

Monday, September 8, 2008

Beijing, China

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

Sport Reports

Boccia

Boccia competition got underway at the 2008 Paralympic Games today and **Timothy (TJ) Hawker** (Holland, Ohio) began his Beijing competition with two rounds of pool play.

Hawker, Team USA's lone boccia athlete, faced Hanif Mawji from Canada in Round 1. The match went back and forth with alternating points by each athlete before ending in a 2-2 tie. Mawji broke the tie by scoring an additional point in the fifth end.

In the second round of the day's competition, Hawker faced a tough competitor, Yi Wang, from China. Wang went from a score of zero to four with the throw of one ball in the first end. Hawker came back with a point in the second, but the game ended with Wang winning, 8-1.

Hawker will continue competition Monday when he faces the No. 1 ranked player in the world, Francisco Javier Beltram of Spain, in the third round of pool play.

Cycling

Karissa Whitsell (B&VI/Eugene, Ore.) and pilot Mackenzie Woodring (Grand Rapids, Mich.) had never competed at the international stage in track cycling together, so the two could not be seeded and therefore were the first to race in the women's 1 Km Time Trial. After they posted the time of 1:12.787, it was simply a waiting game, and with the top three teams remaining, Whitsell and Woodring saw they were still in first place.

Australia's tandem team of Lindy Hou and Toireasa Gallagher finished their race with a time of 1:12.463 to move the U.S. to second place. However, next came a Paralympic record with the Australian team of Felicity Johnson and Katie Parker, which was immediately smashed by Great Britain's Aileen McGlynn and Ellen Hunter with a time of 1:09.066, also a new world record. Team USA had to settle for a fourth place finish.

"We just met in April, raced our first road race in June and this is our first track race," said Whitsell, when talking about her new pilot Woodring. "We are capable of riding faster and it is unbelievable how she has done."

Equestrian

Barbara Grassmyer (Placerville, Calif.) got the competition rolling for the US riders, putting in a solid effort with Mibis for a score of 59.231%. Grassmyer is confident she can improve her performance in the individual test on Tuesday.

Rebecca Hart (Erie, Pa.) and her horse Norteassa were the second US pair of the team, scoring 62.000% in the Grade II Team Test.

Goalball

With just 57 seconds remaining, the U.S. Women's Goalball Team won 2-0 against Japan. "It doesn't matter who scored the winning goal; just as long as we scored at least one," said **Asya Miller**, (Colorado Springs, CO), "getting two goals just makes it a little sweeter."

"I have told the team all year, defense will win this tournament; offense will hold up, said U.S. Women's Goalball Head Coach Ken Armbruster (Colorado Springs, Colo.). "We've really got to give credit to the team from Japan, they really played a good game."

The 2008 Paralympic women's goalball competition is shaping up to be an exciting series of match ups in Beijing. The eight team pool includes USA, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, Japan and Sweden. So far, the silver medal 2004 U.S. Paralympic Women's Goalball Team has faced each of their upcoming Paralympic competitors (with the exception of Brazil) in the lead up to Beijing.

The team began pool play today; the top four teams after pool play advance to the semifinal and final rounds on Sept. 14. Meanwhile, the U.S. Men's Goalball team lost 3-13 to China today. "There is definitely a hometown advantage playing on the same court your team has practiced on the whole year...that's for any team, said Head Coach Thomas Parrigin. "Most would think it's the hometown crowd, which doesn't hurt, but it's the floor. The team that knows every inch of that has the advantage." He added, "The U.S team is notorious for being a slow starting team; we hope to see China in the final gold medal match," said Parrigin.

Shooting

Seventeen-year-old **Danielle Fong** (New York, N.Y.) made her Paralympic Games debut on Sunday, finishing in 19th place in the women's R2-10m air rifle standing (SH1) event. Fong scored 376 out of 400 possible points, which was not enough to qualify her for the final round of competition.

"I did the best I could and now I'm ready for my next competition on Tuesday," said Fong. "It was an amazing experience; you can't beat the facility, and everything was so cool."

Fong competes in her final event, the R8-50m sport rifle 3 x 20 (SH1), on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at the Beijing Shooting Range Hall.

Sitting Volleyball

In its first round of pool play, the U.S. Women's Sitting Volleyball Team swept Lithuania 25-15, 25-18, 25-9.

In the first set the U.S. never trailed, but nerves were noticeably displayed by those experiencing the Paralympic Games for the first time. "It was very overwhelming at first – very surreal," said 15-year-old **Heather Erickson** (Fayetteville, N.C.), the youngest on the team. "Once I got past that, I was able to calm down and play."



BEIJING - SEPTEMBER 07: Danielle Fong of the United States competes in the Women's R2-10M Air Rifle Standing SH1 qualification during the Beijing Paralympics at the Beijing Shooting Range Hall on September 7, 2008 in Beijing, China (Photo by Andrew Wong/Getty Images)

Katie Holloway (Lake Stevens, Wash./Edmond, Okla.) led the team in scoring with 16 points, followed by **Kendra Lancaster** (Sheridan, Ind.) and Erickson who each posted 11.

After a day off on Monday, the U.S. (1-0) will face No. 2 seed China (1-0) at 17:30 on Tuesday, September 9 at the China Agricultural University Gymnasium.

Swimming

The US Paralympic Swimming Team dominated day one of swimming competition at the National Aquatics Center with four gold medals, two silver and three bronze.

Erin Popovich (Fort Collins, Colo./Silverbow, Mont.) shattered her own world record by nearly six seconds in the women's 200m individual medley (IM) (SM7), defending her Athens title with a time of 2:54.61. **Rudy Garcia-Tolson** (Colorado Springs, Colo./Bloomington, Calif.) also held on to his 200m IM (SM7) title with a world record time of 2:35.92. Newcomer **Miranda Uhl** (Alachua, Fla.) made her Paralympic debut in the 200m IM (SM6) with a gold medal, world record time of 3:13.05. After finishing second in this morning's preliminary rounds to teammate **Amanda Everlove**

(Colorado Springs, Colo.), **Jessica Long** (Baltimore, Md.) nabbed gold in the women's 100m butterfly (S8) with a time of 1:11.96.

"I was so nervous, had so many thoughts going through my head – doubt, everything – and just locked it out," said Uhl. "I just saw how far ahead [the other swimmers] were after the breaststroke and gave it my all. This was my first race and I'm so excited about it. It's an amazing start to the meet."

With the highest number of gold medals after one day of competition, the US team has come out strong on the first day of competition. "This was a fantastic opening day for us and a great showing from the experienced Paralympians and the rookies. The difference from four years ago is impressive," said Julie O'Neil, head coach, US Paralympic Swimming Team. "Nine medals is a great start toward our team goal."

Also contributing to Team USA's medal count today were: **Cheryl Angelelli-Kornoelje** (Clinton Township, Mich.) – silver medal in women's 100m Freestyle (S4); **Amanda Everlove** (Colorado Springs, Colo.) – silver medal in women's 100m Butterfly (S8); **Aimee Bruder** (Birmingham, Ala.) – bronze medal in women's 100m Freestyle (S4); **Cortney Jordan** (Henderson, Nev.) – bronze medal in women's 200m IM (SM7); and **Roy Perkins** (Del Mar, Calif.) – bronze medal in men's 100m Freestyle (S5).

Table Tennis

Two U.S. players pulled out first-round wins Sunday at the 2008 Paralympic Games in men's and women's singles events at Peking University Gymnasium in Beijing, China. **Andre Scott** (Fort Worth, Texas) won his match against Dietmar Kober of Germany 3-1 to highlight competition in the men's class four-five singles. Scott took charge early, winning the first two games 13-11 and 11-7. Kober, the higher-seeded competitor, took the third game 5-11. Scott came back to win the fourth game 11-9.

"I was sort of like the sleeping giant," said Scott. "My serve was really effective. I kept serving to his middle forehand, and made him have to decide what to do with it. I just wanted to limit my mistakes and keep the ball in play. Sometimes I get a little impatient and start rushing the shots, but I was able to hold it together and fight to do the right things."

In men's class nine-ten singles, **Tahl Leibovitz** (Ozone Park, N.Y.) swept the match 3-0 against The Netherlands' Tonnie Heijnen. Leibovitz made the first two games look effortless, winning 11-6 and 11-3. Heijnen, a 2004 Paralympic gold-medalist in the team event, made an attempt to come back in the third game. Leibovitz held on to win 13-11 and seal his first round victory.

"Tahl played with great focus and concentration," said coach Sean O'Neill. "Winning 3-0 is huge."

In men's class seven singles, three-time Paralympian **Mitch Seidenfeld** (Lakeville, Minn.) lost 1-3 to Poland's Adam Jurasz. **Noga Nir-Kistler** (Allentown, Pa.) lost 1-3 in the first round of the women's class five singles. Both competitors will have another shot to advance in the second round of competition Monday.

Wheelchair Basketball

The U.S. Men's Wheelchair Basketball Team kicked off the 2008 Paralympic Games with a dominating 76-53 win over Israel. After shaking off some early nerves, the U.S. used its speed and depth to cruise to victory in its first game of pool play.

"We definitely had some first quarter jitters, which we expected, and we told the team it doesn't matter if you shoot 15 percent, just make sure the defense is there," said U.S. head coach **Steve Wilson** (Racine, Wis.).

Steve Serio (Champaign, Ill./Westbury, N.Y.) and **Joe Chambers** (Whitewater, Wis./Davis, Calif.) led the team with 13 and 14 points, respectively, but the U.S. showcased its depth with 10 of its 12 athletes contributing to the team's offensive production.

The U.S. continues pool play against Brazil on Monday, Sept. 8, at 10:00 a.m. at the Beijing Science & Technology University Gymnasium.

ATHLETE PROFILE—Jeff Glasbrenner

Injury ‘closed one door’ but leads to Paralympic success for Glasbrenner

By Jamie M. Blanchard // U.S. Olympic Committee

Jeff Glasbrenner refers to it as the bad day.

On July 30, 1980, the then 8-year-old Glasbrenner was involved in a farming accident that left him as a below-the-knee amputee. “The doctors told me I could never play sports because I would hurt myself or I would hurt the other kids,” he said.



Throughout his childhood, the self-described “very competitive” Glasbrenner sat on the sidelines as his sister excelled in athletics. “It was kind of hard for me since my sister was the best athlete in the whole school while I was sitting on the sidelines. But then I got my chance to come in,” he said.

In 1997, after playing wheelchair basketball at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, he made the U.S. national wheelchair basketball team for the first time. And the chances keep coming for Glasbrenner, who is making his third consecutive Paralympic Games appearance in Beijing, China.

“I really did not know much about the Paralympic Games when I made my first team in 2000,” said Glasbrenner, who has since secured his spot among wheelchair basketball elite with a record 63 points and 23 rebounds in a 2004 national championship game. “Now I’m the oldest guy on the court so my roles have changed a little bit from my first Paralympics,” he said. “I try to use my experience to help the younger team members. I am almost like a dad to the team now because I’m in that leadership role.”

And Glasbrenner knows all about fatherhood. In addition to training full time for basketball as well as triathlons, his newest athletic endeavor, Glasbrenner is a stay-at-home dad to his two young children, daughter Grace, 2, and 10-month-old son Gavin. Grace was born seven weeks premature. “I wasn’t on the team for the 2006 World Championships because of the trouble with her health-wise. I know I made the right choice to stay home with Grace – you have to have your priorities,” said Glasbrenner, who also attends speech therapy with his daughter.

It is not easy for Glasbrenner to balance family matters with gold medal dreams. “I really learned how to be organized when I became a dad. Before the kids, I wasn’t the most organized with everything, but I have to be now,” he said.

Glasbrenner’s wife operates her own bank data business while he stays at home with the kids. “The grandmas are close by so I call them for help sometimes, but it’s mostly me running the show here,” said Glasbrenner, who is a sponsored athlete receiving support from businesses and organizations like The Hartford.

“I sometimes wake up at 3:45 a.m. to squeeze some workouts in before the kids get up,” Glasbrenner said. “I do whatever it takes to make everything work. I’ll train early in the morning. Sometimes, I’ll even train late at night if I need to.”

He trains three times each day in hopes of performing at his best in Beijing. “My goal is to win the gold medal,” he said. “I will do whatever it takes to help the team be on the top of that podium in Beijing. If I need to score all the points or if I need to sit at the end of the bench, I’ll do it because I’ve never won a Paralympic gold.”

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But no matter what happens for the U.S. wheelchair basketball team next month, there is no slowing down for Glasbrenner, a member of the national triathlon team. He is following up the Paralympic Games by competing at the 2008 Ironman World Triathlon Championship in October.

"I like basketball and the triathlons for different reasons. I do like the team aspect of basketball," Glasbrenner said. "But in the ironman, the success or failure is all on you. I really like the aspect of being the only one responsible for the outcome."

Glasbrenner finished third at the 2007 Ironman World Triathlon Championship, and now he has a chance to win both a Paralympic gold medal and the Ironman World Triathlon Championship.

"I never imagined all this could be possible," Glasbrenner said. "I'm really glad that bad day happened because it closed one door in my face but opened so many others. I would have never had the chance to meet my wife, have my kids, be in the Paralympics. It was bad at the time but it's turned out to be pretty cool."

Schedule of Upcoming Events for Team USA *(subject to change)*

Monday, September 8, 2008

Athletics, National Stadium

- 10:05 Men's 400m (T43) - prelim, Erik Hightower (Glendale, Ariz.)
- 10:35 Men's 100m (T12) – prelim, Josiah Jamison (Chula Vista, Calif.)
- 17:38 Men's 100m (T11) – prelim, Nelacey Porter (Chula Vista, Calif./Portland, Ore.), Elexis Gillette (Raleigh, N.C.)
- 18:50 Men's Shot put (F44) – final, Ed Cockrell (New Athens, Ill.)
- 18:55 Women's 5000m (T54) – final, Cheri Blauwet (Palo Alto, Calif.), Amanda McGrory (Champaign, Ill./Kennett Square, Pa.), Shirley Reilly (Tucson, Ariz.)
- 19:18 Men's 5000m (T54) – prelim, Tony Iniguez (Aurora, Ill.), Tyler Byers (Washington, D.C.), Adam Bleakney (Champaign, Ill.)
- 20:22 Men's 100m (T44) – prelim, Brian Frasure (Apex, N.C.), Marlon Shirley (Chula Vista, Calif./Tremonton, Utah), Jerome Singleton (Irmo, S.C.)

Boccia, Fencing Hall

- 9:00 Mixed Individual - BC1 Group A, Timothy Hawker (Holland, Ohio)

Cycling, Laoshan Velodrome

- 11:10 Women, LC 1/LC 2/ CP 4, 500 m TT, Final, Greta Neimanas (Colorado Springs, Colo./Chicago, Ill.) and Jennifer Schuble (Homewood, Ala.)
- 11:45 Women, LC 3/LC 4/ CP 3, 500 m TT, Final, Allison Jones (Colorado Springs, Colo.) and Barbara Buchan (Bend, Ore.)

Equestrian, Hong Kong Equestrian Venue

- 7:30 Individual Championship Test, Grade II, Rebecca Hart (Erie, Pa.)
- 19:15 Individual Championship Test, Grade IV, Robin Brueckmann (Summerfield, N.C.)

Goalball, Beijing Institute of Technology Gymnasium

- 11:00 Women's Preliminaries, USA vs. DEN
- 17:00 Men's Preliminaries, USA vs. CAN

Judo, Beijing Workers' Gymnasium

- 12:00 Men's 81kg, Prelim/Repechage/Finals, Scott Jones (Little Rock, Ark.)

Sailing, Qingdao Olympic Sailing Center

- 13:00 3-Person Keelboat (Sonar), Race 1, Rick Doerr (Clifton, N.J.), Bill Donahue (Brick, N.J.) and Tim Angle (Marblehead, Mass.)
- 13:00 2-Person Keelboat (SKUD18), Race 1, Maureen McKinnon-Tucker (Marblehead, Mass.) and Nick Scandone (Fountain Valley, Calif.)
- 13:10 1-Person Keelboat (2.4mR), Race 1, John Ruf (Pewaukee, Wis.)
- 14:30 3-Person Keelboat (Sonar), Race 2, Rick Doerr (Clifton, N.J.), Bill Donahue (Brick, N.J.) and Tim Angle (Marblehead, Mass.)
- 14:30 2-Person Keelboat (SKUD18) - Race 2, Maureen McKinnon-Tucker (Marblehead, Mass.) and Nick Scandone (Fountain Valley, Calif.)
- 14:40 1-Person Keelboat (2.4mR) - Race 2, John Ruf (Pewaukee, Wis.)

Swimming (Preliminaries), National Aquatic Center

- 9:00 Men's 100m Butterfly (S10), Justin Zook (Plymouth, Minn.)
- 9:04 Women's 100m Butterfly (S10), Anna Eames (Golden Valley, Minn.), Susan Beth Scott (Colorado Springs, Colo./Cape Girardeau, Mo.)
- 9:14 Women's 100m Freestyle (S6), Miranda Uhl (Alachua, Fla.), Casey Johnson (Cypress, Calif.)
- 9:19 Men's 100m Freestyle (S7), Lantz Lamback (Colorado Springs, Colo./Augusta, Ga.)
- 9:35 Women's 400m Freestyle (S13), Kelley Becherer (Sheboygan, Wis.)
- 9:47 Men's 50m Backstroke (S4), Joe McCarthy (San Diego, Calif.)
- 9:51 Men's 50m Backstroke (S5) Dave Denniston (Longmont, Colo.), Roy Perkins (Del Mar, Calif.)
- 9:55 Women's 50m Backstroke (S5), Marin Morrison (Sammamish, Wash.)
- 10:21 Women's 100m Freestyle (S8), Jessica Long (Baltimore, Md.), Amanda Everlove (Colorado Springs, Colo.)
- 10:28 Men's 100m Freestyle (S9), Mark Barr (Davis, Calif.), Cody Bureau (Colorado Springs, Colo./Latrobe, Pa.), Michael Prout (West Springfield, Mass.)
- 10:35 Women's 100m Freestyle (S9), Elizabeth Stone (Grand Rapids, Mich.), April Kerley (Loveland, Ohio), Melissa Stockwell (Colorado Springs, Colo./ Minneapolis, Minn.)

Swimming (Finals), National Aquatic Center

- 17:00 Men's 100m Butterfly (S10) Finals
- 17:05 Women's 100m Butterfly (S10) Finals
- 17:15 Women's 100m Freestyle (S6) Finals
- 17:45 Women's 400m Freestyle (S13) Finals
- 18:10 Men's 100m Freestyle (S7) Finals
- 18:15 Women's 100m Freestyle (S7) Erin Popovich (Fort Collins, Colo./Silverbow, Mont.), Cortney Jordan, (Henderson, Nev.) Finals
- 18:36 Men's 50m Backstroke (S4) Finals
- 18:41 Men's 50m Backstroke (S5) Finals
- 19:02 Women's 50m Backstroke (S5) Finals
- 20:01 Women's 100m Freestyle (S8) Finals
- 20:22 Men's 100m Freestyle (S9) Finals
- 20:27 Women's 100m Freestyle (S9) Finals

Table Tennis, Peking University Gymnasium

- 10:00 Women's singles, class 5, round 2, USA vs. ITA, Noga Nir-Kistler (Allentown, Pa.)
- 12:40 Men's singles, class 4-5, round 2, USA vs. GBR, Andre Scott (Fort Worth, Tex.)
- 20:40 Men's singles, class 7, round 2, USA vs. FRA, Mitch Seidenfeld (Lakeville, Minn.)

Wheelchair Basketball

- 10:00 Men's, Preliminary, USA vs. Brazil, University of Science & Technology Gymnasium
- 16:15 Women's, Preliminary, USA vs. Germany, National Indoor Stadium

Wheelchair Tennis, Olympic Green Tennis Centre

11:00 Women's singles, first match, court 8, Beth Arnoult (Paia, Hawaii)
 11:00 Women's singles, second match, center court, Kaitlyn Verfueth (Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.)
 11:00 Men's singles, first match, court 9, Lee Hinson (Wallan, Australia/Jacksonville, Fla.)
 11:00 Men's singles, second match, court 7, Paul Moran (Chicago, Ill.)
 11:00 Men's singles, third match, court 9, Jon Rydberg (Oakdale, Minn.)
 11:00 Men's singles, fifth match, court 9, Steve Welch (Bedford, Texas)

Top 10 Medal Standings *(as of 10 p.m. 9/7/08)*

| <i>Country</i> | <i>G</i> | <i>S</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| United States | 4 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| Great Britain | 4 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| China | 3 | 4 | 6 | 13 |
| Australia | 3 | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| Russian Fed. | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Algeria | 2 | | | 2 |
| Spain | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Canada | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Brazil | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| France | 1 | 1 | | 2 |

Happy Birthday to wheelchair basketball athlete Steve Serio (Champaign, Ill./Westbury, N.Y.)!