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QUALITY FOR LIFE
The Dawning of a New Era in Military Support Services

I recently had the honor of attending the official closing ceremony for Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. It was very nostalgic to hear the Secretary of the Army and other dignitaries extol the long and distinguished history of one of the most storied institutions in the military. It was also an opportunity to reflect on some of the remarkable advances in medicine that have emerged in the ten years since 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began.

Walter Reed is over 100 years old and has served more than 150,000 of the most severely injured of two World Wars, the Korean, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan wars and many other conflicts. It has served presidents, senators, ambassadors and numerous other dignitaries; along with ordinary active duty and retired service members, including me and my family. I cannot count the number of times I have been to Walter Reed to interact with severely wounded warriors, and I have seen the lives of countless wounded warriors transformed there. The state of medicine, prosthetics, therapy, sports rehabilitation, and employment has been dramatically altered in the past five to eight years and much of this progress has gone on at Walter Reed.

Tremendous advancements have been made with prosthetics. We now work with wounded warriors who have power knees and power foot and ankle units that are lightweight. Advances in batteries aid in making it easier for double amputees to walk instead of relying on a wheelchair for mobility. Lightweight, reliable and functional knee, ankle and foot units make it possible to rock climb, hike tall mountains on rough terrain, water ski, wakeboard, snowboard, scuba dive, swim, cycle and engage in other sports. Arm prostheses are being tested that move on command from the thought process of the wearer! Burn victims are benefitting from advanced techniques in growing and grafting new skin.

In the therapy wards, there are inflatable support devices that enable a new amputee to walk and run even before they are completely healed. They can also practice walking and running on a track that has a supporting harness system so there is no danger of falling while they are learning to use their new prostheses. There are total environment simulated reality rooms that teach balance, walking, and maneuvering in a safe environment before the patients return to the real world.

In rehabilitation, the entire mindset of the therapy staff is to get wounded warriors into sport and recreation as soon as possible. This has made the job of Disabled Sports USA more important than ever. We engage wounded warriors much earlier in their rehabilitation through golf, cycling, skiing, snowboarding, Nordic skiing, rock climbing, kayaking, scuba and other sports. This occurs within months of serious injury and sometimes before they get fitted for the final prostheses or other mobility aids. Who would have ever thought that single and double-leg amputee warriors could climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, or be part of a 12-athlete team that runs 197 miles in one day? This and more is now possible.

One of the most profound changes has been in the area of employment. In 1969, when I returned from combat in Vietnam with a severe injury, there was no serious consideration given to whether or not I was going to stay in the army. The mindset then was very similar to how society in general viewed those with disabilities; I was “disabled” and I no longer qualified for duty; so it was expected that I would be medically retired and become a disabled veteran. There were a few exceptions but this was the rule.

Now that paradigm has completely changed within the military. There is a department within the U.S. Army that is staffed with wounded warriors to evaluate skills and encourage severely injured to continue serving in the military. Fitness requirements have been altered to accommodate injuries (i.e., if you cannot run a distance in the required time, you can handcycle it). The military is examining abilities in determining fitness for the job, fitness for duty. If only the private sector would follow this example more closely! A Harris poll DSUSA commissioned in 2009 validated that wounded warriors who participated in sports rehabilitation are more likely to be employed. Today, we are privileged to work with hundreds of wounded warriors employed across the U.S.

So, as Walter Reed Army Medical Center closes, we can celebrate the many advances that have been made, while remaining committed to improving services to our wounded warriors as they transition to their new location at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., which will be appropriately named the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center to accommodate all services.

Kirk Bauer, JD
Executive Director, Disabled Sports USA, Inc.

I hope you will remember Disabled Sports USA in your 2011 giving plans. You can donate online at www.dsusa.org. For federal workers, Combined Federal Campaign #10151, starting September 15, 2011.
DISABLED SPORTS USA THANKS ITS CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SPONSORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT!

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DSUSA Welcomes New Chapters

Disabled Sports USA is pleased to welcome the following organizations as the latest additions to the DSUSA chapter network! We now have 100 Chapters in 38 states. We are always looking to expand the network whenever possible. If you know of an organization that would benefit from becoming a DSUSA Chapter, contact Cheryl Collins at dsusa@dsusa.org.

HOPE NETWORK – HARMARVILLE OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL NETWORK

HOPE Network is a non-profit organization that offers sports, fitness and recreation opportunities for individuals with disabilities. HOPE Network is supported through grants, private donations, and community fundraising activities. Their mission is to promote community integration of people with physical disabilities and chronic health conditions in southwestern Pennsylvania through sports and recreation programs and services that support a return to healthy, productive lifestyles.

Some activities that the HOPE Network provides are: aerobics, basketball (wheelchair), cycling, fishing, fitness & conditioning, golf, musical theater arts, quad rugby, self defense, snow skiing, track (racing), and waterskiing.

“HOPE Network is very excited about becoming a chapter of DSUSA,” said Leah Gray, program manager.

“We look forward to working with and learning from the other chapters throughout the United States, and continue to provide quality sports and fitness programs to people with disabilities, in addition to expanding their opportunities.”

For more information: Leah Gray, HealthSports Program Manager (412) 826-2771 or hSports@city-net.com; P.O. Box 11460, Guys Run Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238; www.hopenetwork-pa.org.

FRIENDS OF STOWE ADAPTIVE SPORTS

Friends of Stowe Adaptive Sports is a nonprofit that works with Stowe Mountain Resort’s Ski and Snowboard School to provide skiing and riding experiences for individuals with disabilities. Their mission is to improve the quality of life for persons living with a disability residing in Vermont or visiting Stowe Mountain Resort through access to winter sports and recreational activities. The organization was founded on the belief that access to sports and recreational programs are a powerful means for people with disabilities to develop independence as well as physical and mental well-being.

“This is an important milestone for Friends of Stowe Adaptive Sports,” said Cynthia Needham, president of the board of directors. “As a chapter member of DSUSA, we will have access to partnership opportunities with their national network, regional chapter seminars, opportunities to receive grants and access to DSUSA’s 40 years of experience in chapter organization and program management. Each of these will help strengthen our efforts to develop programs that benefit members of our community with disabilities here in Vermont as well as support the larger community served by DSUSA.”

For more information: Cynthia Needham, President: (802) 888-6871 or Cynthia@smartsadvice.org; P.O. Box 486, Hyde Park, VT 05655; www.stoweadaptive.org or info@stoweadaptive.org.

ADAPTIVE ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Adaptive Athletics Association is a nonprofit that was founded in 2010 to promote and grow wheelchair athletics in the U.S. Their mission is to promote an active lifestyle through the introduction of wheelchair tennis and other adaptive sports for disabled children and adults, and their families. Adaptive Athletics Association currently provides professional tennis instruction and coaching and is a USTA Community Tennis Organization with future plans to branch out into other athletics.

For more information: Leslie Haughney, Administrative Officer: (760) 831-2736 or haughney@prodigy.net; 59911 Hop Patch Spring Rd, Mountain Center, CA 92561; www.adaptiveathletics.org; AAA@adaptiveathletics.org.

Congressmen, PGA professionals, and guests join wounded warriors for the Fourth Annual Congressional Charity Golf Classic June 13 at the Army Navy Country Club. Sponsored by the U.S. Farmer Members of Congress, the Golf Classic benefits the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project.

Photo courtesy of ES Video Productions
BLM Rivers and Lands Finally Accessible to the Disabled through DSUSA Chapters

Public lands previously not accessible to persons with disabilities, can now be accessed due to the efforts of Disabled Sports USA and its Colorado chapters. In April, the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DSUSA. The MOU creates a cooperative framework for the development and expansion of joint programs and activities designed to increase recreational access for the disabled and wounded warriors to the 245 million acres the BLM manages.

Prior to the MOU, it was difficult, if not impossible, for nonprofits such as the Colorado chapters, to obtain permits to take their disabled clients on popular whitewater stretches of the Colorado, Green, and San Juan Rivers from starting points in Utah. The BLM recognized only two categories of boaters – private and commercial. It classified nonprofits as commercial and the commercial permits were at limit since the mid-1970s.

“Permitting was the biggest roadblock to getting our clients on the river,” said Ann Marie Meighan, Program Director of the Adaptive Sports Association (ASA).

Colorado Discover Ability led the charge to change the permitting regulations along with Team River Runner, the Adaptive Sports Association Durango, Challenge Aspen, Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center, National Sports Center for the Disabled, Crested Butte and others.

Kirk Bauer, executive director of DSUSA, represented the chapters and entered into negotiations with the BLM. After a year of talks, the BLM and DSUSA reached agreement.

“Having DSUSA as the clearing house and Kirk Bauer and Julia Ray working with the people at BLM was helpful. Everybody had a little different standpoint so to have DSUSA represent the chapters was fantastic,” said Meighan.

“What makes this MOU so important,” Meighan said, “is allowing the outfitter who has disabled-specific equipment and trained staff to access the rivers. It’s difficult for most individuals to have the resources or knowledge to try rafting for the first time. They need an organization that is set up to accommodate their physical needs and have the equipment and the expertise to guide them down the river safely.”

Special equipment includes seating adaptation in the raft that provides support for those with spinal cord injury; paddle adaptations to accommodate those who cannot grip a traditional paddle; beach mats that make the sand accessible; and accessible portable toilet systems.

“We also look at it from a therapeutic standpoint – how can we help them make the most out of the trip. We want them to say, ‘I never thought I could raft, what else in my life can I do that I have never tried yet.’ Now that we have these permits it’s been great because we can open up to people who have never been to that area and never knew they could camp and raft,” Meighan said.

ASA’s first trip down the river was a huge success. The following are some comments received from the participants.

- “I never knew that life could be wheelchair accessible.”
- “I rely on my parents for a lot, thank you so much for this trip it’s showed me that I can still be independent from them and go and do really cool things.”
- “This is the most fun I’ve had since my injury.”
- “This is the coolest thing I’ve ever done.”

Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC) also hosted an outing on the San Juan River. Bruce Fitch, executive director of BOEC expressed his thanks in a note to the BLM: “Many thanks to all of you at the BLM for working with DSUSA and BOEC to make this trip happen. The trip was extremely successful, providing a rejuvenating experience to the soldier’s and a meaningful shared experience with their families. A great time was had by all and the San Juan River proved to be an ideal setting. I look forward to carrying on the dialog to create more such trips in the future for our disabled servicemen and women and their families.”
Climbing Mt. Kili for DSUSA and the Future

Wounded warriors Jesse Acosta and Rob Jackson summited Mt. Kilimanjaro in June and in the process raised funds for DSUSA through their new nonprofit foundation, Leonidas International.

But that is just the beginning. Acosta’s goal through his foundation is to help other veterans who return home emotionally scarred by their experiences. Acosta speaks candidly of his struggles after being wounded to not only overcome physical injuries, but to mentally recover as well.

“When I came out of the military in 2007, I was not aware of any types of services the military offered and I was more or less branded a coward by some for choosing to leave the military. It wasn’t the best of times and I struggled with that,” he said.

Physically, Acosta has limited range of motion in his leg and issues with weight bearing on his back, but through DSUSA, he became involved in two triathlons. “It was painful, but I finished. I definitely give DSUSA credit for helping me,” he said.

Acosta also accompanied a friend to the base of Mt. Everest and while there, he envisioned taking a team of disabled veterans to the summit. “At the base of Everest, I realized the opportunity for helping veterans to manage the problems that I had, to assist them in receiving the benefits they are entitled to as well as provide emotional support. I want them to see that there are emotional and physical benefits from conquering an obstacle such as a mountain. They can prove to themselves what they are capable of and hopefully give other veterans the encouragement to move on regardless of the physical and/or emotional injury,” he said.

After reading about DSUSA’s executive director Kirk Bauer’s Kilimanjaro climb with two other disabled veterans, Acosta saw that as a starting point for awareness of his foundation, as well as a fundraiser for DSUSA.

“I thought if I could complete the climb to Kilimanjaro, it will give me more confidence to ascend Mt. Everest,” he said. Next up, Acosta hopes to assemble a veteran’s team to ascend either Denali (Mt. McKinley) in Alaska or Argentina’s Mt. Aconcagua.


Save the Date!
Adapt2Achieve – Midwest Conference

Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA) will be holding the fifth Adapt2Achieve (A2A) Chapter Development Conference in Chicago Oct. 13 – 16. The goal of the Adapt2Achieve Conference is to provide chapters a chance to learn best practices and new techniques to strengthen their respective programs and the adaptive sports community as a whole. Adapt2Achieve Midwest will address administrative topics such as board development, donor solicitation, grant writing, social media, and more! Each A2A conference highlights a sport and this event will focus on cycling with instruction from Paralympic coach Rick Babington and demos from athletes.

Registration will be open for Midwest chapters from Aug. 5 – Aug. 19. After Aug. 19, registration will be open to all chapters until we reach capacity.

Attendance at the Adapt2Achieve conference is free for the first two members of each chapter and additional conference fees are held to a minimum. Space is limited so don’t wait to register!

For more information contact Kate Sharp at (301) 217-9842 or ksharp@dsusa.org.
Nominees Sought for Jim Winthers Memorial Award, National Disabled Ski Hall of Fame Award

DSUSA chapter members are invited to submit nominations for two awards: The Jim Winthers Memorial Award and the National Disabled Ski Hall of Fame Award. A grant of $1,000 will be awarded to the chapter affiliated with the person who nominated the award winners in each category.

The Jim Winthers Memorial Award recognizes the lifetime contributions and significant achievements in furthering the mission of DSUSA. Nominees for this award must have contributed a minimum of 10 years of service to DSUSA.

The Jim Winthers Memorial Award is named in honor of Winthers, a WWII veteran who was a member of the U.S. 10th Mountain Division – the Skiing 10th – an elite group specifically trained for alpine warfare. Winthers eventually became the director of the Donner Ski Ranch in Northern California and became a pioneer in teaching adaptive skiing, beginning with two friends who became amputees in the war. Winthers taught them to ski on one leg using techniques he saw in Europe.

The National Disabled Ski Hall of Fame Award recognizes outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to disabled skiing in two categories: Recreational/Developmental and Competitive. The award in the Recreational/Developmental category recognizes an individual who has a minimum of five years’ experience in the disabled skiing field and has made a significant contribution to the field, including innovative techniques, specialized equipment, program development, education or public relations.

The award in the Competition category recognizes an individual (participant or coach), who has been active in disabled ski racing for a minimum of three years. Race results, team participations, innovative coaching techniques, and event promotions are considered for this category. Competitive racers and coaches must be retired from active racing or coaching, respectively, for a minimum of three years prior to nomination.

Nominations for both awards can be downloaded from the DSUSA website or by contacting Kathy Laffey, (724) 265-2546 or klaffey@dsusa.org. Nominations must be received by Oct. 30, 2011.

Meet DSUSA Staff Member, Dave Simonson

Dave Simonson, Development Coordinator, joined DSUSA in November. He is responsible for fundraising, sponsor relations and social media for the national headquarters. A native Californian, Simonson served for eight years in the U.S. Air Force, earning multiple awards including the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. After his military service, he held a number of strategic planning and organizational development positions during his 11 years with Toyota’s North American sales headquarters. Most recently, he was the Director of Operations and Human Resources for the Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego, where he was recognized by the San Diego Business Journal as a finalist for their 2009 Health Care Champion award. Simonson loves endurance sports and has completed three Ironman triathlons.
Headed to Mexico: 44 track & field athletes that have been nominated to compete at the 2011 Parapan American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico, Nov. 12-20.

Men’s team members are: Zach Abbott, David Brown, Matt Brown, Rob Brown, Kortney Clemons, Sam Craven, Scott Danberg, Travis Dodson, Rudy Garcia-Tolson, Tanner Gers, Lex Gillette, Chris Hammer, Erik Hightower, Khalid Jliat, Blake Leeper, Carlos Leon, Ray Martin, Michael Murray, Dennis Ogbe, Markeith Price, David Prince, Brad Ray, Scot Severn, Josh Swoverland, Casey Tibbs, Shaquille Vance, Jarryd Wallace, Scott Winkler.

Women’s team members are: Mallerie Badgett, Sydney Bolin, Kate Callahan, Zena Cole, Julie Crisp, Carleigh DeWald, April Holmes, Cheryl Leitner, Angela Madsen, Chelsea McClammer, Kristen Messer, Christina Ripp, Robyn Stawski, Katy Sullivan, Stephanie Timmer, Amberlynn Weber.

USOC Paralympic Coach of the Year: Ray Watkins, head coach of the U.S. Paralympic Alpine Ski Team

USSA Annual Awards: Adaptive Coach of the Year, Mau Thompson, Adaptive Adventures; Adaptive International Coach of the Year, Erik Leifalhorn, assistant coach U.S. Adaptive Ski Team; Adaptive Athlete of the Year, Danelle Umstead, Paralympic alpine skier.

Perfect Score: U.S. Navy veteran and amputee Chris Paulsen, Sacramento, bowled a perfect 300 game.

Rising Stars: Christina Kouros – the first sit-skier to compete with a Nordic high school team in Maine (and possibly New England). Kouros also placed first in the 800 meter wheelchair race (3:23.96) at the Western Maine Conference Track & Field Championship.

Elite runner April Holmes took gold in the 200 and 100 meter runs at the 2011 Paralympics National Championships in Miramar, Fla., with times of 28.71 and 13.27 respectively, but following close behind her was newcomer Katie Maneen of Frankfort, N.Y., who won silver in the 200 with a personal best of 32.92. In the 100-meter race, she took bronze with 15.68.

ESPY Award Winners: Paralympic swimmer Mallory Weggemann, Minnesota, Best Female Athlete with a Disability Award. NCAA Championship wrestler Anthony Robles, Arizona, won the Best Male Athlete with a Disability Award. The field of nominees included: Allison Jones, Tatyana McFadden, Alana Nichols, Melissa Stockwell, Chris Devlin-Young, Aaron Scheidies, Jerome Singleton, Steve Wampler.

U.S. Open Ballpersons: Two amputees earned spots as ballpersons at the U.S. Open tennis tournament to be held Aug. 29-Sept.11. Denise Castelli, Netcong, N.J., and Colin Gooley, Syracuse, N.Y. made the cut from a field of over 500. Their main role is to quickly collect the tennis balls when they are out of play.

At the ESPY’s: Kirk Bauer attended the ESPY Awards show where the audience saw a clip of the Mt. Kilimanjaro summit of three military veteran amputees – Bauer, retired Army Staff Sgt. Dan Nevins, and retired Sgt. Neil Duncan.

Outside the Kodak Theater: From left, triathlete Scout Basset, runner Jami Goldman-Marseilles, wounded warrior Bill Bordollio, DSUSA Executive Director Kirk Bauer, triathlete Sarah Reinertsen, soccer player and inclusion activist Eli A. Wolff, and actor and runner John Sicilliano.
New integrated hydraulic design utilizing the latest in corrosion resistant materials make the KX06 & Mercury knees tough enough for the harsh environments active amputees encounter while they get busy living.

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U.S. Handcycling Series Finale Slated for the CapCrit Pro Bike Race

Through the efforts of DSUSA, one of the most prestigious events in professional cycling – the Capitol Criterium Cycling Festival (CapCrit) – will include handcyclists for the first time at this year’s event, Sunday, Oct. 2, in Washington, D.C. The CapCrit will be the finale of the 2011 U.S. Handcycling Series (USHCS). The finale is presented by Chartis. In its twelfth season as North America’s only integrated cycling series, the USHCS puts athletes with and without disabilities together at premier cycling competitions, featuring 55 individual races at 25 events in 14 states.

“The nation’s Capitol is the ideal event and community for the finale of the U.S. Handcycling Series, and we are thrilled to be a part of the CapCrit,” said Ian Lawless, Executive Director of U.S. Handcycling.

Disabled Sports USA, the “powered by” sponsor of the 2011 USHCS, worked with the CapCrit to secure the inclusion of U.S. Handcycling in the event. DSUSA will be promoting participation in the event to civilian and wounded warrior handcyclists in the D.C. region.

“The course is ideal for handcycling, and this grand venue – staged in the shadow of the nation’s Capitol – will showcase the abilities of handcycling athletes, including recently injured veterans and members of the armed forces,” said Kirk Bauer, J.D., Executive Director of DSUSA.

The course, as in years past, will run along the presidential inauguration route of Pennsylvania Avenue and, new for 2011, venture into the National Mall. This is a special year for the CapCrit as it was named the final race for the men’s and women’s USA Cycling’s NRC (National Race Calendar), the finals of the men’s and women’s USA CRITS SERIES, as well as the finale of the U.S. Handcycling Series.

Critériums are a uniquely American style of bike racing. Raced on city-center streets and staged on spectator-friendly course loops of no more than a mile in length that provide lap-after-lap of excitement, criteriums require extraordinary bike-handling skills, quick recovery, and explosive speeds given the turns, straightaways, and configurations that make up the venues. Spectators can watch the fast-paced action for free at arm’s length at multiple places around the course. Races typically last between 90 minutes to two hours.

Disabled handcyclists who would like to participate in the CapCrit or other races in the D.C. region, should contact Julia Ray, DSUSA’s Sports Program Manager at (301) 217-9841 or jray@dsusa.org.

Bocce Tournament in Truckee

The Third Annual High Fives Bocce Tournament will be held Sept. 15, at Truckee Regional Park, Truckee, Calif. The event includes a full day of bocce with a double elimination format, food and beverages, and prizes.

High Fives Foundation is a Tahoe-based nonprofit dedicated to raising money and awareness for athletes who have suffered a life-altering injury while pursuing their dream in winter action sports.
Extreme Athletes Meet at eX6

Disabled athletes, both experts and novices, gathered in San Antonio, Texas, on June 24-25 for Extremity Games 6 (eX6). They were welcomed by hot weather and the opportunity to participate in competitions, instructional clinics, and exhibitions for athletes with limb loss or limb difference.

Competitions and instructional clinics concentrated on skateboarding, rock climbing, wakeboarding, sit-boarding, kayaking, and mountain biking. With numerous activities and participants of all experience levels, the event’s goal was to raise awareness of the abilities and skills of individuals living with limb loss or limb difference.

The competition concluded with an award ceremony and barbecue to celebrate the athletes’ accomplishments and hard work.

BOARDING AT EX6

A devastating football injury and subsequent infection resulted in high school senior Trevor Roberts becoming an amputee in October 2010. While he had a few rocky weeks of battling recurring infection during his recovery process, he never lost his upbeat attitude. This spring, Roberts played baseball for his high school team in Kansas and participated in his first Extremity Games. Roberts is shown wakeboarding on the cover of this issue of Challenge.

Surf’s Up on the East Coast

Surfer wannabes in the Northeast region will have their chance to learn how to ride the waves when AmpSurf brings its rehabilitative Surf Program to the area Aug. 15-19.

The program is designed to give disabled veterans and the general disabled community the opportunity to take part in AmpSurf’s rehabilitative learn-to-surf program at some of the best beaches in the northeast. AmpSurf will be bringing 10 certified adaptive surf instructors along with surfboards, wetsuits, and other adaptive equipment needed.

Disabled veterans from New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania will receive instruction at a private beach in Monmouth County, N.J., Aug 16 and Aug. 17. Instruction for the general disabled community will be at Hampton Beach, N.H., Aug. 18, and York Beach, Maine, Aug. 19.

Sign-up and information is online at www.ampsurf.org/participate/.

Results

MOUNTAIN BIKING - BK
1st Place - Andy May
2nd Place - Greg Lakomski
3rd Place - Chad Crittenden

MOUNTAIN BIKING - AK
1st Place - Stephen Buchler
2nd Place - Carlos Garcia
3rd Place - Pete O’Brien

SHOE CITY SKATE JAM
Stephen Shope

ROCK CLIMBING - NOVICE
1st Place - Horst Behner
2nd Place - Brooke Artesi
3rd Place - Greg Dotson

ROCK CLIMBING - ELITE
1st Place - Jeff Waldmuller
2nd Place - Alex Miller
3rd Place - Kimberly Olson

KAYAKING MEN - NOVICE
1st Place - Jeff Waldmuller
2nd Place - Brandon Holiday
3rd Place - Alex Miller

KAYAKING MEN - ELITE
1st Place - Mike Schultz
2nd Place - Mike Schulenberg

KAYAKING - WOMEN
1st Place - Kelly Allen
2nd Place - Brooke Artesi
3rd Place - Patty Long

WAKEBOARDING - NOVICE
1st Place - Mike Schulenberg
2nd Place - Wes Webb
3rd Place - Trevor Wallace

WAKEBOARDING - ELITE
1st Place - Sean Reynoudt
2nd Place - Billy Tons
3rd Place - Mike Schultz
24th Annual The Hartford Ski Spectacular

The nation’s premier adaptive winter sports event

Winter is coming!

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Photo courtesy of Reed Hoffman

There is a reason for everyone to be there!

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- Nordic and biathlon programs
- Learn to ski and snowboard
- National Racing Festival – Top-level coaching for aspiring Paralympians!
- Ski races and IPC classification
- Sled hockey
- Teaching and training for program administrators
- Bridging The Gap – “From Recreation to Competition” – Learn how to transition from adaptive ski instructor to race coach!
- Adaptive equipment demonstrations
- Fun social and networking events

Spotlight on Instructor and Coach Education

At The Hartford Ski Spectacular, Disabled Sports USA enhances adaptive snow sports programs nationwide by offering adaptive instructors, coaches, volunteers and program administrators numerous opportunities to receive continuing education, knowledge and experiential learning.

Exploring the Latest Adaptive Instruction Techniques

Continuing education clinics, taught by certified PSIA/AASI examiners, keep exploring the latest adaptive instruction techniques. Ranging from beginning education to advanced techniques, topics include tethering, mono-skiing, Nordic, visual impairments and much more.

Want to Become an Instructor?

Contact your regional Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA)/American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) office, fill out your paperwork and pay your dues. You’re now a registered PSIA/AASI Member. Register for The Hartford Ski Spectacular and sign up for PSIA/AASI continuing education clinics to earn credits toward your certification.

Teaching People with Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Learn from experts in the field who provide instructors and program administrators the tools to offer successful and safe experiences for those with TBI and PTSD. Examples and information are delivered specific to adaptive winter sports.

Learn How to Spot Aspiring Paralympians

The Bridging the Gap clinic at Ski Spectacular teaches instructors how to spot and nurture up-and-coming talent as well as how to improve their programming to “Bridge the Gap” between recreational skiing and racing.

Want to Become a Coach?

Mentoring and education is available from Paralympic coaches who will show you how to improve your coaching skills as well as the educational pathways available in adaptive snow sports.

Hands on New Adaptive Equipment

Stay ahead of the curve by mixing with adaptive equipment suppliers. Learn about and demo the latest products and current trends.

Special Guests

Learn to Ski and snowboard instruction and race clinics will be held for wounded warriors from the USA and Great Britain who have been injured in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Get with the program... Registration opens fall 2011. Visit www.dsusa.org
DSUSA E-TEAM MEMBERS MAKE THE NATIONAL TEAM

Disabled Sports USA congratulates E-TEAM members Sarah Holm, Stephanie Jallen, Andrew Kurka and Alex Tomaszewski who were named to the U.S. Paralympic Alpine Skiing National Team. The Developmental Team members will also remain as E-TEAM members along with Tyler Carter, Griffin Lamarre, and Darby Sherbert.

In 2010, Disabled Sports USA created the E-TEAM to support new racers striving to make the Paralympic teams. The DSUSA E-TEAM is comprised of USA’s most promising talent, Paralympic hopefuls at the start of their journey to becoming the best in the world.

Each E-TEAM member receives a grant from DSUSA, an E-TEAM jacket and other scholarships to attend special development events and programs. To qualify, the athletes must be 13-25 years old, IPC classifiable, regularly training/racing and be in school.

It is DSUSA’s long-term goal to create E-TEAMS in other Paralympic sports, helping to support and develop younger athletes in moving from the recreational to competitive levels. For more information and an application form for the 2011/12 E-Team, e-mail Julia at jray@dsusa.org.

U.S. PARALYMPIC ALPINE SKIING NATIONAL TEAM NAMED

U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC), has announced the 15 athletes and two guides who have been named to the 2011-12 U.S. Paralympics Alpine Skiing National Team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENT TEAM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stephanie Jallen</strong> (Harding, Pa.), standing</td>
<td><strong>Mark Bathum</strong> (Seattle, Wash.) and guide</td>
<td><strong>Lindsay Ball</strong> (Benton, Maine) and guide</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Allison Jones</strong> (Colorado Springs, Colo.), standing</td>
<td><strong>Slater Storey</strong> (Sun Valley, Idaho), visually impaired</td>
<td><strong>Diane Barras</strong> (Bethel, Maine), visually impaired</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alana Nichols</strong> (Farmington, N.M.), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Heath Calhoun</strong> (Grundy, Va./Aspen, Colo.), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Sarah Holm</strong> (Baraboo, Wis.), sitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laurie Stephens</strong> (Wenham, Mass.), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Chris Devlin-Young</strong> (San Diego, Calif./Campton, N.H.), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Meghan Erickson</strong> (Somerset, Wis.), standing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Danelle Umstead</strong> (Taos, N.M.) and guide</td>
<td><strong>Ralph Green</strong> (Brooklyn, N.Y./Vail, Colo.), standing</td>
<td><strong>Staci Mannela</strong> (Randolph, N.J.) and guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rob Umstead</strong> (Taos, N.M.), visually impaired</td>
<td><strong>Stephen Lawler</strong> (Burlington, Vt.), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Kim Saegers</strong> (Averill Park, N.Y.), visually impaired</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stephani Victor</strong> (Park City, Utah), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Scott Meyer</strong> (Frisco, Colo.), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Todd Broderick</strong> (Amherst, N.H.), standing</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Patrick Parnell</strong> (Columbia, Conn.), standing</td>
<td><strong>Ian Jansing</strong> (Wheatwood, Mo.), standing</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Joe Tompkins</strong> (Juneau, Alaska), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Andrew Kurka</strong> (Palmer, Alaska), sitting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tyler Walker</strong> (Fronconia, N.H.), sitting</td>
<td><strong>Alex Tomaszewski</strong> (Wells, Maine), standing</td>
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Adaptive Water Sports Festival

7th Annual

For Wounded Warriors July 7 - 10, 2011
Rockaway Point, Queens, N.Y.

Photos courtesy of Dan Kopf
Horsin’ Around
THERAPY THAT IS FUN
BY CYNTHIA MARSH

EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY.
HIPPOTHERAPY.
THERAPEUTIC RIDING.
These are all terms that have specific definitions, but they share a common goal of helping the disabled become enabled through interaction with horses, whether it’s riding, grooming, touching, or just being near the corral watching.

“We just call it horseback riding,” said Pat Addabbo, program supervisor, Adaptive Sports Center (ASC) in Crested Butte, Colo. “We give our riders the full ranch experience about an hour’s drive from here at the Cochetopa Hide-A-Way. We do focus on the therapeutic benefits, but many just want the horse or Colorado ranch experience.”

ASC’s arena-based program includes ranch orientation and instruction on grooming, tacking, behavior around horses, controlling the horse, and arena riding. Adaptive equipment and instruction is provided and safety precautions are taken, such as one person leading the horse, and another person walking along the side of the horse to help a rider with balance issues.

“Students work on posture, getting exercise, stretching, working muscles and strengthening body core,” Addabbo said. “The whole ranch experience really makes it attractive.”

“Horseback riding is naturally therapeutic,” said Nicole Budden, founder and director of Happy Trails Riding Center in West Linn, Ore. “Whether they have physical, cognitive, sensory or emotional disabilities, participants benefit from riding or working with horses.

“For the physically challenged, horseback riding offers many benefits,” she said, such as improved muscle strength, increased range of motion, increased metabolism and improved posture. “Horseback riding, along with mimicking the sensation of walking, can help build muscles that may not or cannot be used otherwise. Psychological benefits include improved confidence and self-esteem, enhancing social relationships, and improving coping skills.”

Before riders come to Happy Trails, they are sent a packet outlining behavior and safety rules around horses. Budden is a NARHA-certified instructor and abides by the Certified Horsemanship Association manual for instruction. “We teach the riders a variety of things about the horse and horsemanship including grooming, handling, behavior, tacking, horse markings, and identifying various parts of
the horse. We get our students comfortable with the horse before they actually get on it. We have very few people who don’t want to get on the horse,” she said.

A component of therapeutic riding is goal setting. “At Happy Trails, we want to make horseback riding fun and educational, but then we want to incorporate some skill-building or achievement, whether it’s confidence building, working on speech, strengthening the core, or some other goal. When we know what a rider’s goals are, we’ll do activities to achieve them,” Budden said. “For example, if we are working on speech, we’ll have baskets labeled with a letter of the alphabet and the participant guides the horse around the basket and takes out an item corresponding to it.”

Budden said Happy Trails trains horses on games and activities before integrating them with riders. “Horses have to learn to be used to different noises, wheelchairs, mounting platforms, and more. We go through different activities and games with the horses over and over again so they are comfortable with things that they may not have previously encountered.”

Organizations that offer therapeutic riding for the disabled have a wide range of adaptive equipment to assist in mounting the horse and securing riders in the saddle. These include: mounting blocks or platforms of varying sizes, mounting platforms with ramps for wheelchair users, high-back saddles to support a weak spine or back and shoulder muscles, Australian saddles, which offer a deeper seat, honeycombed pads to avoid pressure sores, breakaway stirrups so a rider isn’t dragged in case of a fall, and more.

Beth Fox, operations manager for the National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD), said that for individuals who have a problem following directions, colored reins are utilized. “Instead of saying get your hands up closer or let the reins out a little bit, we can say put your hands on the yellow or blue or red, because that’s an indicator they can understand.”

Fox also talked about the importance of goal setting in therapeutic riding. “We consult with the rider, caregiver, or family member, and determine the goals – cognitive, physical, social, emotional – and then set up the lesson accordingly. For example if someone is trying to be more independent and more advocating for themselves, after going through a horseback riding program, they have

Benefits of Riding for the Disabled

The benefits of riding for individuals with disabilities are many. These include, but are not limited to:

**PHYSICAL:**
- Improved balance
- Improved muscle strength
- Improvements in coordination, faster reflexes, and better motor planning
- Stretching of tight muscles
- Decreased muscle spasticity
- Increased range of motion of joints
- Improved respiration, circulation, appetite and digestion
- Sensory integration
- Improved visual/spatial perception

**EDUCATIONAL:**
- Improved reading and math skills
- Improved sequencing, patterning and motor planning skills
- Improved hand-eye coordination
- Differentiation of sensory stimuli

**SOCIAL:**
- Practice of appropriate social behavior
- Enjoyment of interaction with others and the social experience
- Development of respect and love for animals and people

**COGNITIVE:**
- A general sense of well-being
- Improved self-confidence
- Increased interest in the outside world
- Increased interest in one’s own life
- Improved risk-taking abilities
- Development of patience
- Emotional control and self-discipline
- Sense of normality
- Expansion of the locus of control

*Continued on next page*
controlled a 2,000-pound animal. There is great empowerment and a lot of confidence building in that. And then there are physical benefits, like strength and balance, and cognitive benefits such as understanding and following directions.

“Some of our riders can’t sit up, so that rider would lie across a horse,” she continued. “It’s really interesting to see that connection between a person and an animal.”

A typical session at NSCD begins with starting to know the horse. “We’re grooming the horse, tacking (putting on the saddle and bridle), walking the horse and getting into the arena where we do a lot of equitation exercises and therapeutic games and activities. We provide instruction on how to get the horse to move, how to give the walk on command, how to use the rein, how to move left and right, along with how to balance in the saddle, whether its western, English saddle, or bareback.

Bareback riding is introduced for a rider with tight muscle groups. “If someone has CP and they have tight adductors and tight hamstrings we may get them started bareback with a blanket because that’s a warm, moving horse, and the muscles can relax and lengthen,” Fox said. “Now the muscles can get into the stirrups, and still riding bareback, they learn how to use the stirrups. Then through time they can graduate to a saddle functional for them. Our goal is to help a person take as much ownership or as much command of this activity independently as possible. We’re really focused on independence and letting people participate at a level of independence appropriate to their diagnosis and appropriate to their goals.”

Ellen Adams, program director of the National Ability Center (NAC), notes that the largest part of adaptive equipment used is the horse itself. “Each horse that enters our program goes through an intensive evaluation process for about three months to determine their appropriateness for the program. We have a wide variety of types of horses to meet the varying needs of our participants. Each participant is individually and carefully matched with a horse to help them achieve their goals,” she said.

The NAC’s Equestrian program encompasses four different types of horseback riding. “We serve a very wide range of individuals ages 2 and up with physical, cognitive, behavioral and emotional disabilities. Each program has a slightly different focus and may be more

Resources at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptive Sports Center</th>
<th>Happy Trails Riding Center</th>
<th>National Sports Center for the Disabled</th>
<th>Certified Horsemanship Association</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crested Butte, Colorado</td>
<td>Nicole Budden</td>
<td>Winter Park</td>
<td>Promotes excellence in safety and</td>
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<tr>
<td>(970) 349-2296 (local)</td>
<td>CHA &amp; NARHA-Certified Riding Instructor</td>
<td>33 Parsons Rd/PO Box 1290</td>
<td>education for the benefit of the</td>
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<tr>
<td>(866) 349-2296 (toll-free)</td>
<td>20560 Fernview Rd.</td>
<td>Winter Park, CO 80482</td>
<td>entire horse industry by certifying</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info@adaptablesports.org">info@adaptablesports.org</a></td>
<td>West Linn, Oregon 97068</td>
<td>(303) 316-1540</td>
<td>instructors, accrediting equine</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.adaptablesports.org">www.adaptablesports.org</a></td>
<td>(503) 675-3063</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nscd.org">www.nscd.org</a></td>
<td>facilities and publishing</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.happytrailssridingcenter.org">www.happytrailssridingcenter.org</a></td>
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<td>educational resources.</td>
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</tbody>
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National Ability Center
PO. Box 682799 (mailing address)
Park City, Utah 84068
Bronfman Family Recreational Center and Ranch (riding center)
1000 Ability Way
Park City, Utah 84060
(435) 649-3991
www.DiscoverNAC.org

Challenge Aspen
PO Box 6639
Snowmass Village Mall #309
Snowmass Village, CO 81613
(970) 923-0576
www.challengeaspen.org/outdoor_adventure_camp.cfm
www.challengeaspen.org/veterans_summer_programs.cfm

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Int’l)

Formerly known as the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) to promote safe and effective therapeutic horseback riding.
www.pathintl.org
appropriate for some individuals than others,” Adams said.

“In therapeutic riding lessons for individuals with disabilities, the instructor develops appropriate goals and objectives for each rider, which helps them move towards gaining more independence in riding as well as progressing in other areas of their lives,” Adams said.

Other programs are hippotherapy, which are treatment sessions on horseback delivered by an occupational therapist, physical therapist, or speech pathologist; Camp Giddy-Up, an inclusive summer camp for youth of all abilities; and Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL), a groundwork-based program focused on helping individuals learn about themselves and how they interact with the world around them. It involves a series of activities or tasks performed by the individual with a horse from the ground.

“Groundwork is based on the concepts of communication, trust, self-awareness and respect,” explains AbbyJane Ferrin, TRS, CTRS, Equestrian Programs Manager, via e-mail.

“Horses have a very unique and honest way of teaching us about ourselves. Working on the ground with a horse is like working with a thousand-pound mirror. It is much more difficult to get a horse to do what you want when you are standing on the ground rather than sitting on its back. It puts the individual and the horse on the same level in more of a team work situation rather than the individual ‘dominating’ the horse by sitting on its back with a bit in its mouth.”

“Riding is not a regular component of EFL sessions, but may be included if the facilitator feels that a mounted session could bring a new perspective or may be useful in accomplishing a different purpose. Often times this is helpful in allowing the person to carry over the relationship of being trusting and respectful even when they are in a position of power (on the horse),” Ferrin said.

Some NAC riders train for competitions. “Every year we host the state Special Olympics equestrian games. We have quite a few riders who prepare for and compete in the event,” Adams said. “We also have an annual Horse Show and Rodeo that the majority of our participants compete in. When our riders express interest, we help them train for and go to local mainstream horse shows and competitions. This involves training in western pleasure, trails, barrel racing, pole bending, English equitation, dressage, and more. We currently have one rider who is working towards riding in the Paralympics.”

Challenge Aspen offers equine therapy as part of its Outdoor Adventure Camp, open to participants ages 8-18 with autism spectrum disorders, and equine therapy for the wounded warriors, according to Michael Fass of Challenge Aspen.

“We also have two sessions of Horses for Heroes,” Fass writes. “A community-based collaboration between C.A.M.O. and Sopris Therapy Services, Horses for Heroes offers two military-based equine therapy camps in the Roaring Fork Valley. Equine Assisted Therapy is proven to be a beneficial and highly effective treatment for numerous physical, neurological, cognitive, and emotional conditions, directly addressing difficulties with movement, gross and fine motor control, perception, problem solving and expressive/receptive language.”
Newest Paralympic Competition
Paratriathlon at 2016 Rio Games
By Kate Sharp

The International Triathlon Union (ITU) is the governing body of triathlon and paratriathlon. Triathlon is the only sport in which able-bodied athletes and athletes with disabilities compete side-by-side at the local, national, and international level.

Elite Disabled Triathletes Anticipate 2016
Paul Martin, one of the foremost amputee triathletes and current holder of the Ironman world record for leg amputees, shared his thoughts on the acceptance of paratriathlon to the 2016 Paralympic Games. “I was thrilled to hear of the inclusion of triathlon into the Paralympics! In addition to showcasing the multi-discipline endurance capabilities of challenged athletes, the sport, hopefully, will be the media catalyst the Paralympics has longed for in the U.S. Regarding my personal hopes, I don’t expect to be on the line in Rio at 49 years of age…but stranger things have happened.”

Looking forward to competing in Rio is the first female soldier to lose a limb in the Iraq war, Melissa Stockwell, 1st Lt. U.S. Army, retired. Stockwell has been competing in paratriathlons and co-founded dare2Tri Chicago, the first fully sanctioned
paratriathlon club in the nation, with two friends, Keri Schindler and Dan Tun.

Dare2Tri started with just a few members in March of this year and now boasts more than 60. Stockwell says that the athletes in the club are inspiring and hopes that it will grow and have multiple chapters throughout the U.S.

Stockwell is the 2010 World Champion for Paratriathlon in the TRI-2 competition category and is currently training for the NYC Triathlon Aug. 11 and hoping to qualify for the World Championships in Beijing. She also is a Paralympic swimmer and credits her athletic achievements to her first sporting event after being injured, The Hartford Ski Spectacular. “That changed my perception of what I was capable of,” she said. “I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for organizations like Disabled Sports USA, Wounded Warrior Project, Challenged Athletes Foundation, and the Paralympics.”

Craig Vogtsberger is a member of the U.S. Paratriathlon team and DSUSA participant, who also will be competing in the NYC Triathlon to qualify for the World Championships. Retired National Guard Spc. Vogtsberger was injured in a Humvee accident in 2001 which resulted in a TBI and spinal injuries. Doctors were not optimistic and believed he would spend the rest of his life on medication with limited mobility. Vogtsberger had competed in triathlons in high school and, after seeing a promotion for a race, he decided to attend as a spectator. He said that he saw people smiling, happy and “living” and decided to change his life. Vogtsberger now competes in the TRI-3 category in paratriathlon and went to the Paralympics in 2008 for paracycling. His advice: “To other people with disabilities, just go out there and do it. No excuses, you can do it.”

For more information on paratriathlon visit the ITU’s website at www.triathlon.org/paratriathlon and for information on the national team contact Amanda Duke at Amanda@usatriathlon.org.

Kate Sharp is currently interning at DSUSA and will receive her M. Ed in Outdoor Education Administration in August 2011 from Georgia College & State University.
Adaptive Yoga for Any Body
By Jo Kirsch
Adaptive Sports Foundation

Many people are motivated to try yoga for physical reasons. They hope that practicing yoga will relieve body pain, increase flexibility and improve strength. Most, however, come to find the mental and emotional benefits equal to or greater than the physical benefits.

“Adaptive yoga or just yoga is awesome,” said Tyler Carter, a 17-year-old alpine ski racer who is a below-the-knee amputee. “I was a little skeptical at first but love it now. It is calming, relaxing, and a great way to end the day.”

It is this quality of relaxation that not only attracts people to yoga, but turns them into long-term beneficiaries.

“The stress release and calming effect are the biggest benefits,” said Adaptive Sports Foundation (ASF) Race Team member John Eckbold, a mono-skier born with spina bifida. “I feel some physical improvement, but the mental aspect is what I notice the most.”

Last winter, Carter and Eckbold both attended an ASF race camp for alpine skiers with disabilities. At the end of each day, a mat or chair yoga class was held for participants.

“It was a little challenging at first trying to adapt and adjust some of the poses, but once we did, it felt really good,” said Carter. “I think adaptive yoga provides people with disabilities a sense of accomplishment, a feeling that they can do whatever they want and that no one can hold them back.”

Determining what type of yoga to teach a group of individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities can be challenging. ASF teaches a combination of breathing techniques, yoga postures and a deeply rejuvenating practice called Yoga Nidra, which means focused sleep. Yoga Nidra is a guided relaxation practice where the body and the mind relax at a very deep level and healing and destress occur.

After one of these sessions, Russell Dean, MS, LMHC, said “I haven’t felt that relaxed and pain free since the last time I had anesthesia.” Dean, a Vietnam veteran with back injuries, is the Wounded Warrior Project’s Manager of Project Odyssey, a health and wellness program for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with PTSD.

To insure success, a yoga teacher must evaluate the students and determine what combination, type and level of yoga practice is appropriate. What are the students’ abilities and disabilities? What are the students’ goals? Flexibility and injury-avoidance? Strength? Focus? Relaxation?
Centering? Stress-relief? The goal is to introduce practices that individuals can incorporate into their lives on an ongoing basis.

“Adaptive yoga has impacted my recovery tremendously by increasing my strength, balance, flexibility and pain tolerance.”

Retired Spec. 1st Class Diane Cochran, U.S. Army

Whether a yoga class is geared towards able-bodied or disabled students, adaptability is key. By learning to pay attention to your body and mind, a practitioner learns when and how to adapt to poses. With proper alignment and mindful attention, increased levels of energy and feelings will be experienced.

The key to all of this is the creation of a set of tools you can access to bring not only physical being into balance, but life into balance as well.

For example, when you pay attention to your breath, whether in a yoga class or while going about your day, you tune into your state of being in that moment. Quick, uneven, short breaths often indicate high levels of anxiety or stress. The general yoga instruction is to practice a slow even breath: a long inhale followed by a long exhale. This practice generally increases calmness and reduces anxiety and stress levels on and off the mat.

“By utilizing the relaxation and breathing techniques I’ve learned, I have been able to gain more control over my anxiety and stress,” said Staff Sgt. Matt Bonchi, U.S. Army Reserve. Bonchi was injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in June 2006 and again in January 2007. “Since the first Warriors in Motion event I attended at ASF, I have been able to use these techniques to relax and get a full eight hours of sleep, without medication, for the first time since 2006.”

“Adaptive yoga has impacted my recovery tremendously by increasing my strength, balance, flexibility and pain tolerance,” said retired Spec. 1st Class Diane Cochran, U.S. Army. Cochran sustained a spinal cord injury while serving in Afghanistan. When I do yoga, I find myself doing things like walking down a hill instead of using my wheelchair. As an added benefit, I find that I am more focused and at peace.”
Preparing for the Hood To Coast Relay Race: Q & A with Landon Ranker

By Dan Kopf
Photos courtesy of Outdoors for All

Landon Ranker
The Endurance Racer

Warfighter Sports
Upcoming events

PURPLE SWIM
Aug. 7
Baltimore, Md.

30TH ANNUAL HOOD TO COAST
Aug. 26-27
Mt. Hood/Seaside, Ore.

THREE NOTCH CENTURY RIDE
Sept. 9-11
North Conway/Lincoln, N.H.

NAVY 5 MILER
Sept. 25
Arlington, Va.

ARMY 10 MILER
Oct. 9
Arlington, Va.

For a complete listing of events, visit www.dsusa.org.

“The more you do and the more you see others doing amazing things, the more inspired you become.”

Last year you participated in Hood To Coast for the first time. What inspired you to participate in this event?

LR: Last year I was at the very end of my rehab and just learning that adaptive sports would help me. Before I was wounded, I ran all the time. After I got hurt I couldn’t run for a long time but slowly I began to run again. At first, I thought there was no way I could do that (Hood To Coast). When I realized that it’s only about five or six miles per leg, I thought, that’s not so bad.

How have you prepared for this year’s Hood To Coast?

LR: Before last year’s event I did some basic four-to-five mile runs – Army-type running. I have damaged knees and a head injury. I had to train easier than I used to before my injury and I learned some lessons from that. This year, I’m doing longer runs and doing runs in the middle of the night, because the second leg takes place in the evening or early in the morning. I don’t train this way all the time but because you get little recovery time you don’t get to do proper stretching. Because of this I’ve practiced stretching in vans and tight places to get used to the different conditions that I will face during the race.

What is your pre-race routine?

LR: Before each race I eat a lot of carbs and like to soak in a hot tub. I’m not a spring chicken so I have to do even more stretching just to get the joints warmed up. Right before, I usually have a breakfast consisting of fruit and juices. I like to have something in my stomach a good 40 minutes before I start running.

What is the most challenging aspect of this event?

LR: I would say the second and third legs, because your body is so tired. You don’t have any recovery time. You’re crammed into a van with a bunch of equipment and people. Plus, you’re not eating or sleeping properly.

How do you motivate yourself for this event day in and day out?

LR: That’s the easy part. I do a lot of events and I’m constantly around people who suffer from more serious injuries than me, and I’m not going through what they do on a daily basis. I know that if they can overcome those challenges so can I.

How has Disabled Sports USA helped you to participate in adaptive sports?

LR: They’ve been huge. They’ve been the biggest enabler. They’ve helped fund so many different types of activities. They’ve helped me with skiing and now I’m training with the military’s Paralympic training program. They come up with so many different events and the people who work with DSUSA are very understanding and friendly. They make everyone feel included, especially someone with my type of injury that’s not visible. Sometimes TBI is thought of as a lesser side effect. In my case, it’s a major injury and that’s a huge part of who I am. DSUSA’s events allow people suffering from PTSD and TBI to feel like they belong and allows them to heal in the process.

Why do you feel adaptive sports are important to wounded warriors?

LR: Once you get wounded you stand a high risk of falling into depression and you get into the mind set of ‘my body can’t do this.’ Doing adaptive sports counters that. Instead of feeling sorry for yourself you can rise up to the challenge. The more you do and the more you see others doing amazing things, the more inspired you become.

Besides being an avid athlete you also serve as Fort Campbell’s adaptive sports coordinator. What advice do you usually give new wounded warriors looking to participate in adaptive sports for the first time?

LR: Simple, and I tell them this every week; don’t focus on what you can’t do but on what you can do.
The Motionfoot™ is a revolutionary new product from Motion Control, Inc. that provides unique new features in a prosthetic foot, to improve the comfort and naturalness of walking and using an artificial foot. These features include:

- A hydraulic ankle with up to 50 degrees of motion, allowing natural-like plantar flexion (pointing the toe downward) and dorsi flexion (pointing the toe upward).
- The wearer can adjust the resistance of the ankle. Two independent hydraulic settings allow you to match the ankle to your activities.
- The wearer can also manually lock the ankle at 90 degrees (neutral standing position). This allows you to prevent unwanted plantar flexion for specific activities.
- The carbon fiber Sole Plate can also be adjusted (by your prosthetist) to match your weight and activity level.

Featuring unparalleled ankle range of motion and performance.

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Moab Mania! 2011

Telluride Adaptive Sports Program’s (TASP) Second Annual Moab Mania! Off-Road Arm Bike Camp for individuals with spinal cord injuries or complications will be held in Moab, Utah, in two sessions: intermediate to advanced riders Sept. 23-28; beginner to intermediate riders, Sept. 30-Oct. 5.

The camp is geared to those who want to ride the slickrock trails of the desert Southwest on an arm bike, or those who would like to make the transition from road cycling to off-road bike adventuring. It’s designed to provide a relaxed, positive, professional, and rewarding experience.

Each camp will be based out of the Riverside Oasis Campground and activities include three days of arm biking with direct instruction from top pros in the industry and able-bodied support. A rest day includes a white-water rafting experience with SPLORE through Westwater Canyon, no experience necessary.

Cost is $650; additional scholarships and veterans’ grants available. All meals are included along with camping, activity transportation, and instruction. Camping gear, airport transportation, and bike rentals can be arranged for additional fees.

For more information, contact Tim McGough, (970) 728-3865 or e-mail programs@tellurideadaptivesports.org.

‘Off-Road Ruckus’ Handcycling Weekend

The Adaptive Sports Center’s “Off-Road Ruckus” handcycling event weekend in Crested Butte, Colo., is slated for Sept. 16-18.

Formerly known as the Off-Road Handcycling Adventure Weekend, the Off-Road Ruckus caters to individuals of all riding levels – from beginner to expert – and is set in the spectacular Elk Mountains, an area that is regarded as a cyclists’ Mecca.

This year’s Off-Road Ruckus will focus less on competition and more on camaraderie. While there is potential for a time trial or race depending on participant interest, this year’s event primarily centers on having a good time and “getting out there.” Riders also will have the opportunity to gain knowledge about the sport and build upon existing skills, or acquire new skills.

Friday will serve as a warm-up day, with introductions and a ride to get the weekend rolling. On Saturday, the group will explore trails on Mt. Crested Butte and experience spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. The weekend culminates Sunday with a day of backcountry riding on the varied and fun trails Crested Butte is known for.

The ASC’s expanding collection of downhill and off-road handcycles will be available to participants at the event, including four new Active Force downhill bikes, the ASC’s existing fleet of One-Off Off-Road handcycles, and one new off-road handcycle from ReActive Adaptations called “The Bomber.”

“The big attraction for me [with off-road handcycling] is being able to go places I just can’t go any other way, under my own power,” says ASC participant and handcyclist Drew Wills. “That really means being able to venture out on trails and into the backcountry to experience nature firsthand in a visceral way. This kind of experience would otherwise be lost to me without a handcycle.”

For more information about the Off-Road Ruckus or to register, contact the ASC at 970-349-2296 or info@adaptivesports.org.
NEDS Offers Surfing and Scuba

New England Disabled Sports added two water sports to its line-up of offerings – surfing and scuba diving. Scuba diving instruction will be taught by a PADI-certified and HSA (Handicapped Scuba Association)-certified instructor along with certified dive buddies specifically trained in working underwater with clients needing adaptive techniques. This program will be offered throughout the year with scuba discovery days and pool training. Come experience the weightlessness and freedom of this underwater environment.

With the support of local Surf Shop Cinnamon Rainbows, NEDS is now offering individuals with disabilities the opportunity to ride the waves at Hampton Beach, New Hampshire. The surfing schedule will be listed on the NEDS events calendar website.

For reservations and information, contact NEDS at www.nedisabledsports.org (603) 745-6281 ext. 5663.

Fly-Fishing with Higher Ground

Higher Ground will be hosting its annual couples fly-fishing camp Oct. 6-11. The week’s activities include fly-fishing instruction from Silver Creek Outfitters, spending a large part of time angling on the Big Wood River and the world-renowned Silver Creek Preserve. Participants are instructed by local professional guides and a group of dedicated trained volunteers. Higher Ground only invites six to eight veterans and their supporters and caters to specific populations – couples, singles, male, and female – creating a safe and intimate atmosphere to connect and enjoy the great outdoors.

Higher Ground, a division of Sun Valley Adaptive Sports, utilizes a highly innovative approach to therapy that combines sports, family, and coping therapies to restore and rehabilitate men and women of the armed forces who have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As one participant describes his experience: “Higher Ground showed me that alone I may not be able to do all of the things I used to do, but my wife and I together as a team can accomplish anything.”

Applications are accepted online at www.hgvets.org. For more information, contact Bert Gillette (208) 726-9298 ext. 117 or Bert@SVASP.org.

Outdoor Adventures in Logan, Utah

Common Ground Outdoor Adventures in Northern Utah provides year-round outdoor recreational opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities. Upcoming fall and winter trips include climbing, white-water rafting, cycling, canoeing, and camping trips to the National Parks in the West. All trips are adapted to meet the needs of all abilities and accessible airport shuttles are available from Salt Lake International Airport to Logan, Utah. Equipment, meals (during trips), and transportation from Logan are included in the cost. Scholarships are available to persons who are low income.

Upcoming events include:

- Sept. 7-10, Yellowstone National Park: We will be spending our nights camping under the stars listening to the rutting bull elk bugle the night away in search of a harem. This will be a three-night excursion and we will be visiting Old Faithful, the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone and many other locations. We also will be seeing elk, bears, and bison. Cost is $280, which includes round-trip transportation from Logan to Yellowstone, meals, and park admission. Common Ground can provide camping gear if needed.
- Oct. 12-15, Bryce Canyon National Park: Camping and adaptive cycling through Bryce Canyon. Cycling ability not required; a van also accompanies the group for sight-seeing in the park. Cost is $250.
- Late December - March 2012, Adaptive Alpine Ski Program: Skiing at popular resorts such as Beaver Mountain and Powder Mountain for people of all abilities. Instruction and adaptive ski equipment (bi-skis, monoskis, and outriggers) provided. Contact us for exact dates and costs.

For more information or to sign up for activities, call (435) 713-0288, e-mail programs@cgadventures.org, or visit www.cgadventures.org.
MHS Blind/Visually Impaired Ski Festival

Plans are underway for the inaugural New England Blind/Visually Impaired Ski Festival at Sugarloaf Mountain Resort, Feb. 12-17, 2012.

The festival is designed to create a unique educational skiing and guiding experience for all levels of skiers with visual impairments, as well as those seeking to gain or improve skills necessary to serve as sighted ski guides. Visually impaired skiers of all ability levels are welcome and all instruction and guide training will be provided by PSIA-certified instructors and experienced MHS volunteers.

“In our year-round programs, MHS serves 38 people who are blind or visually impaired each year. Supporting this festival will enable us to share this tremendous experience and our expertise with additional skiers and guides from all over the country,” said Peter Adams, executive director of Maine Handicapped Skiing. “Combining expert instruction with the sense of community that comes from the all-inclusive, multi-day atmosphere should make for a unique and memorable experience. We hope to make this an annual event.”

Special package rates are available for the festival. For more information, visit the event website at www.nevifest.org.

Peak to Peak Pedal Big Bear to Mammoth

Up to 50 cyclists, some with disabilities are expected to cycle from Big Bear to Mammoth Lakes, Calif., to support the United States Adaptive Recreation Center’s (USARC) winter and summer programs for the disabled. The riders will complete the 335-mile adventure in five days, Oct. 5-9, camping overnight in Barstow, Ridgecrest, Lone Pine, and Bishop.

Riding in the annual Peak to Peak Pedal requires riders to obtain a minimum of $1,500 in donations from their sponsors. In return, participants are provided all meals, beverages, transportation of camping equipment and personal gear, camping facilities with hot showers, basic mechanical support, basic first aid, celebration party in Mammoth Lakes and return transportation of themselves and their gear to Big Bear on the Columbus Day holiday, Oct. 10. Riders also will receive a custom cycling jersey, T-shirt, water bottle and invitation to a P2P17 slide show/reunion party during the winter.

The annual Peak to Peak Pedal enables the USARC to continue offering outdoor therapeutic-recreation programs to children and adults with disabilities, including wounded warriors.

Online rider and donation opportunities are at www.firstgiving.com/usarc/p2p17. For additional information call (909) 584-0269 or click on the Special Events link on the USARC website, www.usarc.org.

Photo courtesy of Marshall Richter/USARC
Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra Cycling Group

The second season of the Bishop Cycling Group is underway at Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra, Paralympic Sport Mammoth Lakes (DSES).

This group was formed last autumn to answer the need for adaptive cycling opportunities in Bishop, Calif., and spearheaded by passionate cycling advocate and Bishop local, Donnie Tobias. With the recent acquisition of two new One-Off All Terrain Handcycles, two new Hase Kettweisle recumbent bikes, and a Trets tag-a-long, DSES’s expanded fleet of adaptive cycles will accommodate almost anyone looking to explore Eastern Sierra cycling opportunities. Participants in this group range in age from 6 to 60 and include athletes with physical, visual and cognitive disabilities. Weekly rides vary in length and intensity depending on riders’ goals with multiple options available each week. Rides began in July in Mammoth Lakes and will move back to Bishop in the fall.

For more information regarding Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra and Paralympic Sport Mammoth Lakes, contact Maggie Palchak at mpalchak@disabledsportseasternsierra.org.

Wounded Warriors’ Snow Sports in 2012

Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra, Paralympic Sport Mammoth Lakes
Wounded Warrior events for 2012 include Operation Mountain Freedom to be held in January, which includes, alpine skiing, snowboarding, Nordic skiing and biathlon. For more information, contact Maggie Palchak at mpalchak@disabledsportseasternsierra.org.

Pedal-Paddle Campout

DSES will host a Pedal-Paddle Campout Aug. 12-14. Participants will camp, cook out, kayak on a beautiful Eastern Sierra Lake, cycle around the town Mammoth Lakes, and fish streams and ponds. Open to athletes of all ages with any disability. For more information, contact Laurel Martin at (760) 934-0791 or e-mail lmartin@disabledsportseasternsierra.org.
Our Daddy Is Invincible!
By Shannon Maxwell
Illustrated by Liza Biggers

Moms and dads can get hurt? What happens after a parent is injured? Our Daddy Is Invincible! is a story that focuses on the journey a family must take to cope with a parent’s injury. Alexis and Eric, whose daddy has been hurt, are concerned about the affect their father’s injuries will have on their lives. They soon realize that although their father is physically different, his love for them will never change.

The book helps young children understand the recovery process, the changes that can occur in life, and the new adventures that await them after an injury.

Our Daddy Is Invincible! is based on Shannon Maxwell’s experience following the traumatic brain injury her husband, Lt. Col. Tim Maxwell, USMC, incurred while serving in Iraq — the injury, the recovery, and the new possibilities.

Broken Tees and Mended Hearts
A Life’s Journey Serving Wounded Warriors & Injured Spirits
By Judy Alvarez, PGA, LPGA

Broken Tees and Mended Hearts is a series of stories that explore how golf serves as a therapeutic and rehabilitative tool. It explains that golf is a healing exercise and a means to improve one’s quality of life. The author, Judy Alvarez, PGA, LPGA, recalls her teaching experience and provides inspiration to disabled individuals, their families, and golf professionals. She not only explains the benefits of golf, but she also demonstrates the lessons she has gained from her students. Readers will witness disabled golfers’ determination, growth, and friendships.

The Running Dream
By Wendelin Van Draanen

The Running Dream is a story of empowerment. Jessica is a high school track star, a born runner, until a tragic bus accident occurs that requires her leg to be amputated. The book shows Jessica’s struggle with coping, rehabilitation, and the loss of her identity as a runner. When a running prosthesis becomes a possibility, Jessica’s team begins to raise money to help her accomplish her goal to run in a hometown race.

The Running Dream demonstrates to adolescents and young adults the courage and optimism it takes to get through tough times. Wendelin Van Draanen was inspired to write The Running Dream after participating in the New York City marathon and witnessing the motivation of the disabled runners. She takes her knowledge of and passion for long-distance running to show the adversity that Jessica must overcome to run again.
College Park Industries Introduces the Velocity™ Foot

The Velocity’s coupled toe springs work together to provide a progressively smooth roll over. It combines high functionality and no maintenance, with easy heel adjustment capabilities for fine-tuning.

Key features include:
- Smooth control from heel strike to toe-off throughout stance phase
- Highly sophisticated dynamic response
- Precision gait matched for out-of-the-box performance
- Weight limit up to 275 lbs.; three-year warranty.

Motion Control New TRIAD Preamp
- Three mounting options
- Water resistant case
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  - Utah Arm 3 & 3+ (kit: p/n 4050214)
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  - Otto Bock electrode cables

For more information call (888) 696-2767 or email info@UtahArm.com / www.UtahArm.com

TiLite Has Full Range of Titanium and Aluminum Wheelchairs

TiLite evolved from the simple idea of developing a superior class of manual wheelchairs that would combine orthoses-like customization with the most advanced materials. We believed that these attributes would help users remain independent longer, experience reduced body stress, and incur fewer posture-related problems. The flagship model was the TiLite “CrossSport.” Radically different from other designs, it was an immediate success. Since that first chair was designed over a decade ago, TiLite has developed a full range of titanium and aluminum wheelchairs that cater to the unique requirements of each user. It is our goal that each new design further advances the performance, function and style of manual mobility.
Endolite Introduces the ORION Microprocessor-Controlled Knee
The ORION rapidly selects support as needed to safely negotiate obstacles encountered during everyday walking. Its onboard programming is intuitive, resulting in finely-tuned gait parameters for enhanced symmetry. The knee is versatile, adapting for slow to fast walking speeds without being restrictive. This reduces the need for increased muscle input and leads to a reduction in energy expenditure throughout the day, empowering amputees to get busy living.

- Enhanced stability – immediate support on the first stair and instantaneous free walking upon reaching level ground. Provides controlled descent on slopes.
- Batteries last two-four days on average with a single charge. High support programs for more active amputees will require more frequent charging. Recharge is two hours. High stability fail-safe mode in the event of battery run down.
- No restriction on foot or socket choice.
- 275 lbs. weight rating at the K3 activity level.

For more information, call (800) 548-3534 or visit www.endolite.com

Ossur Redesigned PROPRIO Foot® with EVO™ Offers Improved Walking
The newly redesigned PROPRIO Foot® with EVO™ utilizes intelligent ankle flexion to help users walk confidently and naturally without watching the ground, so they don’t need to think about every step for fear of tripping and falling. The lifelike ankle movement enables the PROPRIO Foot to adjust for normal sitting and standing, and features automatic alignment for adapting to various types of footwear. PROPRIO Foot recently received the prestigious Red Dot International Design Award with more than 4,000 submissions from 60 nations. For more information, visit www.Ossur.com or call (800) 233-6263.

Otto Bock’s New Aqualine® - Dive In
Just in time for a trip to the beach or pool, Otto Bock launches a line of waterproof components. The Aqualine® waterproof prostheses provides waterproof protection for either below-knee or above-knee users. Perfect for use as a shower leg or for other water activities, the Aqualine accommodates users who weigh up to 330 lbs. The system includes specially modified adapters, pylons and a tube clamp along with the waterproof Aqua Knee and Aqua Foot.


Freedom Innovations Introduces Load-Activated Prosthetic Foot
The new THRIVE™ from Freedom Innovations is the world’s first load-activated prosthetic foot. Ideal for those who work in construction, farming, or any occupation that requires heavy lifting, the dual-keel design manages additional loads (up to 30% of the user’s body weight) by providing incremental support. This ensures consistent performance and ultimately, greater confidence among users. For more information, visit www.freedom-innovations.com or call (888) 818-6777.
How can a donation change a person’s life?

“It makes me feel good when people watch me ski and notice I have one leg and they seem so amazed. I like changing the way people think when they see a disabled athlete.”

Alex Tomaszewski, Age 16
DSUSA Mentee and National Racer
Festival Youth Scholarship Athlete

“When I’m out there boariding, it takes the disability away from my mind and gives me more of my freedom. I’m enjoying what I went to protect. I owe a lot to this program.

It saved my life.”

Navy PO3 Mark Mix
Wounded Warrior

“Disabled Sports USA’s mission is to provide national leadership and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop independence, confidence, and fitness through participation in community sports, recreation and educational programs.”

Combined Federal Campaign #10151

Please donate today!

DONOR OPTIONS: (includes membership in Disabled Sports USA)

☐ Member - $25  • One-year Membership and One-year Subscription to CHALLENGE Magazine (three issues)
☐ Challenger - $35  • DSUSA pin plus DSUSA Member Benefits
☐ Medalist - $100  • DSUSA Polo Shirt (shirt size ________) plus DSUSA Challenger Benefits
☐ Champion - $250  • Your name listed in CHALLENGE as a Disabled Sports USA Donor plus DSUSA Medalist Benefits (shirt size ________)
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☐ Check if you would like to make a donation and waive benefits
☐ Check if you are an athlete. Disability ____________________ List Sports ____________________

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PAYMENT INFORMATION (CHECK ONE): To donate online, go to www.dsusa.org and click on Donate Today

☐ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to Disabled Sports USA
☐ Please bill $____________________ to my:  ☐ MC  ☐ Visa  ☐ AmEx

Card Number ____________________________ Exp Date ______________________

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Return to: DSUSA, 451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20850 or fax to 301-217-0968. For more information, call 301-217-9841.

Donations to DSUSA are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. DSUSA’s tax exempt number is 94-6174016.
Introducing **Plié 2.0**, the World’s Most Responsive MPC Knee.

The new Plié 2.0 features an advanced hydraulic system with cutting edge microprocessor control of both swing and stance that reacts to ambulatory stimuli in 10 milliseconds. As the most responsive MPC knee, the Plié 2.0 provides amputees with a more natural experience of mobility. Plus, an array of innovative features deliver increased reliability and durability over a broad spectrum of activities.

**Advanced Stumble Recovery • Water Resistant Electronics • Interchangeable Batteries**

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