Chapter 1

Introduction to the Paralympic Movement

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Introduction

The Paralympic Movement, a dream and an inspiration for many, dates back to the post-World War II era of Sir Ludwig Guttmann, a Jewish physician who fled Nazi Germany for a new home and a new start in Great Britain in 1939. This neurosurgeon was now in a place where he could practice medicine freely and without religious persecution. In 1943, at the urging of the British government, Dr. Guttmann established the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire, which opened in February 1944. In 1948, he organized the first “Stoke Mandeville Games” for people with disabilities, on the same day as the start of the London Summer Olympics. Over the next couple of decades, the Stoke Mandeville Games grew to the point where it caught the attention of the International Olympic Committee, and by 1960 was run in parallel with the Olympic Games. The first Paralympic Games took place in Rome, Italy, with 400 athletes from 23 countries competing. Today, thousands of athletes compete in the Summer Paralympic Games and the Winter Paralympic Games. Sir Ludwig died in 1980, but lived to see his dream become a reality.

This book and this chapter chronicle the foundation on which Sir Ludwig envisioned the Paralympic Movement. It is written for coaches and for athletes, the elite and the yet-to-be elite athlete who has a physical, visual, or intellectual impairment. It is a cutting-edge resource, but the authors know and understand that in this rapidly growing and expanding movement, new technology and new evidence-based classification will be introduced. These chapters offer a starting point for coaching and training the Paralympic athlete, beginning with a brief history of the movement, then more detailed training techniques, methods, systems, skills, and best practices. The chapters on technology and classification are based on current knowledge and evidence, fully understanding that these two topics specifically will be forever changing. The coach and the athlete will decide how to apply these and other chapters to their own training programs as they prepare for the greatest sporting moment of their lives.

History of the Paralympic Movement

The first Winter Paralympic Games were held in Sweden in 1976, and just like the Summer Paralympic Games have taken place every four years thereafter. Since the Summer Paralympic Games in Seoul, Korea (1988) and the Winter Paralympic Games in Albertville, France (1992), the Games have taken place in the same cities and the same venues as the Olympic Games.
Chapter 1

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) was formally established in Düsseldorf, Germany on September 22, 1989. More than 200 people representing 42 countries attended the event that created for the first time a global governing body for the growing Paralympic Movement. Founding members of the IPC were the Comité International des Sports des Sourds (International Committee of Sports for the Deaf, CISS), the Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CP-ISRA), the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA), the International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (formerly known as INAS-FMH, now INAS), the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF), and the International Sports Organization of the Disabled (ISOD). The first President of the IPC was Canada’s Dr. Robert Steadward, who remained President until 2001. In that year, Sir Philip Craven of Great Britain was elected President and has served as such since that time.

Initially housed in a small office in Brugge, Belgium, in 1999 the IPC opened a headquarters in Bonn, Germany and currently employs 75 people and has over 200 members, including international federations. Today, the IPC organizes both the Summer and Winter Paralympic Games, acts as the International Federation for nine sports (alpine skiing, athletics, biathlon, cross-country skiing, ice sledge hockey, powerlifting, shooting, swimming, and wheelchair dance sport), and coordinates world championships for those sports. For a more detailed chronological summary of key events in the Paralympic Movement, see Table 1.1 and Tweedy and Howe (2011).

The top 10 greatest moments in Paralympic history

In May 2014, the IPC set out to determine what had been the most impactful events of the Paralympic Movement over the preceding 25 years. More than 500 people participated in the survey and the IPC Governing Board chose the top events (for fuller descriptions of the top picks go to http://www.paralympic.org/ipc-25-year-anniversary/top-25-moments). Thanks to Craig Spence, the IPC’s Director of Media and Communications, here are the top 10 Paralympic moments from the past quarter-century.

London 2012: Inspiring a generation, transforming a nation

The London 2012 Paralympic Games broke multiple world records and created seismic shifts in attitudes and perceptions toward people with an impairment. The Games did not just inspire a generation, but transformed a nation for ever. In September 2011, over 30,000 people attended International Paralympic Day in London’s Trafalgar Square. It was a taste of what was to come. The media interest was unprecedented, with 1 million Paralympic Games tickets sold in a matter of days, and a record 2.7 million tickets sold overall. The momentum continued in the lead-up to the Games. For the first time ever, the Games were positioned by the organizing committee, media, broadcasters, and commercial partners as a high-performance sporting event. Paralympic athletes were promoted on the strength of their abilities, as opposed to their perceived disabilities. Every worldwide Olympic partner signed up as a Paralympic sponsor, and many Paralympians starred in television and billboard campaigns. British broadcaster Channel 4 led the way with its multi-award-winning Superhumans television commercial (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKTamH_xuQ), and its breathtakingly innovative Games coverage was watched by two-thirds of the UK population.

The Games attracted a record-breaking 4,236 athletes from 164 countries. They competed across 20 sports in packed venues. The British media gave the event the coverage it deserved, and the achievements and stories of Paralympians were headline news – at both the front and back of all national newspapers. More broadcasters than ever before covered the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Television pictures were beamed to over 100 countries, reaching a cumulative audience of 3.8 billion people. By the time that Coldplay, Rihanna, and Jay-Z performed at the closing ceremony (see Figure 1.1),
### Table 1.1 History of the Paralympic Movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Establishment of Comité International des Sports des Sourds/International Committee for Deaf Sports (CISS) [first international sports organization for people with disabilities]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establishment of the Disabled Drivers Motor Club (UK) [one of the earliest sports organization for people with physical disabilities (Brittain, 2010)]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>First International Games for the Deaf [first international sports event for people with disabilities]</td>
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<td>1932</td>
<td>Establishment of British Society of One-Armed Golfers [one of the earliest organizations to emphasize sports of physical prowess for people with physical disabilities]</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>Start of World War II [theaters of war led to a large increase in the number of fit, young soldiers and civilians sustaining permanent physical impairments, including spinal cord injury]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Dr. Ludwig Guttmann begins tenure as inaugural Director of the National Spinal Injuries Unit in Stoke Mandeville, UK [Guttmann had free rein to develop and implement his quite radical approach to management of spinal cord injury (SCI). The inclusion of competitive sports activity was a key component of this approach that became increasingly important over the years]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>First Stoke Mandeville Games, an archery competition between patients from Stoke Mandeville and those at the Star and Garter Home in Richmond, Surrey, UK [occurred the same day as the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games being held just 35 miles away, an important, though possibly coincidental, initial link with the Olympic movement (Brittain, 2010; Bailey, 2007)]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Second Stoke Mandeville Games (known at the time as the “Grand Festival of Paraplegic Sport”; Brittain, 2010) [the Games became an established annual event and grew substantially, from 16 competitors and 2 hospitals, to 37 competitors from six hospitals (Brittain, 2010); Guttmann gives a speech in which he declares his hope that the Games would become international and achieve “world fame as the disabled men and women’s equivalent of the Olympic Games” (Goodman, 1986)]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>First Winter Games for the Deaf</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>First International Stoke Mandeville Games (known at the time as the “First International Inter-Spinal Unit Sports Festival”; Bailey, 2007), with an official team from the Netherlands competing in a program of five sports [recognized as the first International Stoke Mandeville Games; first international games for athletes with a physical disability; second Stoke Mandeville Games to be held in the same year as the Olympic Games].</td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>First media record of the term “Paralympic,” in the Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News (Brittain, 2010)</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>Fifth International Stoke Mandeville Games [the third Stoke Mandeville Games to be held in the same year as the Olympic Games]</td>
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<td>Guttmann awarded the Fearnley Cup by the IOC for “outstanding achievement in the service of Olympic ideals” [the first official engagement with the Olympic movement]</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td>The term “Paralympic” in common colloquial use to describe the Stoke Mandeville Games (Gold and Gold, 2007)</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>Establishment of International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee, ISMGC (Bailey, 2007)</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>1st Paralympic Games held in Rome (also officially known as the 9th International Stoke Mandeville Games); competitors were SCI athletes only [first International Stoke Mandeville Games held outside Stoke Mandeville; first time the Olympic Games and Stoke Mandeville Games were held in the same city, venue, and year, strengthening links between the movements; recognized by IPC as first Paralympic Games]</td>
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<td>Formal decision by International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee to align the International Stoke Mandeville Games with the Olympic cycle, so that in the year of an Olympic Games the Committee would endeavor to hold the annual Games in the same city (or country) as the Olympic Games</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>2nd Paralympic Games held in Tokyo (also officially known as the 13th International Stoke Mandeville Games); competitors were SCI athletes only [ISMGCMC achieves goal of linking the Games with the Olympics, which it set in 1960; Paralympic athletes share accommodation and sporting facilities used by Olympic athletes]</td>
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<td>Establishment of International Sports Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD), a multi-disability sports organization that aimed to provide sports opportunities for people with disabilities other than SCI</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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| 1966 | * Ludwing Guttmann knighted for services to the disabled and becomes President of ISOD  
  * World Games for the Deaf replace International Games for the Deaf (established in 1924)  
  * First international sports competition for amputees, held at Stoke Mandeville and hosted by the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association (Brittain, 2010) |
| 1967 | * ISOD transfers headquarters to Stoke Mandeville  
  * ISOD begins development of rules of sports and classification for amputee athletes |
| 1968 | * 3rd Paralympic Games held in Tel Aviv, Israel (also officially known as 17th International Stoke Mandeville Games); competitors were SCI athletes only  
  [despite promising early negotiations with Instituto Mexicano de Rehabilitación, ISMGC fails for the first time to secure a host for the Games in Mexico, the 1968 Olympic City; credible alternative bids from Israel and USA indicate the growing international stature of the Games]  
  * Establishment of Sports and Leisure Group by International Cerebral Palsy Society |
| 1972 | * 4th Paralympic Games held in Heidelberg, Germany (also officially known as the 21st International Stoke Mandeville Games); competitors were SCI athletes only  
  * ISMGC changes name to International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation, ISMGF (Bailey, 2007) |
| 1975 | * United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopts “The Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons” (Resolution 3447, article 9), which states that “Disabled persons have the right to … participate in all social, creative or recreational activities” |
| 1976 | * 5th Paralympic Games held in Toronto, Canada (also officially known at the time as the Tokyo Olympic for the Physically Disabled, or Toronto Olympiad); competitors were SCI athletes and, for the first time, amputee and vision impaired (VI) athletes  
  [first Paralympic Games not recognized by the ISMGC alone, but in cooperation with ISOD; first games that included athletes other than those with SCI – viz. amputee and les autres (LA)]  
  * 1st Winter Paralympic Games held in Örnsköldvik, Sweden (also officially known at the time as the “Winter Olympic Games for the Disabled”; Jahnke, 2006); competitors were amputee and VI athletes  
  * Establishment of Cerebral Palsy-International Sport and Recreation Association (CP-ISRA)  
  * UN adopted Resolution 31/123, declaring 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons |
| 1977 | * ISOD creates Les Autres Classification system, a single classification system for athletes not eligible to compete in competitions for people with SCI, cerebral palsy, amputation, vision impairment, or hearing impairment (Bailey, 2007) |
| 1980 | * 6th Paralympic Games in Arnhem, the Netherlands (also officially known at the time as Olympics for the Disabled); competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, athletes, and, for the first time, athletes with cerebral palsy (CP)  
  * Establishment of International Blind Sports Association (IBSA)  
  [first international sports organization for people with vision impairment]  
  * 2nd Winter Paralympic Games held in Geilo, Norway (also officially known at the time as the 2nd Winter Olympic Games for the Disabled; Jahnke, 2006); competitors were amputee and VI athletes and, for the first time, athletes with SCI  
  * World Health Organization publishes International Classification of Impairment Disability and Handicap (ICIDH), which defines and uses a standardized language for describing the consequences of disease and injury; and provides a framework to code information relating to the consequences of disease and injury |
| 1982 | * Establishment of International Coordinating Committee of World Sports Organisations for the Disabled (ICC) comprised of representatives from CP-ISRA, IBSA, ISMGF, and ISOD (Bailey, 2007; Brittain, 2010)  
  * First Cerebral Palsy World Games, held in Denmark and hosted by CP-ISRA  
  * UN adopts Resolution 37/53, proclaiming 1983–92 the “United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons” |
| 1983 | United Nations declares Decade of Disabled Persons (GA resolution 37/32) |
| 1984 | * 7th Paralympic Games held in two locations:  
  a. New York, USA (also officially known at the time as the New York International Games for the Disabled); competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, and, for the first time, LA athletes  
  b. Aylesbury, UK (also officially known at the time as International Stoke Mandeville Games); competitors were SCI athletes only  
  * 3rd Winter Paralympic Games, held in Innsbruck, Austria, also officially known at the time as the III World Winter Games for the Disabled (Jahnke, 2006); competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, and, for the first time, LA athletes |
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Establishment of International Association for Sport for Persons with Mental Handicap (INAS-FMH)</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>CISS and INAS-FMH join ICC</td>
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| 1988 | 8th Paralympic Games held in Seoul, South Korea  
(first Games since 1964 held in the same city as the Olympic Games, sharing venues and facilities); competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, LA athletes, and for the first time dwarves were included under the banner of LA  
4th Winter Paralympic Games, held in Innsbruck, Austria, also officially known at the time by two names: IV World Winter Games for the Disabled – Winter Paralympics 1988 and IV World Winter Games for Physically Disabled Innsbruck 1988 (Jahnke, 2006); competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, and LA athletes |
| 1989 | Establishment of International Paralympic Committee (IPC) |
| 1990 | ISMGF changes name to International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF) |
| 1992 | 9th Paralympic Games, held in Barcelona, Spain; competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, and LA  
1st Games for athletes with intellectual disability (ID) held in Madrid, Spain  
5th Winter Paralympic Games held in Tignes-Albertville, France  
Conclusion of United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons |
| 1993 | First VISTA Conference held in Jasper, Alberta, Canada at the Jasper Park Lodge  
First World Dwarf Games, Chicago, USA  
Establishment of the International Dwarf Athletic Federation (IDAF) |
| 1994 | 6th Winter Paralympic Games held in Lillehammer, Norway; competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, and LA |
| 1995 | CISS withdraws from Paralympic family, having joined in 1986 |
| 1996 | 10th Paralympic Games held in Atlanta, USA; competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, LA, and, for the first time at the same venue, ID |
| 1998 | 7th Winter Paralympic Games held in Nagano, Japan; competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, LA, and, for the first time, ID  
Second VISTA Conference hosted by the German Sport University in Köln, Germany |
| 1999 | INAS-FMH changes name to International Association for Sport for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) |
| 2000 | 11th Paralympic Games held in Sydney, Australia; competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, LA, and ID |
| 2001 | INAS-FID suspended from the Paralympic Movement by the IPC at the 2001 General Assembly following revelations that 69% of athletes who had won medals in the intellectually disabled events at the Sydney Paralympic Games did not have a necessary verification of an intellectual disability  
Deaflympics replace World Games for the Deaf (established in 1966)  
8th Winter Paralympic Games held in Salt Lake, USA; competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, and LA |
| 2002 | Third VISTA Conference held at the Swedish Development Centre for Sport in Bolnäs, Sweden |
| 2003 | A cumulated global television audience of 1.8 billion watch the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games in which judo and women’s sitting volleyball make their Games debut and at the closing ceremony the Agitos, the new symbol of the Paralympic Movement, is launched  
Cairo, Egypt, stages an IPC Extraordinary General Assembly adopting a new IPC Constitution and new nomination and election procedures for the Governing Board, which will replace the Executive Committee  
ISMWSF and ISOD merge to form the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS) |
| 2006 | Fourth VISTA Conference held in Bonn, Germany, home of the IPC headquarters  
9th Winter Paralympic Games held in Torino, Italy; wheelchair curling makes its debut  
IPC launches ParalympicSport.TV, an online television channel, during the Games attracting nearly 40,000 unique viewers from 105 nations |
| 2007 | IPC Table Tennis transfers governance to the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) and IPC Cycling becomes part of the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI)  
Seoul, South Korea stages the 13th IPC General Assembly; new members include Liberia, Panama, the Netherlands (transfer), Asian Paralympic Committee, FEI, FISA, ITTF, and UCI (there are now 178 members)  
The IPC Classification Code is approved by the General Assembly and published; it helps support and coordinate the development and implementation of accurate, reliable, and consistent sport-focused classification systems, and to detail policies and procedures common to classification in all sport  
For the first time, the Parapan American Games are held in the same city and at the same venues as the Pan American Games; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil welcomes 1,132 athletes from 25 countries  
Bonn stages the first Women in Paralympic Sport Leadership Summit |
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<td>2008</td>
<td>• 13th Paralympic Games held in Beijing, China; high jumper Hou Bin climbs a rope using just his arms in the Bird’s Nest Stadium to light the Paralympic Cauldron during the opening ceremony; rowing makes its Paralympic Games debut</td>
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| 2009 | • INAS-FID reinstated to the Paralympic movement at the IPC General Assembly  
• Sir Philip Craven re-elected President, Australian Greg Hartung becomes Vice President, and the membership votes in a new Governing Board  
• The process of complying with the IPC Classification Code is initiated through a self-audit process; a total of 157 NPCs, 4 regions, 3 IOSDs, and 10 IFs sign the Code for acceptance |
| 2010 | • Vancouver, Canada stages the 10th Paralympic Winter Games attracting 502 athletes from 44 countries; the cumulated global television audience hits 1.6 billion people |
| 2011 | • Fifth VISTA Conference held in Bonn, Germany |
| 2012 | • 13th Paralympic Games held in London, UK; competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, LA, and ID  
• The IPC and IOC sign a new cooperation agreement that increases the amount of financial support to the IPC and guarantees that the Paralympics will be staged in the same city and venues as the Olympics through until Tokyo 2020  
• The Agitos Foundation is launched aiming to be the leading global organization developing sport activities for people with an impairment, as a tool for changing lives and contributing to an inclusive society for all |
| 2013 | • Sixth VISTA Conference held in Bonn, Germany  
• In Athens, Greece, Sir Philip Craven is elected IPC President for a fourth and final term at the 16th IPC General Assembly, and Brazilian Andrew Parsons wins the race to become Vice President |
| 2014 | • 11th Winter Paralympic Games held in Sochi, Russia; competitors were SCI, amputee, VI, CP, and LA, and exceed all expectations, obliterating all ticket and television audience records for a Winter Games  
• IPC celebrates its 25th anniversary |
| 2015 | • Seventh VISTA held in Girona, Spain |
| 2016 | • 14th Paralympic Games held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil |
| 2018 | • 12th Winter Paralympic Games held in PyeongChang, South Korea |
| 2020 | • 15th Paralympic Games held in Tokyo, Japan |


Figure 1.1  London 2012 Paralympic Games. Source: Getty Images. Reproduced with permission of Getty Images.
few observers could believe what had taken place in the previous 12 days. London 2012 chairman Lord Sebastian Coe, speaking on the first anniversary of the Games, said: “What struck me most was that people were not seeing the disabilities: they were seeing the abilities. These were athletes performing feats that so-called ‘able-bodied’ people would not have got within a country mile of.” Post-Games research found that fantastic athletic performances, combined with capacity crowds and unprecedented media coverage, led to a huge shift in British society. One in three UK adults changed their attitude toward people with an impairment, while two in three said that the Paralympic Games changed the way people with an impairment are viewed in Great Britain. Very many aspects of London 2012 have set the benchmark for how future Paralympic Games should be organized.

**Historic “One Bid, One City” agreement**

Since their inception in 1960, the Paralympic Games have always been held in the same year as the Olympic Games. In Rome 1960 and Tokyo 1964, the Games took place in the same city as the Olympics, but that practice was not repeated until Seoul 1988 for the Summer Games, and Albertville 1992 for their winter equivalent. Since then, the Paralympics have been staged in the same city as the Olympics, with just a few weeks separating the two major sport events. However, it was not until 2001 that a formal agreement was put in place between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the IPC, ensuring that Olympic host cities would also stage the Paralympics.

On June 19, 2001, Dr. Bob Steadward, the IPC’s Founding President, and IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch signed the historic agreement that still benefits the Paralympic Movement to this day. The “One Bid, One City” agreement protected the organization of the Paralympic Games, meaning that the staging of the Paralympics is automatically included in the bid for the Olympic Games. It formally recognized that, after 2008, the Olympic host city had an obligation also to stage the Paralympic Games, using the same venues, facilities, and infrastructure (see Figure 1.2). The agreement also addressed the general scope and organization of the Paralympic Games, with the aim of creating similar principles for the organization of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Although this had been the informal practice since 1988, cementing this bond in the eyes of organizing committees and the public was an important step. The agreement also meant that, from the 2012 bid process, cities were fully aware that they were bidding for both Games, not just the Olympics. Speaking after signing the agreement, President Samaranch said: “Today is an important day for the Olympic Movement. This agreement is the result of many years of close relationships between the IOC and the IPC. Its aim is to secure the organization of the Paralympic Games, with full integration of both organizing committees and financial guarantees.”

Since the Salt Lake City 2002 Games, one organizing committee has been responsible for hosting both the Olympic and the Paralympic Games. Athletes from both Games live in the same village and enjoy the same catering services, medical care, and facilities. Ticketing, technology, and transport systems for the Olympic Games are seamlessly extended to the Paralympics. Over the years, the agreement has been extended on a number of occasions. The most recent extension was signed in June 2012, going through to Tokyo 2020.

**Barcelona 1992: The benchmark for the future**

Barcelona 1992 acted as a turning point for the entire Paralympic Movement, and is still referred to today as the best Games ever by many who witnessed what took place in the Catalan capital (see Figure 1.3). For the first time ever the Games benefited from daily live domestic television coverage. They were played out in front of packed venues and, in some areas, received comparable levels of organization and service to the Olympics. The performances of both Olympians and Paralympians were greeted with the same level of enthusiasm and support. Moreover, a Paralympian took center stage before the event started, with Para-archer Antonio Rebello responsible for lighting the cauldron during the Olympic opening ceremony. His extraordinary aim saw him shoot his arrow high above the
Figure 1.2 One bid, one city. Source: Getty Images. Reproduced with permission of Getty Images.

Olympic stadium. Four weeks later Rebello stood in the same position, only this time to light the Paralympic flame in front of a 65,000-capacity crowd during a spectacular Paralympic opening ceremony. Among those watching were IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, King Juan Carlos, and Queen Sofia of Spain.

Coach’s Corner

“The Paralympic Games in Barcelona were the first of their kind, crowned with success which highlighted to the world the human quest for great sporting achievements.”

Juan Antonio Samaranch, IOC President

Barcelona Mayor Pasqual Maragall, who was highly supportive of the Games, noted that “the city took a whole-hearted interest in the competition.” Although tickets for both the sold-out opening and closing ceremonies came at a price, tickets for all 16 sports were made available free of charge. The Spanish public responded, and a record 1.5 million people attended the Games. Many venues were regularly filled with hugely passionate crowds. Long queues developed for any sport involving Spanish teams or athletes, and it was not uncommon for people to be turned away, such was the demand for a seat. The USA beat 82 other countries to top the medal standings, helped in part by visually impaired swimmer Trischa Zorn, who won ten gold and two silver medals. Other highlights included the thrilling finale to the men’s wheelchair marathon, which took place in front of 65,000 spectators in the Olympic Stadium, and the men’s wheelchair basketball final, which took place in front of a 15,000-capacity crowd ahead of the closing ceremony. Barcelona 1992 were the last Games to be organized by the International Coordinating Committee (ICC), following the formation of the IPC in 1989, and benefited hugely from the financial support of the ONCE Foundation.
Jonnie Peacock silences 80,000 people

It is amazing how less than 11 seconds can change everything. At London 2012, British sprinter Jonnie Peacock delivered a performance that not only changed his own life for ever, but was arguably the greatest single moment in Paralympic sporting history. At the start of 2012, the T44 sprinter was a relative unknown. His only major international result was a sixth-place finish at the 2011 World Championships. In June 2012, however, things started to change. Peacock, then aged 19, ran the 100 meters in 10.85 seconds to become the world’s fastest leg amputee. With a world record under his belt, he started a gradual rise to fame in the lead-up to London 2012, starring in a Channel 4 television commercial promoting the Games and being talked about as a gold medal prospect. Yet few could have predicted what happened next. When eight athletes lined up for the men’s 100 meters T44 final – the most anticipated race of London 2012 – the crowd was already excited after watching David Weir win his third gold of the Games with a virtuoso performance. The competition was fierce. Nobody could predict the podium positions, and defending champion Oscar Pistorius and world champion Jerome Singleton were considered to have an outside chance. Unbelievable tension settled on the stadium as the athletes took to the starting blocks, but it was broken by 80,000 people chanting “Peacock, Peacock, Peacock.”

The emotion was raw, and every spectator felt part of the race. London 2012 chief Lord Sebastian Coe said: “Even the great Usain Bolt doesn’t get his name chanted in the way Jonnie Peacock did. It was spine-tingling stuff.” Peacock calmed the crowd, somehow coping with the immense pressure with ease. A stumble by Alan Fonteles Oliveira on the start line only added to the tension. Then, as the starting gun sounded, the athletes exploded into a 1.6 meters/second headwind. Peacock, however, had a tailwind of 80,000 screaming fans urging him
to the finish line. As the line approached he took a sneaky look to his left: there was nobody ahead of him. A glowing smile replaced the tension on his face. He knew that he was going to be Paralympic champion (see Figure 1.4). Peacock crossed the line in 10.90 seconds, a Paralympic record, and the stadium went ballistic. The USA’s Richard Browne took silver, marking the start of his huge rivalry with Peacock, while South Africa’s Arnu Fourie claimed the bronze. All eight finishers came in under 12 seconds. Peacock said: “To hear the crowd chant my name was amazing, and that’s going to live with me forever. I couldn’t have wished for better.”

Sydney 2000

After the tremendous success of Barcelona 1992, and the interesting experience of Atlanta 1996, the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games got the Paralympic Movement back on track with a sensational showcase of sport (see Figure 1.5). The momentum of a highly successful Olympics transferred to the Paralympics, and astounding levels of competition, administration, and public awareness raised the profile of the Paralympic Games to a new high.

From an organizational point of view, the Games were outstanding. The local organizing committee benefited from a number of shared resources with the Olympics. A record 1.2 million tickets were sold, and many spectators received excellent explanatory guides to athlete classification. The spectacular opening ceremony was a three-hour affair. One of Australia’s most decorated Paralympians, Louise Sauvage, lit the Paralympic cauldron, and pop princess Kylie Minogue entertained the fans with a virtuoso performance. The Games attracted 3,881 athletes from 122 countries, greater than the number of athletes and countries that took part in the Munich 1972 Olympic Games. Athletes
competed in 18 sports and, in terms of sporting performance, Canadian para-swimmer Jessica Sloan won the most individual titles, topping the podium six times. Great Britain’s wheelchair racer Tanni Grey-Thompson also enjoyed notable success, winning four gold medals. After being a demonstration sport in Atlanta, wheelchair rugby made its full Games debut and won huge praise for its fast and physical style. The USA edged out Australia 32–31 in a thrilling gold medal match. Despite the loss, Australia, aided by tremendous home support, still topped the medals table, winning 149 medals, including 63 golds. The Games were not without controversy, however. It was discovered that members of the gold medal-winning Spanish basketball team for athletes with an intellectual impairment did not meet the eligibility criteria.

The Games received unprecedented global exposure. More than 2,300 media representatives attended and, for the first time ever, 100 hours of Paralympic sport were webcast to more than 103 countries, ensuring that those in territories where the Games were not shown on television could still follow the action. The official Games website attracted an estimated 300 million visits during competition time. At the closing ceremony on October 29, which featured live music and a showcase of the athletes’ achievements, IPC President Dr. Bob Steadward said: “It came as a sheer delight, but no surprise, that you excelled yourselves in hosting our Paralympic athletes to an absolutely outstanding event. Thank you Australia, for enhancing the profile of our athletes more than at any time in our history.”

Great Wall of China and Forbidden City made accessible

A sporting event’s success is usually judged by similar metrics: the performances of athletes, number of television hours broadcast, media coverage achieved, spectator attendance, and commercial
income generated. What makes the Paralympic Games unique is the legacy that they can leave away from sport, and their ability to act as a catalyst for enormous societal change. Prior to the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, China’s 83 million people with an impairment were excluded from society. The country was inaccessible, inhospitable, and in many ways inhumane for anyone with an impairment. Winning the right to host the 2008 Paralympics Games, however, acted as a trigger for the Chinese government to improve the lives of people with an impairment and protect their rights as equal members of society.

To meet the requirements of the Games, new legislation on the building of accessible facilities was passed. A 5,000-strong team was recruited to oversee the construction and renovation of accessible facilities. In the seven years leading up to the Games, RMB 1 billion – equivalent to EUR 124 million (USD $136 million) and the sum of the last 20 years’ investment – was spent on making 14,000 facilities, including roads, transport hubs, and public buildings, accessible throughout China. More than RMB 67 million (USD $11 million) was spent on making 60 of the country’s most popular tourist destinations accessible. Elevators and wheelchair ramps were installed at the most popular part of the Great Wall of China, and accessibility was also improved in the 600-year-old Forbidden City and Imperial Palace (see Figure 1.6). On July 1, 2008, the revised Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of People with a Disability came into force, having been adopted by the National People’s Congress Standing Committee some months earlier. The law provided that state and society should take measures to improve accessible facilities and promote accessible information, in order to enable equal participation in social life for people with an impairment. One small example was allowing guide dogs and their owners into public places. This is

Figure 1.6  Great Wall of China and Forbidden City become accessible during the Games. © International Paralympic Committee.
taken for granted in many countries, but was completely new for China.

**Coach’s Corner**

On July 1, 2008, the revised Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of People with a Disability began to be enforced.

China was also among the first signatories of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the first international human rights treaty, which came into effect on May 3, 2008. Thanks to the Paralympic Games, people in China now have a greater knowledge and understanding of disability. Those with a disability now enjoy a better social status, more public attention, greater respect, improvement of social security, easier access to employment, better educational opportunities, and much more. Had Beijing not staged the 2008 Paralympic Games, such monumental change would not have taken place.

**First IPC–IOC agreement**

After years of working together informally, the IPC and IOC signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2000 covering the basic principles and relationships between the two bodies. Signed by founding IPC President Dr. Bob Steadward and IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch (see Figure 1.7), the agreement arose from the IOC 2000 Commission, of which Dr. Steadward was a member. The Commission recommended that the Paralympics must be organized in the same city as the Olympic Games, and that the obligation for the host city to organize the Paralympic Games must be included in the host city contract; the Paralympic Games will always follow the Olympic Games; the IPC will have a representative on both the IOC Evaluation Commission and the Coordination Commission; and the Paralympic Movement, through a member of the IPC and Paralympic athletes, could be represented on the IOC. Similarly, the Olympic Movement could be represented on the IPC.

The MOU was in two parts, the first of which was signed during the Sydney 2000 Paralympics. It included statements of shared philosophy, which made clear that both organizations support “the right of all human beings to pursue their physical and intellectual development.” It also incorporated matters of protocol, accreditation, funding, administrative relationships with staff, and information technology. In October 2000 Dr. Steadward was elected an IOC member, a role to which Sir Philip Craven was also elected when he took over as IPC President in 2001. The second part of the Agreement was signed in June 2001, and protected the future of the Paralympic Games. It formalized the practice of “One Bid, One City” and meant that any city hosting, or bidding for, the Olympic Games automatically had to include the Paralympics too.

Since the historic first agreement in 2000, the IPC’s relationship with the IOC has grown stronger each year. The “One Bid, One City” concept has been extended on a number of occasions, most recently in June 2012 to cover the 2018 and 2020 Games. The latest agreement, signed prior to the London 2012 Olympics, also provides the IPC with greater financial support and brand protection for the Paralympic Movement, and includes further cooperation on a range of other areas.

**Sochi 2014 breaks down barriers**

The Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games (see Figure 1.8) were a stunning success, exceeding all expectations. The athletes arrived at the Games as the best prepared ever, and they did not disappoint. Few observers will forget the stand-out performances of Russia’s Roman Petushkov winning a record six Nordic skiing golds, or Anna Schaffelhuber, the German sit skier, winning five gold medals from five events. In a Games of many highlights, one of the best was the vocal crowds and packed venues that became a trademark of Sochi 2014. A record 316,200 tickets were sold, a figure that was almost 40% higher than had been achieved at Vancouver 2010.

Traditionally, Russian spectators only cheer their own athletes. Nevertheless, they were quickly infected by the Paralympic spirit, supporting and celebrating the performances of every single athlete. This unified support climaxd on the final night of competition, when Russia met the USA in the ice sledge hockey gold medal match. The crowd
Figure 1.7 First IPC-IOC Agreement signed by IPC President Dr. Bob Steadward and IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch. © International Olympic Committee.

Figure 1.8 Sochi 2014 breaks down barriers. © Sochi 2014.
were delirious in their support of the Russian team. What was most impressive, however, was their reaction at the end of the game, when they stayed to cheer all three medal-winning teams. The support was for the sport and the athletes. It did not matter which country they represented; everyone was a hero. The Russia–USA match also marked one of the most historic moments in Paralympic broadcasting history: it was the first time that any US gold medal success had been shown live on the US television channel NBC. The Games also received more coverage than ever before, with television pictures shown on 125 channels in 55 countries. Consequently, the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games were the most watched in history, attracting a global cumulative audience of 2.1 billion people.

However, the biggest impact of Sochi 2014 was on the Russian government and Russian society. In 1980 the old USSR had declined the opportunity to stage the Paralympics because the government said that the country had nobody with an impairment. Thirty years later, the attitude could not have been more different. The driver behind this change was the Games. Sochi’s election as host city in 2007 led for the first time to Russian authorities and society paying attention to the issue of inclusion, and creating accessible environments for all. New legislation was passed at the highest levels of government, and the Sochi 2014 organizing committee created a barrier-free infrastructure, ensuring that everything built for the Games was completely accessible. Sochi is now a blueprint for the rest of Russia, with 200 cities already using what was created for the Games as a guide for furthering their own accessibility. The lives of millions of Russians will be permanently improved and enriched.

**The IPC is created in Düsseldorf**

The German city of Düsseldorf hosted the historic meeting in 1989 that saw the formation of the International Paralympic Committee. The aim of the meeting, which was attended by 203 participants from 42 countries, including West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, was to form a new world organization for sports for athletes with a disability. It was a tense and fraught meeting, with existing organizations airing their fears of losing prominence within any new body. Nevertheless, a vote was taken, and the official founding of the International Confederation of Sports Organizations for the Disabled (ICSOD) was confirmed (see Figure 1.9). A new organization had been created. It was soon agreed to change the name to the International Paralympic Committee, which would be “the only World Multi-Disability Organization with the right to organize the Paralympic and Multi-Disability World Games, as well as World Championships.”

The next steps were to elect an Executive Committee and agree on the constitution. The Executive Committee, made up of a President, two Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary General, three Members at Large, and a Technical Officer, would be elected by the General Assembly. There were also to be six representatives of the regions elected by the regions, one athlete representative voted for by athletes, and six representatives appointed by the six international organizations of sports for athletes with a disability. The role of the Executive Committee, led by founding President Dr. Bob Steadward, was to “initiate studies and make decisions on the policy as dictated by the General Assembly, respond to the needs of the members, set out rules for sanctioning international events, and ensure all complied with rules laid out by the IPC.”

The International Committee for Deaf Sports, Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association, International Blind Sports Association, International Association for Sport for Persons with Mental Handicap, International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation, and International Sports Organization for the Disabled would be celebrated as Founding Members of the IPC, and the voting rights and representation of all members were determined. Full national members of the IPC could participate in all international competitions in all sports, and the separate international federations retained the right to organize their own events that were separate from the Paralympic Games. The IPC was initially registered and housed in Brugge, Belgium as an international nonprofit organization, and shared office space there with the Flemish League for Sports for People with a Disability. The IPC was always an athlete-centered organization, and in 1990 the first Athletes...
Committee was elected, with Martin Mansell as Chairperson.

**Hou Bin becomes a global sensation**

After three years of planning and a full year of rehearsals, the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games took place on September 6 in the immense Bird's Nest stadium. A crowd of 90,000 spectators witnessed a sensational ceremony that drew on the themes of sky, earth, and humans, and aimed to showcase to the world the Paralympic spirit and Chinese culture. The colorful and memorable production involved over 4,800 performers, 850 of which had an impairment, and featured the most spectacular lighting of a Paralympic cauldron in the history of the Games.

Hou Bin, a Chinese high jumper who had won Paralympic titles at three consecutive Paralympic Games from Atlanta 1996 through to Athens 2004, was chosen as the person to light the cauldron. What he did in doing so left the whole world in awe, and showcased to the world the ability of Paralympic athletes to push their bodies to the absolute limit. With the Paralympic torch fixed to his wheelchair, Bin used his bare hands and every ounce of energy in his body to haul himself and his wheelchair 39 meters into the air and light the cauldron on the stadium roof (see Figure 1.10). It was an unbelievable moment, and one that epitomized all four of the Paralympic values of courage, determination, equality, and inspiration. The awe-inspiring sight was one that the Paralympic Movement, and the global audience watching on television, would never forget. Cheered on by a crowd who could not believe what they were seeing, Bin took over three-and-a-half minutes to climb the rope to the roof. By the time he reached the summit, he was exhausted. He took a deep breath, composed himself, and then lit the cauldron, to a thunderous roar from the enormous crowd. It was a symbolic moment, and one that marked the start of the Games that would change Chinese society for ever.
Yet Bin’s achievement was even more remarkable than it first appeared: he completed the climb with a broken finger, suffered days earlier during a rehearsal. IPC President Sir Philip Craven said: “To watch him climb a rope from the stadium floor to the roof, with a broken finger rubbing on the rope, and with a flame on his chair, was one of the most amazing things I’ve ever seen. That was the Paralympic spirit in action.”

There are many examples in botany, zoology, and even pathology. However, the classification of athletes proved to be more challenging. Each evolution of Paralympic classification was to “promote fair and equitable competition,” but as the movement matured it became clear that certain models of the time were not creating fair and equitable competition and had to be continuously evaluated and modified.

In the 1970s and into the 1980s, a medical model was established for athlete classification. Adopting a replication used in rehabilitation hospitals of the time, units for spinal cord injury, amputation, brain injury, other neurological, and orthopedic conditions created a class based on the medical diagnosis, with a single class used for all sports. In the 1980s there was a transition from medical to “sport-specific functional systems,” which resulted in fewer classes than the medical systems and

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**Figure 1.10** Hou Bin becomes a global sensation. Source: Getty Images. Reproduced with permission of Getty Images.

The unique challenges of classification

During the early years of the Paralympic Movement, it became clear that athletes had to be put into classes (see Chapter 7), not unlike scientific taxonomic classifications that group things according to their similarities and not their differences.
2.1.1 – Classification is undertaken to ensure that an Athlete’s impairment is relevant to sport performance

2.1.2 – Classification has two important roles:
- To determine eligibility to compete
- To group athletes for competition

15.2.2 – International Federations should develop evidence-based classification systems through research


created in the 1988 Seoul Paralympic Games a shift from sport as rehabilitation and recreation to elite sport. By the 1992 Barcelona Paralympic Games, all sports were using sport-specific functional classification systems. Some challenges began to occur when it was recognized that the classification of athletes was based on the experience and judgment of classifiers who may not always have used objective criteria.

In 2003, the IPC developed a strategy to create a system that was “accurate, reliable, consistent and credible,” and this led to the publication of the 2007 IPC Classification Code. The Classification Code set out to standardize jurisdiction, terminology, eligibility (minimum eligibility), operational procedures (such as athlete assessment, protests, and appeals), misrepresentation of ability, and classifier certification across all sports (for more extensive information, go to http://www.paralympic.org/Classification/Code). While there are many important points to be made regarding the Classification Code, Table 1.2 indicates the key standards that make this an important document.

In 2011, Tweedy and Vanlandewijck published a paper titled “International Paralympic Committee Position Stand – background and scientific rationale for classification in Paralympic sport,” which has become the standard reference for evidence-based classification. Each sport’s classification system must now match the standards identified in the Position Stand. Tweedy and Vanlandewijck (2011) explain that the purpose of evidence-based classification in Paralympic sport is to “promote participation in sport by people with disabilities by minimizing the impact of eligible impairment types on the outcome of competition,” which ensures that the success of an athlete is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability, and mental focus.

The ten eligible impairments for inclusion in the Paralympic Games are identified in Table 1.3. While these have been identified, not every Paralympic sport is obligated to include every impairment type. The IPC Classification Code does require, however, that the type of impairment be permanent. Each International Sports Federation determines which impairment type to include and the minimum impairment criteria (how severe an impairment has to be for an athlete to compete).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible impairments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impaired strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypertonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impaired range of movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ataxia</td>
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<td>Limb deficiency</td>
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<td>Athetosis</td>
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<td>Leg length difference</td>
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<td>Vision impairment</td>
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<td>Short stature</td>
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<td>Intellectual impairment</td>
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Are cyborg athletes in our future?

While issues regarding technology are covered in Chapter 8, the idea of a cyborg athlete in the future has engaged the Paralympic Movement in discussion of both classification and ethics. As far back as 1948 at those first archery competitions between patients from Stoke Mandeville and the Star and Garter Home, no one, including Dr. Ludwig Guttmann, would have dreamed of the technological advances that would be made in just a few short decades. During this time, many people believed that the introduction of advanced technologies (e.g., running blades) was just an evolution of sport, while others held that rules should be put in place where a prosthetic would not predict the outcome of a race or contest. The world outside of sport for athletes with an impairment did not enter the conversation until the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, when South African sprinter Oscar Pistorius competed in the Olympic sprint relays. Never before had an athlete competed with a prosthetic limb, so a great debate ensued as to his eligibility to compete in the Olympic Games. There was little conversation, however, about him and his running
blades competing in the Paralympic Games. Perhaps there should be more discussion, since because of the IPC's desire to “ensure competition is fair and equal, all Paralympic sports have a system in place which ensures that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus, the same factors that account for success in sport for able bodied athletes” (Tweedy and Vanlandewijck, 2011).

Soon the cyborg athlete will need to be studied. Technological advances coupled with the high stakes of Paralympic sport (including financial rewards) will mean that scientists and athletes will come together to try to find the winning edge. New terminology has been developed, including the cyborgization of sport and posthumanization. Ethical considerations will need to be determined, which may include stump length for amputee athletes when undergoing surgery. We do not know what the future holds; perhaps the cyborg athlete will be in our future. But, unlike the introduction of running blades, the Paralympic Movement needs to be ready for it. Either way, the Paralympic Movement has been jettisoned into the international spotlight courtesy of great athletic performances and the growing interest of news media around the world. Finding the winning (scientific) edge will be on every athlete's mind, and the Paralympic Movement must be ready.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has provided a brief history of a movement that has a relatively short history and has highlighted two important strategies for future success. Classification and technology are discussed every day as athletes continue to improve and, it seems, to shatter world records at every national and international competition. Athletes are training harder and are more dedicated to their sport than ever before. The International Paralympic Committee has a dedicated team of full-time professional staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to bring to the world the very best competitions. This book will help to guide the coach and the athlete to be the very best they can be within the rules of competition. It is also designed to stimulate conversation among the scientific community to engage even more research scientists to study these remarkable athletes. The world's spectators are involved, as evidenced by sold-out crowds not only at Paralympic Games but at regional events as well. Television rights have already been established well past the next quadrennial. If you are a coach, an elite athlete, or someone who wants to begin an athletic career, this book is for you.

References


Recommended reading


