

Wednesday, September 17, 2008 (LAST EDITION)

Beijing, China

For more information on the U.S. Paralympic Team, please check www.usparalympics.org and www.usocpressbox.org.

Melissa Stockwell Represents Team USA as Flag Bearer for the Closing Ceremonies of the Beijing Paralympic Games

American swimmer **Melissa Stockwell** (Colorado Springs, Colo. /Minneapolis, Minn.) has been selected by the U.S. delegation as flag bearer for the closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. Stockwell, who lost her left leg to a roadside bomb while serving in Iraq, is the first veteran injured in Iraq to compete on the U.S. Paralympic Swimming Team.

"Coming over here [to Beijing], I've been so proud to wear the USA uniform and be a part of the team," said Stockwell, who was nominated by her peers to serve as Team USA's flag bearer. "To now walk and hold the flag is a huge honor, especially knowing that I'll be alongside all of my teammates, who have accomplished so much. To be the one representing them is pretty incredible."

"The fact that Melissa was nominated by the volleyball team shows the amount of respect she gets from fellow Paralympians," said Dave Denniston (Longmont, Colo.), co-captain of the men's Paralympic Swimming Team. "She absolutely deserves to be carrying that flag."

In her first Paralympic Games competition, Stockwell competed in the women's S9 100m butterfly, 100m freestyle and 400m freestyle. "This experience has been better than anything else I've ever done," she said. "To end like that, carrying the flag, is just amazing. It will complete my whole experience."

Stockwell lives and trains at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., as part of the Veterans Paralympic Performance Program (VP3). For her service to the U.S., Stockwell was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.



Melissa Stockwell, 2008 flag bearer for the Closing Ceremonies. Photo courtesy of Joe Kusumoto Photography

Sport Reports

Athletics

The U.S. Paralympic Track & Field Team added five more medals to its tally on Wednesday, the final day of competition on the track at the Bird's Nest Stadium.

Casey Tibbs (San Diego, Calif.), an active duty sailor with the U.S. Navy, won bronze in the long jump. The feat was remarkable considering he scratched on all jumps but one, but that one, measuring 6.39m and 988 points, sealed the deal – and the bronze – for Tibbs. He finished behind gold medalist Wojtek Czyz of Germany and silver medalist Atsushi Yamamoto of Japan.

"Coming here was so much larger than I thought it would be; it was a whole other level of competition, and everyone stepped it up," said Tibbs. "I will leave Beijing knowing that I tried my best."

Teammates **Jeremy Campbell** (Chula Vista, Calif./Perryton, Texas) and **Jeff Skiba** (Chula Vista, Calif./Sammamish, Wash.) finished in fourth (6.36m, 983 pts) and ninth place (5.83m, 901 pts), respectively.

In the men's 100m final (T53), **Josh George** (Champaign, Ill.) claimed the gold medal he has worked so hard for. George, who was slow off the line, picked up speed around the 40-meter mark to best his opponents for the gold medal finish in 14.79.

"It's my first gold in this Paralympics and I'm very satisfied," said George. "I want to dedicate this medal to my coach Adam Bleakney; all of my good performances are thanks to him."

The men's 4x100 relay team comprised of **Brian Frasure** (Apex, N.C.), **Jim Bob Bizzell** (Abilene, Texas), **Casey Tibbs** (San Diego, Calif.) and **Jerome Singleton** (Irmo, S.C.) won gold and set a new world record in the event, breaking the U.S. record which has stood since the 2006, edging out their second place competitors from Brazil by almost three-seconds.

Said a breathless Singleton, "I never imagined I would come here and set a new world record. It feels ever better to do it as a team because we all worked together to achieve a common goal."

For Frasure, who plans to retire after Beijing, he couldn't have scripted the finish any better.

"I can't imagine it [the race] being any more perfect," said Frasure. "I swear that had to be the best fastest 100m I ever ran in my life (laughs). Walking out into the stadium and hearing the cheers really got the adrenaline pumping. I just can't imagine going out any way more perfect than this."

The women's 4x100m relay team (T53/54) also found success in its relay, winning bronze with a final time of 1:02.1, behind China (gold) and Australia (silver). The four-woman team of **Tatyana McFadden** (Clarksville, Md.), **Jessica Galli** (Savoy, Ill./Hillsborough, N.J.), **Amanda McGrory** (Champaign, Ill.) and **Anjali Forber-Pratt** (Natick, Mass.) had little practice time together prior to the event, but managed to shave off three seconds between training and race day.

The last medal of the night, silver, was won by **Jim Bob Bizzell** (Abilene, Texas), a former All-American from McMurry University who lost his leg just 17-months ago in a motorcycle accident. Bizzell finished behind Oscar Pistorius of South Africa, who set a new world record for the men's T43 class (47.49). Bizzell set a new world record of his own in the T44 class – 50.98. The record was previously held by U.S. teammate **Danny Andrews** (Tucson, Ariz.), who finished in fourth (53.15).

In the women's 1500m final (T54), the U.S. narrowly missed a bronze when **Jessica Galli** (Savoy, Ill./Hillsborough, N.J.) finished in fourth in 3:41.68. **Amanda McGrory** (Champaign, Ill./Kennett Square, Pa.) finished in fifth with a time of 3:42.17 and **Shirley Reilly** (Tucson, Ariz.) came in seventh in 3:43.54.

In the men's shot put (F53/54) final, **Scot Severn** (Caro, Mich.) finished in ninth place throwing for 7.76m and 995 points. Teammate **Carlos Leon** finished in 15th place with a best distance of 6.95m for 855 points.

In the men's discus final (F42), **Matt Brown** (Idalou, Texas) just missed the medal stand with a fourth place finish, throwing 42.25m.

Competition (last event) – Wednesday, September 17

7:30 Men's & Women's Marathon

U.S. athletes competing include:

Women - **Cheri Blauwet** (Palo Alto, Calif.), **Amanda McGrory** (Champaign, Ill./Kennett Square, Pa.), **Shirley Reilly** (Tucson, Ariz.)

Men – **Adam Bleakney** (Champaign, Ill.), **Tyler Byers** (Washington, D.C.), **Joshua George** (Champaign, Ill.), **Tony Iniguez** (Aurora, Ill.), **Steven Toyoji** (Tucson, Ariz.)

Complete marathon results will be available at http://results.beijing2008.cn/WRMP/ENG/Schedule/AT_2008-09-17.shtml.

Wheelchair Basketball

The U.S. Men's Wheelchair Basketball Team was defeated by Great Britain, 85-77, in the bronze medal match of the 2008 Paralympic Games. The U.S. finishes the tournament in fourth place.

"We've been through an extremely emotional few days," said Eric Barber (Whitewater, Wis./Chicago, Ill.). "We were pretty spent and hats off to Great Britain; they played an incredible game. This wasn't the result we wanted, but I'm proud to be part of this team. This is the best team I've ever played on."

The defense the U.S. had relied on so heavily throughout the tournament couldn't handle the Brits' big three of Terry Bywater, Simon Munn and Jon Pollock on Tuesday night. Bywater lit up Team USA for 32 points, Munn dropped 20 points and Pollock finished with 15 points, including two key 3-point baskets that helped put the game out of reach.

For the USA, Joe Chambers (Whitewater, Wis./Davis, Calif.) scored 25 points, Jeremy Lade (Janesville, Wis.) totaled 15 points and Mike Paye (Warren, Mich.) also hit double digits with 10 points.

Wheelchair Fencing

In today's women's epee category B tournament, **Andrea DeMello** (New York, N.Y.) was eliminated in preliminary pool play to conclude her competition at the Games. The four-time Paralympian competed for Brazil in 1996, 2000 and 2004 before coming to the United States. DeMello lost 0-5 overall, but managed to score touches in all but one of the bouts. The closest match-up of the morning was with Italy's Rosalba Vettrano, who narrowly won the bout 5-4.



Andrea DeMello (New York, N.Y.) competed in individual epee on Tuesday.

"I had the best time and it was a wonderful experience despite the results," said DeMello. "I did better than I expected against Italy. I was only one touch away, I almost got her. It's hard to describe the emotion I feel. I am done here, but I will continue to train for London."

Wheelchair Rugby

The U.S. Wheelchair Rugby Team had to wait four long years for another shot at the gold medal that eluded the team in Athens. On Tuesday night in Beijing, the U.S. seized its opportunity by defeating Australia, 53-44, to be crowned Paralympic champions.

"I've been playing on the U.S. team for 10 years and this is hands-down the best team I've played on," said Norm Lydych (Austin, Texas). "We never backed down and always played together as a team."

Australia, led by 19-year-old wonderkid Ryley Batt, pushed the U.S. for nearly three quarters as both teams traded goals and turnovers. Back-to-back turnovers by Australia with five minutes to go in the third helped Team USA open a three goal lead, and from then on the U.S. took complete control.



Wheelchair Rugby wins gold. Photo courtesy of Frank Polich

By the end of the third quarter, the Americans had opened a five goal lead, 36-31, and in the final eight minutes hammered their point home for the nine goal win.

Team USA was led by Will Groulx (Portland, Ore.) with 15 goals, Bryan Kirkland (Leeds, Ala.) with 13 goals and Andy Cohn (Tempe, Ariz.) with 10 goals.

Team USA Athletes Inspire Next Generation of Paralympic Hopefuls

On Monday, Sept. 16, Paralympians **Scott Winkler** (Grovetown, Ga./track & field) and **Kari Miller** (Washington, D.C./Edmond, Okla./sitting volleyball) joined **John Register** (Colorado Springs, Colo.), Director of the Paralympic Academy Program, to speak with a group of 13 student athletes with physical disabilities from across the U.S.



Scott Winkler shares a laugh with Paralympic Academy student athletes. Photo courtesy of Joe Kusumoto Photography

The Paralympic Academy Beijing participants, who were selected through an essay contest on the topic of “what ability means to me” are in Beijing with family members and coaches. They had the opportunity to speak directly with Winkler and Miller about the Paralympians’ journey to the Paralympic Games and their experience in Beijing.

“It’s an honor for me to meet future Paralympians like you,” said 35-year old Winkler, who was paralyzed in 2003 after falling off of an ammo truck in Iraq. In sharing his story of breaking the world record in shot put earlier this year, he said: “If you can believe it, you can achieve it.”

“It’s good to see what I’m getting myself into before I actually get into it,” said 18-year old **Sara Koehnke** (Chicago, Ill.), who competes in the Chicago area in track and field events and fencing. “It’s mind blowing to see everyone here cheering for the athletes. John Register

keeps reminding us that differences mean nothing and we are whatever we want to be. We determine what our abilities are and there is no limit.”

For young athletes searching for what sports to pursue, Winkler advised: “As long as you enjoy it, and have fun doing it, then that’s your sport. Don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do something. Everyone has a hidden talent. It’s up to you to find it.”

Miller, who lost both of her legs when a drunk driver hit her car, echoed Winkler. “You just have to say I can do it, and I can do it even better,” she said. “The next thing you know, you’re here at the Paralympics showing people your medal.”

Miller thanked the group for cheering her and the team on during the Women’s Sitting Volleyball match on Sept. 15, when the U.S. won the silver medal. “Thank you for being there. It meant so much to have you all in the stands.”

For more information on the Paralympic Academy Beijing, visit www.usparalympics.org.

Schedule of Upcoming Events for Team USA *(subject to change)*
Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Athletics, National Stadium

7:30 Men's & Women's Marathon

Women - Cheri Blauwet (Palo Alto, Calif.), Amanda McGrory (Champaign, Ill./Kennett Square, Pa.), Shirley Reilly (Tucson, Ariz.)

Men – Adam Bleakney (Champaign, Ill.), Tyler Byers (Washington, D.C.), Joshua George (Champaign, Ill.), Tony Iniguez (Aurora, Ill.), Steven Toyoji (Tucson, Ariz.)

Wheelchair Fencing, Fencing Hall of the National Convention Center

9:30 Men's Individual Sabre, Category A, Preliminary Pools, USA, Mark Calhoun (Bremen, Ga.)

9:30 Men's Individual Sabre, Category B, Preliminary Pools, USA, Gerard Moreno (Los Angeles, Calif.) and Benjy Williams (Bethlehem, Ga.)

12:00 Men's Individual Sabre, Category A, Round of 16, TBD

12:40 Men's Individual Sabre, Category B, Round of 16, TBD

13:20 Men's Individual Sabre, Category A, Quarterfinals, TBD

13:40 Men's Individual Sabre, Category B, Quarterfinals, TBD

14:00 Men's Individual Sabre, Category A, Semifinals, TBD

14:20 Men's Individual Sabre, Category B, Semifinals, TBD

14:40 Men's Individual Sabre, Category A, Bronze Medal Match, TBD

15:00 Men's Individual Sabre, Category B, Bronze Medal Match, TBD

15:20 Men's Individual Sabre, Category A, Gold Medal Match, TBD

15:40 Men's Individual Sabre, Category B, Gold Medal Match, TBD

Top 10 Medal Standings *(as of 11 p.m. 9/16/08)*

<i>Country</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Total</i>
China	87	68	52	207
Great Britain	42	29	31	102
United States	36	34	28	98
Australia	22	29	27	78
Ukraine	24	18	31	73
Russia	18	23	21	62
Spain	15	21	22	58
Germany	14	25	20	59
France	11	21	19	51
Canada	19	10	21	50

Sport Wrap-Ups from Beijing

As the 2008 Paralympic Games draw to a close, the following highlights are given for each sport.

Archery

After a series of elimination rounds, Archery finished with two bronze medals.

Russell Wolfe (Williamsburg, Va.) was eliminated after a 31-point loss to Italian archer Oscar de Pelligrin. **Chuck Lear** (Lee's Summit, Mo.) was also eliminated in the Men's Individual Compound W1 after losing to Canadian archer Norbert Murphy by 23 points.

Kevin Stone (Kodak, Tenn.) competed in the Men's Individual Recurve –W1/W2, finishing 10th on his first day, beating Amit Dror of Israel by four points the second, and losing to Marco Vitale by four points on the third day.

After tying with Korea's Kweon Hyun-Ju in the Men's Individual Compound-Open, eventually beating him in a three arrow shoot-off, **Eric Bennett** (Surprise, Ariz.) was stopped from advancing by John Stubb of Great Britain, 117-114.

Joe Bailey (Flushing, Mich.) eliminated Keijo Kallunki of Finland in the Men Individual Compound-Open with a score of 115, while in a separate competition, **T.J. Pemberton** (Moore, Okla.) unseated the third-ranked British archer Fred Stevens with the same score. Facing each other in the next round, Pemberton scored six tens to Bailey's four and advanced to the semifinals where he was defeated by 2006 European Championship gold medalist Alberto Simonelli of Italy, shooting six tens to Simonelli's eight. While out of contention for the gold, Pemberton faced Philippe Horner of Switzerland for the bronze and lost, taking fourth place.

The sole woman on the U.S. Archery team, **Lindsey Carmichael** (Lago Vista, Tx.), competing in Women's Individual Recurve-Standing, beat Chinese archer Wang Yanhong, the reigning gold medalist from the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games, and then Magali Comte of Switzerland before progressing to the quarterfinals. She narrowly beat fifth-ranked Korean Archer Kim Ki- Hee 86-85, then faced top-ranked Lee Hwa-Sook of Korea. Carmichael finished with the first bronze medal at the Games.

Jeff Fabry (Tulare, Calif.), competing in the Men's Individual Compound W1, beat Fabio Lucas Azzolini of Italy 113-97, setting a new Paralympic record. He faced John Cavanagh of Great Britain, and the match ended with the pair tied with three tens each, but Cavanagh had maintained his two-point edge with a score of 109 to Fabry's 107. This placed him against Osmo Kinnunen of Finland for the bronze medal, the very archer whose Paralympic record Fabry broke just two days before. Winning by ten points, Fabry's bronze medal almost seemed effortless. "The gold will have to wait four more years," said Fabry. "I am overwhelmed by it all, but I am happy to have won the bronze."

Athletics

The U.S. Track & Field Team accrued 27 medals* during the 2008 Paralympic Games, September 7-17 in Beijing, China, topping the team's performance in Athens by one medal. The medal tally includes nine gold, 13 silver and five bronze.

U.S. performances included six new world records. Besides winning gold, **Jeremy Campbell** (Chula Vista, Calif./Perryton, Texas), who made his Paralympic Games debut, set a new mark in the men's pentathlon (F44), one of track & field's most grueling events (long jump, shot put, 100, discus and 400), with 4,662 points (previous WR – 4,444). Campbell also earned gold in the men's discus (F44) with a 55.08m pitch and 1019 points.

Two-time Paralympian **Jeff Skiba** (Chula Vista, Calif./Sammamish, Wash.) won the gold medal in the high jump (F44/46) that had eluded him in Athens. He also broke his previous world record in the event and set a new mark of 2.11m (6'11") and 1,056 points.

"My goal was to win a gold medal," said Skiba. "To come away with a gold medal and to hold the title of Paralympic champion – that's the greatest achievement in our sport."

Wheelchair racer **Jessica Galli** (Savoy, Ill./Hillsborough, N.J.) won five medals (gold/400m, silver/100, 200 & 800m, bronze/4x100m relay), earning the distinction of winning the most medals on the U.S. Track & Field Team at the 2008

Paralympic Games. One of her highlights among those medals includes a new world record mark in the women's 400m with a time of 54.88.

"My intention and focus was to break the world record, but I had no idea I could go under 55-seconds," said Galli. "This is my third Games and this is my first Paralympic gold medal, so it means a lot to me."

Newcomer to the Paralympic Games, **Jim Bob Bizzell** (Abilene, Texas), who lost his leg in a motorcycle accident only 17-months ago, won silver in both the men's 200m (22.62) and 400m (50.98) races, setting new world record marks in both events in the men's T44 class. Oscar Pistorius of South Africa, who races as a T43, won gold in both events, setting new records in his class.

The sixth and last world record to fall was in the men's 4x100 relay team comprised of **Brian Frasure** (Apex, N.C.), **Jim Bob Bizzell** (Abilene, Texas), **Casey Tibbs** (San Diego, Calif.) and **Jerome Singleton** (Irmo, S.C.). The team won gold and set a new world record in the event, breaking the U.S. record which has stood since the 2006, edging out their second place competitors from Brazil by almost three-seconds.

"I never imagined I would come here and set a new world record. It feels ever better to do it as a team because we all worked together to achieve a common goal," said Singleton upon completing the race.

Singleton also won silver in the men's 100m, his marquee event, racing to an 11.20 finish, proving he's one to keep an eye on moving forward.

For Frasure, who plans to retire after Beijing, he couldn't have scripted the finish any better.

"I can't imagine it [the race] being any more perfect," said Frasure. "I swear that had to be the best fastest 100m I ever ran in my life (laughs). Walking out into the stadium and hearing the cheers really got the adrenaline pumping. I just can't imagine going out any way more perfect than this."

Frasure also won bronze in the men's 100m.

Three-time Paralympian **Marlon Shirley** (Chula Vista, Calif./Tremonton, Utah), who was making a comeback from knee surgery and staph infection, attempted to reclaim his title as the world's fastest below-the-knee amputee, but fell short suffering a torn Achilles midway through the race.

Troy Engle (Colorado Springs, Colo.), head coach of the U.S. Paralympic Track & Field Team says the U.S. Team should be commended on its performance.

"We bounced back from a slow start plagued by a few bad breaks and put together a very solid team performance in Beijing," said Engle. "Special notice has to be given to Coach Adam Bleakney's stable at U of I and their incredible medal haul and to our bright young prospects. We are blessed to have a fantastic staff of coaches that were completely focused on supporting our athletes and insuring optimum performance."

Other performances that deserve the spotlight include two-time Paralympian **Joshua George's** (Champaign, Ill.) gold medal finish in the men's 100m (T53) in 14.79, an event he won bronze in – in Athens. George also won silver in the men's 800m (T53).

"It's my first gold in this Paralympics and I'm very satisfied," said George. "I want to dedicate this medal to my coach Adam Bleakney; all of my good performances are thanks to him."

Another athlete coached by **Adam Bleakney** (Champaign, Ill.) at the Univ. of Illinois, **Amanda McGrory** (Champaign, Ill./Kennett Square, Pa.), contributed three medals to the U.S. tally. She won gold in the women's 5,000m (12:29.07), an event that had to be re-run due to a crash in the first final. She also won two bronze – one in the women's 800m (T53) and the second as part of the women's 4x100m relay team (T53/54).

Nineteen-year-old **Tatyana McFadden** (Clarksville, Md.), who will attend the Univ. of Illinois this semester, won three medals including silver in the 400 and 800m (T54) and bronze in the women's 4x100m relay.

Other gold medal performances include **Josiah Jamison** (Chula Vista, Calif./Vance, S.C.), who with the assistance of his guide runner **Jerome Avery** (Lemoore, Calif.), ran a personal best for gold in the men's 100m final (T12.).

Distance runner **Peter Gottwald Jr.** (West Chester, Pa.) chipped in a silver medal in the men's 800m (T13), where he led the entire race before getting nabbed for gold in the last turn before the straightaway

"I just wanted to go for it and I did," said Gottwald. "The last 200 I was hurting, but I kept going, pushed myself and held on for the silver. I was about a second and a half off my personal best, but I didn't care about the time – only the medal!"

Ellexis Gillette (Raleigh, N.C.) repeated his performance from Athens in Beijing, leaping in the long jump to silver in 6.46m.

April Holmes (Chula Vista, Calif./Somerdale, N.J.), the sole female T44 athlete on U.S. team and heavily favored to win gold in the 200m, suffering a devastating fall during her run. Five stitches and a few days later, Holmes dusted herself off to win gold in the women's 100m with a time of 13.72. Holmes and the other seven competitors in her heat all took a victory lap around the Bird's Nest track after the race wrapped up.

"None of us had this chance in 2004, so it was important for us all to come together and celebrate our accomplishments," said Holmes. "The fact that we have this many women racing in our class now is a sign of the times and hope for the sport in the future."

**At press time, the marathon had not yet been run, so the above medal count does not reflect any U.S. medals from that event.*

Boccia

Competing in Boccia's BC-1 classification, Team USA's lone Boccia athlete, **Timothy (TJ) Hawker** (Holland, Ohio), faced some very skilled competitors during all four rounds of pool play. His first match against Hanif Mawji of Canada ended in a 2-2 tie and Mawji won the tie-breaker end. Hawker lost close matches in the following three rounds but showed excellent defensive play during key points of every match. During an especially challenging game against the number one ranked player in the world, Francisco Javier-Beltran of Spain, Hawker's well positioned balls allowed him to keep the Spaniard scoreless in the second end and to become the first player in the competition to score a point against Beltran. Although he didn't advance into the quarterfinals, Hawker put up a tough fight for Team USA and USA Boccia coach Mark McMillan (Lenexa, Kan) was pleased with his performance overall.

Cycling

The U.S. cycling team had a goal of two gold medals and ten medals total. They not only met the goal, but surpassed it, finishing with an amazing five gold, five silver and four bronze.

On the first day of track cycling the U.S. was unable to medal but then kicked it into gear on day two and in the Women's 500m Time Trial (LC1-2/CP4) **Jennifer Schuble** (CP4/Homewood, Ala.) won the Paralympic gold medal with a time of 40.278 and also set a new record in the CP4 class.

On day three **Karissa Whitsell** (B&VI/Eugene, Ore.) and new pilot **Mackenzie Woodring** (Pilot for Whitsell/Grand Rapids, Mich.) posted a time of 3:41.521 to secure the bronze medal and take their place on the podium stand.

The final day of track cycling brought much excitement as 52-year old **Barbara Buchan** (CP3/Bend, Ore.) won her first gold medal in the Women's Individual Pursuit (LC3-4/CP3) with a time of 4:01.243. Not to be outdone, Schuble won a silver in the Women's Individual Pursuit in her category as well with a factored time of 3:36.637.

After a day off, the U.S. took to the road and won an amazing seven medals the first day of competition. The HC C Men's Time Trial was the first race of the day with a distance of 12.7km. **Oz Sanchez** (San Diego, Calif.) was the first to cross the finish line, winning the gold with a final posted time of 20:16.52. Sanchez finished 20 seconds before the 2nd place winner, but not far behind was **Alejandro Albor** (Elk Grove, Calif.) who posted a time of 20:59.49, good enough for the bronze.

Anthony Zahn (Riverside, Calif.) was the first cyclist to take a medal in the afternoon race in the LC 4 Men's Time Trial. After competing in track cycling, Zahn had yet to score a medal. But he found success on the road and posted a final time of 41:08.21 and was awarded with the bronze.

The U.S. women then had their turn and they did not disappoint. First out was Schuble in the LC1/LC2/CP4 Women's Time Trial. Already winning a gold and silver in track cycling, Schuble continued her success, winning silver with a factored time of 38:38.94.

The Women's Time Trials continued, this time in the category of LC3/LC4/CP3. Buchan won her second gold in the Games. Not far behind was **Allison Jones** (LC3/Denver, Colo.) who, like Zahn, had gone through track cycling without a medal. This time was different and she won a silver with a time of 44:42.88.

The final time trial of the day was for the Women's Blind and Visually Impaired. The tandem team of Whitsell and Woodring finally found their gold after a fourth place finish and a bronze medal in the track cycling. Their posted time of 36:14.87 was 44.11 seconds faster than the second place team.

After an amazing seven medals being awarded to the U.S. in the first day of road cycling competition, the team experienced a let down on day two, with none of the cyclists finishing in the top 20. However, on the final day, the U.S. found the medal stand once more.

Albor and Sanchez began the day for the U.S., competing in the Men's HC C Individual Road Race. Albor won the silver with a time of 1:21:41 and Sanchez won the bronze.

The final race of the day for the U.S. featured the tandem team of Whitsell and Woodring who won a final silver with a time of 1:58:35.

Goalball

Women

Women's Goalball walked away with the gold medal. In its first match against Japan, the squad won 2-0. They won their second preliminary game against Denmark, 2-0, with **Jennifer Armbruster** (Colorado Springs, Colo.), U.S. Flag Bearer for the Opening Ceremonies, scoring both goals.

Competing against China in its third match, the U.S. powerhouse stumbled and lost 0-4, then came back to tie its fourth match against Brazil. They went on to play Germany and dominated with a big 4-0 win, followed by a tie with Canada. Continuing to advance, the team beat Sweden 7-4.

It all came down to the last two games. The U.S. beat Denmark in sudden overtime to play China for the gold, finishing with a victorious 6-5 win before a sold-out, securing the gold medal for the United States.

Men

In Men's Goalball, the squad lost its first game to China. "The U.S. team is notorious for being a slow starting team," said head coach Thomas Parrigin. It went on to lose to Canada in its second match, 2-8, but won its third match over Brazil, 6-4, and its fourth over Iran.

Competing against Sweden in the fifth match, the men lost 1-9, advancing into the quarterfinals against Slovenia, where they won solidly with a final score of 4-2, before falling to China, 0-4. After giving their all in a tough game with Sweden, the U.S. Men's Goalball team lost its final match, 5-2, finishing competition in fourth place.

Judo

Judo finished two days of competition with a bronze medal earned by **Greg De Wall**, +100kg (Chico, Calif.). He threw Cuba for an ippon in his first match, lost to China in the second, secured an ippon against Russia in his third, and was awarded the bronze against Korea when the match was stopped and Korea was disqualified.

Each of the judo athletes faced very tough competitors in their preliminary rounds and two did not advance. **Scott Jones**, -81kg (Little Rock, Ark.), a two-time Paralympian, faced Japan and lost by ippon with only three seconds left on the clock.

"I shot for a double and didn't get it," Jones said. **Jordan Mouton**, -70kg (Houston, Texas) faced 2007 Parapan gold medalist Maria Del Herrera of Spain for her first match and lost by ippon.

Andre Watson, -90kg (Upper Darby, Penn.) fought 2004 gold medalist Messaoud Nine of Algeria and lost. In his second match against Anatoliy Schevchenko of Ukraine, Watson was thrown for a ippon. **Myles Porter**, -100kg (Colorado Springs, Colo./Fremont, Ohio) faced a known opponent in Antonio Silva of Brazil, who is a three-time Paralympic gold medalist. He lost by ippon but advanced to fight against Iran's Hamzeh Nadri and won by ippon. He fought Bill Morgan of Canada and again won by ippon, advancing against Cuba's Juan Carlos Cortada, but lost by ippon. Porter took fifth place.

Powerlifting

Two U.S. athletes represented the United States in Powerlifting in Beijing, **Anderson Wise** (Needham, Mass.) and **Mary Stack** (Ann Arbor, Mich.). Wise, competing in the -67.50kg weight class, made two of three lifts and finished 11th overall in his class. In a flight of eight in the -82.50 kg women's class, Stack faltered and was disqualified. Stack was disappointed with her results. "I'll be back!" said Stack.

As a first-time Paralympian, Wise was humbled by the experience of competing in Beijing. "It's overwhelming to see the best Paralympic athletes in the world," he explained. "And to know I'm among them is unfathomable."

Rowing

Two U.S. crews made history at the 2008 Paralympic Games, winning two of the first-ever awarded medals in the sport of rowing. The mixed four with coxswain won silver, while the women's single sculls won bronze to highlight competition at Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park. In the legs, trunk and arms mixed four with coxswain, the crew of **Simona Chin** (Houston, Texas), **Jamie Dean** (Pickerington, Ohio), **Jesse Karmazin** (Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.), **Tracey Tackett** (Phoenixville, Pa.) and **Emma Preuschl** (Indianapolis, Ind.) clocked a 3:37.61 for the silver medal. Italy led from the start, winning gold in a 3:33.13. The U.S. crew was in third place through the 750-meter mark, but powered through Great Britain in the sprint to cross just 0.76 seconds ahead. Great Britain took bronze in a 3:38.37, with Germany fourth in a 3:41.71. China finished in fifth place with a 3:44.15, followed by Canada in a 3:45.66.

"I'm just so proud," said Preuschl. "This was really tough and I feared the other teams around us. I expected to win gold, but it's hard to get there. I will definitely be back at the London 2012 Paralympics."

In the final of the women's arms only single sculls, four-time Paralympian **Laura Schwanger** (Harrisburg, Pa.) sprinted from fifth to third place in the final 200 meters of the race to take bronze. Defending world champion Helene Raynsford of Great Britain won gold in a 6:12.93, with Liudmila Vauchok of Belarus second in a 6:25.44 for the silver. Schwanger clocked a 6:35.07, followed by Ukraine in a 6:40.04. China and Brazil finished fifth and sixth, respectively.

"The competition was incredibly tough," said Schwanger, a former track and field Paralympic athlete, who won four gold medals in 1988, three silver medals and a bronze medal in 1992 and three silver medals in 1996. "I am just happy to win a medal."

Ron Harvey (Long Beach, Calif.) finished fifth in the final of the men's arms only single sculls. The five-time adaptive national team member clocked a 5:46.32. Great Britain's Tom Aggar won gold in a 5:22.09, with Ukraine's Oleksandr Petrenko finishing in a 5:26 for silver and Israel's Eli Nawi taking bronze in a 5:39.11. China crossed fourth with Australia in sixth. After missing a qualifying spot in the repechages by less than a second, **Angela Madsen** (Long Beach, Calif.) and **Scott Brown** (Collingdale, Pa.) won the B final of the mixed double sculls for seventh place overall. The duo led from wire-to-wire, defeating Ukraine's Sergii Dereza and Iryna Kyrychenko by 7.45 seconds. Ukraine clocked a 4:37.78, with Germany third in a 4:49.05. Israel finished fourth in a 4:50.43, followed by Canada and Japan in fifth and sixth.

"It's a huge honor to take part in the Paralympic Games," said Brown. "After we failed to get into the A final, we had to make our revenge and get the first place in the B final."

Sailing

The U.S. Paralympic Sailing Team won a coveted gold medal in the double-handed SKUD-18 class and a bronze medal in the single-handed 2.4 mR. Thanks to a substantial lead in the SKUD-18 fleet, sailors **Nick Scandone** (Newport Beach, Calif.) and **Maureen McKinnon-Tucker** (Marblehead, Mass.) clinched the gold medal Friday with two races left to go in

the Paralympic regatta. **John Ruf** (Pewaukee, Wis.) secured a bronze medal in the tight 2.4 mR fleet, which was stacked with previous Paralympic medalists and world champions. **Rick Doerr** (Clifton, N.J.), **Tim Angle** (Marblehead, Mass.) and **Bill Donohue** (Brick, N.J.) finished eighth in the competitive, triple-handed Sonar class.

All six members of the U.S. Paralympic Sailing Team were first-time Paralympians, and McKinnon-Tucker entered the history books as the first female gold medalist in the history of the Paralympic Sailing Regatta. McKinnon-Tucker and Scandone's win was also the first time the U.S. Paralympic Sailing Team has won a gold medal.

Held in the coastal city of Qingdao, China, the 2008 Paralympic Sailing Regatta consisted of three fleets sailing 10 to 11 races over five days.

Shooting

In a sport that values experience and where it is not uncommon for athletes to attend their third, fourth or fifth Paralympic Games, first-time Paralympians **Danielle Fong** (New York, NY) and **Mike Dickey** (Trafford, Ala.) made a positive showing for Team USA in Shooting. Each athlete competed in two events at Beijing Shooting Range Hall and although they are not going home with any medals, they have gained invaluable experience that USA Shooting Coach Dan Durben feels will help them tremendously with training and their bright futures in the sport.

At seventeen years old, Fong was, by far, the youngest shooter in the entire women's competition. Her best performance was in the R8-50m Sport Rifle 3.20 – SH1 competition where she shot a personal best of 542 out of a possible 600. During the R2-10m Air Rifle Standing – SH1 competition, she failed to make the finals, but was right in the thick of the competition with the top shooters in the world. Dickey competed in the -50m Free Rifle 3x40-SH1 where he shot a 1106 out of a possible 1,200 points and in the Mixed R3-10m Air Rifle Prone-SH1 where he had an excellent first half and missed the 10-ring only once in his initial 30 shots.

Sitting Volleyball

The U.S. Women's Sitting Volleyball Team came into the Paralympics expected to finish either third or fourth in the tournament. But the U.S. team had other plans, upset the Netherlands to make it to the final match, eventually losing to China, but claiming the silver, their best finish ever in the Paralympics.

The U.S. easily defeated Lithuania, 3-0 on the first day of competition. The second day, the team faced China and lost in three straight, but recovered and went on the next day to beat Latvia, 3-0 and finish pool play ranked number two. This set the team up to face the Netherlands in the semi-final match.

Team USA then upset the Netherlands in five hard fought sets (19-25, 25-23, 28-26, 25-27, 15-10). "I have been playing for five years and we have never beat them (Netherlands) in an official competition," said Team Captain **Brenda Maymon**, (Sellersberg, Ind.). "We could never get the job done, but we finally did it! This is the exact set-up that we faced in Athens when the Netherlands beat us to go to the gold medal match. So this time, it feels great to beat them and to get to go to the gold medal match instead."

But the U.S. was unable to upset the 2004 Paralympic Games gold medalists China and they went on to secure their second consecutive Paralympic gold medal by defeating Team USA in straight sets (25-14, 25-19, 25-15).

"Playing the former gold medal team in their home country – that is a once in a lifetime opportunity," commented Assistant Coach Denise Van deWalle (Bowling Green, Ohio). "We have improved a lot and we've come so far but we were simply out-played today. It was just not our day."

With a silver medal now under their belt, Team USA will begin training for the World Disabled Volleyball Championships, set to be held in Oklahoma City, Okla. in July of 2010.

Swimming

For the first time, the U.S. Paralympic Swimming Team finished first in the medal standings, winning 17 gold medals at the Beijing Paralympic Games. With 44 total medals, nine more than they took home from Athens (2004), the team has proven their ability on this elite international stage. The U.S. swimmers set a total of 16 world records, 23 Paralympic records, 48 Pan American records and 99 American records.

“As a team, we have taken leaps and bounds since Athens,” said **Julie O’Neill** (Colorado Springs, Colo.), head coach, U.S. Paralympic Swimming Team. “The entire team as a whole has been very performance oriented and that has shown in the medal count, lifetime best swims and records.”

Of the 38 men and women on the U.S. team, 19 athletes stood on the podium, demonstrating the depth of the team. Of those, several won multiple medals, making them not only a force to reckon with in the pool, but a target for countless fans asking for autographs and photos in the Water Cube.

It wasn’t just the returning Paralympians – like **Erin Popovich** (Fort Collins, Colo./Silverbow, Mont.), **Jessica Long** (Baltimore, Md.), **Rudy Garcia-Tolson** (Colorado Springs, Colo./Bloomington, Calif.), **Lantz Lamback** (Colorado Springs, Colo./Augusta, Ga.), **Cheryl Angelelli-Kornoelje** (Clinton Township, Mich.), **Kelley Becherer** (Sheboygan, Wis.) and **Ashley Owens** (Stockbridge, Ga.) – who visited the podium multiple times.

First-time Paralympians – including **Cortney Jordan** (Henderson, Nev.), **Amanda Everlove** (Colorado Springs, Colo.), **Anna Eames** (Golden Valley, Minn.), and **Roy Perkins** (Del Mar, Calif.) – won multiple medals, broke world records and challenged their U.S. teammates in tough races, making it clear that the U.S. team has a bright future.

“We have a really young team and we’re going to be around for awhile to hold on to this,” said Eames.

Popovich, a three-time Paralympian who won her 14th career gold in Beijing, said “it’s nice to see my role changing,” referring to the new wave of young talent on the team. “We have an incredible team and I couldn’t be more proud of everyone. To have a part in representing your country is just an amazing experience.”

Possibly the biggest accomplishment of the U.S. swim team during the Beijing Paralympic Games was the caliber of performance and number of personal bests. According to O’Neill, 85-90% of the team’s races were best times. She said: “The team has dropped an unbelievable amount of time for this level of competition – more than five minutes across all events thanks to personal bests.”

The U.S. Paralympic Swimming Team will leave Beijing with 17 gold medals, 14 silver and 13 bronze. They finished first in the medal standings and second in the overall medal count, with 44 medals to China’s 52.

What’s the secret to the American team’s success? Across the board – from world records and debut Paralympic races, to medals and even fourth place podium near-misses – the message from the athletes was loud and clear. Hard work, a love of the sport and being a true competitor are what drive Team USA.

Table Tennis

Three-time Paralympian **Mitch Seidenfeld** (Lakeville, Minn.) lost 1-3 to Spain’s Alvaro Valera in the bronze medal final of the men’s class seven singles to conclude individual table tennis competition at Peking University Gymnasium. Valera, the gold medalist in the men’s class eight singles at the 2000 Paralympic Games, won the first and second games 13-11 and 16-14. In the third game, Seidenfeld gave his opponent less opportunity to use his backhand and pulled out an 11-7 win. Then in game four, Valera secured the bronze medal for Spain, winning 11-5. Seidenfeld pulled off of two big 3-0 wins en route to the semifinal match, but dropped to China’s Chaoqun Ye.

“I lost two tough games at deuce,” said Seidenfeld. “He was a difficult opponent and he played with a different kind of rubber, which made the ball respond in a way that took me some time to get used to.”

“Valera is very good and he’s used to this kind of big-tournament pressure,” said O’Neill. “Mitch played well. There were opportunities to take the match to a fifth game, but I’m proud of the way he played.”

Tahl Leibovitz (Ozone Park, N.Y.) lost to Finland’s Esa Miettinen in round three of the men’s class 9-10 singles to wrap up his individual performance at the Games. Miettinen took the first two games 12-10 and 11-9. Leibovitz fought back in the third game to win 14-12, but couldn’t maintain the momentum into the fourth game, losing 9-11. Leibovitz joined Seidenfeld in teams competition later in the week, but the duo was eliminated by Ukraine in the first tournament round 2-3.

In women's class five singles, **Noga Nir-Kistler** (Allentown, Pa.) lost 1-3 to Italy's Maria Nardelli. Nir-Kistler dropped the first two games 7-11 and 5-11, but came back in the third to win 12-10. Nardelli clamped down in the fourth game to win 11-2. The following day, Nir-Kistler 0-3 to Jordan's Khetam Abuawad to conclude U.S. women's competition.

In men's class four-five singles, **Andre Scott** (Fort Worth, Texas) fell to Great Britain's Scott Robertson 0-3. After an unexpected victory over Kober in round 1, Scott dropped three in a row against Robertson, losing 8-11, 8-11, 8-11 to conclude his competition at the Games.

"It was a really long tournament and they fought hard," said O'Neill. "That's all you can ask for. Overall, I think everyone wanted to go further, but the team was able to rally around Mitch in the singles. All the teams here came to play their very best."

Wheelchair Basketball

Men

The 2004 Paralympic Games left a sour taste in the collective mouth of the U.S. Men's Wheelchair Basketball Team, which left Athens empty-handed and with only a seventh place finish to show for its effort. Four years of rebuilding had hopes and expectations high as the team arrived in China. The U.S. had dominated its international competition throughout 2007 and in the lead-up to the Games. But, Team USA would find no redemption in Beijing as it fell short of making the medal podium and finished in fourth place.

"Our guys put our hearts on the line," said co-captain **Jeremy Lade** (Janesville, Wis.). "We tried to fight back as well as we could, but it just wasn't meant to be for us this time. We'll keep our heads up and come back strong."

The U.S. looked to be in good shape in the preliminary round, minus what appeared to be a hiccup of a loss to Great Britain in the third game. The team still easily advanced to the medal round and a forfeit by opponent Iran in the quarterfinals automatically put the U.S. into the semis. However, that loss to the Brits had put the United States as the two seed coming out of the pool, which earned the team a showdown with 2-time defending gold medalists and archrivals Canada in that semifinal round.

This USA versus Canada match-up will go down as one of the most epic games in men's wheelchair basketball history. Despite leading by as many as 16 points in the first half, the U.S. was unable to hold on and lost by seven in double overtime. It was a crushing defeat that knocked the United States out of contention for gold.

"No matter how you look at it, this is disappointing. We came here to win a gold medal and didn't have the opportunity to do that," said head coach **Steve Wilson** (Racine, Wis.). "But, I'm so proud of these guys. They fought all the way and worked so hard. It just shows how strong our team is and how much we believe in one another."

Just 48 hours after that exhausting battle, the U.S. took to the court against Great Britain for its last chance to take home some hardware. But, the emotional and physical toll had been too great and Team USA fell just short of sitting on the podium.

"We've been through an extremely emotional few days," said **Eric Barber** (Whitewater, Wis./Chicago, Ill.). "This wasn't the result we wanted, but I'm proud to be part of this team. This is the best team I've ever played on."

Women

The U.S. Women's Wheelchair Basketball Team arrived in Beijing with a very large target on its back. The team entered the tournament as defending Paralympic champions, giving every opponent a little extra motivation as they tried to knock off the top dog. But, for another four years the U.S. team will stay perched atop the proverbial mountain after taking home its second consecutive Paralympic gold medal.

"This experience has been so incredible. It was a little more difficult this time because every team here was gunning for us. They wanted what we had and we rose to the challenge," said team co-captain **Patty Cisneros** (Champaign, Ill./Lake Station, Ind.). "There's no better feeling than knowing you're the best in the world. This is so amazing."

Team USA completed the tournament undefeated at 7-0. The U.S. took out Germany, Australia, Great Britain and Brazil in preliminary round action and then knocked off China in the quarterfinals, Australia again in the semifinals and Germany

for a second time to claim gold. Three-time Paralympian **Christina Ripp** (Littleton, Colo./Dane, Wis.) said the reason her team was able to take back-to-back gold medals is simple – defense.

“I don’t think I’ve ever been part of a team that plays defense the way we did during this tournament. It was a total team effort and everything came together for us. No matter what, we always knew we could rely on the strength of our defense to win ball games,” said Ripp. “I’m proud to be a part of this team and it’s an unbelievable feeling to share this achievement with my teammates.”

The team consisted of six athletes returning from Athens and six athletes making their Paralympic debut in wheelchair basketball. Ripp, Cisneros, **Carlee Hoffman** (Champaign, Ill./Cutlerville, Mich.), **Emily Hoskins** (Murray, Ky./Mascoutah, Ill.), **Stephanie Wheeler** (Tuscaloosa, Ala./Norlina, N.C.) and **Jennifer Ruddell** (Rome, Ga.) all returned from 2004, while **Sarah Castle** (Champaign, Ill./Centennial, Colo.), **Loraine Gonzales** (Ft. Worth, Texas), **Mary Allison Milford** (Tuscaloosa, Ala./Magnolia, Ark.), **Alana Nichols** (Tuscaloosa, Ala./Farmington, N.M.), **Natalie Schneider** (Lincoln, Neb.) and **Becca Murray** (Germantown, Wis.) took to the Paralympic court for the first time.

The number of newcomers to the team was never of concern to U.S. head coach **Ron Lykins** (Stillwater, Minn.) as he said his team’s mix of veteran leadership and youthful exuberance was one of the biggest keys to repeat success.

“Our depth is tremendous and our team chemistry kept us going when we got down in a few of our games,” said Lykins. “We were literally 12 players deep and I could send any number of line-ups onto the floor at any time. All our girls played with poise and confidence, regardless of what kind of game experience they came here with. They worked incredibly hard and it was fantastic to see them come together as a team to achieve their goals.”

Wheelchair Fencing

To highlight competition leading up to the final day of competition, **Scott Rodgers** (San Diego, Calif.) advanced to the quarterfinals in both days of his competition of the men’s foil and epee category B. A three-time Paralympian ranked fifth in the world, Rodgers won bronze in the epee category B event at the 2004 Paralympics and placed sixth at the 2007 World Cup in Paris. After coming away from a competitive morning preliminary pool with two wins and three losses in foil, Rodgers defeated Athens double medalist Piotr Czop from Poland 15-11 in the Round of 16. Then in the quarterfinals, the U.S. fencer had a four-touch lead, but couldn’t maintain the upper body strength to close the door against China’s Daoliang Hu.

“I thought I had it, but I ran out of gas at the end,” said Rodgers. “I wasn’t exploding out of it like I was in the beginning. The challenge is to use what you’ve got. The Chinese fencers have become a tough group. I saw him in Athens at the 2004 Paralympic Games and he is one of their good guys.”

Rodgers repeated a quarterfinal loss in his bout against Belarus’ Mikalai Bezyazychny in epee competition Monday, with a final score of 4-15. Rodgers and **Benjy Williams** (Bethlehem, Ga.) both advanced from the morning pools, Rodgers with wins against Japan (5-1), Spain (5-3), France (5-3), and China (5-4), and Williams with two wins against Kuwait’s Alsaedi Abdulwahab (5-4) and Greece’s Emmanouil Bogdos (5-4). Then in the un-luck of the draw, the two U.S. fencers were paired together. Rodgers advanced to the quarterfinals with a 15-2 win over Williams.

“Scott’s the better guy. You never really want to fence against a teammate, unless it’s for two medals,” said Williams. “The highlight of the morning was beating Kuwait. He beat me at all the world cups, and I got him today. In the bout against Greece, timing was key because he was so quick, but my long arms came in handy. It’s been a real experience being here for the first time. I fenced better today than I ever have before.”

“I dug myself a hole and got in trouble,” said Rodgers. “He’s a tough competitor and I knew that coming in. He’s been around a few years and has a lot of experience. I wasn’t patient enough to make him come to me. He was pretty good at giving me the invitation and caught me flat-footed, so to speak. I forced too much of the action too early and made mistakes.”

Also competing in the men’s individual foil category B, **Gerard Moreno** (Los Angeles, Calif.) did not advance from his preliminary pool. The three-time Paralympian and oldest competitor in the field at 51 years old, defeated Korea’s Kim Gi-Hong 5-4 in his second bout, but failed to tally enough touches in the other match-ups to secure a spot in the Round of 16. In men’s individual foil category A, **Mark Calhoun** (Bremen, Ga.) won his first bout in the morning pool 5-4 against

Poland's Stefan Makowski. He proceeded to lose the next four bouts and did not advance to the rounds. **Andrea DeMello** (New York, N.Y.), a four-time Paralympian who competed for Brazil in 1996, 2000 and 2004, did not advance out of the preliminary pools of the women's foil or sabre category B events. In epee, DeMello lost 0-5 overall, but managed to score touches in all but one of the bouts. The closest match-up of the morning was with Italy's Rosalba Vettrano, who narrowly won the bout 5-4.

"I had the best time and it was a wonderful experience despite the results," said DeMello. "I did better than I expected against Italy. I was only one touch away, I almost got her. It's hard to describe the emotion I feel. I am done here, but I will continue to train for London."

Wheelchair fencing competition concludes Wednesday with men's sabre categories A and B. U.S.A.'s Moreno, Williams and Calhoun compete in preliminary pools, beginning at 9:30 a.m. local time. Complete daily results will be available at <http://results.beijing2008.cn/WRMP/ENG/Schedule/WF.shtml>.

Wheelchair Rugby

Prior to 2004, the U.S. Wheelchair Rugby Team had never lost a game in Paralympic competition. Team USA was downed by Canada in the semifinal round in Athens and the U.S. left Greece with an unsatisfying bronze medal. Four years later, the U.S. team members leave Beijing satisfied and fulfilled – with gold medals around their necks.

"It's just an awesome feeling to be up on that medal stand and hearing the national anthem. I've been playing on the U.S. team for 10 years and this is hands down the best team I've played on," said co-captain **Norm Lydych** (Austin, Texas). "We never backed down and always played together as a team."

The U.S. was never seriously challenged in the tournament and finished with an unblemished 5-0 record. Team USA took down China, Japan and Canada in pool play and advanced to the semifinal to meet Great Britain. The team squeaked by the Brits to earn a berth in the gold medal game and then dominated Australia, taking the championship by a score of 53-44.

"The USA's biggest strength is that we're 11 guys strong. There are 11 different starters on this team and we can confidently play any one of them at any point in the game. That helps all of us go out on the court and give it our all knowing there are seven guys on the bench that can back us up and come in fresh and ready to go," said first-time Paralympian **Nick Springer** (St. Petersburg, Fla./New York, N.Y.).

Springer, age 23, and **Joel Wilmoth** (Hueytown, Ala.), age 19, were two of the brightest young stars to emerge at these Games. U.S. head coach **James Gumbert** (Austin, Texas) said the experience they each gained in Beijing could help lead the team to future success.

"The performances that Nick and Joel gave in this tournament were unbelievable. They're the two youngest kids on the team and they came out and played like seasoned veterans. What they learned here and how they contributed to our success say great things about the future of U.S. wheelchair rugby," said Gumbert.

Springer and Wilmoth were joined by three other newcomers on the team – **Jason Regier** (Denver, Colo.), **Chance Sumner** (Denver, Colo.) and **Seth McBride** (Portland, Ore./Juneau, Alaska) – and six returning team members from Athens: Lydych, **Bryan Kirkland** (Leeds, Ala.), **Will Groulx** (Portland, Ore.), **Mark Zupan** (Austin, Texas), **Scott Hogsett** (Phoenix, Ariz.) and **Andy Cohn** (Tempe, Ariz.). To a man, each attributed their success to the unity and depth of Team USA.

"I'm so proud of everyone – the staff, the coaches, my teammates," said Cohn. "We have trained and prepared for this since the day we left Athens four years ago. Everyone on this team is so close and we did this together, as a group. It's an amazing feeling to win a gold medal."

Wheelchair Tennis

The U.S. Wheelchair Tennis team exceeded expectations, ending competition with a gold in Quad Doubles and a bronze in Quad Singles.

In Women's Singles, **Kaitlyn Verfuert** (Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.) was eliminated in the second round against No. 3 ranked Sharon Walraven (NED). **Beth Arnoult** (Paia, Hawaii) was thrilled to advance to the third round of competition where she was eliminated by the No. 4 seed Jiske Griffioen (NED) in the quarterfinals.

In Women's Doubles Arnoult and Verfuert beat Great Britain in the quarterfinals and advanced to the semifinals where they met No. 1 seed Jiske Griffioen and Esther Vergeer (NED) and lost. They fell again to No. 3 Florence Gravelier and Arlette Racineux (FRA) in the bronze medal match.

In Men's Singles **Lee Hinson** (Wallan, Australia/Jacksonville, Fla.) scored a big win against Mauricio Pomme of Brazil in the first round but lost to Joachim Gerard of Belgium in the second round of competition. **Paul Moran** (Chicago, Ill.), a five-time Paralympian but first time in wheelchair tennis, lost to Ronald Vink of the Netherlands, and **Jon Rydberg** (Oakdale, Minn.) advanced to the third round and lost to No. 1 ranked Shingo Kunieda (JPN). **Steve Welch** (Bedford, Texas), the silver medalist in men's singles from Sydney, also advanced to the third round where he played and lost to Robin Ammerlaan (NED), the gold medalist from Athens.

In Men's Doubles, Hinson and Moran won their first match against Canada and lost in the second round to No. 4 seed Stefan Olsson and Peter Wikstrom (SWE). Rydberg and Welch beat China in the first round and lost to No. 3 seed Maikel Scheffers and Ronald Vink (NED) in the second.

In Quad Mixed Singles, **Brent Poppen** (Paso Robles, Calif.) lost in a tiebreaker to Sweden's Johan Andersson. Meanwhile, **Nick Taylor** (Wichita, Kan.) beat Boaz Kramer (ISR) and Bas van Erp (NED), advancing to third round where he lost to No. 2 seed Peter Norfolk (GBR), gold medalist of the inaugural Quad Singles. **David Wagner** (Hillsboro, Ore.), the silver medalist from Athens, beat Canada and Israel, but lost to No. 4 ranked Johan Andersson (SWE) in the third round. This put Taylor and Wagner head to head in the bronze medal match, and Wagner beat Taylor in the third set to take the bronze.

In Quad Doubles, Taylor and Wagner, defending gold medalists from Athens, beat Dorrie Timmermans-van Hall and Bas van Erp (NED), in Quad Doubles 6-3, 6-4. In the gold medal match they faced Boaz Kramer and Shraga Weinberg (ISR) and went 6-0, 4-6, 6-2, defending their title for a gold medal finish. Taylor and Wagner's magic on the court can be attributed to their close bond. "We are such good friends and we're together all the time," said Taylor. "This win was more dramatic than Athens because it went three sets, but the feeling is the same."