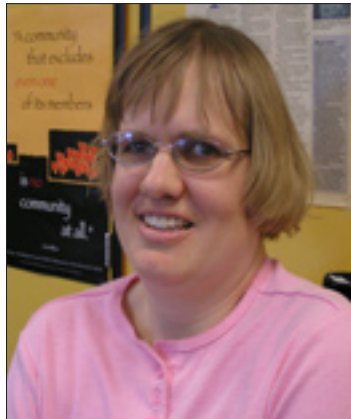


## Paralympics: enabled athletes motivate and empower

Ursula Schletter  
DDDetails columnist

Paralympics What, you might be asking, is that? It is a team of people who don't have full use of their body, they may be missing a limb an arm or leg. They may have an artificial leg or arm, some use wheelchairs and a few athletes are blind.



The reason I choose to write about this, is because in Beijing, China, where the Summer Olympics were held they also hosted the Paralympics, I don't think they are broadcasting the whole thing on television, just part of it.

I just wished I could have seen a whole competition with these folks. I did go looking for it on my TV but it was not on. I got to see the preview of some of the competition, and some opening ceremonies,

Some of the athletes who did not have

limbs or the use of them were gold medal swimmers including a lady who is blind.

Some of these athletes were playing volley ball sitting on the floor, with the net lowered. Others were riding specially built bicycles.

One young man in a wheel chair got to light the torch, the way he got himself up there was to pull himself up in his wheel chair using a rope pulley. He only had one leg.

While he was on his way up there, someone said, he is not disabled, he is enabled.

How true that is. I find that statement to be empowering and motivational.

Of course, people with physical disabilities don't want you to feel sorry for them.

They can do a lot of things that people with full use of body and limbs can, just in a different way.

Do you feel empowered yet? I know you have a lot of talents and gifts. Just start looking for or doing some projects and you will find your gift or talents.

Then go out and use your God given talents and gifts.

## Paralympics provide 20 sports for athletes



Paralympics sport Volleyball Sitting. Photo of competition in Beijing, China.

Since the 1960's, the development of sport for athletes with a disability has produced the development of classification systems.

This continues to evolve to the present day. Not unlike wrestling, boxing and weightlifting, where athletes are categorized by weight classes, athletes with disabilities are grouped in classes defined by the degree of disability function.

Traditionally there are

athletes who belong to six different disability groups in the Paralympic Movement: amputee, cerebral palsy, visual impairment, spinal cord injuries, intellectual disability and a group which includes all those that do not fit into the other groups.

Classes are determined by a variety of processes that may include a physical and technical assessment and observation in and out of competition.