

Not Your Average Sport

Paralympic sports are like the sports we watch on television or read about in the newspaper, but they are changed so that athletes with disabilities can still participate.

Have you ever tried skating on only one leg? Or skiing through a snowstorm without being able to see where you are going? These types of experiences might give you an idea of the challenges that face the Paralympians.



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Lets compare ice hockey and ice sledge hockey.

The crash of sledges and poles can just barely be heard over the roar of the cheering crowds. This popular event is similar to ice hockey, with Olympic-size rinks and regulation-size goals. It is becoming one of the biggest attractions for spectators at the Paralympic Winter Games. It is fast-paced, highly physical and played by athletes with a physical disability. As in ice hockey, each team has five players on the ice and a goalie. Two blade sledges (sleds) replace skates allowing the puck to pass underneath. Athletes use two, 3-foot long hockey sticks with picks on one end, similar to the jagged toe on figure skates, and blades at the other end. The pick helps propel the sled across the ice and the slightly curved blade is used to handle the puck. The game consists of three, 15-minute stop-time periods.

Review information about ice hockey and sledge hockey (found on pages 43 and 96) and compare and contrast the two sports on another sheet of paper. Write down similarities and differences between the two sports.

Then choose one of your favorite sports to modify so that people with disabilities could participate. On another sheet of paper, explain the modified event. Include a brief explanation of how to play, the basic rules, and a drawing of the equipment used.