



# GET IN THE GAME

*Discover the fun and exhilaration of getting involved in parasport!*

*By: Alison Korn, Media Relations Manager, Canadian Paralympic Committee*

***“You can’t have a podium full of medalists without a playground full of kids... and you can’t have a playground full of kids if they don’t know that there is a playground for them!”***

**As simple as it sounds, this premise doesn’t always play out so easily. But the Canadian Paralympic Committee is determined to help youth with disabilities find their proverbial playground.**

Physical literacy isn’t something that happens seamlessly for able-bodied kids either. But it is an even greater challenge among kids with a disability. Children born with a disability may not have the opportunity to learn basic movement skills, and those who acquire a disability may find their athletic avenues have changed. Still, the path to physical literacy for everyone begins with an active start, progresses through learning the fundamentals, embarking on training and – for those who wish – competition. Ultimately, the end goal is to be physically active, for life.

“I have gone through all the same stages of development as Canada’s other elite athletes,” notes multiple Paralympic gold medal-winning wheelchair racer Chantal Petitclerc. “From training hard as a teenager, through learning to compete on the international stage, to standing on the Paralympic podium, my development has taken time and perseverance.”

The Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) is dedicated to helping athletes reach their Paralympic dreams and achieve peak performance, but the building blocks for those achievements need to be constructed long before CPC’s support begins. With only three percent of Canadians with a disability participating in sport (compared to 30 percent of the general population), the CPC is taking a leadership role in collaborating with the Government of Canada and its sport partners to change this situation.

The CPC provides annual funding grants to sports clubs

and organizations for introductory parasport programming and adapted equipment. The Ottawa-based association also works closely with healthcare and education professionals to support them in their role of connecting people with a disability to sport through its own “Changing Minds, Changing Lives” program.

“I was really glad when my Recreation Specialist suggested I try sit-skiing,” says Pamela Budden, a cross-country skier from Newfoundland and Labrador. “At first, I couldn’t even think about what it was all about, but I have learned that it is something I can do for fun! I would love to see more people with a disability like me out skiing. I’m so glad I got into this and I plan to enjoy it to the fullest!”

“Parasport” is sport for people with a disability and is “para”lled, or similar, to sport for able-bodied athletes. Adapted equipment or rules make the game fun and accessible to everyone. Parasport provides a full spectrum of opportunities and experiences to enjoy while being active and having fun, and is open to all disabilities.

“My first experience with trying a parasport,” says Chantal Beauchesne, a Women’s National Sitting Volleyball Team member, “was five months after my amputation through the encouragement of a volleyball team member I met during a five-kilometre run. Playing the sport changed my life,” shares Beauchesne. “I was dealing with my accident in a negative way and turned it around into a positive experience.”

The CPC works with 38 parasports in Canada – 31 summer and seven winter (see list above). Besides becoming involved as a participant, opportunities also exist for guides, coaches, officials, classifiers and volunteers. Even simply passing on information about parasport opportunities is a way to contribute and help someone get in the game. Learn more about getting started in parasport at [www.Paralympic.ca/getinvolved](http://www.Paralympic.ca/getinvolved).

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**WHAT'S YOUR SPORT?** *Whether at the recreational or competitive level, there are plenty of parasports to choose from – keep trying new sports until you find your favorite!*

Alpine Skiing	Rowing
Archery	Sailing
Athletics	Sitting Volleyball
Badminton	Skeleton
Biathlon	Sledge Hockey
Bobsleigh	Snowboard
Boccia	Soccer
Canoe-Kayak	Swimming
Cycling	Synchronized Swimming
Dancesport	Table Tennis
Equestrian	Taekwondo
Field Hockey	Triathlon
Football	Wakeboard
Goalball	Waterski
Gymnastics	Wheelchair Basketball
Judo	Wheelchair Curling
Karate	Wheelchair Fencing
Nordic Skiing	Wheelchair Rugby
Powerlifting	Wheelchair Tennis

***Who competes at the Paralympic Games?***

Competition at the Paralympic Games is open to six disability groups, including athletes with amputations, visual impairments, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, intellectual disabilities and “les autres,” which includes disabilities such as spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, and more.

***About the Canadian Paralympic Committee:***

The CPC is responsible for leading the development of a sustainable Paralympic sport system in Canada to enable athletes to reach the podium at the Paralympic Games. For more information, please visit [www.paralympic.ca](http://www.paralympic.ca).



**PARASPORT ONTARIO MISSION:** *Providing support to all members of the disability community – regardless of age or stage in life – to find, connect with, and participate in competitive and recreational sport programs and activities of their choice to enhance physical function and quality of life.*

[www.parasportontario.ca](http://www.parasportontario.ca)