

# National Veterans Wheelchair Games



## Athlete Profile (National)

**Anthony Radetic**  
**Combat Army Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom**  
**31 years old**  
**Abbeville, Alabama**

The transition to life after a spinal cord injury has no timetable. Sometimes people adjust quickly, while for others it can take a lifetime. For Anthony Radetic, a former Blackhawk Helicopter pilot and Special Forces member, the first year post injury was his toughest. It was a challenge learning how to do the basic activities of life, but Radetic says the hardest part was changing his lifestyle. He had to let go of items he used to cherish, like his sports cars, for a more practical car that was easier to transfer in and out of.

As a youth in Florida, Radetic was always on the go, with a passion for water sports. He was not sure how to replace that thrill, one that defined his previous leisure interests. With the help of the staff at the Tampa VA Medical Center and the Paralyzed Veterans of America, he began to learn of new possibilities. He attended the Wheelchair Games last year in Spokane, as well as the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic. He also signed up with the PVA Racing Team, and now has a couple of handcycling races under his belt.

This year Radetic will compete in slalom, swimming and handcycling at the Wheelchair Games in Denver. To prepare for these events, using a manual wheelchair every day is great training for the slalom events; his love of the water makes swimming a natural choice; and his recent interest in racing makes Radetic a force to contend with in the 5-K handcycling race.

Radetic has looked forward to touching base with so many Veterans he met in the 2009 Games. That interaction is one of the main reasons he is returning.

**"The key to my first Games experience was the camaraderie that I felt," said Radetic. "There were so many disabled Veterans ready to give me tips on living with an injury."**

