

Riposte – Newsletter of the British Disabled Fencing Association

“Its not every four years, its every day”. So say the American Wheelchair Rugby team about the Paralympics, and it couldn't be truer. The GB squad saw the results of their efforts in Beijing in August so morale amongst the squad now arrived for the Paralympics must be nearly as high as the wave of expectation and excitement that has been created by the historic achievements and final medal table placement. So, Go Team GB, and especially fencings representative Lee Fawcett!

Comment from the Chair...

London Calling

The next Paralympic Games will undoubtedly be the best opportunity we ever have to really champion disability sport. Fencing will be no exception. In order to create the best opportunity we really need to start working together as a team. When I say team – I include every

single person involved in any shape or form with fencing. The fencers in London will only be successful if they have all of us 100 % behind them at all times.

The November weekend will be our Launch event for London. In light of what I have just said – it will not be just about fencers. The Olympics have proved that it was the support structure and technology behind the sports that brought back so many Golds. I am sure the Paralympics will do the same.

In order for fencing to be successful in London we too need people committed to development, support, technology, armoury..... as well as fencers ! Being a fencer, is not the only way to get to London.

The launch event will include inputs on armoury, refereeing, coaching, development, technology, international links, video...and much more! Then.....at every single weekend for the next 4 years London will always be at the fore front of all that we do.

My greatest dream is to be at a medal ceremony with all of us proud that we had a part in it. It's now time to start to make that dream come true.

Shuna Body

Paralympics on the BBC

BBC television coverage of the Paralympics will be more extensive than ever before, action will be streamed live for six hours a day through the red button and via broadband.

There will be live terrestrial/red button coverage at the weekends and the opening and closing ceremonies will also be broadcast live including the handover to London moment on the final day

Daily midweek programmes on BBC2 between 1900 and 2000 will be available on high definition (HD) and on iPlayer. Clare Balding and Steve Cram will present the programmes from the Bird's Nest stadium.

There will be more live coverage than from Athens 12 different sports in all and there will be two BBC roving crews to record additional material.

Athletics, swimming, cycling, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby will comprise the backbone of the BBC's TV coverage throughout the Games, but will be supplemented by coverage of other sports, particularly those in which Paralympics GB have strong medal hopes like equestrian and wheelchair tennis.

GB have two football sides competing and adaptive rowing is a new Para sport.

Commentators and reporters include Paul Dickenson, Bob Ballard, Eddie Butler, Ronald McIntosh, Nick Mullins, Phil Jones, Rishi Persad and Lizzie Greenwood-Hughes.

They will be joined by ex-Paralympians Tanni Grey-Thompson, along with Ade

Adeitan and Marc Woods as guest commentators.

All the coverage will be streamed on the BBC's award-winning Disability Sport website, where there will also be a daily blog written from Beijing as well as reports and photos on all the main action, results and medal table bbc.co.uk/paralympics.

BBC Radio 5 Live will bring all the news throughout the Paralympic Games with a dedicated team of reporters in Beijing. There will also be live commentary from some key events featuring strong British interest.

Other programmes covering both Paralympic stories include: News, Olympic Diaries, Blue Peter and Radio Five Live to name just a few.
(Source: BBC website)

BBC Coverage:

Saturday 6th September

12.50 – 16.30 BBC One

Sunday 7th September

10.00 – 13.00 BBCi

13.50 – 15.30 BBC Two

Monday 8th – Friday 12th

10.00 – 16.00 BBCi

19.00 – 20.00 BBC Two

Saturday 13th September

10.00 – 12.30 BBCi

13.00 – 16.30 BBC One (shared with World Athletics Final)

Sunday 14th September

10.00 – 12.30 BBCi

13.00 – 16.30 BBC Two

Monday 15th – Tuesday 16th

10.00 – 16.00 BBCi

19.00 – 20.00 BBC Two

Wednesday 17th September

12.50 – 16.00 BBC Two (live)

19.00 – 20.00 BBC Two

(highlights)

Beijing Basics:

Great Britain is sending a team of 212 athletes to the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, and will compete in 18 of the 20 sports.

In Athens, GB finished second to China in the medal table with 94 medals, including 35 golds.

Didn't quite make the Paralympics?

Most of us have the aim of getting to the Paralympics, so if you have not made it this year, never fear, you can make up for your disappointment by using the Wii. (No, it is not the latest incontinence product!)

Did you know that there is an Olympic Beijing 2008 version, so you can now be an Olympian if you really feel the need! Perhaps we could fill in the gap by producing a Paralympic version eh?

Anyway, there is an Epee event, which goes up to 15 hits, now if you are a computer games idiot, it can be a real challenge. (ie what button do I press?) But if you are a games whiz (or rather a nerd) it can be good fun.

I have gained a Bronze during my events, (but I blame my hip for that), in addition to lots of fights with family members, just like being with the French and Italians really!

I thought it would be good fun to bring it to one of the training sessions, and we could have our very own fencalympics, with an entry fee and all money going to the association let me know what you think.

Suzannah Rockett (aka Miss Tarmac)

Wheelchair Fencing Nationals 2008

The 2008 National Wheelchair Fencing Championships were held at the Stoke Mandeville Stadium over the weekend of the 1st – 3rd August.

Due to many uncontrollable issues several participants had to withdraw prior to the competition leaving a small but talented group who made up for in quality what they lacked in quantity.

The Foil competition kicked off the proceedings on Friday afternoon. A seeding pool taking the top 4 ranked fencers through to a direct elimination round which was effectively the semi-final. Some great fencing hits were scored by all the competitors in two closely fought bouts, setting up a final featuring Beijing bound Lee Fawcett and just turned 18 year old Tom Hall-Butcher. A stunning match saw Tom take the title of National Foil Champion for 2008, his first senior title.

A team event was organised for the remainder of the afternoon with the

individual Gold and Silver medallists from the earlier competition taking the helm as team captains. The match which was fenced in high spirits with the welcome inclusion of newcomer Coach Terry Collings who donned some borrowed equipment and showed his natural flair and fencing skills to contribute to his team taking a well earned victory in the challenge match for the ironically named Buccaneers over the Pirates.

Day two saw the Epee competition in full swing again with a seeding pool to place the athletes for the direct elimination rounds. Closely fought semis saw Fawcett beat Ross and Wilson beating Hall-Butcher. This set up an exciting final which saw Wilson taking and retaining the National Epee Championship for the second consecutive year by a score.

A further team event with equally humorous 'pirate themed' names saw the Black Pearls take on the Black Pigs – Q. why are GB fencers like pirates? A. Because they GB RRRRRRRRRRR!

A quiet night out in Aylesbury was attended by the fencers proving age has no

obstacle to enjoying oneself!!! Dancing, cavorting and the drinking of one or two shandy's was the order of the day following an athlete fuelling session in the 'Noodle Nation' restaurant.

Sunday morning heralded the start of the eagerly anticipated Sabre competition. A fast paced opening pool paved the way for a semi final line up of Tom Hall-Butcher vs defending champion Neil Ross, and Lee Fawcett vs new Sabre convert Simon Wilson. Neil edged out Tom in the first semi 15, and Lee making the final by beating Simon. The Final saw Neil take an early lead only to be caught up quickly by Lee. After a tense bout the match lay in the balance at a nerve twitching 14 – 14 tie with all to play for on the last hit with the added tension of both fencers being on yellow cards. The last hit saw both fencers trying to outwit each other, Fawcett taking a chance and anticipating a beat attack was undone by a direct attack to chest, leaving the Referee happy with the final hit being decided with one light to Neil Ross who retained his Sabre National Champion title following an equally matched final the year before.

Special thanks must go to the people who made the Championships such a success and a joy to take part in. Caz Walton for organising and managing the event, Peter and Janet Huggins for providing the Armoury and weapon control, Peter (again) for his refereeing of the Foil and Epee, Terry Collings for his refereeing of the Sabre, Vera Burge for the score keeping, Paul Cordell for the IT support, and the two Catherine's for making the tea & coffee.

The Championships were once again supported by the members of the Nottinghamshire Fencing Club who provided vociferous support and joined in the team events.

Our thanks also go to Jean Stone, MBE, for taking time out of her busy schedule to present medals and trophies for the event.

Neil Ross

Comments, view and opinions.....

Should some disabled athletes really have their cake and eat it?

I never thought I would say this, but I realise I am kind of an old fashioned sort of girl, when it comes to disabled sport. I really believe that world class disabled athletes should take their skills and show them off to the world solely at the Paralympic games. (As a paralympian, I passionately believe that these are our games and I took a lot of pride with being a disabled athlete and representing my country)

In my opinion, the Paralympics are in no shadow of a doubt the full equivalent of the Olympics for world class disabled athletes, so why then should there be a need for some athletes to choose to be in both?

Take for example Oscar Pistorius and Natalie du Toit, these two individuals

are excellent athletes who want to compete in both the Paralympics and Olympics, Is this right?

On the one hand I can say well good on them, show the world what you can do in the able bodied world. But on the other, I can't help but ask myself, is this right, because after all they are disabled athletes and there is no getting away from it. Why is it not good enough to show the world their abilities solely in the arena of the Paralympics?

Another argument is this, if athletes are able to compete in the Olympics, then is there any need for them to compete in the Paralympics? If they are as good as our able bodied athletes, then surely they don't need to compete at the Paralympics. By doing so; are they disadvantaging disabled athletes?

Are we on course for integrating the Paralympics and Olympics, if so would that be a great idea, true integration?

Oscar Pistorius (blade runner) and Natalie du Toit, are both South African athletes and share a common aim, to participate in both disabled and able bodied competitions.

On May 3, 2008, Du Toit qualified for the 2008 Beijing Olympics after finishing fourth in the 10km open water race at the Open Water World Championships in Seville, Spain. Her time was only 5.1 seconds off the winner in a race that will make its first Olympic appearance in Beijing. She will also take part in the 2008 Summer Paralympics.

Oscar on the other hand has been unsuccessful in meeting the qualifying standard for the Olympics and has no chance of competing in the 400m. He has set records in the 100m, 200m and 400m sprints at Paralympic events. Oscar is now likely to compete in the Paralympic games in September.

There is no questioning that both Du Toit and Pistorius are excellent athletes, what I want to know is this, should they be able to choose which games they compete in, as most other disabled athletes don't have the same choices and is it really anything one else's business but theirs?

I have mentioned just a few opinions, there are many more I know, what are yours?

By Suzannah Rockett

Disability Sport Websites

BDFA & BPFA - <http://www.bpfa.org.uk/>
IWAS Wheelchair Fencing - <http://www.iwfencing.com/index.html>
IWAS (International Wheelchair & Amputee Sports Federation) - <http://www.iwasf.com/index.htm>
British Wheelchair Sport - <http://www.wheelpower.org.uk/index.cfm>

CP Sport (England & Wales) - <http://www.cpsport.org/home.shtml>
Disability Sport Events - <http://www.disabilitysport.org.uk/index.cfm>
English Federation of Disability Sport - <http://www.efds.co.uk/>
Inclusive Fitness - <http://www.inclusivefitness.org/>
Scottish Disability Sport - <http://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com/>
Disability Sport Wales - <http://www.disabilitysportwales.org/>
British Paralympic Association - <http://www.paralympics.org.uk/>

Fencing Websites

British Fencing – <http://www.britishfencing.com/>
England Fencing – <http://www.englandfencing.co.uk/>
Northern Ireland Fencing - <http://www.nifu.co.uk/>
Scottish Fencing - <http://www.scottish-fencing.com/>
Welsh Fencing - <http://www.welshfencing.org/>
Federation Internationale D'Esgrime - <http://www.fie.ch/>

The Fencing Forum - <http://www.fencingforum.com/>
Nottingham City Fencing Club - <http://www.nottinghamcityfencing.co.uk/>
Laszlo's Fencing - http://www.geocities.com/laszlo_jakab_fencing/
Fencing.Net - <http://www.fencing.net/>
British Academy of Fencing - <http://www.baf-fencing.org/>
Fencing Master - <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~jes/master.htm>
National Fencing Museum - <http://www.fencingmuseum.com/>

Fencing Equipment Suppliers

Allstar/Uhlmann UK – <http://www.allstar-fencing.co.uk/2home.php>
Leon Paul – <http://www.leonpaul.com/>
Blades Brand - <http://www.bladesbrand.com/index1.php>
Duellist - <http://www.duellist.com/cgi-bin/fencing.cgi>
Athos - <http://www.athosuk.com/>
Esgrime UK - <http://www.esgrimeuk.com/catalog/>
Jiang UK - <http://www.jiang-uk.com/>
Go Fence - <http://www.gofence.com/>

Sword Price Fighters –
<http://www.swordpricefighters.com/>
Merlin –
<http://www.konect.cwc.net/merlin/index.htm>
PBT UK – <http://www.fencing-supplies.me.uk/>
Pooley Sword Company
(decorative/awards) -
<http://www.pooleysword.com/home.html>

General Disability Websites

Scope – www.scope.org.uk
Capability Scotland -
<http://www.capability-scotland.org.uk/home.aspx>
DIAL UK - <http://www.dialuk.info/>
RADAR -
<http://www.radar.org.uk/radarwebsite/>
Spinal Cord Injury -
<http://www.apparelyzed.com/>
Spinal Injuries Association -
<http://www.spinal.co.uk/>
Association for Spina Bifida &
Hydrocephalus - <http://www.asbah.org/>

Sporting Bodies

British Olympic Association -
<http://www.olympics.org.uk/beijing2008/>
UK Sport - <http://www.uk sport.gov.uk/>

Anti-Doping -
<http://www.100percentme.co.uk/home.php>
Drug Information Database -
http://www.uk sport.gov.uk/pages/drug_information_database/

Forthcoming training dates:

Saturday & Sunday 27th & 28th September @
University College Worcester

Saturday & Sunday 22nd & 23rd November @
University College Worcester

Saturday & Sunday 13th & 14th December @
University College Worcester
** Christmas Party**

Booking forms for the next training weekend
have been sent out and need to be completed
and returned to Trish Taylor by 9th September,
along with your cheques made payable to
'BPFA'.

Thanks to all of the contributors to this edition :
Suzannah Rockett, Neil Ross, Caz Walton,
Shuna Body & the BBC website!

For future editions, please send material to:
cath.reid@virgin.net - its your newsletter so its
as good as you make it!

And a final thought to ponder...you can
never be too old to take up fencing!

