

# Quest Dispatch



*Quest for the Best!*



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Sunday, July 27, 2008

## Women Veterans Feel the Camaraderie and Love the Competition



At this year's National Veterans Wheelchair Games, where more than 500 athletes have come to compete, nearly 50 women are going for the gold alongside their male counterparts. With the exception of team sports, most events are grouped by classification, experience and ability, and arranged so that women compete with women, and men with men. Divvy up the sports in any fashion, though, because here at the Wheelchair Games, a veteran is a veteran – it's as simple as that.

"I enjoy going to the Games to support the other veterans," said Lenora Stern, a Navy veteran from Sequim, Wash.



**Judith Ruiz from Chicago, Ill., competes in archery on Saturday.**

"Besides competing, I just feel like I'm where I belong." For Stern, 72, the 2008 Games mark her fourth year participating.

Judith Ruiz, a Marine Corps veteran from Chicago, Ill., is also a returning athlete to the event. "Participating in the Wheelchair Games gives me a great sense of accomplishment," she said. "Ability at any level assures me that I am still capable."

Women are the fastest growing segment of the veteran population, with more than 200,000 women serving in the military today, and approximately 1.7 million female veterans. At the 2008 Wheelchair Games, participants of both genders range in age from 22 to 84 years and represent every conflict, from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Navy veteran Amy Riter, 33, is giving the Games a try for the first time this year. "Being a woman in the military was



**Emma Burns from Wilsden in West Yorkshire, Great Britain, competes in the sled hockey exhibition.**

a wonderful experience," Riter said. "It gives you a tougher skin; it's an empowering experience. I miss the camaraderie." This week, Riter is sure to find what she's been missing before she returns home to Canton, Ohio on Wednesday.

Bonnie Sampsell, 56, feels the same. "I always said, 'If you want to travel, see the world, learn new things – enlist in the military.' I would recommend it to anyone. I enjoy being a woman veteran," said Sampsell, whose daughter is on active duty in Iraq. The Games offer Sampsell, an Army veteran, an exciting gateway to sports, friends and fellowship. She has looked forward to being a part of the Games every year since 1997 and she recommends the Games to all veterans with disabilities.

That can-do attitude is precisely what the athletes at this week's Wheelchair Games are all about – the women as well as the men. It's the tie that binds these veterans together and draws them in for a week of fellowship and healing; a week that produces enough inspiration to last the whole year through. Well, at least until the week of the next National Veterans Wheelchair Games rolls around.

## Athletes Travel Near and Far to Enjoy Omaha

For every athlete at the 2008 Games, the journey began with paperwork. But for most, the adventure also included actual travel; some arrived from mere blocks away, while many ventured thousands of miles to be with their comrades in the throws of competition.

“I am really excited about the Games being in Omaha— I love it,” said William “Dave” Gardner, 55, a Marine Corps veteran from Omaha. “Being able to compete in the Games is so much fun, and shows that we are active, competitive and have a great deal to offer.”

For the nine Omaha veterans competing this year, there’s a distinct advantage to having the Games on their own turf: the “fans in the stands” will be stocked with cheering locals.

Navy veteran Dave Nelson, Jr., 46, is another Omaha athlete. “Having the Games so close to home is a great thing,” he said. “I’m familiar with the environment, and have lots of relatives nearby. Omaha has great food and attractions and the people are really friendly.”

Athletes who have traveled many miles, are sure to appreciate the hospitality extended by the city and its people. Ken Schoenlein, 50, is an Army veteran who has crossed 3,300 miles to get to here. A Willow, Alaska resident, his first Games experience was in Anchorage in 2006. At the annual event, Schoenlein experiences a big change from his daily routine. “I live in the middle of the woods,” he said. “On my daily wheel to exercise my dog, I check the road to make sure the tracks from bears and moose aren’t fresh.” No animal tracks to watch for in Omaha, just the tracks of 500-plus wheelchair athletes on their way to victory.



**Paul Jackson, from Great Britain, talks about his sled hockey game with University of Nebraska Omaha hockey players Jeri C Agosta and Nick Fanto.**

Jeremy Wagner, 27, of Wai-anae, Hawaii, is competing in the Games for the first time after traveling 10 hours and more than 3,800 miles to do it. An Army veteran, Wagner served in Iraq during 2004. “I was mostly looking forward to meeting other people at the Games who are in the same situation as me, as well as the



competition and camaraderie,” he said. “Being around others who have to go through life differently than the rest of the human race is the best thing for me. It helps show me that even though we are different, life still goes on and it can still be great!”

Emma Burns, 27, a third-time member of the British Team from Wilsden, in West Yorkshire, is among the athletes traveling the farthest—over 4,200 miles. “I love the camaraderie among the athletes,” she said. “Prior Games have been spot-on, opening up horizons as to what is possible.”

Burns’ fellow British military veteran, Andy Mcerlean, 38, is from Waterlooville, in Hampshire, but he’s used to traveling. “Since my accident, I have played wheelchair tennis, which has taken me around the world,” he said. Competing in the Games for the eighth time, Mcerlean had a list of where he wanted to go in Omaha, including “a stomach stretching steak!”

Army veteran and novice athlete Bob Lee, 65, is familiar with those famous steaks—he’s from Omaha. “It’s just fantastic having the Games so close to home,” he said. “To me, the Games are not all about winning; the Games show us that we can participate in whatever we want.”

Air Force veteran Scott Grove, 37, is also from Omaha and is attending his fourth Games. “The Omaha community is seeing a tremendous amount of spirit, camaraderie, competition and patriotism” he said.

Grove summed it up like this. “The Games bring a tremendous sense of pride in your healing. The athletes can’t help but feel Omaha’s warmth and genuineness—real hometown feeling!”

## Sponsors Make the Difference at the Games!

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games require a cast of thousands to organize and stage the world’s biggest annual wheelchair sporting event: athletes, their families, volunteers, spectators, staff and our generous corporate partners.

There are many ways in which sponsors make a positive impact on the Games. Here are just a few examples of how our sponsors work behind the scenes, in ways both large and small.



Invacare Corporation has been associated with the Games since 1985, and has provided the vitally important service of wheelchair repair. Without it, some of our best athletic performances might never have happened. Chairman and CEO Mal Mixon says, “Invacare supports the mission of Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Department of Veterans Affairs because it so closely matches Invacare’s own mission of serving people with disabilities.”

The UPS Foundation has made the life of every athlete less stressful by picking up their extra wheelchairs and baggage – from the airport transporting it to their hotel and back again – for some 22 years. The business expertise of UPS has prevented



See “Sponsors,” cont’d on page 3





# Diabetics: Special Tips for the Games

## Today's Clinical Corner



People who eat right, get plenty of rest and follow some type of regular activity tend to have healthier lives than those who don't. This is fact for everyone, but especially for anyone living with diabetes. In fact, exercise is an important tool in managing diabetes and staying healthy. If you are one of the many athletes who have diabetes, there are a few considerations to keep in mind while competing in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Here some special tips just for you this week.

- Be sure to check your blood sugar first thing in the morning and last thing at night.
- Check your blood sugar levels before, after and every 20 to 30 minutes during prolonged exercise.
- Know the signs of hypoglycemia and be prepared with available snacks, juice or glucose elevating products.
- Avoid alcohol around the time of exercise (even the night before a morning workout or strenuous event).
- Pay attention to your feet. Wear proper shoes and socks.



- Be sure to take your oral medications at the prescribed times, and take insulin if you need it. Insulin dosages might change during ex-

### Signs of low blood sugar:

**sweating, feeling lightheaded, shaky, weak, anxious, hungry, having a headache, having problems concentrating or confused.**

### Signs of high blood sugar:

**feel very thirsty, have to urinate frequently, feel very tired or have blurry vision.**

ercise so check with the medical team if you are having specific concerns or problems.

- Take control. You're in control of your own health. Pay attention to how your body responds to exercise and your blood glucose levels. Stop if you feel any signs that something is wrong. Stop if you need to drink water, eat a snack for low blood

sugar, use the restroom or check your glucose levels.

Even the most diligent of diabetics will, at some point, experience low (or high) blood sugar levels. You know the signs – be ready to treat them if needed. The key to successfully managing this condition is to be knowledgeable about how your body responds to exercise and prepared to adapt to those changes. Even if you think you might miss the bus or be late to an event, do not skip a meal or miss taking your medications – the consequences could be dire. Finally, be sure to tell your

coach, roommate and teammates if you are diabetic so they can give you some help if you need it.

## “Sponsors,” cont'd from page 2

what could be a logistical nightmare of lost or misplaced personal property. “The support from the thousands of UPSers who've been involved in these Games – from volunteering at the events to planning the transportation of equipment – signifies our shared focus and commitment to the Games, the athletes and our communities,” said Lisa Hamilton, UPS Foundation president.

The Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) is the local host sponsor. Incorporated in the VCS mission is an unwavering commitment to support VA's goal of providing outstanding quality health care. The Games present an opportunity for VCS to provide funding and employee volunteers from VCS central office to support an event designed to promote wellness, rehabilitation, and camaraderie among the athletes.



At TriWest, giving back to those who have made physical and mental sacrifices in serving and defending our nation goes far beyond just writing a check. It's a commitment. Giving is engrained in the company's core values. The health of our nation's veterans is important to TriWest, which provides access to quality health care for 2.9 mil-

lion members of America's military family.



There are dozens of other sponsors who make it possible to stage the wheelchair basketball, swimming or other athletic competitions. Suffice it to say, the cumulative contribution of all our sponsors is the difference between holding an event that is just OK and one that generates a lifetime of memories.

Michael Delaney, Paralyzed Veterans' associate director for corporate marketing, knows the sponsors first-hand. “There is no other wheelchair sporting event that enjoys a level of corporate support and engagement compared with the National Veterans Wheelchair Games,” Delaney says. “Our sponsors are demonstrating the best example of corporate citizenship and leadership, and I strongly believe that their exposure to the Wheelchair Games affects them in a most positive way.”

Their contributions certainly do the same for all of us, and we wouldn't be here without them. A sincere thank-you goes out to all of our 2008 sponsors!

# Summer Sports Clinic Pilot Program Set to Make a Big Splash in San Diego



Approximately 100 recently injured veterans from around the country will get the opportunity of a lifetime this September as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hosts the first National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic Pilot Program. The event, hosted by the VA San Diego Healthcare System, takes place September 28 through October 3. The purpose of the Summer Sports Clinic is to introduce water and adventure sports such as sailing, surfing, kayaking, cycling (hand and tandem), and track and field events to those who were recently injured, providing an early intervention and introduc-

tion to recreation sports. Many of the participants at this week-long event are from the Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom conflicts.

As Games' participants can attest, learning an adaptive sport and staying active creates positive changes in one's life. That is the mission of the new Clinic. Many recently injured veterans wish to participate in a variety of sports outside of those currently offered in VA's national rehabilitation programs. To answer this call, VA created the Clinic to provide an extension of what many medical centers provide locally, enabling a new national program in a larger venue.



"We are proud to offer another outstanding rehabilitation event that is a therapeutic extension of the superior health care these young veterans receive in our medical centers each day," said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "The purpose of this Clinic is to provide early intervention for veterans battling back from injury, not only

strengthening their bodies, but overcoming and improving their mental well being as well."

All of the activities that will take place in San Diego will compliment the therapy provided in daily rehabilitation programs at VA medical centers nationwide. Participation is open to U.S. military service veterans with orthopedic amputations, traumatic brain injuries, burn injuries, psychological trauma, certain neurological conditions, visual impairment, spinal cord injuries and other recently incurred disabilities.

Currently, VA co-sponsors four national rehabilitation events each year: the National Veterans Wheelchair Games,

the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Golden Age Games, and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Each event improves awareness of the therapeutic value of recreation, sports or the creative arts.

During the Summer Sports Clinic, veterans will build new skills, bringing to fruition their hard work and motivation as they realize their full potential – despite any newly acquired challenges.



For more information about the Summer Sports Clinic or to look into participating next year, check out the event's Web site at [www.summersportsclinic.va.gov](http://www.summersportsclinic.va.gov); or contact Sandy Trombetta at [santo.trombetta@va.gov](mailto:santo.trombetta@va.gov).

## Athlete quote...

"I look forward each year to competing at the Games. Don't ever give up and don't let anyone tell you it can't be done. There's always someone out there worse off than you."

*Joseph Knoblock, Army  
Land O'Lakes, Fla.*

## Congratulations!



...to our athletes with birthdays during the week of the Games.

- July 24** Fernando Marmolejo  
James McLaughlin
- July 25** Dana Liesegang  
Darryl Coe  
Jesse Gonzales  
Scott Grove  
James Mayo
- July 26** Jo-Ann Rodriguez  
Ann Grijalva  
Michael Hancock
- July 27** Evo Marini  
David Williams
- July 29** Roger Lainson
- July 30** Robert Thomas  
David Fowler





# Quest for the Best!



Athletes prepare for the Opening Ceremonies in the staging area.



Tamara Lawter from Kearney, Neb., carried the torch into the Opening Ceremony on Friday.



Secretary James B. Peake, M.D., shakes hands with Michael Guilbaut from Atteboro, Mass.



The contingent from Great Britain enter the arena...

Britain



Dennis Gordon from Longmont, Colo., competes in the cycling competition on Saturday.



## Kids Day Today!

The eighth annual Kids Day will be held today at the Northwest High School track from 1 to 4 p.m.

Since the 21st Games in 2001, Kids Day has been a yearly feature of the Games' program.

Veteran athletes competing in the Games this week will again serve as mentors for local children with disabilities, introducing them to some of the many sports and recreational opportunities available to them.

This year, mentors will be instructing the children in slalom, T-ball, and archery. Mentors will work one-on-one with children, teaching them not only the rules of the sports they play but also about having confidence and pride in their abilities. A special ceremony at the end of the day will be held where participating children will be presented with their own medals for their efforts and accomplishments. Mentors from past Kids Day have expressed how much the event has meant to them and they look forward to sharing their experiences and expertise with the children of Omaha.

Stop by Kids Day today and cheer on the participating children! You'll be glad you did!



Don't forget to drop off your nominations for the 2008 Spirit of the Games award. They are due no later than 8 a.m. tomorrow. Help us recognize the outstanding athletes at this year's event by dropping off your nomination in one of the Spirit of the Games ballot boxes today! Boxes are located at the located at the main hospitality desk and in Exhibit Hall A. Do it today.



Have you signed up yet to tell your story for the Veterans History Project (VHP)? You still have an opportunity! Look for signs directing you to the VHP interviews in Show Office B (near Exhibit Hall B) in the Qwest Center Omaha to make an appointment. The VHP honors our nation's veterans by creating a lasting legacy of their military experience. All veterans interviewed receive a VHP tote bag and a one-of-a-kind VHP Challenge coin. Interviews take place today and tomorrow from 8 a.m. – until 5 p.m.; and on Tuesday from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Regardless of your branch or period of service, age, military career or experience, we need your story. Share it with us today and make history come alive.

## Awards... Presentations

Medals will be awarded two ways. For sports events with a clear first, second and third place winner, medals will be awarded immediately after the competition at the venue where the competition took place. The events with immediate awards are: nine-ball, basketball, power soccer, quad rugby, slalom, softball, table tennis and weightlifting, and are all at the Qwest Center Omaha. A photo of the medal presentations will be taken and available for pick-up at the medal presentation area in the Grand Hallway of the Qwest Center Omaha.

For events that require the results to be tabulated, medal presentations will be delayed. All delayed awards will be presented at the medal presentation area in the Grand Hallway of the Qwest Center Omaha at the following times:

Sunday, July 27	4 – 8 p.m.
Monday, July 28	9 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Tuesday, July 29	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

## Just for Grins...



### Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend

Bill was rolling through the mall carrying a small gift-wrapped package when he met his friend Doug. Doug asked what Bill's wife wanted for her birthday, and Bill said she had specifically requested, "Anything with diamonds."

So, he wrapped up tickets to the final wheelchair softball game on Tuesday at the Qwest Center – along with part of a deck of cards.







## Daily Bulletin Board

### DME & Wheelchair Repair

**Durable Medical Equipment (DME)** is located at the Hilton Hotel in the St. Nicholas Ballroom, Hilton Garden Hotel in the Haze Room and at the Hampton Inn in Meeting Room A. DME Hours of Operation:

Thru Monday, July 28	On Call (402) 205-6051
Tuesday, July 29	6 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Wednesday, July 30	6 a.m. - Noon

The Games **Wheelchair Repair Shop** is located at the Hilton Hotel, Hill Room on the 2nd floor and is open from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. July 27 - 29. There will be a wheelchair repair presence at every venue and at departure time, all day on Wednesday, July 30. Phone number: (402) 205-6087



**Hospitality** - Friendly staff and volunteers at the 28th National Veterans Wheelchair Games hospitality desks look forward to having you stop by for information about Omaha, and discovering all the things to do and see in the local area. Hospitality desks at the Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn hotels will be open as follows:

Monday July 28	Noon – 9:30 p.m.
Tuesday July 29	7 a.m. – 6 p.m. 9 p.m. - Midnight

The Hours for the hospitality desk at the Qwest Center Omaha are:

Sunday and Monday, July 27-28	7 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Tuesday July 29	7a.m. – 6 p.m.



**Transportation** leaves from in front of the Qwest Center Omaha on 10th Street on a regular schedule to the event sites. Specifics for each event are below:

#### Sunday July 27

For <b>Track</b> with 8 a.m. event start	Loading starts at 6 a.m.
For <b>Bowling V</b> with 6:30 p.m. event start	Loading starts at 4:45 p.m.

A shuttle will run daily on a regular schedule from the Qwest Center Omaha to each of the Games hotels starting at 6:30 a.m. and ending at 10 p.m.

### Quote of the Day...

“Hindsight is a wonderful thing.”  
~ David Beckham



## Our Chef's Selections for...

Sunday, July 27, 2008

### Meals

Daily meal services continue today and end with lunch on Tuesday, July 29 at the Qwest Center Omaha in Exhibit Hall A.

Exhibit Hall A is located on the first floor of the Qwest Center Omaha. Meals will be served cafeteria style, with hot and cold entrees as well as á la carte items such as salads, grilled sandwiches, and an assortment of desserts and beverages. Athletes and others receiving complimentary meals will use their meal voucher provided during registration. Family members and guests may pay cash for each meal, and will not be required to purchase a meal pass for the entire week.

You may also choose to use your meal voucher at the concession stands in the event areas of Halls A, B and C.

**Hall A Meal Hours:** Through Tuesday, July 29 (unless otherwise noted):

Breakfast:	6 – 9 a.m.
Lunch:	10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Dinner:	4 – 7 p.m.

**Concession Stands Hours:** 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. through Monday, July 28. Tuesday hours, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

#### Breakfast

Main entrees: Scrambled eggs, pancakes, breakfast potatoes, maple glazed breakfast sausages  
Ala carte: variety of pastries, bacon, assorted cold cereals with 2 percent milk and fruit.

#### Lunch

A BBQ lunch will be served at Northwest High School  
No lunch served at Qwest Center Omaha; concession stands open

#### Dinner

Main entrees: Boursin stuffed chicken breast and carved petit tenders with demi-glace  
Ala carte: cold sandwiches, soup and salad





Weather

**Scattered Thunderstorms**  
High 87  
Low 71



Did you lose something? Did you find something? Lost and Found is located in the Games Command Center in Room 211 of the Qwest Center Omaha and is available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.



# Quest for the Best!

Daily Schedule for...

## Sunday, July 27 – (Kids Day at the Games)

8 a.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
	Field IV	Northwest High School
	Track IA, IB, IC	Northwest High School
9 a.m.	Field V	Northwest High School
	Power Chair 200	Northwest High School
9:30 a.m.	Power Relay	Northwest High School
10 a.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
	Field III	Northwest High School
11 a.m.	Field II	Northwest High School
1 p.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
	Field IA, IB, IC	Northwest High School
	Kids Day	Northwest High School
	Nine-Ball II, III	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
	Track II, III, IV, V	Northwest High School
3 p.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
3 – 5 p.m.	Weightlifting Weigh-In	Qwest Center Omaha, Room 210
6:30 p.m.	Bowling V	Thunderbowl
	Nine-Ball IV, V	Qwest Center Omaha, Halls B&C
	Power Soccer Games 5, 6	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
	Slalom IA, IB, IC	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B
7 p.m.	Air Guns	Qwest Center Omaha, Ballrooms A&B
8 p.m.	Power Soccer, Consolation Game	Qwest Center Omaha, Hall B



Great news! HP is once again sponsoring an iCafé (internet café) at the Games. Located at the north end of the Qwest Center Omaha's grand hallway, it features computer stations and two plug-in ports for personal laptops. It is open 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, except for Tuesday July 29 when

it closes at 2 p.m. *Thank you, HP!*

Want to connect via **WiFi**? Two "hotspots" are available in the Qwest Center Omaha, one at the grand hallway south end and the other near the entrance to the concert hall.

Take advantage of these opportunities to check your e-mail, send messages about your athletic achievements and log onto the Games' Web site for the latest information.

## The Internet Places the Games at Your Fingertips

The 28th National Veterans Wheelchair Games is receiving unprecedented online coverage. National and local media outlets are uploading daily webcasts and streaming video of athletes and events. Highlights of the Games can be found at Fox news [www.kptm.com](http://www.kptm.com), CBS news [www.kmtv.com](http://www.kmtv.com), ABC news [www.ketv.com/sports/index.html](http://www.ketv.com/sports/index.html), and the Omaha World Herald [www.omaha.com](http://www.omaha.com). In addition, Xable.com, [www.xable.com/sports/vawheelchairgames/main](http://www.xable.com/sports/vawheelchairgames/main), the interactive media network for the disability community, latest online



episode of the Xable.com Sports Show features Tampa Bay athletes as they prepare for the Games.



Medical suites are available at the **Hilton Hotel in Room 4034** and **Hilton Garden Inn in Room 214**. They will be open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturday, July 26 and will close Wednesday, July 30 at 8 a.m. Medical assistance will be available at all times (with the exception of the Opening Ceremonies) during the duration of the Games. (Look for people wearing light green shirts with white crosses.)



For those athletes staying at the Homewood Suites, Courtyard by Marriott or the Hampton Inn, medical assistance will be available daily Midnight – 8 a.m. If an athlete has a medical emergency during this time, the hotel operator should be contacted. The operator will take the veteran's name and room number, and communicate with the physician or nurse on call. If medical assistance is needed at other times during his or her stay, the veteran should go to the medical suites located at the Hilton or Hilton Garden Inn hotels, or at the Qwest Center Omaha.

The medical suite at the **Qwest Center Omaha, in Show Office C**, will be open daily at 6 a.m. and will remain open until the last event in that location has ended.

In the case of a life-threatening emergency, please have the hotel operator call 911.

Only registered athletes or registered volunteers on duty may be treated by Games' medical staff. A list of local emergency clinics and hospitals will be available for family members who need medical assistance.

## NVWG Web site

[www.wheelchairgames.va.gov](http://www.wheelchairgames.va.gov)

Would you like your friends and family back home to be able to see what you are doing this week? Tell them to log onto the National Veterans Wheelchair Games' Web site to check out the daily editions of the *Quest Dispatch* (on the main home page) and individual news releases, soon to be located on the "Athlete Information" tab. Event results are located on the Web site as well. Information will continue to be updated through Tuesday morning.