexander Cataldo, world No. 32, defeated Colombia’s Eliecer Oquendo, 6-0, 6-1.

In women’s action, Argentina’s Andrea Medrano defeated Chile’s Sofia Fuentes, 3-6, 6-1, 6-1, while Argentina’s Maria Florencia Moreno defeated Chile’s Macarena Cabrillana, world No. 20, 6-2, 0-6, 6-2, avenging an earlier tournament loss.

Chile will host the men’s finals for the first time since 2011, while Argentina is scheduled to host the women’s finals for the second time in three years in May.
Each issue, SPORTS 'N SPOKES recognizes three athletes who have recorded outstanding accomplishments in wheelchair sports.

Interested in nominating someone for Spokes Stars? Then email editorial coordinator John Groth at john@pvamag.com with a nomination and his or her accomplishment.

**ANDREW KURKA** (Palmer, Alaska)
The 28-year-old, who has a T10 spinal-cord injury, won a gold medal in the men’s sitting Super G event and men’s sitting giant slalom skiing events in the mid-February Sakhalin 2020 World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup in Sakhalin, Russia.

**LAURIE STEPHENS** (Wenham, Mass.)
Born with spina bifida, the 36-year-old captured three gold medals in women’s sitting downhill skiing, two in women’s sitting Super G and one in the women’s sitting giant slalom, as well as a silver medal in the women’s parallel event in the mid-February Sakhalin 2020 World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup in Sakhalin, Russia.

**JESPER PEDERSEN** (Haugesund, Norway)
The 20-year-old, who was born with spina bifida, was the only one of six downhill sit-skiers who didn’t crash on the opening day of the mid-February Sakhalin 2020 World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup downhill course and ended up winning the gold medal in Sakhalin, Russia.
Paralympics Postponed
by SNS Staff
Paralympic hopefuls and teams will have to wait one more year for their chance to compete in the 2020 Summer Games. Officials announced in mid-March they were postponing the 2020 Tokyo Summer Paralympics because of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Roughly a week later, officials said the Games would be held Aug. 24–Sept. 5, 2021, in Tokyo.

The Games are just the latest major sporting event that’s been canceled or moved because of the COVID-19 virus that’s affected the world.

STAYING SAFE
Officials from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee, Tokyo Metropolitan Government and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) in a press release cited three main considerations for postponing the Games:

• To protect the health of the athletes and everyone involved
• To support containment of the COVID-19 virus
• To safeguard the interests of the athletes and of Olympic and Paralympic sport and the global international sports calendar

"When the Paralympic Games do take place in Tokyo next year, they will be an extra special display of humanity uniting as one, a global celebration of human resilience and a sensational showcase of sport," says IPC President Andrew Parsons in the press release. "... The priority for all those involved in the Paralympic Movement must be to focus on staying safe with their friends and family during this unprecedented and difficult time. Now that the dates are confirmed, the IPC will work with the International Federations to establish new qualification criteria which will fully respect those that have already qualified for the Games."

HISTORY MADE
It’s not just the Paralympics that have been affected, either. The 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics also have a new date and will run July 23–Aug. 8, 2021.

So, the Paralympics will continue to run a couple of weeks after the Olympics. Team trials have been postponed, and new dates for those will be announced later. It’s only the fourth time since 1896 that the Olympic Summer Games won’t have been held every four years. The other years were in 1916, 1940 and 1944, when the Games were canceled because of war. The 1940 and 1944 Winter Games also were canceled.
It’s also the first time the IOC has had to postpone the Games outside of their designated year.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike says the Tokyo Metropolitan Government will commit all its resources and work closely with the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee, the national government and other stakeholders to fully prepare for the delivery of a Games that is safe and secure.

The IPC says Paralympic athletes and teams who already qualified for the 2020 Paralympics will stay qualified. The International Wheelchair Rugby Federation announced that the eight teams — United States; Australia; Canada; Denmark; France; Great Britain; Japan; and New Zealand — will remain qualified for the 2021 Paralympic Games, as well.

The IPC is issuing weekly coronavirus updates on its website at paralympic.org.

MENTAL HEALTH HELP
Mental health resources have also been created to help athletes.

In early April, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) announced the formation of an external Mental Health Taskforce to support Team USA athletes, as well as coaches, officials and administrators who serve them. It’s a 13-member taskforce comprising U.S. Olympians, Paralympians, coaches, medical and mental health professionals who are charged with developing best practices, resources and action plans to support Team USA athletes’ mental health needs and to advise USOPC staff. The group was organized in February 2020 and meets on a monthly basis.

IPC Athletes’ Council Chairperson Chelsey Gotell, a former Canadian Paralympic swimmer and 12-time medalist, thought the quick decision to finalize dates offered a huge sense of relief for athletes, who can mentally reset and start thinking about their 2021 plans. But athletes’ health and safety remain imperative.

“For now, though, training for Tokyo is not the priority. Staying safe is, and I hope all athletes, their families and their friends follow the advice of their local authorities during this difficult period for the whole world,” Gotell says in the release.

For more information, visit teamusa.org, paralympic.org and sportsnspokes.com.
When Malik Jones started rehabilitation, he thought his life was over. An accident during his U.S. Navy deployment in 2017 in Virginia Beach, Va., left him paralyzed on the left side of his body and with a traumatic brain injury. He was told he wouldn’t be able to walk again, and he couldn’t do many of the activities that he used to enjoy with his active lifestyle, such as CrossFit, lifting weights and snowboarding.

Three years later, the 22-year-old Jones is more than just walking again; he is rock climbing. The veteran is unable to use his left arm, but he uses a harness to hoist himself. Jones, who is in the Servicemember Transitional Advanced Rehabilitation (STAR) Program at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA (Department of Veterans Affairs) Medical Center in Richmond, Va., says he regained the confidence to climb and do other activities by playing billiards — with the help of an invention by VA rehabilitation experts.

Seth Hills and Nicole Shuman, two rehabilitation experts at Hunter Holmes, developed a rolling bridge device that helps those with disabilities to play billiards. The VA has applied for a patent, which was filed Dec. 26, 2019.

“It’s basically a wheel that you can attach to your pool stick so you can shoot pool one-handed,” Hills says.

Malik Jones, 22, shows how to balance a pool cue with the rolling bridge device.
with one arm, but the pool bridge helps me balance the pool stick. So, I can still play even only with one arm."

**POPULARITY BOOST**

The invention helped and became popular, with more and more veterans requesting pool bridges. But it was time-consuming to create, and Shuman ran into an issue where the leather strap was wobbly and the wheel base too narrow, limiting the stability of the roll.

“We didn’t realize it was going to be such a big hit at first,” Hills says. “She [Shuman] had maybe two or three patients at first, at the time.”

So, Shuman came to Hills for help. They worked together to simplify the materials, using nylon and carbon fiber instead. They changed the design to accommodate cheaper hardware and make it easier to assemble. They also found that in some of the earlier designs, the wheel didn’t quite clip onto the cue as easily as they would like.

“It was an iterative process,” Hills says. Hills and Shuman also made product adaptations to allow users to shoot from close to the table or from a longer range. In billiards, there are some cases when players want to get a closer shot, requiring the cue and bridge to be on the other side of the table. The initial design didn’t have enough clearance for a billiard ball. With that in mind, they made other versions to accommodate specific situations. They also made a tackier wheel surface, allowing users to run the wheel along the upper outside edge of the table.

And perhaps the most helpful improvement of all was using a 3D printer to replicate the rolling bridge, so they didn’t have to make each one individually.

“It doesn’t seem like a huge number, but for what we do here for assistive tech, that’s one of the higher-use devices,” Hills says.

For Jones, who has been in rehab for almost three years, billiards is a way he and other veterans at the facility can pass the time with an activity that is therapeutic.

“It’s like a math game on the table,” Jones says. “It’s a strategy game. It looks simple, but it’s a lot harder. It’s a challenge. And I get to beat people. I’m competitive.”

The team has shared the invention with other VA facilities in hopes it will catch on beyond Richmond and even to the everyday user.

“We would love to have this available for folks who are outside of the VA,” Hills says. “Hopefully, somebody will be able to pick it up and market it to the general public.”

Each device costs approximately $10. More than 20 veterans at the medical center are currently using the product.

**HELPING VETERANS**

This rolling bridge device costs approximately $10 and helps people with disabilities play billiards.

Seth Hills and Nicole Shuman, two rehabilitation experts at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA (Department of Veterans Affairs) Medical Center in Richmond, Va., developed this rolling bridge device to help those with disabilities play billiards.
With the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and many gyms closed, working out has become a bit of a challenge. But here are some ways to adapt — and suggestions to reduce the germs, too.

Everyone has been bombarded by messages of germ avoidance during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

One in particular stuck with Dan McCoy, a 2014 Sochi Winter Paralympic Games sled hockey gold medalist and a personal trainer in Pittsburgh.

“I saw a meme on social media of someone putting hand sanitizer on his hands and saying, ‘Cool, my hands are clean. I can go about my day.’ And then, he touches his wheelchair and says, ‘Oh, shoot. Gotta sanitize again,’” McCoy recalls.

**Stay Active, Use Guidelines**

For those with disabilities, there are some considerations beyond the often-repeated general guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other experts for remaining safe. That particularly applies to those who want to continue to train and work out.

“I encourage people with disabilities to be physically active,” says Stephen Yerkovich, MD, chief of medical services for Paralyzed Veterans of America. “It improves your well-being, not only physical but mental. It’s very important.”

Some among the disabled community have compromised immune systems or are not able to produce a deep cough — issues that could make COVID-19 all the more dangerous, and therefore, call for diligence against the highly contagious virus, which can survive on surfaces and be transmitted when people touch those surfaces and then their face.

Yerkovich points first to the general, widespread messages of caution:
Wash your hands often, and do it for 20 seconds, which can be singing Happy Birthday twice. “If you’ve got a better song, you’d better time it out and make sure it’s 20 seconds,” Yerkovich says, chuckling.

Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. It’s a product that has been scarce, but there are recipes online that combine isopropyl alcohol and aloe vera for a homemade version.

Practice social distancing, remaining at least 6 feet from people in public and limiting gatherings to just a few people.

Don’t touch your face.

Comply with any stay-at-home directives that are in place and with any face mask recommendations if you must go out.

Learning To Adapt

As part of the pandemic response, many or even most gyms and fitness facilities across the country were among the businesses ordered to be closed during the outbreak.

McCoy, who specializes in training people with disabilities, was ahead of the curve on that. He has worked with clients via the internet and has developed various at-home workouts — something he stepped up during the pandemic, with videos on YouTube and blogs and vlogs on his website, danmccoyfitness.com.

He’s also been practicing those workouts during the stay-at-home orders.

McCoy favors using resistance bands, although he cautions that people with latex allergies should be aware that many brands contain that substance. He suggests TheraBand as an affordable option with no latex. But workouts at home don’t have to involve purchasing specific equipment.

“There are plenty of things around your house that you can use as extra weight in terms of resistance,” McCoy says. “You could use a chair. You could lift that, you could do squats, you could do extensions off a chair, a couch or even a bed. You can do pushups, sit-ups, crunches, bodyweight exercises.”
Hold a water bottle while doing biceps curls. That way, he jokes, you can take a drink with every repetition to keep hydrated and make the weight lighter as you go.

“Different things like that you can add into your daily routine that don’t require huge lifestyle shifts and doesn’t require buying hundreds of dollars of equipment,” says McCoy, who has spina bifida and, at times while at home, simply ties a towel around his leg brace hinges and uses that for resistance exercises.

McCoy sometimes oversees training sessions with his longtime sled hockey team, the Mighty Penguins in Pittsburgh. That requires trips to a gym.

“Full disclosure, I would much rather work out at a gym,” McCoy says. “I’m just one of those people. I can’t really 100 percent focus when I’m in my apartment working out. At this point [during the pandemic directives], you do what you’ve got to do. You’ve got to find a way to keep yourself healthy as much as possible for as long as possible.”

Wipe Down Equipment

Even before the pandemic raised awareness, McCoy says he used safety and hygiene practices at gyms.

“Before [the sled hockey players] came in, we would wipe down all the equipment. After they leave, we would wipe down the equipment, and after each person used certain equipment, we would wipe it down, as well,” he says.

Yerkovich applauds that approach.

“Wipe down anything your skin is going to touch — the seat, the hand grips, the weightlifting benches,” he says, adding that floor mats are something that can be overlooked but should be sanitized frequently, as well as individuals’ wheelchairs and other mobility assistance equipment.

Yerkovich says it matters what is used to clean equipment. Baby wipes, made to be gentle, don’t generally work, for example.
He recommends something with an alcohol, bleach or ammonia base, with alcohol-based wipes containing at least 60% alcohol. Besides presoaked wipes, a spray solution used with a cloth can work. It should be noted that bleach and ammonia should never be mixed. In addition, some bleach-based cleaners can have a corrosive effect on some equipment.

For some time, wiping down equipment after use at gyms was considered a matter of courtesy. It became more of a safety issue several years ago after the spread of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), a bacterial infection that is highly resistant to antibiotics. Those with disabilities who aren’t able to clean equipment after use need to get assistance to perform that important task, Yerkovich says.

Gus LaZear, vice president and general manager of Ability360 Sports & Fitness Center in Phoenix, points out that the organization’s 45,000-square-foot accessible fitness facility — which, like so many others, closed during the height of the pandemic — already was vigilant about safety and cleanliness.

“We have a lot of machines where people can just roll right up and exercise from their wheelchair, and [when] they want to transfer to [another machine], we provide wipes that are very similar to what they use in hospitals,” LaZear says. “We have something where you wipe down the machines and you let the liquid set, and that kills all the germs. We have our volunteers going around on a regular basis doing that. We have, in our group fitness room, a fitness mat that is similar to a Murphy bed that goes into the wall. That way, a chair user who wants to get out of their chair to do yoga, if they don’t want to go on the floor or a yoga mat, they can go on the therapy mat. It’s got a vinyl cover, so it’s easy for us to clean and make sure it’s hygienic. We take every precaution.”

Even after the world gets a handle on COVID-19, LaZear is confident that facilities that cater to the disabled community will remain staunch in their attention to safety and hygiene. After all, there are still things that have long been a concern, such as MRSA, staph infections, the flu, bad colds and even stomach bugs.

The vigilance born of the pandemic “should be a constant practice,” Yerkovich says.

“This is just putting a spotlight on it,” he says. “It’s very important to establish this practice and use it the rest of your life. That will take care of all these things.”

— Stephen Yerkovich, MD

“Wipe down anything your skin is going to touch — the seat, the hand grips, the weightlifting benches.”

— Stephen Yerkovich, MD
With 11 teams and more than 20 programs throughout the United States, wheelchair lacrosse is gaining traction in the adaptive sports world.

by Jennifer Best

photos by Di Miller

Brian Galloway was looking for a physical, fast-paced sport beyond basketball when he picked up his first crosse. Mike Looney rediscovered his passion for the sport of his youth the first time he was checked from his wheelchair. Ryan Baker wasn't looking for anything.

"In a weird turn of events, lacrosse found me," says Baker, a T6 paraplegic athlete who cofounded Wheelchair Lacrosse USA (WLUSA) with Bill Lundstrom in 2009.

Today, the growing national organization oversees more than 20 programs representing male, female and youth players in 11 states. It has been supported throughout its development by team equipment drives and clinics sponsored and led as Eagle Scout and bar mitzvah projects.

Now, with support from US Lacrosse, the national governing body of men’s and women’s lacrosse in the United States, and a growing body of players, coaches, volunteers and sponsors, WLUSA has set its sights on the Paralympic Games.

"While it may be an adaptive sport, it's a sport. It's not only therapeutic, but we still want to compete," says Galloway, now WLUSA president, a T10 paraplegic and member of Indy Rip in Indianapolis. "We're athletes. I still want to compete as long as I can. I don't want people to see me in a chair and think I'm not up to the challenge. We have the same competitive drive and enthusiasm and love for sports as anyone else would."
There are currently more than 20 Wheelchair Lacrosse USA programs representing male, female and youth players in 11 states.
Coordination Is Key

North America’s oldest team sport was played by indigenous peoples before it was adapted and adopted by European colonizers. Players use the head of the lacrosse stick, or crosse, to carry, pass, catch and shoot the ball into a goal in a game that blends soccer, basketball and hockey.

“Lacrosse provides a good balance of contact, athletic ability and strategy. It’s simple: score goals, win the game,” Galloway says.

The game is played on open fields or closed hockey rinks or “boxes.” Wheelchair athletes play box lacrosse for its smaller field, better rolling surface, walls for ball containment and smaller teams.

“Lacrosse is like hockey, but with the ball in the air instead of on the ground. It has strategy like basketball with picks and setting up someone to score being a big thing. And it’s like soccer because it’s on a field,” says Looney, the WLUSA vice president.

The greatest challenge of the game is coordinating the crosse with the wheels.

“Because I played tennis and had learned to push the chair with a racket in my hand, I knew I could push with a crosse in my hand,” says Baker, a Carlsbad, Calif., resident. “I knew it was team-oriented, semi-physical and could possibly be viable.”

Looney, who lives in Severna Park, Md., had played lacrosse through high school and into college before a climbing fall resulted in a T12 incomplete spinal-cord injury. The game was ingrained in him down to his core.

“When I was injured, I didn’t have that outlet anymore, and it was tough,” Looney says.

He played wheelchair basketball during his recovery in Philadelphia and through college at Edinboro University in western Pennsylvania. When he spotted wheelchair lacrosse on the cover of US Lacrosse magazine, he was intrigued.

Through WLUSA, he connected with Mark Flounlacker’s Maryland Thunder, one of the first teams on the East Coast. Looney became a key player and in 2017 took over the Thunder’s leadership.

“I’ve always loved the physicality of the game. I enjoyed that when I was able-bodied, and I enjoy it now. When I started playing and we had our first game with San Diego, I got checked in the first 10 minutes, fell over and remember lying there, laughing and thinking, ‘I’m back. This is what I loved and missed.’ It was the first time in a long time I’d been hit, knocked over, and I absolutely loved it,” Looney says.

Galloway is quick to point out that while checking and contact are part of lacrosse, finesse is the name of the game.

“When wheelchair lacrosse started, there was a lot of ramming and winning ground balls. As players’ skills, as a whole, have improved, we have a lot less contact. It’s about ball movement and passing. You’re still going to get your stick check if you’re cutting toward a goal trying to pass and score, but we see a lot more movement up and down the field now,” he says.
Something Different

While some players have found renewed passion for their old sport in wheelchair lacrosse, it was precisely a personal lack of experience with the sport that drew Baker and Galloway.

Before his injury as a passenger in a car accident, Baker had played volleyball, baseball and soccer. He was a surfer, snowboarder and skateboarder. But lacrosse had never really crossed his mind. Since his entry into wheelchair sports in 1991, Baker has skied, camped and played tennis, golf, sled hockey and basketball.

“I’ve participated in all these things, but as far as team sports go for guys that are fairly athletic and functional, the options are pretty limited,” Baker says.

Before his 2012 motorbike injury, Galloway had played rugby, ice hockey and golf.

“Sports was a big thing for me. I wanted to find something that would be physical, fast-paced. Basketball wasn’t my thing, so I tried sled hockey, but it was really difficult because I was still rehabbing my shoulder,” Galloway says.

Wheelchair lacrosse is played on open fields or closed hockey rinks or “boxes.”

While checking and contact are part of wheelchair lacrosse, finesse is the sport’s key aspect.
Lacrosse crossed his radar through his kids, whose youth sports program made mention of it. A bit of research led him to WLUSA, which connected him to a clinic in Louisville, Ky. “I fell in love with the sport,” he says. Galloway established his own team, the Indy Rip, in Indianapolis and has never stopped forging ahead in wheelchair lacrosse development.

“Part of my love for wheelchair lacrosse is that I’m not playing an adaptive version of a game I used to play. I don’t have anything to base my performance off of, so it’s my sport,” Galloway says. “When I’m playing lacrosse, it absolutely makes me forget about my injury, my daily struggles, which over the years I’ve gotten better with, but every day there’s struggles. This allows me to push that away, be an athlete, play hard, play fast, have fun.”

Baker was quick to show appreciation for the volunteers, sponsors and helpers who keep players on the field. Adrenaline, Nike Lacrosse, STX Lacrosse, StringKing, Permobil Seat-

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**WHEELCHAIR LACROSSE**

The sport of wheelchair lacrosse is growing across the United States. Here are the 11 teams that make up the WLUSA and where they’re located.

- **Buffalo Bandits** (Greater Buffalo Adaptive Sports) – Buffalo, N.Y.
- **Colorado Rolling Mammoth** (Colorado Wheelchair Lacrosse Foundation) – Denver
- **Houston Apollos** – Houston
- **Indy Rip** (Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana) – Indianapolis
- **Maryland Thunder** – Baltimore
- **Milwaukee Eagles** (Wisconsin Adaptive Sports Association) – Milwaukee
- **Minnesota North Stars** (Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute) – Minneapolis
- **New York Safeway** – New York City
- **Sportable Crush** (Sportable) – Richmond, Va.
- **San Diego Rolling Seals** – San Diego

**CONTACT:** Wheelchair Lacrosse USA, wheelchairlacrosse.com, info@wheelchairlacrosse.com

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**Coordinating the crossie stick with the sports wheelchair’s wheels may be the greatest challenge of wheelchair lacrosse.**
“Because I played tennis and had learned to push the chair with a racket in my hand, I knew I could push with a crosse in my hand. I knew it was team-oriented, semi-physical and could possibly be viable.” — Ryan Baker

Wheelchair lacrosse blends soccer, basketball and hockey into one sport.

Because I played tennis and had learned to push the chair with a racket in my hand, I knew I could push with a crosse in my hand. I knew it was team-oriented, semi-physical and could possibly be viable.

― Ryan Baker

“Through this whole endeavor, we’ve learned there are tons of guys who have experience who never thought they’d be able to play again, and now here they are, playing again,” Baker says.

“Don’t be afraid of the sport if you’ve never played,” Looney adds. “You can learn to play. Wheelchair basketball athletes can easily cross over because they can already move a chair. They just need to learn to catch and throw with the crosse. It’s a fun, adaptive sport you can play. It’s very competitive.”

For information about getting started, teams, clinics and the Aug. 21–22 World Championships slated for San Diego, as of press time, visit wheelchairlacrosse.com.

S’NS
Logan Soleas was so close to another national prep wheelchair basketball championship in mid-March when everything came to a stop.

Close in the sense that Soleas was literally almost there. He was driving with his family from Baltimore to Wichita, Kansas, for the 2020 National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) Toyota Junior Wheelchair Basketball National Championships and was somewhere in southwest Missouri when he learned the event would be canceled because of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic — just a day before the event was to tip off.

Soleas was close in another sense, too. His Prep Division Bennett Blazers team from Baltimore hadn’t lost this year and was expecting to win the tournament for a second straight season. They were the top seed in the Prep Division.

“This would have been one of the best shots we had,” Soleas says. “We have good players, and we were all in a good mindset to go and win.”

Blazers coach Gwena Herman agrees. It was a tough year to see a tournament canceled because she, too, expected Soleas and his teammates would bring home hardware again. But they didn’t get to prove it to themselves or anyone else.

“It would have been nice for the kids to go back-to-back,” says Herman, who along with her hus-
COVID-19 cut the wheelchair basketball season short and canceled other sports championships, but disappointed players and coaches think organizers did the right thing.
band, Gerry, founded the Bennett Blazers program at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore. “They were all really disappointed.”

### Adult Tourneys Canceled

Besides wreaking havoc on professional sports, including the MLB, NBA, NHL and auto racing, COVID-19 also canceled or postponed many events in the wheelchair sports world.

That included postponing the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics and the 2020 Invictus Games in The Hague, Netherlands, in May, which were all moved to 2021, and canceling the United States Quad Rugby Association (USQRA) National Championships in Rockford, Ill., the NWBA’s 2020 Toyota Women’s Wheelchair Basketball National Championships in Phoenix and a host of other wheelchair and adaptive sports events around the globe.

While losing out on a good shot at a championship is obviously hard, it’s not any easier for teams that had longer odds of coming out on top, nor is it easier when the players are adults.

Chad Cohn, the coach of the University of Arizona wheelchair rugby team and a 2012 Paralympic bronze medalist, wasn’t necessarily expecting his team to repeat as national champions this year at the USQRA National Championships, acknowledging the team wasn’t as strong as last year’s title-winning squad.

“But we’ve put in a lot of hard work,” he says.

“This would have been one of the best shots we had. We have good players, and we were all in a good mindset to go and win.” — Logan Soleas

Pasqual Torres, with ball, says he misses the camaraderie with other players on the University of Arizona’s wheelchair rugby team.
And that’s the thing about tournaments — there’s always that long-shot chance that makes them so exciting. “We were a dark horse. I was hoping we could possibly sneak into the top three,” Cohn says. “We have three practices a week, basically six to eight hours a week we’re putting in time on the court. And to not have an opportunity to showcase that, my heart breaks for my athletes because of the amount of work they put in.”

And players don’t just miss winning — they miss playing. “We all want to go through the season. We all want to finish,” says Pasqual Torres, one of Cohn’s players on the Arizona team. “With what just happened, there’s no finale, no end.”

Torres says he’ll miss the camaraderie while the sport is on hiatus. “Our team’s pretty close. We all like each other,” he says. “So, you’re also losing those connections.”

Focus On Training

So, what can they do now? “They say never let a crisis go to waste,” says retired Army Spc. Brent Garlic.

He was part of the USA team that was headed to the Netherlands to compete in the 2020 Invictus Games, an event for wounded, injured and ill service-members started by Harry, Duke of Sussex.

Garlic would have competed in wheelchair basketball, handcycling, indoor rowing, swimming, powerlifting and wheelchair rugby. Twenty nations were expected to have athletes compete, but the competition has been postponed until next year. However, Garlic says that just gives him more time to train. “There’s always something you can work on,” he says. “This is a good time to reset and really get back to your game plan.”

And, he notes, nobody really gets an advantage from the unfortunate turn of events. Everybody has to figure out how to keep training during any time away from structured events and more formal training sessions as long as the pandemic lasts. “That’s just fine. If I have to be postponed, so do they,” Garlic says of his opponents.

Many athletes on this forced break from their sports are already looking ahead to next year. That’s the case for Soleas, who is already thinking about the next level. “Right now, I just need to start focusing on varsity,” Soleas says.

That’s the good part about having a younger team, says Herman. “My whole starting lineup will move up to varsity, so it’s not like their playing career is over,” she says.

For the WASA Junior Bucks, who were the top seed in the NWBA’s Junior Varsity Division after going undefeated and winning the Midwest Conference Championship, it’s different, because some players’ time as juniors will be coming to an end. And like Herman’s team, the Junior Bucks, from Milwaukee, were also defending champions and were
pretty confident they had a great shot to go out as the best team — but didn’t get a chance to prove it. Bucks coach Jordan Wilkens notes his team did get to play all the other top teams at least once, so there’s less doubt in his mind about how good the team was. Still, Wilkens says, “It hit hard. We were doing really, really well. They’re disappointed.”

The Right Thing

But Wilkens, and every other athlete and coach interviewed for this story, agreed wholeheartedly with decisions by various organizing bodies to cancel events in light of the global pandemic. “Our athletes’ health and safety have to always come first, no matter how disappointing it was,” says Herman.

Garlic notes that all large gatherings of athletes would be dangerous right now, but he says that could be especially true at an international event, where some might be coming from particularly hard-hit areas. And for athletes trying to be their best, being sidelined by actually being infected with the virus could present a far bigger problem than just having to rearrange a schedule because of gym closures and stay-home orders. “It’s a shame, but you’ve got to be smart,” Garlic says. “It’s sad, but safety first.”

Cohn agreed. He canceled the University of Arizona’s wheelchair rugby practices even before his team’s facilities in Tucson, Ariz., closed. “The last thing I wanted to do was jeopardize any of my athletes,” Cohn says.

Still, the uncertainty of the situation does make it hard to know what’s next for his team. He says he took about a week off to try to wrap his head around the situation and to “just sit back and enjoy life” for a bit after a stressful few days. “But now, I’m moving forward,” Cohn says. “We don’t have a choice.”

Cohn says he has to be ready for next year, to keep recruiting and to stay on his wheelchair athletes to make sure they’re staying in shape until they can get back on the court. Garlic says that outlook — working to stay in shape and keeping an eye on what’s to come — will be critical for relieving the restlessness and boredom of life under quarantine, as well as staying prepared for when competitions are allowed again.

Garlic, who lives near Atlanta, can still get out and handcycle every morning, and he usually lift weights either before or after. He also has a pushup challenge going with a friend. “I will not go to bed until I do my 500,” Garlic says. And he’s in still in great shape. “If this [pandemic] was to stop today and Invictus were tomorrow, I’d be ready to go,” Garlic says.

For more information on sports event cancellations and postponements, visit sportsnspokes.com.

The WASA Junior Bucks from Milwaukee were the top seed in the National Wheelchair Basketball Association’s Junior Varsity Division.
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.

The editorials, written in Cliff’s unique style of writing and a reflection of his charismatic personality, are presented in chronological order.

Photos published with the editorials are included as are many additional unpublished photos from the SPORTS 'N SPOKES archives.

A comprehensive index allows a means to find a specific sport, event or person.

“Cliff Crase had a way with words. He always seemed to capture the highlights of wheelchair sports along with the substance of current issues. He wrote about topics that mattered and celebrated the successes of a variety of athletes from beginners to experts. We are fortunate to have over 30 years of his observations all in one place. This book is a treasure!”

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

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Proceeds benefit Paralyzed Veterans of America
Malat Wei’s return to South Sudan was about wheelchair basketball — and so much more.

When he was 3, Wei was diagnosed with polio and lost the use of his legs. With Sudan mired in a civil war, the family relocated to a refugee camp in Ethiopia. When he was 12, they moved to Houston. The transition was incredibly difficult for a kid in a wheelchair who didn’t speak English and wasn’t familiar with American customs.

“I was culture-shocked,” says the now-25-year-old Wei. “Everything was very different from where I came from: the language, the food and the way people were doing things. I felt like I was a stranger in another country, and I was. I did not know how to read or speak the language to make friends, so it was very hard for me.”

Basketball makes a difference

Basketball changed his life — and ultimately led to him change the lives of others as the coach for South Sudan’s fledgling wheelchair basketball team. It’s in Houston where he first learned to play.

“Basketball was introduced to me by the neighborhood kids who used to go to the park every day after school. I used to go to the park to go watch them play,” Wei says. “Then one day, a kid passed me the ball. I shot the ball from my wheelchair and made the basket. From there, the kid who passed me the ball asked me a very important question that would change my life forever.

“I couldn’t believe what I saw. I saw athletes in wheelchairs that were shooting a basketball and moving so fast with the ball, maneuvering their chairs in incredible ways. On that day, a new sport was born for me. After 10 years of playing soccer with my hands in the refugee camp where I grew up in Ethiopia, I finally had found my true athletic calling.”

— Malat Wei

The kid asked me, ‘Have you ever seen wheelchair basketball?’”

Wei had not. So, he called some of his church friends who had computers. On YouTube, he watched videos of wheelchair basketball.

“I couldn’t believe what I saw,” Wei says. “I saw athletes in wheelchairs that were shooting a basketball and moving so fast with the ball, maneuvering their chairs in incredible ways. On that day, a new sport...
was born for me. After 10 years of playing soccer with my hands in the refugee camp where I grew up in Ethiopia, I finally had found my true athletic calling.”

It was a calling that would take him around the world — he played at the University of Arizona, then professionally in France for three years — and, finally, back home.

“Wheelchair basketball gave me the same confidence and feeling of belonging that I had in Dimma refugee camp in Ethiopia,” Wei says. “When I got the opportunity to play professionally, I knew I had to take this sport back to South Sudan.”

DREAM BECOMES REALITY

That dream came true in 2018. Jess Markt, who played and coached in the National Wheelchair Basketball Association and previously served as head coach of the Afghanistan men’s national wheelchair basketball team, leads the International Committee of the Red Cross’ Disability Sport and Inclusion Program. In 2017, Markt went to Juba, South Sudan, to run a basketball camp. In-
have had conditions like polio that left them disabled from a very young age. There are a few of these players who have been playing wheelchair basketball for many years but most only started playing in the past three years. Those who have been playing for a longer time never had proper coaching until more recently, so the game is still in its very beginning stages of development in South Sudan.”

Wei returned last December to coach a group of women, many of whom had never played the game. He was supposed to go back to South Sudan in May to coach the men’s team in advance of a June tournament in Congo, but the novel coronavirus pandemic put that on hold.

“Wheelchair basketball can mean a lot to all the athletes with disabilities in South Sudan,” he says. “When they come to the basketball court and I see them play, I can see on their faces how excited they are about this game.”

It’s a joy that’s badly needed. South Sudan became an independent nation in July 2011. Fighting continued through most of the country’s brief history, but a unity government was formed in February. Wei is optimistic about his homeland’s future.

“For me to come back home and teach them the game that changed my life in America shows that someone like me who grew up in the refugee camp did not forget where he came from. It shows them that someone cares about them,” Wei says. “The reason why I want to return to South Sudan and start a business there is because South Sudan is a young nation that is growing very fast and has a lot of economic potential. I want to be a part of the growth of my home country and hopefully have a positive influence on its society.”
Sports Associations

AMPUTEE SPORTS
Disabled Sports USA
451 Hungerford Drive, Ste. 100
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 217-0960 / 217-0968 (fax)
disabledsportsusa.org

ARCHERY
Disabled Archery, USA
c/o Coach Glen Harris
P.O. Box 698
Langley, WA 98260
(360) 321-5979
bowcoach@whidbeyisland.com
disabledsportsusa.org/archery

BASKETBALL
Wheelchair Basketball Canada
6 Antares Drive, Phase 1, Unit 8
Ottawa, Ontario K2E 8A9
Canada
(613) 260-1296
info@wheelchairbasketball.ca
wheelchairbasketball.ca

International Wheelchair Basketball Federation
5 Route Suisse
1295 Mies
Switzerland
(+41-22-545-00-00)
wfbf.org

BILLIARDS
National Wheelchair Poolplayers Association
9757 Mount Loomis Court
Las Vegas, NV 89178
jdelezal@verizon.net

BOWLING
American Wheelchair Bowling Association
c/o Gary Ryan, AWBA Secretary
16006 Congo Lane
Houston, TX 77040
(713) 444-7588
gryan210@sbcglobal.net
awba.org

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

FLYING
Freedom’s Wings International
324 Charles Street, Apt. 25
Cooperstown, PA 18036
(800) 382-1197
freedomswings.org

International Wheelchair Aviators
82 Corral Drive
Keller, TX 76244
(817) 229-4634
wheelchairavatars@yahoo.com
wheelchairavatars.org

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

GOLF
U.S. Golf Association
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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@amputee-golf.com
nagagolf.org

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

HORSEBACK RIDING
North American Riders for the Handicapped Association
P.O. Box 33150
Denver, CO 80223
(303) 369-9140 / (303) 252-4610 (fax)
tharmilt.org

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

MULTISPORT
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casacolina.org

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Adaptive Sports USA
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(720) 412-7979
nationaloffice@adaptivesportsusa.org
adaptivesportsusa.org

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4250 Veterans Memorial Highway, Ste. 420E
Hollbrook, NY 11741
(855) 987-8326 / 288-3377 (fax)
worldteamsports.org

QUAD SPORTS
Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP)
3075 Adeline St., Ste. 155
Berkeley, CA 94703
(510) 849-4663 / 849-4616 (fax)
info@borp.org
borp.org

United States Quad Rugby Association
4000 Ridgeway Drive
Homewood, Al 35209
(205) 999-3092
usqra.org

RACQUET SPORTS
International Tennis Federation
(Wheelchair Tennis Department)
Bank Lane, Roehampton
London SW15 5XZ, England
(011) 0044-(0)208-878-6464
0044-(0)208-392-4744 (fax)
wheelchairtennis@itftennis.com
itftennis.com

United States Tennis Association
70 W. Red Oak Lane
White Plains, NY 10604
(914) 696-7000 / 696-7029 (fax)
usta.com

RECREATION
Turning POINT (Paraplegics On Independent Nature Trips)
403 Pacific Avenue
Terrell, TX 75160
(972) 324-4231
point@turningpointnation.org
turningpointnation.org

SHOOTING
National Wheelchair Shooting Federation*
102 Park Avenue
Rockledge, PA 19046
(215) 379-2359 / 663-0102 (fax)
nrashooting.com

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

SOFTBALL
National Wheelchair Softball Association
3344 Paul Street
Omaha, NE 68154
(402) 365-5020
bfroendt@cox.net
wheelchairsoftball.org

TABLE TENNIS
American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association*
23 Parker Street
Port Chester, NY 10573
(914) 977-3932
johnsonjennifer@yahoo.com

TRACK & FIELD
Adaptive Track & Field USA
(WTFUSA)*
c/o Adaptive Sports USA
P.O. Box 621023
Littleton, CO 80162
(720) 412-7979
nationaloffice@adaptivesportsusa.org
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WATER SPORTS/RECREATION
American Canoe Association
7402 Albion Station Boulevard,
Ste. B-232
Springfield, VA 22150
(703) 451-0141 / 451-2245 (fax)
americancanoe.org

Handicapped Scuba Association
1104 El Prado
San Clemente, CA 92673
(949) 498-4540 / 498-6128 (fax)
sa@hsascuba.com
hsascuba.com

U.S. Wheelchair Swimming, Inc.
c/o Adaptive Sports USA
P.O. Box 621023
Littleton, CO 80162
(720) 412-7979
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adaptivesportsusa.org

Water Skiing With Disabilities Association
1251 Holy Cow Road
Polk City, FL 33868
(800) 533-2972 / (863) 324-4341
325-8239 (fax)
usawaterski.org

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nationaloffice@adaptivesportsusa.org
adaptivesportsusa.org

National Governing Body (NGB) of Adaptive Sports USA
The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that began in March has had an unprecedented effect on sports events and activities throughout the world. Because of the countless alterations and cancellations of numerous events, SPORTS ’N SPOKES has decided to not include a calendar of events in this month’s issue.

Visit sportsnspokes.com/calendar for a regularly updated list of events that have been postponed or called off because of the pandemic.

We hope to have the calendar back in the magazine for the July issue.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) are the latest major sports event to be affected by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which cosponsors the NVWG with Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), announced April 1 that the Games have been canceled because of concerns surrounding COVID-19.

PVA National President David Zurfluh issued a video statement the same day and says while he’s sad about the decision, “it was made out of great caution for the health, safety and well-being of our veterans, their families and all involved.”

A resident of the Tacoma, Wash., area, Zurfluh added that he was disappointed to not have the Games in his part of the country.

“I’m very saddened about the Portland Games being canceled because my proximity of being 124 miles from Portland,” he says. “I was really looking forward to showcasing the great Northwest, but that will have to wait. What’s important now is that we come together during this time of crisis for the COVID-19, we unite, we get together, virtually, and that we find the reserve to get through this.”

New York City is scheduled to host the 2021 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, which will run from Aug. 8–13, 2021.
The 2021 NVWG are to take place in New York City, running from Aug. 8–13, 2021. For more information, visit wheelchairgames.org.

**Invictus Games Postponed**

With the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic spreading across the world, this month’s Invictus Games in The Hague, Netherlands, have been postponed until next year.

The Board of the Invictus Games The Hague 2020, along with the Invictus Games Foundation, decided in mid-March to postpone the Games and is investigating options to reschedule them, possibly in May or June 2021.

Twenty nations, including the United States, were expected to take part in the May 9–16 event, which is for wounded, injured or ill servicemen and servicewomen and was started by Harry, Duke of Sussex, in 2014.

According to a press release, the decision was taken in consultation with the participating nations’ teams and in close coordination with local and national authorities to limit the impact of the pandemic on all parties involved in the delivery of, and particularly participation in, the Games.

“The coronavirus and its effects are part of a global pandemic which will influence every public event in the foreseeable future. Therefore, we find ourselves in a clear situation which left us no other choice than to reschedule the Invictus Games to the year 2021,” says Mart de Kruif, chairman of the Invictus Games The Hague 2020, in the press release. “By doing this, we also bring clarity to those vulnerable competitors and their loved ones, a clarity which is so desperately needed in their journey to recovery.”

For more information, visit invictusgamesfoundation.org.

**BASKETBALL**

**Hall Of Fame Inductees**

It may have been a small, two-member class that was inducted into the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) Hall of Fame this year, but there was nothing little about their impact on the game.

Jeff “Glas” Glasbrenner and Bill Greene were welcomed into the hall in mid-March during the 2020 NWBA Toyota Wheelchair Basketball National Championships in Wichita, Kansas.

Glasbrenner’s 63 points in the 2004 National Wheelchair Basketball Championship game is remembered as one of the greatest single-game performances in NWBA history.

Glasbrenner also won a national wheelchair basketball championship at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and four Division I national championships. During his time on the U.S. national wheelchair basketball team, he won two world championship gold medals (1998 and 2002).

Greene has been a trailblazer for many years in the NWBA. He has had a positive impact on many youth with disabilities in the Washington, D.C., area and beyond since the early 1970s.

Willing to do whatever the sport or his athletes needed from him, Greene has been an athlete, coach, mentor, conference representative and organizer.

Greene has provided countless athletes with disabilities an opportunity to compete and develop. He instilled many qualities into those athletes, including...
independence, confidence, courage, accountability, discipline, sacrifice and sportsmanship.

For more information, visit nwba.org.

PARALYMPICS
Birthplace Of The Games
Helping With COVID-19

The 2020 Summer Paralympics in Tokyo may be postponed, but the birthplace of the Games — Great Britain — is staying busy helping with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Stoke Mandeville Stadium in Great Britain has been transformed from a disability sports facility into a health care center during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Located about an hour from London, the converted center is looking after patients who no longer require acute care but are still not prepared to go home and are unable to remain at home because they have little support. The move helps free up spaces at hospitals and also provides focused care for some of the most vulnerable patients. It’s staffed by health care workers, as well as volunteers with health or social care backgrounds.

Situated next to the famed Stoke Mandeville Hospital, the stadium developed out of the Stoke Mandeville Games in 1948, which was the predecessor of the Paralympic Games. The facility opened in 1969 as an international center of sport for men, women and children with disabilities. It was redeveloped in 2003 to become a state-of-the-art sports complex, hosting camps, training academies, conferences and more.

For more information, visit stokemandevillestadium.co.uk.

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