

RiVER CiTY DAIly

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Newsletter of the 32nd National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Scaling = Stalom



**Veteran Mike Brickert
at the Games Kick-off**

Photo by Lenny Skidmore



JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION!

#NVWG... What is it?

Twitter hashtags allow you to post your own photos, videos, stories and experiences about the Wheelchair Games on Twitter! All you have to do is create a Twitter account, then write a post about the Games with #NVWG at the end. After you post you can click on #NVWG to see what everyone is saying about the Games. To sign up go to <http://www.twitter.com>.

Like NVWG on Facebook

You can also find the Games on Facebook. Just search for 2012 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, and click LIKE. Or click <http://www.facebook.com/wheelchairgames>.



Have a smartphone?

Keep an eye out for this symbol in the newsletter. It's called a QR, or quick response code. These codes will take you to extra content throughout the week. Blackberry, iPhone and Palm QR Scanner Apps are available at Neo Reader—<http://getneoreader.com>. Visit <http://tag.microsoft.com> for Windows phones. For an Android phone visit the Android Marketplace and search for "Barcode Scanner."

End of Hometown News

The public affairs team will no longer be able to provide individual news releases and photos, but you can get better photos faster. Every day a selection of photos will be loaded onto VA's Flickr account. Find it by clicking the Flickr icon on <http://www.wheelchairgames.va.gov>, then search for the Wheelchair Games set.

MISSION REDEFINED

VA's Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events formally known as the Office of National Programs and Special Events has changed its name and mission. The office, which oversees VA's National adaptive programs like the Winter Sports Clinic and Wheelchair Games as well as VA's Paralympic grant program and allowance payments for elite athletes, is refocusing its efforts to encourage Veterans to get involved in their communities and redefine their potential.



The office's new brand – Mission ReDefined – resonates with Veterans who have suffered debilitating injuries while at their physical prime. The idea, according to the office's director, Christopher J. Nowak, is to engage Veterans early in their rehabilitation and give them a renewed sense of purpose and hope for the future. "Adaptive sports have a long history in VA and our objective is to challenge Veterans to redefine their capabilities, set goals, train and compete in their communities," explained Nowak.

VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki had a similar message when he addressed recently-injured Veterans attending the 2011 Summer Sports Clinic at the Admiral Kidd Club in San Diego on Sept. 18. "Take what you learn here, continue to move forward, live an active life—not just this week, but every day hereafter. You may have been injured, but life isn't over because of that injury," Shinseki told a packed room.

To this end, the VA National sports office is implementing a number of initiatives in 2012, including the Rehabilitative Adaptive Sport Training Conference, which was held Jan. 24–27, at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs; a five-day advanced ski clinic for Veterans at Arapahoe Basin resort in Colorado, April 22–27; and continued support for community and regional adaptive sporting events. The emphasis on sports and activity isn't limited to just elite athletes. Sports and recreation can benefit Veterans at all ages and abilities, according to Nowak, who encourages Veterans to set goals like giving up the smokes, cleaning up their diet and getting involved in community sporting programs.

To learn more about VA adaptive sports, visit <http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/>. The site has an adaptive sport club finder searchable by zip code, information on Olympic Opportunity Fund grants for community events and monthly allowance payments for Veterans who meet eligibility standards.

Meet Tom Brown

If you ask, Tom Brown will say with a smile, he was "born in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and he got married at 'center court.'" Brown and his wife Susan of 39 years did not get married on the court, but he is easily recognized as the catalyst, mentor and originator of the Games and has been involved ever since the idea evolved in 1981. Brown, track star and five-time All American in basketball as well as a father of two, had important work ahead.

In 1981, during the International Year of the Disabled, Wally Lynch, VA Director of Recreation asked Muriel Barbour, Richmond's Chief of Recreation and Tom Brown, Recreation Therapist, to collaborate on how to recognize the Year of the Disabled. Through these initial discussions, the inaugural Games were underway.

The first Games were small in comparison to this week's events, but offered a competitive environment with an even stronger atmosphere of camaraderie. Seventy-four athletes competed in seven different activities with lunches planned, organized and serviced by volunteers. This was just the beginning of things to come.

After the 1981 Games, Brown and his family moved to San Antonio where he served as the Chief of Recreation Therapy, all the while supporting the growing Wheelchair Games as a coach. The second year, the Games were held in Milwaukee and grew to nine sporting events and 104 athletes.

In 1985, the National Sports Advisory Committee was formed and Brown provided his knowledge and expertise to the Games. Also in 1985, the Paralyzed Veterans of America joined forces with the VA to co-host the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and participation continued to grow.

By 1986 Tom was serving as a National Advisor, visiting the various locations for potential sites of future sporting events and maintaining his role as the Chief of Recreation for the Audie Murphy VA Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. In 2000, Tom became the Chair of the Bid and Site Selection Committee which was tasked

with the critical role of determining the city and host medical center for future Games. Brown continued in the role until his retirement in 2011 from VA.

Tom Brown continues to offer his expertise in planning the Games through his role as a consultant with the National Paralyzed Veterans of America. He believes the Games should always be "fun". But make no mistake – his mission is to "teach athletes that they need to keep living even after traumatic injury. You may look, walk, or talk differently, but you still have something to offer when you take the initiative to challenge yourself and get back into the community."

"Sports have meant so much to me because you can do the things you love with your team members even when you didn't think it was possible," said Brown.

Charles E. Sepich, Director of the Richmond VA Medical Center, said, "Tom is an incredible athlete and an even better role model. For wheelchair athletes around the world, Tom's guiding words and actions have created an event that not only supports our Nation's Heroes but changes lives."

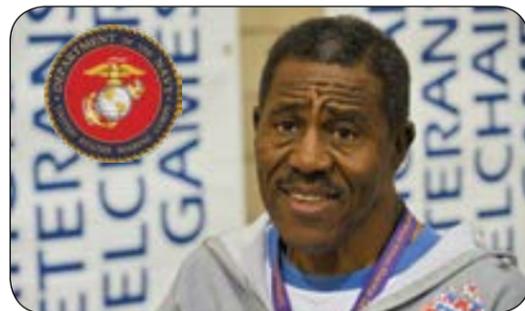
When you see Tom Brown this week please stop and say hello and thank him for his dedicated service to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.





A TOP PERFORMER

Eugene Tatom, a 68 year-old Marine Corps Veteran from Philadelphia, is the model of preparation. He has been participating in organized wheelchair sports since 1969 and joined the Philly Phever National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) team in 2005.



Tatom keeps a solid workout regimen throughout the year to be a top performer each year at the Games. Tatom trains five days a week, including three in the pool and two at the gym. In the pool, he does 800 meters—400 backstroke and 400 breaststroke. At the gym he does one day with a basketball league and one day solo. He also fits in time for softball practice to work on batting. His strategy for winning is to work on his distance first and then add speed for events like swimming and track.

Tatom participates in other sporting events throughout the year and recently placed second in the iconic 10-mile Broad Street Run in Philadelphia.

“It’s important to take time to close your eyes and relax and get focused. It’s not about winning for me; it’s about doing your personal best.”



He also drops by the Philadelphia VA Medical Center each year to do the VA2K.

A healthy diet is also key to Tatom’s year-round training and lifestyle. “I eat lots of fruits, vegetables, and salads and fish. Diet is important to keep healthy and at the top of my physical game.” said Tatom.

So, why the hard work and discipline each year to prepare? “The Games give me hope. I love the serenity of being around other military men and women and meeting new people.”

He loves to help the younger Veterans get physically active and give advice about exercise and working out. “I enjoy the challenge of helping them to be better than I was—because that’s how it should be. The younger Veterans should be better and stronger.”

Tatom has seen his fair share of events at the Games. Among his events are basketball, softball, swimming, 1500 meter track race, table tennis, slalom, javelin and discus. Next year, his goal is to try at least four new events, 9 ball being at the top of his list. He bought a pool cue but hasn’t used it and if he sets a goal to compete in 9 ball next year, it will give him the motivation to practice for it all year. “I want to challenge myself by trying new sports and gaining new skills.”

His favorite event is the backstroke. As much as he loves basketball, individual sports are his true love. Tatom said, in individual sports “You only get out what you put in and it’s a chance to measure your abilities.”

Day-of preparation is not overlooked. On the day of he drinks lots of water, eats a few bananas right before the competition and always remembers to take time to relax.

ODDS & ENDS

Stop by Toyota’s Wall of Inspiration

Located in the Lobby of the Convention Center.

Write a message or illustrate what inspires you this week. After you’ve completed your message or drawing, snap a photo and share it on Facebook.com/wheelchairgames or Twitter #NVWG.

Please return the markers to the bucket. Tell your friends and teammates to stop by and add to the Wall of Inspiration.

Medical Clinics

In case of emergency, always dial 911. For other issues, medical staff are available to help. If you need to reach them by phone, please call the hotel’s main number and ask to be directed to that particular room number or dial the extension below.

Hilton Garden Inn

Room 218
(804) 344-4300, Ext. 7218

Crowne Plaza

Room 1124
(804) 788-0791, Ext. 1124

Omni Richmond

Rooms 319 & 321
(804) 344-7000, Ext. 7321

Hotel medical suites will be open daily starting Sunday, June 24, at noon. Weekday hours of operation will be from 7 a.m.–10:30 p.m. Staff will be on call from 10:30 p.m. until 7 a.m. and can be reached by calling your hotel’s front desk. The operator will take the Veteran’s name and room number before contacting a medical staff member.

Greater Richmond Convention Center

Rooms E25 A & B

The Convention Center medical suite will open daily starting Monday, June 25, at 7 a.m. Hours of operation will run from 7 a.m. until the last event at the Convention Center has ended. The suite will close Saturday, June 30 after the closing banquet.

Games medical staff are authorized to treat registered athletes or volunteers on duty. They can also treat coaches and officials, but are unable to treat sponsors or family members. For more information please see your Athletes and Coaches Guide.

HP’s Internet Cafe

@ Lobby of the Convention Center
Hours of Operation
Monday, 10 a.m.–8 p.m.
Tuesday–Friday, 8 a.m.–8 p.m.
Saturday, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

Wheelchair Repair Shop

The wheelchair repair shop will be in the Greater Richmond Convention Center Room E10A, Sunday June 24–Saturday June 30, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. (hours extended as necessary). Airport wheelchair repair for all inbound and outbound flights will be available Sunday, June 24 and Sunday, July 1. Invacare minor repair service will be available at all off-site venues during events. For after-hours, emergency repair call (804) 314-4239. For more information, reference your Athletes and Coaches Guide.

Transportation

Shuttle service for volunteers will be available from the Showplace from 6 a.m.–10 p.m. on a continuing rotation and from McGuire VA Medical Center from 6 a.m.–10 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Richmond Convention Center will serve as the hub for transportation. Shuttles will run one hour before scheduled events and continue running until 10:30 p.m.

Beginning Monday, hotel shuttles will run starting at 7 a.m., and continue every 20 minutes.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

TUESDAY JUNE 26	ACTIVITY	CLASS-DIV	LOCATION/VENUE
5:30–9:00 a.m.	BREAKFAST		HOTELS
7:30–8:30 a.m.	LATE REGISTRATION		Hall D-E10 B / GRCC
8 a.m.	AIR GUNS	ASSIGNED TIMES	Ballroom / GRCC
	BOWLING	IV,V	Hanover Lanes
	9 BALL	II-III	Hall A / GRCC
	QUAD RUGBY	GAME 1	Hall C-D / GRCC
	TRAPSHOOTING	ASSIGNED TIMES	CP OF VA-CC
	SLALOM	MOTOR (HAND, HEAD & MOUTH)	Hall B / GRCC
10 a.m.	AIR GUNS	ASSIGNED TIMES	Ballroom / GRCC
	QUAD RUGBY	GAME 3	Halls C-D / GRCC
10–1:30 a.m.	POWER SOCCER CLINIC		Halls C-D / GRCC
11 a.m.	TRAPSHOOTING	ASSIGNED TIMES	CP OF VA-CC
10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.	LUNCH		Hall A / GRCC
1:00 p.m.	AIR GUNS	ASSIGNED TIMES	Ballroom / GRCC
	BOWLING	II,III	Hanover Lanes
	POWER SOCCER	GAME 1, 2	Halls C-D / GRCC
	SLALOM	IA-B-C	Hall B / GRCC
	TT	IV-V	Hall A / GRCC
2:00 p.m.	TRAPSHOOTING	ASSIGNED TIMES	CP OF VA-CC
2:30 p.m.	POWER SOCCER	GAMES 3-4	Halls C-D / GRCC
3:00 p.m.	AIR GUNS	ASSIGNED TIMES	Ballroom / GRCC
4:30–6:30 p.m.	DINNER		Hall A / GRCC
6:30 p.m.	BOWLING	RAMP	HANOVER LANES
	BASKETBALL	GAMES 1,2,3	Halls C-D / GRCC
7 p.m.	AIR GUNS	ASSIGNED TIMES	Ballroom / GRCC
8 p.m.	BASKETBALL	GAMES 4,5,6	Halls C-D / GRCC
GRCC = Greater Richmond Convention Center CP OF VA-CC = Conservation Park of VA		TT = Table tennis	



My HealthVet is onsite, near the internet café, to assist with registration, secure messaging enrollment and troubleshooting. Stop by or visit <http://myhealth.va.gov>.

Continuing the Momentum! NVWG Educational Sessions

Session 3: NVWG Coaches Forum— Taking it to the Next Level!

Wed., June 27 • 11:30 a.m.– 12:45 p.m. • Hall B15–A
Jennifer Day, CTRS James A. Haley VAMC
Carrie Booker, CTRS VA Puget Sound Health Care System
Valerie McNary, CTRS Charlie Norwood VAMC
Target Audience: Coaches of the NVWG

Session 4: Caregivers Forum— Supporting a Balance

Wed., June 27 • 11:30 a.m.– 12:45 p.m. • Hall B15–B
Robin E. Jackson, Ph.D., LCSW McGuire VAMC
Target Audience: Spouses, Caregiver and other critical individuals supporting the Veterans

Session 5: Future of the VA National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events

Thurs., June 28 • 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m. • Hall B15–A
Christopher Nowak, Director, VA National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events
Justin Brown, Chief Operations Officer, VA National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events
Target Audience: Coaches, Veterans, Sponsors and other stakeholders

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games began 32 years ago right here in Richmond, VA as a celebration of sports and recreation, and as a way to promote independence and healthy living for our Nation's Veterans. That spirit and opportunity is thriving today, and we are committed to continue to build on that foundation. These sessions are being conducted by professionals that want to create a dynamic conversation to identify opportunities and strengthen the community that keep the Spirit of the Games bright during the other 51 weeks of the year.