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39th National Veterans Wheelchair Games Showcases Veteran Athletic Spirit

Over 600 Veterans to participate in rehabilitation event co-sponsored by VA and PVA

WASHINGTON – More than 600 military Veterans from across the country, Puerto Rico and Great Britain are in Louisville, Kentucky this week to compete in the 39th National Veterans Wheelchair Games (Wheelchair Games) being held July 11-16.

The Wheelchair Games, co-presented each year by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), is a multi-event sports rehabilitation program. The games are open to U.S. military Veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, amputations or certain neurological disorders, and who receive care at VA medical facilities or military treatment centers.

“The Wheelchair Games showcase the athletic ability and competitive spirit of our nation’s Veterans,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Competition through sports and recreation plays an important role in the rehabilitation journey and these games exemplify VA’s commitment to supporting Veterans who are navigating recovery and rehabilitation to achieve active, independent lives.”

VA research and clinical experience have shown that physical activity is important to maintaining good health, speeding recovery and improving overall quality of life. For many injured Veterans, the Wheelchair Games provides their first exposure to wheelchair athletics. Veterans have the opportunity to compete in 20 different events throughout the week including archery, billiards, bowling, cycling, track, field, quad rugby, wheelchair basketball and more.

“Every year, our members look forward to this event for the adaptive sports competition and the chance to reconnect with peers,” said David Zurfluh, a disabled Air Force Veteran and national president of PVA, who himself will compete this week. “The PVA mission is to ensure Veterans with disabilities have the same life experiences as everyone else, and co-hosting this event certainly delivers on that mission.”

The opening ceremonies were held on Thursday at the Kentucky International Convention Center (KICC) – the venue for many of the week’s competitive events. The annual Kids Day event for local children with disabilities will take place at 12 p.m. on Saturday, July 13, at KICC. All events are free and open to the public - no tickets are required.

For a complete schedule of events and additional information about the National Veterans Wheelchair Games visit wheelchairgames.org. People can follow #NVWG on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for videos and photos from the event.

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