

One Year Out: 2010 Paralympic Winter Games



Team USA Previews & Storylines

2010 PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

www.vancouver2010.com

Paralympic Winter Games Dates: March 12-21, 2010

PARALYMPIC GAMES BY THE NUMBERS

5	Sports on the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games program
10	Days of Paralympic competition
64	Paralympic Games medal events
600	Number of Paralympic athletes (est. 600) and officials expected to participate
45	Number of countries participating

VENUES

Vancouver

- UBC Thunderbird Arena: Sled Hockey
- Vancouver Paralympic Center: Wheelchair Curling
- Paralympic Athlete Village Vancouver

Whistler

- Whistler Creekside: Alpine Skiing
- Whistler Paralympic Park: Biathlon, Cross Country Skiing
- Paralympic Athlete Village Whistler

SPORTS

The 2010 Paralympic Winter Games sport program includes five sports and 64 medal events:

- Alpine Skiing
- Biathlon
- Cross Country Skiing
- Sled Hockey
- Wheelchair Curling

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MASCOT

Sumi, the mascot for the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, is an animal spirit who wears the hat of the orca whale, flies with the wings of a thunderbird and runs with the legs of the black bear and lives in the mountains of British Columbia. The mascot's name was derived from the Salish word 'sumesh' which means 'guardian spirit.'

The three animals Sumi represents were carefully chosen for what they stand for. The orca is the traveler and guardian of the sea. The black bear represents strength and friendship and the thunderbird, who creates thunder by flapping its wings, is one of the most powerful of the supernatural creatures.

The mascot was inspired by Aboriginal mythological creatures in Western Canada and strongly influenced by the Olympic and Paralympic Movements, the culture and wildlife of British Columbia and Canada, popular culture, the modern animation styles and the artists' own imagination.

Videos, games and more about Sumi can be found on the child-friendly microsite at vancouver2010.com.

EMBLEM

For centuries, the Inuit people of Canada's Arctic stacked rock in a human form to create the inukshuk, a guidepost that provided direction. It has grown to become a symbol of hope and friendship and an expression of hospitality. The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games emblem is a contemporary interpretation of the inukshuk, called "Ilanaag" – the Inuktitut word for friend. The Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games emblem represents the harmony that exists between athlete, sport and environment. It is a dynamic human form created by the valley, mountains and sun of Canada's West Coast and reflects inner strength of the athlete.



ABOUT VANCOUVER

Founded in 1886, the city of Vancouver is home to 560,000 citizens. Including the surrounding communities, the population of Greater Vancouver is approximately 2.2 million. As the main western terminus of Canada's transcontinental highway and rail routes, Vancouver is one of the nation's largest industrial centers. In the 2007 Worldwide Quality of Living Survey by Mercer Human Resource Consulting released in April 2007, Vancouver ranked third.

With the ocean at its feet and the mountain wilderness at its back, the city of Vancouver is deeply committed to environmental sustainability. The city is also a major tourist destination. In addition to the city's scenic location, visitors enjoy beautiful gardens and more than 180 parks, including world-famous Stanley Park, a combination of natural forest and parkland near the city center.

Recently, *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine readers voted Vancouver the "Best City in the Americas" for a third year in a row.

ALPINE SKIING

If this season is any indication of how the 2010 U.S. Paralympic Alpine Skiing Team will fare in Vancouver next year, the U.S. can look to its alpine athletes for the majority of the medal haul at the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games.

The U.S. team recently competed in the World Cup Finals in Whistler, which provided a sneak preview of the venue for the Games next year.

“We are focused and poised to use this competition to familiarize ourselves with the venue, test the hill, and ready ourselves for a hell of a lot of best performances next year,” said Ray Watkins, head coach, U.S. Paralympics Alpine Skiing National Team. “The team is hungry to prove itself on the world stage when the pressure is on. I am confident that this test run will be an indication of what we can produce for 2010.”

The national team has solid talent depth which includes, on the women’s side, **Stephani Victor** (Park City, Utah), who cleaned up with three golds and one silver medal at the recent IPC Alpine Skiing World Championships in Kangwonland, Korea. Victor promises to be a major force in the women’s sitting slalom, giant slalom and super G.

Laurie Stephens (Wenham, Mass.) who is also having an impressive 2009 World Cup season, including gold in the giant slalom at the first event of the year, is also a favorite to make an appearance or two on the podium in 2010.

In the women’s standing division, **Allison Jones** (Colorado Springs, Colo.), who recently won silver in the slalom at the IPC Alpine Skiing World Championships, will be seeking a repeat of her 2006 Paralympic gold in the same event.

In men’s competition, **Chris Devlin-Young** (Campton, N.H.) figures to be a force in the sitting division. CDY, as teammates call him, won bronze at the 2009 IPC Alpine Skiing World Championships in the downhill. A three-time Paralympian, CDY is also a four-time Paralympic medalist and team leader and mentor.

After taking the silver last year, **Tyler Walker** (Franconia, N.H.) won gold at this year’s X Games in the mono ski cross event, crushing his competition. He also finished first in the men’s sitting downhill in early season World Cup action, hopefully a precursor of what’s in store for next year.

STORYLINES

ATHLETES

Kevin Bramble (Cape May Courthouse, N.J.) – Two-time Paralympic downhill gold medalist... Vancouver will mark third Paralympic Games... background in engineering led him to design his own mono-ski rigs, called Kevin Bramble Goodz or KBG... broke his back in snowboarding accident in 1992 and all but taught himself how to be a mono-ski racer

Heath Calhoun (Grundy, Va.) – Ret. Staff Sgt., U.S. Army and Iraq war veteran... Calhoun trains at Challenge Aspen... his father served in Vietnam and his grandfather in World War II... was severely injured when a rocket-propelled grenade hit his Humvee in 2003, resulting in the amputation of both his legs above the knee

Chris Devlin-Young (Campton, N.H.) – Vancouver will mark his fourth Paralympic Games (1992, 2002 & 2006)... four-time Paralympic medalist... builds wheelchair accessible furniture... became paralyzed after a 1982 plane crash while serving in the Coast Guard... was inducted into the California Sports Hall of Fame with baseball player Troy Glaus and football star LaDainian Tomlinson

Ralph Green (Brooklyn, N.Y.) – Vancouver will mark second Paralympic Games competition... was injured after being shot while walking down the street in Brooklyn at the age of 16... Green is the only African-American on the 2009 Adaptive Ski Team... is second of five children in his family

Allison Jones (Colorado Springs, Colo.) – Jones is a dual-sport athlete (alpine skiing & cycling)... Vancouver will mark her fifth Paralympic Games... Nicknamed "Jonezy," she graduated from Denver University in 2007 with a degree in mechanical engineering; she was the recipient of the Pioneer Award, which is the highest achievement an undergraduate can receive... collects Coca-Cola bottles from all over the world

Caitie Sarubbi (Brooklyn, N.Y.) – Freshman at Harvard University... first skiing experience was with her Dad at The Hartford Ski Spectacular in Breckenridge, Colo. after her father, a NYC firefighter, was invited to the event shortly after the attacks of September 11th

Elitsa Storey (Sun Valley, Idaho) – Was adopted from Bulgaria as a youngster... made her 2006 Paralympic Winter Games debut while in high school... dates teammate **Brad Washburn** (Winter Park, Colo.)

Stephani Victor (Park City, Utah) – Two-time Paralympic medalist... Vancouver will mark Victor's third Paralympic Winter Games... former film student and actress

TEAM SELECTION

The 2010 U.S. Paralympic Alpine Skiing Team will be nominated on or before February 22, 2010 based on the International Paralympic Committee's (IPC) alpine skiing points list.

BIATHLON & CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

The U.S. Paralympics Cross Country Skiing National Team has a new head coach in **Greg Rawlings** (Steamboat Springs, Colo.), after previous coach Jon Kreamelmeyer took a new position as development coach with the hopes of increasing talent for the team. Under Rawlings guidance, the team has a likely shot to increase their medal count from Torino.

"I am excited to have the chance to work with such a great support staff," said Rawlings. "Coming in at this late date has been educational and allows me the chance to push us in a positive direction leading up to the Games. My goal for this year is to raise the level of the team by sharing philosophies of training and to integrate what works best for this change over. My plan is to have a solid showing in 2010 and that means medals as well as the athletes consistently placing in the top-ten."

Although the team won't be nominated until February 2010, you can expect to see some familiar faces on the roster.

Monica Bascio (Evergreen, Colo.) finished just out of medal contention three years ago in Torino. She is hoping to make an appearance on the medal podium for the first time at a Paralympic Winter Games in 2010. Most recently, Bascio finished third in the women's 5k at the IPC Cross Country World Cup in Whistler. She also finished eighth at the IPC Cross Country World Championship in Vuokatti, Finland.

Chris Klebl (Heber City, Utah) has been consistently improving since his 11th place finish in Torino. For the second time this year, Klebl led the U.S. Paralympics Cross Country Skiing National Team, posting a sixth place finish during the IPC Cross Country World Championships in Vuokatti, Finland.

Skiing in both Nordic events, biathlon & cross country, looking to make their Games debut are athletes **Sean Halsted** (Ephrata, Wash.) and **Andrew Soule** (Pearland, Texas). Both athletes are training with new biathlon development coach **James Upham** (Lake Placid, N.Y.).

Halsted, a retired Air Force veteran, has been on the U.S. National Team for three years, and continues to show consistent improvement in both biathlon and cross country events.

Soule, a retired Army veteran, lost both of his legs as the result of an IED explosion during his deployment in Afghanistan. He finished the 2008 season with the team in 12th place in the World Cup standings.

Kelly Underkofler (St. Paul, Minn.) will also be returning to Paralympic competition - competing in both biathlon and cross country events. A seasoned athlete, Underkofler competed in both the 2002 and 2006 Paralympic Winter Games. In Torino, she placed 4th in the long distance biathlon and posted five other top-ten finishes.

STORYLINES

ATHLETES

Bob Balk (Long Beach, Calif.) – three-time Paralympic medalist... Vancouver will mark fifth Paralympic Games... father of triplets born just after the 2006 Paralympic Winter Games... sit-ski designer

Monica Bascio (Evergreen, Colo.) – Vancouver will mark second Paralympic Winter Games... Bascio is also an avid handcyclist... balances being an athlete with being a mother to infant Henry Lane

Greg Mallory (Portland, Ore.) – Vancouver will mark Mallory's second Paralympic Winter Games... A lawyer with a Portland legal firm (Schwabe, Williamson&Wyatt)... Mallory usually handcycles to work three days a week and paddles or roller-skis to the office the remaining days

TEAM SELECTION

The 2010 U.S. Paralympic Cross Country Team (includes both biathlon and cross country) will be nominated on or before Feb. 22, 2010.

SLED HOCKEY

While Canada may be the favorite to win the gold medal in sled hockey competition at the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, Team USA likes its role as the underdog and plans on giving Canada all they can handle in Vancouver.

The U.S. Team, which finished with the bronze in the 2006 Paralympic Winter Games in Torino, Italy, has become accustomed to its friendly rivalry with its adversaries to the North. In fact, for the past half-decade, the top-three sled hockey teams in the world include Canada, Norway and the U.S. While you can expect more of the same in Vancouver, U.S. head coach **Ray Maluta** (Rochester, N.Y.) says his guys have an edge they didn't in the past.

“Our team has taken a huge step from where it was a few years ago,” said Maluta. “It’s grown in leaps and bounds in terms of team chemistry, mental toughness and also learning to play the game away from the puck. I have no doubt that we will be a top contender in Vancouver.”

Most recently, the U.S. Sled Hockey Team wrapped up competition at the Canada Cup, a Paralympic Games test event in Vancouver, Feb. 22 – Mar. 2, finishing with the silver, after falling just short, 2-1, in a shootout against Canada.

Last year, the 2008 IPC Sled Hockey World Championships took place on home soil – in Marlborough, Mass. Team USA posted a bronze medal finish, while Canada and Norway finished with the gold and silver, respectively.

In 2002 at the Salt Lake Paralympic Winter Games, the U.S. astonished competitors and fans alike by overcoming a last-place seed to go on and face the reigning Paralympic champion, Team Norway, for the gold. The Americans rallied from an early deficit and stifled Norway's offense, forcing overtime and a subsequent shootout before winning 4-3 and earning the first sled hockey medal in U.S. history.

While the 2010 U.S. Paralympic Sled Hockey Team won't be nominated until July, Maluta points to a few of the guys who have been difference-makers since Torino. The list includes starting goalie **Steve Cash** (Overland, Mo.), who Maluta says single-handedly gives Team USA the opportunity to be competitive in each and every game they play.

Cash, who made his Games debut as back-up goalie in Torino, has since become the number one. His defensive skills and intensity on the ice have given Team USA the confidence it needs in front of the net.

Another notable mention, **Jimmy Connelly** (Egg Harbor, N.J.), who Maluta says is maturing in to one of the top defensemen in the world. He says Connelly has made the biggest strides to be an impact player and that he has the work ethic and drive that has made him a natural team leader at the ripe age of 19.

Also on the short list, team captain **Andy Yohe** (Bettendorf, Iowa) and assistant captain **Taylor Chace** (Hampton Falls, N.H.), both players that made their Games debut in Torino. Both physical players, they also possess the leadership skills to help their team achieve success in Vancouver.

Maluta, himself, has also had an impact on Team USA. Hired as head coach in 2007, he brought a new approach and coaching philosophy to the team, one that continues to reap the rewards in international competition and, hopefully, in Vancouver.

STORYLINES

ATHLETES

Brad Emmerson (Amherst, N.Y.) – Writes an athlete blog featured on www.usparalympics.org chronicling his training and travel with the U.S. Paralympics Sled Hockey National Team

Lonnie Hannah (Boerne, Texas) – diagnosed in 2006 with melanoma, Hannah underwent chemotherapy for several months and beat cancer to compete in Torino... Vancouver will mark Hannah's third Paralympic Winter Games...was elected flag bearer for 2006 Closing Ceremonies in Torino

Adam Page (Lancaster, N.Y.) – At 17, Page is the youngest member of the sled hockey team.

Kip St. Germaine (East Falmouth, Mass.) – St. Germaine scored the first goal in U.S. Paralympic history in 1998 and netted the game-winner in 2002 that give the USA its first gold medal in the sport of sled hockey... Was inducted into the Massachusetts Hockey Hall of Fame in 2002... Vancouver will mark St. Germaine's fourth Paralympic Winter Games ('98, '02 & '06)

2009 U.S. Paralympics Sled Hockey National Team Roster

Mike Blabac (Buffalo, N.Y.)

Steve Cash (Overland, Mo.)

Taylor Chace (Hampton Falls, N.H.)

James Connelly (Egg Harbor, N.J.)

Bradley Emmerson (Amherst, N.Y.)

Michael Hallman (Hatboro, Pa.)

Lonnie Hannah (Boerne, Texas)

Timothy Jones (Mt. Ephraim, N.J.)

Andrew "Taylor" Lipsett (Mesquite, Texas)

Christopher Manns (North Tonawanda, N.Y.)

Adam Page (Lancaster, N.Y.)
Greg Shaw (Park City, Utah)
Kip St. Germaine (East Falmouth, Mass.)
Alexi Salamone (Grand Island, N.Y.)
Bubba Torres (Riverside, N.J.)
Andy Yohe (Bettendorf, Iowa)

TEAM SELECTION

A team tryout camp will be held in Rochester, NY, July 1-3. Upon completion of the camp, the 2010 U.S. Paralympic Sled Hockey Team consisting of 15 players will be nominated.

WHEELCHAIR CURLING

Growth of curling in the U.S.

Since the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, the sport of curling has seen its membership increase by 25 percent from 11,510 members to 14,395 in 2008 thanks to great coverage by NBC. Curling's exposure on NBC's networks during the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino helped further grow the sport of curling across the United States from Southern California to Texas to Vermont. Much of the 80+ hours of U.S. curling programming from the 2006 Olympic Games appeared on CNBC. This was up from the 50+ hours shown during the Salt Lake City Games in 2002. Weekday coverage of curling in the 5-8 p.m. ET time slot delivered an average of 876,000 viewers, 579 percent higher than CNBC's February 2005 average in the same time slot. Since the 2006 Olympic Games, the sport has added 2,164 members, a 17.7 percent increase in just two seasons. Post-Torino, NBC has produced two curling pieces – the 2006 Korbel Celebrity Challenge in Whistler, British Columbia, and the 2007 Korbel Elite Curling Challenge at The Rink at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City.

2010 Paralympic Team:

- Skip, **Augusto “Goose” Perez**, 36, East Syracuse, N.Y. USA Curling's 2008 Male Athlete of the Year, Perez competed at the 2006 Paralympic Winter Games as well as the two world wheelchair championships (2008, bronze; and 2007)
- Vice skip, **James Pierce**, 45, North Syracuse, N.Y. Pierce competed at the 2006 Paralympic Winter Games as well as three world wheelchair championships (2008, bronze; 2007 and 2005)

- Second, **James “Jimmy Jam” Joseph**, 46, New Hartford, N.Y. Joseph competed at the 2006 Paralympic Winter Games as well as three world wheelchair championships (2008, bronze; 2007 and 2005)
- Lead, **Jacqueline Kapinowski**, 45, Point Pleasant, N.J. In her first year of curling, Kapinowski made Team USA and won bronze at the 2008 World Wheelchair Championship.
- Alternate, **Patrick McDonald**, 42, Orangevale, Calif. McDonald began curling in 2007. His first international competition was at the recent 2009 World Wheelchair Championship.

How the team was selected:

The five-person wheelchair curling team was selected after three competitions. Drills were administered in order to evaluate game skills and strategy as well as game participation. The tryouts continued at the Fourth Annual Cathy Kerr Memorial Bonspiel on Nov. 29 in Ottawa and concluded at the Second Annual U.S. Open International Bonspiel, Dec. 5-7, in Utica.

Growth of wheelchair curling program:

Wheelchair curling is in its infancy in the United States. A curling team consists of five players, and must include both genders in the wheelchair discipline. The roots of the program are headquartered around the Utica Curling Club in Utica, N.Y., where most of the 2010 Paralympic team members train and compete. USA Curling recently obtained a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation to help support four wheelchair curling camps in the upcoming season. At this year’s tryouts for the 2010 Paralympic team, 10 athletes competed for the five available spots. The U.S. has been competitive in the past few years at the World Wheelchair Championship. Augusto Perez led his team to the bronze medal in 2008, which marked the first-ever medal for the U.S. wheelchair curling program. Perez was later named USA Curling Male Athlete of the Year.

WHEELCHAIR CURLING CONTACT

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