

A Showcase of Ability

It's all about discovery. My discovery is that Swimming opened the door to everything: first it gave me freedom, then a place in society (Béatrice Hess, France, IPC Brochure 2004)

INTRODUCTION: NO EXCUSES, NO LIMITS

For anyone who has witnessed the determination of athletes striving to push themselves beyond their own limits it is quite easy to understand how competitive sport can play such a key part in the life of an individual with a disability. There are more opportunities for accomplishment of personal goals through sport than in many other aspects of life, and sport certainly can change the way other people see us. For some persons with a disability competitive sport provides a vehicle for levelling out some of the inequalities that are faced day-to-day. But for everyone it is thrilling, fun and satisfying.

This book attempts to examine the route through which the Paralympic Movement has advanced. On its way to the present day we will see personal crusades, conflict and consensus. But the overriding message is one of heartfelt enthusiasm to make a difference. This study should allow us to understand something of the early sacrifices and successes of a small group of people, but it will also trace the emergence of a highly complex worldwide organisation, the International Paralympic Committee. In this sense it is both an institutional history and a weaving together of several biographies. The sketching of the personalities is vitally important to our understanding of the emergence of the modern phenomenon.

The Paralympic Movement effectively began with the recreational and rehabilitative use of sport for persons with a disability, turning gradually into a broad-based pyramid of competitive sport that has ultimately led to the elite level of the Paralympic Games. The philosophy of the Paralympic Movement is one of self-realisation through competitive sport. The expression of personal determination and the exploration of one's own boundaries are there for those brave enough to commit themselves.

The Paralympic Movement has developed over the last fifty years to become the pinnacle of achievement for athletes with a disability. Ludwig Guttmann, a German neurosurgeon who had established the Stoke Mandeville Spinal Injuries Unit in Aylesbury in 1944, used sport as part of a process of rehabilitation for patients with spinal injuries. As his employment of competitive physical activity became more sophisticated, he also saw the benefits of drawing people with similar injuries together: sport enabling individuals to meet and strive for 'normal' goals. As the first Stoke Mandeville Games coincided with the opening day of the Olympic Games being held in London in 1948, the parallel with the Olympic Games was drawn. Today the Paralympic Movement is recognised as a global

sporting phenomenon: a wonderful celebration of competitive physical activity that fuels dreams, encouraging many to participation and to excellence.

THE INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE

The International Paralympic Committee was formed in 1989 out of the earlier cooperation of several international organisations looking to stabilise and extend the world of elite sport for persons with a disability. These organisations have had their own colourful and distinct histories, and their full genesis is beyond the scope of this study. However it is essential to understand how these organisations have moved towards a vision of international elite sport for individuals with disabilities. The International Paralympic Committee now organises the Paralympic Winter and Summer Games, as well as acting as the international federation for 12 sports – in which it also coordinates the World and Regional Championships. The successes of the IPC have allowed the organisation to target activities in developing countries, and to focus specifically on improving the participation levels of women with disabilities, and of those athletes with severe disabilities. ‘Through sport, its ideals and activities the IPC seeks the continuous global promotion of the values of the Paralympic Movement, with a vision of inspiration and empowerment’ (IPC 2004).

In the period after the end of the Second World War Ludwig Guttman was involved in the institutionalisation of organisations serving the needs of persons with a disability other than those with spinal injuries, although he held a fiercely personal grip on organisations he had brought into being. Guttman was instrumental in the promotion of sporting competition for athletes with disabilities, establishing the International Stoke Mandeville Games organisation. Work was being done in some European nations to provide for people who were blind and for amputees, but Guttman was keen to hold off their entry into the Stoke Mandeville movement. He was later to be more broadly inclusive of people with other disabilities through the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD).

As international federations strengthened partisanship towards the needs of their own population, they also built restrictions to access by others. In turn, this had a slowing effect on progress towards the wider acceptance on the world stage of elite sport for athletes with a disability. Major international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have tended to encourage interest groups to get together and speak with one voice so as to ensure consistent and fair representation and support, as well as enabling these agencies to serve complete constituencies more effectively. This has been true of United Nations agencies and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Olympic Movement has always insisted on being able to respond to one lobby rather than receiving numerous different petitions for assistance or attention from groups with overlapping interests. Just as the IOC has sought to encourage a single umbrella organisation to represent sports science, it has also been instrumental in prompting confederacy among disability sports organisations. In 1982 an International Coordinating Committee of World Sports Organisations for the Disabled (ICC) was established, with the intention of ‘speaking with one voice’ with regard to sport for persons with a disability. This committee undertook the management of what became the Paralympic Games: international multi-disability world championships organised in conjunction with the timing and location of the Olympic Games cycle. Although the time was right for cooperation between the separate disability organisations, it was particularly the call of the International Olympic Committee for unity from within the organisations serving athletes with a disability that consolidated the actions that led to the foundation of the International Paralympic Committee. This was no impulsive act: national organisations wished to create a sport-specific organisation rather than a disability-specific one. The national organisations also drove the movement towards a democratic structure. The International Paralympic Committee is the most prominent

evidence of success in drawing the early development of elite disability sport into a fully coordinated world organisation.

Certain issues regularly became focal points as the international organisations were establishing themselves and as the movement progressed towards a single international body for athletes with disability: among them whether representation should be based on disability, sport or country; and whether classification of athletes for competition should be medical/anatomical or functional. These issues emerged in the historical context of the development of sport for those with disabilities. It is inevitable in preparing a history of the Paralympic Movement that the emphasis will change as we move through time: new problems arise and new horizons permit fresh setting of targets. The early pioneers brought their own specialisations to the attention of a larger audience, inevitably inviting a smaller section of the population into the limelight for a time – until ideas broadened and others worked to help bring the same benefits to their particular population. In this respect sport for people in wheelchairs was in the public eye earlier than some other sporting opportunities for persons with other disabilities.

The reasons for prominence of one particular group are not always easy to pinpoint. Sometimes it can result from the particular drive and commitment of an appropriately poised individual; sometimes the regional or national political environment can suit the emergence of a dominant influence. Conspiracy theories have pointed to Eurocentric attitudes of colonialism being historically at the root of all successful international sporting organisations: ‘arrogantly teaching the world how to play’. Certainly some chance is likely to contribute to the circumstances being right for initiatives to become wholly supported in society – particularly where more marginalised populations have been concerned. It is essential to explore the background to these localised energies so as to understand better the emerging picture of the Paralympic Movement. Inevitably there are difficulties in ascribing meaning and determining the prime movers in a diverse subject such as this, and it is best to emphasise that no particular merit is intentionally being bestowed on individual participants in the process. Adaptation and emulation are the means of progress, and international sport for persons with a disability has benefited from the nebulous identities of groups with different needs. By definition the pursuit of sporting excellence within particular populations will always require some reassessment of established concepts relating to elite sport and international competition.

Funding and research recognition will inevitably affect the progress and development of highly specialised areas of sports science. The impact of the Paralympic Movement has been far-reaching in its effects on attitudes towards all those persons with a disability. Governments have addressed aspects of educational reform, accessibility and prejudice against disability in recent decades. Seeing elite athletes on a world stage promotes an inclusive stance towards all members of society, helping to bring down barriers.

Today, the International Paralympic Committee is the principal force for the Paralympic Movement, identifying as its vision: ‘To enable paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world’. The IPC seeks to enable athletes with a disability to be involved with decisions about their own future, to maintain a sports-centred organisation and to provide the appropriate opportunities for the development of all athletes – from early stages through to elite levels. To capture the essence of these aims the International Paralympic Committee introduced a new Paralympic Motto: ‘Spirit in Motion’ (IPC 2003).

QUALIFICATION, ELIGIBILITY AND CLASSIFICATION

It has been natural for organisations to define eligibility so as to provide for ‘fair’ competition. Classification in sport for those with disability has a similar basis to the early distinctions made between the amateur and the professional athlete in Olympic sport in the early 20th century: participants wished

to compete against those with similar opportunities and against those with similar limitations, so that competition itself was meaningful – a victory or defeat had significance. In the creation of structures and definitions for classification in disability sport, as identified by Ludwig Guttmann just after the Second World War, there was also the inevitable development of barriers to access. Qualification meant distinction and also exclusion. Guttmann logically encouraged competitive sports events among former patients of spinal units. Others followed Guttmann's model and took the institutionalised system of sporting participation back to their own countries and units after spending time at Stoke Mandeville. Using disability categories to specify who could and who could not compete necessarily excluded certain athletes who did not fit into a particular classification. The motive of clarity also brought a greater difficulty in moving towards integration within sports movements, although segregation was a by-product and was not usually intentional.

THE 'MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY' VERSUS THE 'SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY'

Before embarking on an examination of how the Paralympic Movement has emerged to become the world phenomenon that it is today, it is important to understand the nature of disability in society.

From centuries past it had been common to treat persons with a disability in terms of those requiring medical cure, rehabilitation or segregation from the rest of 'normal' society. This legacy has been called the 'medical model' of disability, and it was commonly sustained until only a few years ago. This model (also sometimes called the 'individual model') relies on a designation of a person in terms of negative classification – disability prevents a person from functioning within society. The inability of people to participate fully in society is seen in terms of their disability. The humanity of individuals becomes subordinated to their disability.

More appropriate to us today is the 'social model' of disability: individuals' impairment becomes a disability when the organisation of society prevents them from participating fully. This could be in relation to access, mobility, communication or other barriers. So, in the social model of disability, a distinction is made between 'impairment' and 'disability'. Impairment is considered to be a long-term limitation of body function, structure or physical appearance that has usually been caused by illness, injury or a congenital condition. Disability is defined as the loss of opportunity to function equally with others because of impediments put in their way either by the environment or by the way society is structured. The World Health Organization's Action Plan for Disabilities and Rehabilitation 2006–2011 defines 'disability' as: 'the outcome or result of a complex relationship between an individual's health condition and personal factors, and of the external factors that represent the circumstances in which the individual lives'. Effectively, society causes the disablement of those individuals who are impaired in some way. Inflexibility in organisational policies can be a barrier to enabling normal functioning of persons with a disability in society, as can cultural representations that patronise or dehumanise. In the social model disability is necessarily a political concept.

DISABLING BARRIERS AND THE ROLE OF COMPETITIVE SPORT

There can be no doubt that sport has the power to bind people together, make them feel as though they belong and create 'community'. The many positive benefits sport has to offer all individuals are even more meaningful to persons with a disability. Motivation and socialisation are obvious rewards to add to health maintenance. For many people sport has provided levels of freedom that have not been normally

experienced by them, due to barriers, ignorance and prejudice. Sport can offer a means of navigating past the barriers that have limited participation in other facets of their lives. For many people sport has given new goals and targets that have lifted them out of a sometimes unwelcoming environment. The high profile of the Paralympic Movement has served to force communities to address questions of accessibility and inclusion for persons with a disability. In more recent years this could mean that a career path has opened up through sport, but for most individuals sport has helped physical and mental well being.

As changes in policy and legislation have come into effect, society has become more accepting of persons with a disability, but this has not been enough. Compliance with what is required does not in itself lead to changes in attitude. The difference is made by active provision of opportunities, inclusion of all individuals in communities as citizens.

Language Defines and Restricts

Concrete change in use of language has been encouraged in the past decade, bringing people's attention to removing seldom-considered negative connotations. Language and ascribed meaning are relentlessly evolving. Value systems also continuously change, causing a need for redefinition of what is meant by particular words and phrases. A phrase from the past becomes a hackneyed cliché with familiarity and overuse. The worst prejudices and misunderstandings in society have frequently been exacerbated by particular use of language, perpetuating myths that have affected the treatment of marginalised groups. Resolute campaigning in many quarters in more recent years has led to a change in the way language is used to refer to persons with a disability. Labels can generalise and stigmatise so that differences become problematic. Certainly labels can dehumanise. Stigma can imply threat, inferiority, or that the 'different' individual does not deserve the same levels of courtesy and consideration as other people. As Goffman (1963) explained, stigma could act to be socially discrediting and to exclude individuals from acceptance in society. Stereotypes are reinforced through language that confines definition of persons in terms of their disability, rather than recognising the humanity of individuals in their own right. Apprehension and misunderstanding have blighted the progress of persons with a disability.

The currently preferred principle is to use positive, 'people-first' language when referring to individuals with disabilities. It is more appropriate to refer to the person first and to the impairment afterwards – if it is relevant to do so at all. So terms such as 'crippled', 'afflicted', 'suffering from', 'wheelchair-bound' and 'handicapped' are considered negative, and are to be discouraged. A wheelchair provides the mobility that can be enabling, rather than 'binding'. Putting people first means recognising the value of people as individuals, rather than patronisingly defining them in terms of their disability. 'Disabled people', therefore, are referred to as 'persons with a disability'. Political correctness in language can have its own problems, however. The purpose of being politically correct is reportedly to reduce the chance of offending others. Politically correct language can still apply labels and it can ignore individuality. But it can signal an intent that is positive – effectiveness is in the understanding or in the actions rather than in the language. Respect can be conveyed through sensitivity. Appropriate and thoughtful use of language may avoid labelling altogether.

Not everyone agrees that the preoccupation with political correctness in language is a good thing: overdoing people-first language can be unacceptable to the very populations believed to benefit. In a reaction against the oversensitivity that had arisen, the US National Blind Federation passed a resolution in 1993 declaring that politically correct language 'does the exact opposite of what it purports to do since it is overly defensive, implies shame instead of true equality, and portrays the blind as touchy and belligerent' (Jernigan 1993). Some extensions to politically correct language can overreach their purpose and become condescending in their use: terms such as 'challenged' and 'differently able' might

fall into this category. While society has made some effort to correct the wrongs of the past, it is essential to remember that individuals often see their disability as a crucially identifying feature of their persona. While the fact that individuals have a disability that causes some limitation of function is part of who they are, it should not affect society's attitudes towards them as individuals in the community.

READING AND WRITING A HISTORY OF THE PARALYMPIC MOVEMENT

In the discussions that follow it has been essential to make use of contemporary sources: principally documents and publications. Extensive support has been forthcoming from people who were involved in the events themselves, to corroborate the documentary evidence and to provide the necessary 'colour' that makes the Paralympic Movement what it is: a thriving and energetic celebration of sport for persons with a disability. In reflecting the evidence as accurately as possible, some outdated terminology used by the participants of the day has been retained, although this necessarily means that more recent sensitivities in language already discussed might be affronted. No offence is intended, only a wish to keep the language of the discussions accurate to the historical context in which they took place. It should become apparent to the reader that the central participants in the Paralympic Movement are much less constrained by the language used to describe their disability or social situation than are people who are trying to enter the debate from an external viewpoint. As this study heads towards analysis of the very recent past one might observe that the language being quoted from meetings, interviews and written evidence is often of a nature that would be judged not to be politically correct at all. Those involved do not tiptoe around their subject – they act with passion so as to affect change.

Paralympic Terminology

The employment of the term 'Paralympics' has been in dispute off and on for many years. It is interesting to look at the different ways that individuals and organisations have employed the term, and how they have explained its origins and meaning. The earliest users of the term for the quadrennial games tended to perceive 'para' as a prefix that was associated with paraplegia, combined with 'Olympic' – the association with the Olympic ideals in sporting distinction. As time progressed, the International Coordinating Committee moved towards a derivation that was coupled to the idea of 'para' as 'being attached to' or 'parallel to' – so accordingly the Paralympics were defined in terms of the broadened participation of disability groups in a sporting celebration timed to closely precede or follow the Olympic Games. The wish to aspire to the highest sporting accomplishments, as epitomised by the celebration of the Olympic Games, has always been present in the identity of the Paralympic Movement.

In 1949 Ludwig Guttman declared that he hoped the International Stoke Mandeville Games would be the 'disabled person's equivalent of the Olympic Games' (Guttman 1949b); he seems to have been adamant that the use of the word 'Olympic' must be maintained, even in the face of pressure from the International Olympic Committee to protect what it saw as its own copyright. Jens Bromann (former President of the International Blind Sport Association and former Vice President of IPC) comments: 'Guttman told the IOC that as long as he was living he would call these games "Olympic" and he would never give up that term because sport for the disabled was as ideal as the spirit of the Olympic Games for the able-bodied' (Jennings 1996). Roger Bannister, neurosurgeon and inspiration to many athletes for his achievements on the track, presented the prizes at the 1955 Stoke Mandeville Games and announced that he considered the recipients 'wonderful record holders in their own "Paraplegic Olympics"'.

A recent, more intricate, explanation was published by the International Paralympic Committee: ‘The word “Paralympic” derives from a combination of three sources: the Latin adjective “par” (“similar” or “the same”), the Greek preposition “para” (“next to” or “alongside”), and the word “Olympics” (the Paralympic Games being held parallel to the Olympic Games)’ (Reinecke and Reiff 2002). While this may be a suitable explanation now, it has been demonstrated that nothing so precise was intended at the outset.

Organisers of the Tokyo 1964 Paralympic Games were among those to try to clarify the meaning of the title. Although Ludwig Guttman referred to the 1964 13th International Stoke Mandeville Games as the ‘Tokyo Games for the Paralysed’ in his welcome address at the Opening Ceremony, throughout his official reports he called the event the Paralympic Games. This was the same in most official reports of Tokyo – the term used was ‘Paralympics’. The Japanese press also used the term ‘Paralympics’ to report the events at the time. For various reasons, usually connected with the legal rights to usage of Olympic-related terminology, the name used for the four-yearly international games has been varied until more recently: World Wheelchair Games, World Winter Games, International Games for the Disabled, Olympiad for the Physically Disabled, Torontolympiad, Olympics for the Disabled and finally the Paralympic Games. Since 1988, when the Games were held in Seoul, Korea, the Paralympic Games has been accepted as the official name.

ORIGINS OF ORGANISATIONS OF SPORT FOR PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY

Any attempt to understand the development of the Paralympic Movement will be aided by a look at the various organisations that emerged in the 20th century serving specific populations of persons with a disability. They each came into existence in differing ways, often riding the enthusiasm of particular individuals. But they provided an essential stability for those individuals who wished to express themselves through competitive sport, and eventually these organisations gave the platform for efforts to bring the different disability groups together. In an effort to provide greater fluency in preparations for quadrennial multi-disability games, discussions between international organisations led to the creation of the International Coordinating Committee of Sports for the Disabled (ICC), on 22nd March 1982. The President, Vice President and Secretary General from four international federations began meetings that would have much wider impact. The organisations involved were: Cerebral Palsy – International Sports and Recreation Association (CP-ISRA), the International Blind Sport Association (IBSA), the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF) and the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD). In 1986 these four organisations were joined in their efforts by the International Committee for Deaf Sports (CISS) and the International Sports Association for Persons with Mental Handicap (INAS-FMH). Understanding the beginnings of the different international organisations serving sport for persons with a disability will aid any detailed exploration of the Paralympic Movement, because they represent the constituents of the Movement itself. Below is a brief introduction to the very diverse origins of the international federations.

Comité International des Sports des Sourds / International Committee for Deaf Sports

The oldest of the international federations for sport for individuals with a disability is the Comité International des Sports des Sourds / International Committee for Deaf Sports (CISS). This organisation, at first called the International Committee of Silent Sports, was set up just before the end of the

inaugural World Games for the Deaf, held in Paris in 1924 on 16th August. The preferred name for the CISS Games is now the Deaflympics. The prime movers were Antoine Dresse (Belgium) and Eugène Reuben-Alcáis (France). The latter had encouraged the six existing national federations for the deaf (Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Poland) to send competitors to the First International Silent Games. Some athletes from other countries without a national organisation also competed (from Hungary, Italy and Romania). At a meeting in the Café de la Porte Dorée, adjacent to the Bois de Vincennes, Paris, 13 representatives from these nine countries met and sketched out the formation of an international organisation. The constitution was formally adopted at the first Congress, in Brussels, on 31st October 1926. The Summer Silent Games has operated on a four-year cycle since 1924, apart from a ten-year gap from 1939, with Winter World Games for the Deaf starting in 1949. As the only federation representing people who are deaf, the International Olympic Committee recognised the CISS in 1951. The particular independence that the CISS has had since its very early beginnings has strengthened its ability to represent its members. At the same time the isolation that has come with total self-sufficiency, and its singular population, has tended to make it more difficult to persuade the members of CISS to embrace the potential benefits of bringing all disability sports organisations together. The fact is that the International Committee for Deaf Sports has not really needed to hang on the coat-tails of any other global body for survival. CISS became a member of the International Coordinating Committee in 1986, and was a founder member of the International Paralympic Committee. But its early misgivings were confirmed: that there was little to gain from maintaining its involvement. The elected officials of CISS felt that valuable resources were being squandered attending meetings that had little relevance to their ability to represent athletes who are deaf. In 1995, at the Congress held in Helsinki before the Winter Silent Games in Ylläs, Finland, the membership of CISS voted to withdraw from the International Paralympic Committee.

International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation

The International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF) arose from the annual festivals of sport held at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury, UK. Originally the games were organised by the Paraplegic Sports Endowment Fund, which later became the British Paraplegic Sports Society and is now the British Wheelchair Sports Foundation. The participants at these annual gatherings were mainly from the spinal injuries units or other rehabilitation centres around the United Kingdom. The tendency of the Stoke Mandeville Committee to be Eurocentric was historically related to its origins in England, and by the expansion mostly into Europe via medical exchange contact. When an International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee was set up at the Meeting of Managers and Trainers in 1959, it was not surprising that the five members should include Great Britain and the Netherlands holding permanent positions. The Netherlands was suggested as a permanent member 'as the country which, with Great Britain, first put the Games on an international basis' (Scruton 1998); the country in which the next games were to be held (if not at Stoke Mandeville) would also be a member. In 1959, Italy was included as the host country for the 1960 Games, with France and Belgium constituting the five.' It might help to add another sentence explaining the basis on which the final two were chosen. Membership of the Committee was initially intended to change regularly. The country in which the next games were to be held (if not at Stoke Mandeville) would be a member, with France and Belgium constituting the five. Delegates on the first Committee were: Dr L. Guttman, President (Great Britain), Dr A. Maglio, Treasurer (Italy), Dr A. Tricot (Belgium), Mr M. Boubee (France) and Capt. H. Tjebbes (Netherlands). Joan Scruton was appointed Honorary Secretary. Only two years later the membership was extended to include representatives from the USA and Austria: Mr R. Simon (Austria) and Mr B. Lipton (USA). Then in 1964 the full Committee was enlarged to include: Dr A. Lococo

(Argentina), Dr G. Bedbrook (Australia), Mr W. Weiss (Germany), Mr Y. Kasai (Japan) and Mr G. Pentland-Smith (Rhodesia). The fundamental pattern of events was agreed in 1960: that the Games would be held annually for three years at Stoke Mandeville, then the Games should have 'Olympic Status' in the fourth year, and efforts should be made to hold them in the city or country in which the Olympic Games were taking place. The International Stoke Mandeville Games were the starting point for the phenomenon we see as the ultimate event today. Although participation in the Games was restricted to people with spinal cord lesions, the Games would eventually give rise to the most spectacular multi-disability sports celebration – the Paralympic Games.

At a meeting in Heidelberg in 1972 it was agreed to change the name to the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation. ISMGF changed its name again to the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF) in 1990. A merger later amalgamated the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation and the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled from 1st January 2004, becoming the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS).

International Sports Organisation for the Disabled

The International Sports Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD) was established in 1964, serving amputees and 'les Autres'. A large number of persons with a disability did not qualify for participation under the aegis of one of the organisations established so far, and discussion took place in 1977 to find a way of providing for this disenfranchised group of athletes. Representatives of ISOD from France, United Kingdom and Spain met in February to consider systems of classification that would bring another group into ISOD – 'les Autres'. This term serves to identify people with other conditions that had not been represented within the other federations, including people with locomotor disabilities such as dwarfism, muscular dystrophy, osteogenesis imperfecta (brittle bones), Guillain's Syndrome and arthrogryposis, some types of cerebral palsy, spinal cord conditions such as polio, and multiple sclerosis. When the interested parties considered the formation of ISOD it was with an umbrella function in mind, a multi-disability sports organisation to cater for the sporting needs of people other than those with spinal lesions.

The organisation followed from meetings of the World Veterans' Federation at its Paris headquarters that began in 1960. Eleven countries attended the 1961 gathering, at which an International Working Group was set up, and elections took place for membership of an Executive Board and Medical Committee. They agreed a constitution that would receive significant modification over the next few years. The President of the Working Group was also Secretary General of the World Veterans' Federation, Curtis Campaigne, with Guttman and Van Rijn (Netherlands) elected as Vice Presidents. Guttman welcomed the development of ISOD as a logical extension of the British Sports Association for the Disabled (BSAD), founded on his initiative in February 1961. Joan Scruton says that Guttman saw a need to embrace other disability organisations into his original vision of Paralympic Games as sporting celebrations for people with spinal lesions, and required a corporate structure that could administer this (Scruton 2000). The inaugural meeting of the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled was in 1964 in Paris. Norman Acton took over from Campaigne as President (he was the new Secretary General of the World Veterans' Federation as well). Vice Presidents elected were Guttman and J Westerhoff (Netherlands). Countries recognised as founder members were Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Later, the World Veterans' Federation could no longer offer the same level of involvement in ISOD, and in 1966 Norman Acton resigned from the Presidency. The Secretary General was also from the WVF, Mr E. Joubert, and he also tendered his resignation. Although some financial support had been pledged from the WVF, the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled had to suddenly draw itself up to its full height and

use the strength of its member nations to stand confidently, after eight years of being propped up. A new Executive Committee was elected, with Guttman as President.

In 1967 ISOD appointed a sub-committee to prepare rules for sports for amputees, and to assemble a report on the range of sports opportunities for athletes who were blind. Involvement with the International Cerebral Palsy Society (ICPS) began unsteadily, but meetings in 1976 and 1977 brought medical experts from ISOD and the ICPS together to establish classifications under which competitors with cerebral palsy could take part in multi-disciplinary events.

As disability-specific sports organisations such as IBSA and CP-ISRA were begun in the 1970s, (with INAS-FMH being formed in 1985), the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled began to lose its significance as a coordinating body for athletes outside the ISMGF framework. In 1978 Ludwig Guttman, still President of ISOD, put together a paper with Joan Scruton on the concept of the ISOD becoming the equivalent of the International Olympic Committee. It would 'become the coordinating committee of sport for all disabled'. Guttman saw confusion within different countries being the barrier to progress in the late 1970s, with several organisations acting separately. The paper suggested that ISOD could 'assume the role of an overall umbrella organisation, coordinating the work of the individual international organisations'. But the establishment of the International Coordinating Committee in 1979 did not lead to this logical transition for ISOD. Its work continued, and eventually it became prudent to establish a merger between ISOD and ISMWSF.

Cerebral Palsy – International Sports and Recreation Association

Cerebral Palsy – International Sports and Recreation Association (CP-ISRA) was created in 1978. Until this time all sporting activities for people with cerebral palsy were coordinated through the Sports and Leisure Group of the International Cerebral Palsy Society, which had been founded in 1968. The first Cerebral Palsy World Games were held in Denmark in 1982, and athletes with cerebral palsy first took part in the Paralympic Games in Arnhem, the Netherlands, in 1980. Recreational Seminars have been a feature of the CP-ISRA, beginning in Portugal in 1983. The 1994 General Assembly of CP-ISRA adopted the following mission statement. The aim of CP-ISRA is: 'To promote the development of sporting and recreational activities, both competitive and non-competitive, for people with cerebral palsy and allied conditions'. Under the banner of 'allied conditions' CP-ISRA has given emphasis to individuals with neurological impairment, including people who have been affected by strokes and traumatic brain injury. CP-ISRA 'strives to be an athlete-centred organisation, involving athletes and ex-athletes in discussion and formulation of decision-making at all levels'. In relation to the Paralympic Games, CP-ISRA takes responsibility for the level of participation of athletes with cerebral palsy 'based on fair classification and appropriate sports'. Functional classification has been employed throughout CP-ISRA's existence. Its own Sports Rules Manual is used to determine eligibility criteria, and to consider minimum disability. The different sports have to be considered separately because the criteria will vary for each.

Cerebral palsy can be described as a brain lesion that is non-progressive. It causes varying impairment of coordination, muscle tone and strength. Characteristics include: difficulty in maintaining posture and in controlling some movement; central motor disturbance that can lead to deficiency in perceptual areas; some hearing, speech and visual deficits; and epilepsy. 'Eligible participants must have a diagnosis of cerebral palsy or other non-progressive brain damage with locomotor dysfunction, either congenital or acquired. If an abnormality can only be detected by a detailed neurological examination of the athlete and there is no obvious impairment of function, the person is not eligible for CP-ISRA competitions'. CP-ISRA has been very actively involved, with the International Paralympic Committee, in examining ways of best providing appropriate elite sport opportunities for people with severe disabilities.

International Association for Sport for Persons with Mental Handicap

The International Association for Sport for Persons with Mental Handicap (INAS-FMH) was established in 1986 to further sport for people with intellectual disability. As society has altered its use of related language, this organisation became the International Association for Sport for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) in 1999. The terms used to describe individuals with intellectual disability have changed steadily through the 20th century. Some language used in past years could now be considered derogatory. Another complication is that language is culturally dependent – some countries employ a term to describe what is now called intellectual disability that, when transliterated into another language, equates to a word that has become insulting. Some other terms that have been used to describe individuals with intellectual disability in the 20th century include: mentally defective, mentally deficient, mentally handicapped, mentally retarded, learning disabled.

The federation takes ‘normalisation’ as a main principle in its activities. This starts from the premise that people with intellectual disabilities are equal members of society, and as such they possess the same rights and obligations as everyone else. There are particular needs that individuals have as a result of their disability, just as some other individuals are blind or are elderly and have specific needs. These rights extend into the realm of opportunities to participate and to compete in sports. INAS-FID is democratic in structure, arranged on a basis of national representation. Ignorance and prejudice within the broader community is seen to be its greatest barrier to progress. A tendency for families and carers to have low expectations of athletes with intellectual disability has also been a restriction to people gaining the greatest benefits from their involvement. But more recently the difficulty of effectively classifying eligibility has caused significant problems in the relationship between INAS-FID and the International Paralympic Committee.

International Special Olympics, Inc.

Another organisation that has catered for individuals with intellectual disability is International Special Olympics, Inc., which was founded in 1968 as a result of the very personal commitment of Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Special Olympics Inc. was established with the stated mission to ‘provide physical fitness, sports training, and athletic competition for mentally retarded individuals’. This organisation, largely funded from its inception by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr Foundation, is a very wide-ranging organisation providing competitive athletic programs for persons with intellectual disability. Having held a day camp for children with intellectual difficulties in 1963, Shriver was inspired to extend these events to other cities in the United States over the next five years. Bringing together the Chicago Park District and the Kennedy Foundation, Shriver nurtured the First International Special Olympic Games in Soldier Field, Chicago, in July 1968. Special Olympics remains some distance from the Paralympic Movement, serving mostly North America and wishing mainly not to associate itself directly with the development of the International Paralympic Committee. The International Olympic Committee, as we will see, tried to bring Special Olympics and INAS-FID together so that they could ‘speak with one voice’.

International Blind Sports Association

The International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) was established in 1980 serving blind and visually impaired sportspersons. There is a very long history of athletic endeavour being an integral part of the education and recreation of blind people; many residential schools and colleges had established extensive competitive programmes in the first half of the 20th century, and some athletic associations

were formed to help coordinate the expanding competitive schedule. The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind (WCWB) recognised the value of sports and competition to all blind people, and passed a resolution at its 1979 General Assembly encouraging the formation of an international sports federation conspicuously catering for the distinctive requirements of blind athletes. The resolution was crafted by Helmut Pielasch (German Democratic Republic) and a small group of other delegates from around the world. IBSA endorsed renewed objectives in 2001.

CONCLUSION

Broadly speaking, the aims of sport embody the same principles for the disabled as they do for the able-bodied; in addition however, sport is of immense therapeutic value and plays an essential part in the physical, psychological and social rehabilitation of the disabled. Sport helps the disabled person to restore contact with the world around him; in other words, to facilitate and accelerate his social re-integration or integration. (Ludwig Guttmann 1976)

There have been many obstacles to overcome in providing opportunities for persons with a disability to participate in elite competitive sporting environments. This book is intended to guide us through some of the great efforts made by individuals and organisations. More than 50 years ago, efforts were made to employ sport systematically for rehabilitation. These efforts lead us to look more closely at the early coordination of competitive opportunities for individuals with a disability – usually organised on disability-specific lines. This could be said to mark the start of a Paralympic Movement. This book aims to explore the mechanisms by which the Paralympic Movement developed, leading to the foundation of the International Paralympic Committee, and to trace the formidable work of this body to the present day.

Attitudes are all-important however, and it is noticeable immediately that barriers have been constructed in the minds of the general public and in the minds of some athletes themselves. The literature of post-Second World War sport for people with a disability shows a clear misunderstanding on the part of the public: that all early provision for athletes with a disability had therapeutics as its primary aim, rather than elite athletic performance and competition. The misconception associated the efforts of those participating in competitions nationally or internationally with rehabilitation, rather than acknowledging the highly trained, elite sportspersons as athletes in their own right. People did not think of these competitions in the same terms as their understanding of the Olympic Games or world championships in different sports. It is inevitable that this negativity would slow down any progress in attracting sponsorship or governmental support for the furtherance of sport for disabled persons. The extent of negativity existing within the community of persons with disability was ironic, and also a factor in slowing the initial development of the Paralympic Movement. There was certainly some reluctance for a global encouragement and promotion of sport for all people with a disability. While reading this account we should bear in mind the contemporary shifts in attitudes both of the participants and of society more broadly to sporting opportunities for persons with a disability.