

Meet Some Paralympic Athletes



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Sarah Will

Sarah Will loved to ski! She worked hard to improve her speed and technique. Sarah had become very

good at her sport. One day in 1988, she had a serious accident, while skiing in Aspen, Colorado, causing her to be paralyzed from the waist down. Sarah could no longer use her legs but discovered that disabled athletes could still compete using a mono-ski. This device uses a seat and footrest attached to a ski. The athlete competes using poles with small outriggers for better control.

After mastering the mono-ski, Sarah won most of the races that she entered. During the 1996 Nagano, Japan Winter Olympics, Sarah lost one gold medal to a Japanese racer. The winner bowed to Sarah and thanked her for being such strong competition! Sarah congratulated the

Japanese racer and then went on to win the gold in the next three events. In fact, all together, Sarah has won a total of eight Paralympic gold medals, making her the most honored disabled woman skier of all time.

Sarah's positive attitude did not end with her desire to win. She and fellow paralympian Chris Waddell organized a mono-ski camp in Vail, Colorado. Here young people learn to set goals and turn their disabilities into strengths. So far, four students from the camp have qualified for the U.S. Disabled Ski Team.

Now in her mid 30's, Sarah is excited to participate in the Salt Lake 2002 Paralympic Winter Games. She doesn't consider herself disabled at all. In fact, her disability brought out the winner in Sarah as she turned an accident into an opportunity for excellence and service.

Muffy Davis

Muffy Davis has been skiing since she was four years old. At the age of seven, she was accepted as a member of the Sun Valley Ski Team.

Muffy worked hard in high school and had a goal to win an Olympic gold medal. She challenged herself to compete against a classmate Picabo Street and became an excellent skier.

In 1989 when Muffy was just 16 years old, she was involved in a skiing accident that paralyzed her from the mid-chest down. Muffy appreciated all the support she received from family, neighbors, and friends.

Muffy continued school, graduating with honors, and was accepted into Stanford University.

She graduated in 1995, again with high honors. But, Muffy still wanted to race. Muffy was told that she most likely would not be able to operate a mono-ski. She wouldn't let that stop her. She was soon skiing using a mono-ski.

Muffy won the bronze medal in the super giant slalom at the Paralympics in Nagano, Japan and continues to win medals in World Cup Finals and other disabled skiing events. She is preparing to participate in the 2002 Salt Lake Paralympic Winter Games.



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Chris Waddell

Chris Waddell began skiing when he was three years old. He was paralyzed below the waist in a skiing accident in 1988

and quickly became a strong mono-skier. He has been skiing for 27 years, 11 of which have been on the U.S. Disabled National Team. He has won five Paralympic gold medals.

Chris is excited about the technological advances

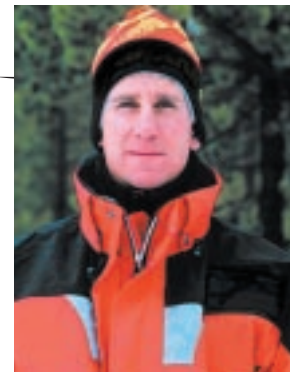
made for disabled skiers. He balances ski training and wheelchair race training as he prepares for the 2002 Salt Lake Paralympic Winter Games.

Chris will be working to promote the Paralympic Movement during the Games. Who better to represent the Paralympic Games than Chris Waddell? Chris has not only been a top-ranked skier, but has also been featured on popular television shows and in magazines. He runs a company that operates ski camps for persons with disabilities and delivers motivational speeches around the country.

Steve Cook

It is not noticeable that Steve Cook is any different than those around him. However, he is missing the bottom right half of his leg from a farming accident. Steve has always been athletic and tried skiing just two weeks after his leg was amputated. It was a painful experience, and he thought he should try other ways of staying fit. His choice of mountain biking took him to the Atlanta Paralympic Games.

Steve started Nordic skiing about five years ago and has just begun training in the sport. Nonetheless, he participated in the Nagano, Japan Paralympics, competing in four events, and is preparing for the 2002 Salt Lake City Paralympics.



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Check out these sites for more information about these athletes and others:

THE HARTFORD TEAM ABILITY

<http://www.thehartford.com/breakaway/paralympics/index.html>

Includes background information on several Paralympic athletes.

United States Ski Team – Disabled Biographies

<http://www.uskiteam.com/disabled/athletbios.htm>