

National Veterans Wheelchair Games



HOT SHEET

Friday, July 7, 2006

Last Full Day of Events at 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games

NOTE TO EDITORS: The 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games continue through tomorrow at the Egan Convention Center, Sullivan Arena and other area venues. More than 500 disabled veteran athletes (including more than 30 recently injured in Iraq) continue to compete in rigorous athletic events. The Games, a great patriotic, sports, and health/fitness story, are the largest annual wheelchair sports competition in the world! Slalom, swimming and weightlifting, as well as championship games in basketball, power soccer and quad rugby highlight today's agenda. For more information or to arrange for interviews or media opportunities, call the National Veterans Wheelchair Games Media Center (at the Hilton Hotel) at (907) 257-6768 or (907) 257-6769. For continuing updates throughout the week, visit the Games web site at www.wheelchairgames.org.

*SLALOM

9:00 a.m.

Bartlett High School

Ever see a wheelchair go through sand? A true wheelchair sport, the slalom event is a test of agility, skill, speed, and strength around a challenging obstacle course. The course is on a smooth surface, defined by flag gates around which the athlete must maneuver both forward and backward. Obstacles are added including ramps, platforms, slopes and hurdles. **An extremely emotional event with incredible displays of the athletes' strength, willpower, and sheer determination! Lots of cheers and spectator excitement as the paraplegic and amputee competitors test their mettle today.** 2005 gold medalist David Lund will compete today, along with other medalists William Kafka and Holly Koester. Don't miss this event.

*SWIMMING

2:00 p.m.

Bartlett High School

Imagine what it's like to swim competitively with little or no leg movement, or with no lower extremities. All swimming events start in the water and include competition in the breaststroke, backstroke, freestyle and butterfly strokes. Race distances run 25 yards for quadriplegic groups; 50 and 100 yards for other competitor groups. **Lots of action and determination are exhibited here, with potential swimmer/coach interviews.** Among those to watch are 2005 gold medalists Ruth Kult and double amputee James Milliken, a combat-wounded veteran of Vietnam.

*WEIGHTLIFTING

2:30 p.m.

Egan Convention Center

Weightlifting competitions are classified strictly by body weight within two classes—"high para" and "low para/amputee." The bench press is the form of weightlifting performed. Wheelchair competitors start

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WEIGHTLIFTING (continued)

with the bar held one inch from the chest and are required to drive the weights up in one continuous motion to a full extended position. This event demonstrates the strength and determination of our wheelchair athletes. Some of the “heavy-weights” at past Games have bench-pressed more than 400 pounds! Among those who are heavy lifters are 2005 gold medalists Ryan Lindstrom and David Patton. Never rule out the novice though, as Charles Mays, a combat-wounded veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, gives it his all on the bench today.

BASKETBALL (FINALS)

7:30 & 9:00 p.m.
Sullivan Arena

The rules for wheelchair basketball are essentially the same rules of the NCAA—with the wheelchair considered part of the player’s body in determining physical contact fouls. Three levels of player classification are used to achieve team balance, and players are allowed two pushes between dribbles. This is a fast and furious competition. Don’t let the wheelchairs fool you—this is hard-core, spirited, exciting basketball, with lots of crashing, colliding wheelchairs. **The Consolation Game begins at 7:30 p.m. The Championship Game will follow at 9:00 p.m. Medals will be awarded directly afterward.**

POWER SOCCER (FINALS)

7:30 p.m.
Sullivan Arena

Power soccer is a unique, competitive sport for motorized wheelchair users, played on a basketball size court by two four-member teams (one member as goalie) using a large rubberized ball. The objective is to maneuver the ball across the opponent’s goal line – and to keep them from doing the same. **Great action at today’s final Championship Game! Medals will be awarded after the game.**

QUAD RUGBY (FINALS)

9:00 p.m.
Sullivan Arena

Quad Rugby is a unique, tough, competitive contact sport especially developed for quadriplegics. It is played on a basketball court by four-member teams. Unique to wheelchairs, this is an interesting event for the sports-viewing public and lots of fun to watch. Rough and tumble, high-action, great action photo and interview opportunities. **Lots of emotion in the final rounds today. Medals will be awarded after the last game.**

OTHER EVENTS ON FRIDAY

Archery – Bartlett High School, 9:00 a.m. More than 100 archers signed up for this event this year!

***Great action photo opportunities!**