

Getting started

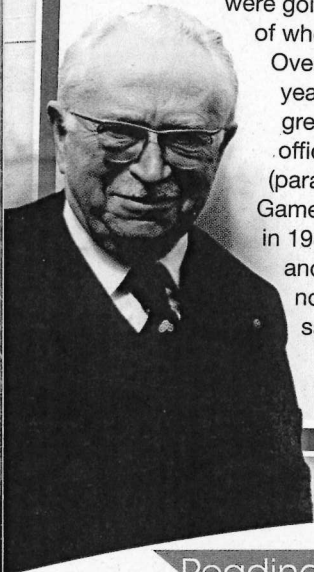
What do you know about the Olympics and the Paralympics? Where are the next Olympics and Paralympics going to be? **T**

A

In 1943, Dr Ludwig Guttman started a sports rehabilitation programme at Stoke Mandeville hospital near London. He decided that he was going to help soldiers with spinal injuries to rebuild their physical health and self-esteem. The first competition (archery, in 1948) was very successful, so Guttman decided he was going to make it an annual event.

The event became international and joined the Olympics in Rome in 1960. Guttman said that British competitors were going to be 'pioneers of wheelchair sport'.

Over the next twenty years, the movement grew and the first official 'Paralympic (parallel + Olympic) Games' was in Seoul in 1988. The Olympics and Paralympics are now always in the same city.



The Paralympics

B

Sarah Storey is one of the UK's most famous Paralympians. She was born without a left hand. When she was only 14 she won two gold medals in swimming at the 1992 Barcelona Paralympic Games before she changed her sport to cycling. She became the first Paralympian to win a non-disabled national title for cycling when she was 31. At the 2012 London Paralympic Games, she won another four gold medals for cycling.



Other accomplished UK Paralympians include Tanni Grey-Thompson, Ellie Simmonds and Lee Pearson. Tanni has spina bifida. She won eleven Paralympic gold medals in wheelchair racing and is one of Britain's most successful disabled athletes. Ellie has dwarfism. She won two golds, a bronze and a silver medal at the 2012 London Paralympics; and two golds at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, when she was only 13 years old. Lee Pearson is a para-equestrian and he controls his horse with his hips. Like other Paralympians, he overcame his disability, and has now got ten Paralympic gold medals. He thinks that the success of the Paralympics is going to inspire disabled children and adults to do sport.

C

One of the most exciting events at the Paralympics is wheelchair basketball. Yesterday, I went to the semi-final. Before the match, I thought, 'What is this game going to be like?' Then, when I saw the basketball players in wheelchairs come on to the court and heard the shouts from the crowd, I got very excited. The atmosphere was electric.

I soon realised that wheelchair basketball is quite a violent sport. The players crash into each other and can really hurt themselves. It's clear that these athletes are determined to be successful and they aren't going to be limited by their disability. I'm not surprised that this is the most popular disabled sport played in the UK.

Reading

1 **4.20** Listen and read the three texts about the Paralympics.

Match the titles (1-3) to the texts (A-C).

- 1 Watching the Paralympics
- 2 Inspirational individuals
- 3 A short history

Check

2 Answer the questions.

- 1 Why did Dr Guttman start the sports rehabilitation programme?
- 2 How many years did it take for the Paralympic competition to become part of the Olympics?
- 3 What does the 'para' in the word Paralympics mean?
- 4 What is Sarah Storey's disability and when did she have her first success?
- 5 Who is Lee Pearson and what influence does he think the Paralympics will have?
- 6 Why is wheelchair basketball dangerous?

Vocabulary

3 Choose the correct translation.

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 1 self-esteem | a autonomia | b autostima |
| 2 pioneers | a pionieri | b vincitori |
| 3 shouts | a rumori | b urli |
| 4 crash into | a si schiantano contro | b litigano con |
| 5 accomplished | a abili | b accompagnati |
| 6 overcame | a ha superato | b ha esagerato |