

17 March 2010

IN FOCUS

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- Giant Slalom Sees Strong Finishes
- Sweden and USA Take Wheelchair Curling
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CZECH REPUBLIC REPEATS WIN AT ICE SLEDGE GAME

Athletes from Czech Republic gave their team a second win 3:2 against Italy at the UBC Thunderbird Arena today. With 13 out of 15 shots, Czech forward Jiri Berger said “we were a lucky team today as we were down but found a way to come back”.



The Czech Team controlled the first period with numerous scoring chances seeming to carry that momentum over from their first win yesterday over Korea as forward David Palat scored a hard shot from outside the face-off dot at 9:51 in the first period. The Czech Republic continued that momentum scoring their second goal at 11:39 of the second period on a nice cross ice pass from forward Tomas Kvoch.

The Italians however played well offensively and finally scored off a goal-mouth play where Italian defence players Florian Planker and Gian Cavaliere set up Gianluigi Rosa to get their team on the score sheet, making it 2:1. The Italians seemed to get a spark from that goal as they carried play throughout the second period with Rosa and Planker setting up captain Andrea Chiarotti on an odd man rush with under one minute to play in the second, who fired the puck into the net sending the UBC Thunderbird Arena wild, chanting “Go Italian Go” and tying the score.

But, in the tightly contested affair between the Italians and Czech Republic, it was the Czech Republic that ultimately combined the right amount of offence and defence to prevail victorious today.

“Hockey is about mistakes and if you receive more mistakes than your team loses, 90 percent of the game is about your head and only 10 percent skills”, said the Czech Ice Sledge Hockey forward shoot-out hero Erik Fojtik.

WOOLSTENCROFT AND SCHOENFELDER DELIVER IN ALPINE EVENTS

At Whistler Creekside, Lauren Woolstencroft (CAN, LW3-1) and Gerd Schoenfelder (GER, LW5/7-2) continued to display their dominance in Alpine Skiing. Woolstencroft won her second gold medal of the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games today in Giant Slalom (Standing) with a combined time of 2:34.03.

After the race, Woolstencroft said, “I’m super excited. Giant Slalom is one of my favourite events. I’m happy to do it today and repeat from Torino.”



A total of 7.57 seconds behind Woolstencroft was Andrea Rothfuss (GER, LW6/8-2), winning her second silver medal of the Games. Petra Smarzova (SVK, 6/8-2) was determined to do better after her fall in the Women's Slalom (Standing) event earlier this week. Smarzova won the bronze medal and was only 0.07 seconds from the silver.

In the Men's Giant Slalom (Standing) event, Gerd Schoenfelder (GER, LW5/7-2) added to his impressive Paralympic medal collection, which comprises over 18 medals including the silver from the Men's Slalom (Standing) event on Monday. Schoenfelder easily won the gold medal in a time of 2:23.92. This is Schoenfelder's thirteenth Paralympic gold medal.

"Gerd is certainly an icon on the circuit. His success is amazing for all of us to watch," Woolstencroft (CAN) said after his gold medal race.

In Monday's Men's Slalom (Standing) race, Robert Meusburger (AUT, LW4) and Vincent Gauthier-Manuel (FRA, LW6/8-2) finished less than 0.11 seconds from winning a medal, but came back strong today in the Giant Slalom (Standing) to win the silver and bronze medals, respectively. Gauthier-Manuel's bronze medal was the first of his career and the first for France at the Vancouver Paralympic Games.

"The first one tastes pretty good," Gauthier-Manuel said. "I'm happy for France."

CLOSE VICTORIES FOR SWEDEN AND USA

The Wheelchair Curling game between Sweden and Great Britain went to an extra end this afternoon as Great Britain took control of the game early on with two consecutive steals to start the game. A steal of three in the sixth end put Great Britain in a great position, but Sweden would come back to take three. In the extra end, Great Britain's fourth Aileen Neilson would attempt a

raise shot twice, but would end up pushing the stone too deep on both attempts, letting Sweden steal a single for the win 7:6.



Norway and USA also played a close game, as the Americans held the Norwegians off at 9:8. Norway stayed in the game with a triple in the third and sixth end, but would just miss getting their third triple in the last end when skip Rune Lorentsen's final draw shot failed to get deep enough to score.

Canada controlled the game early on against Germany after German skip Jens Jaeger's draw attempt against three went wide and helped Canada steal an extra for four in the

third end. The lead would hold as Canada kept Germany at 8:6.

Korea also successfully fended off a Swiss comeback as Korea skip Kim Haksung threw a perfect double take-out with his last stone in the fifth end to prevent Switzerland from stealing three. Korea would go on to win the game 9:3 in seven ends.



DOUBLE GOLD FOR GERMANY IN MEN AND WOMEN'S 12.5KM

Today was Germany's day at Whistler Paralympic Park as Verena Bentele (B1) with guide Thomas Friedrich and Wilhelm Brem (B1) with guide Florian Grimm both scored gold medals in the Women and Men's 12.5km Biathlon (Visually Impaired category).

Andrea Eskau (LW11) also took a bronze home for Germany in the Women's 10km Sitting category. German fans excitedly waved their flags and cheered as skiers from their country crossed the finish line.

Bentele said that she was incredibly happy to have won another gold medal. She is the most decorated Paralympian in the Nordic skiing category with 14 medals under her belt, ten of them being gold medals. She did not seem any less excited just because this was her fourteenth medal and she commented that she still gets nervous before every race even though she has competed for 12 years in the Paralympic Games.

It was also a tight race for Bentele today as she missed three shots, which added three minutes onto her final time.

"This race certainly was nerve-wracking. I started badly at shooting, although skiing went very well right from the beginning. And then I even made three mistakes at the first two shooting stances. So I started crying right after the last clear shooting because I knew that we had won."

Brem also has significant experience on the Paralympic circuit, having now competed in five Paralympics, his first one being in Lillehammer, Norway in 1994. He has eight Paralympic medals, finally winning one today after placing fourth in two races on Saturday and Monday.

"This definitely is a huge relief for me," he said. "Before, we were missing that little bit of luck but today, luck was totally on our side."

OMEGA SETS TIME FOR ALL

At the Whistler Paralympic Park venue, the location of the Cross-Country and Biathlon events, timekeeper Omega is making sure that every athlete is timed at the utmost precision. IPC President Sir Philip Craven had the pleasure of visiting the high-tech facility, in the building adjacent to the crowd stands.

"It is an incredible amount of technology that puts the Paralympic Games at a high standard," Sir Philip said. "It would be fantastic to have each athlete come inside this control centre and have a look at what keeps their resulting time just right."

Senior Executive of Omega Christoph Berthaud said that the timekeeping facility at Whistler Paralympic Park controls everything.



"What is important is that the time is the same on all equipment," Berthaud said. "So we have a central clock that we are setting everyday by connecting the GPS to the satellite time, and then this central time is dispatched to the equipment on the field of play and in the venue."

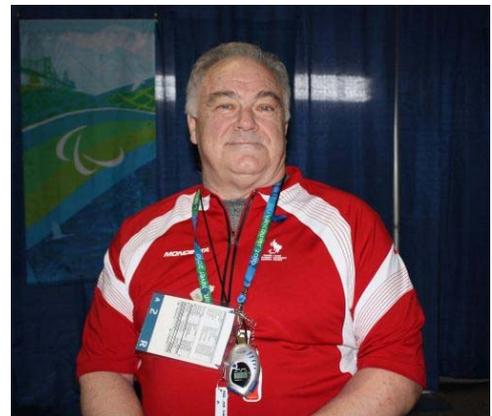


PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

Hiroyuki Nagata (LW10) is a Biathlon and Cross-Country athlete from Yubari, Japan, who is excited to compete at the Paralympic Games. At 46 years of age, he still shows a youthful spirit and was happy after his race. He trained in Abashiri, Hokkaido, prior coming to Vancouver and has also competed at the 2006 Winter Paralympics in Torino and the 2009 World Championships in Vuokatti, Finland. Nagata started skiing about 15 years ago and really enjoys the fact that he has been able to have a variety of interesting experiences such as going abroad through competitive skiing. He also expressed that he was grateful to all of the enthusiastic Japanese fans in the stand who everyone in the audience could hear cheering, "Nagata!"



Jim Armstrong from Canada leads his team on the ice wearing short sleeves. Curling since the ripe young age of eight, the cold no longer bothers him and the ice has become a second home. As one of the game's first officials, Armstrong pioneered the rules and regulations that would make curling fair and balanced. He also acted as the President of the World Curling Players' Association from 1997-1999. After he started using the wheelchair in 2007 due to knee and back injuries, Armstrong immediately took up Wheelchair Curling and led Canada to Gold in last year's World Championships, an act he hopes to follow up in this year's Paralympic Winter Games.



CALENDAR

18 March	Alpine Skiing – Downhill	Whistler Creekside
18 March	Ice Sledge Hockey – Semifinals (12:00-14:00; 19:00-21:00)	UBC Thunderbird Arena, Vancouver
18 March	Cross-Country Skiing (Men's 10km; Women's 5km)	Whistler Paralympic Park
18 March	Wheelchair Curling (mixed ten-team tournament)	Vancouver Paralympic Centre
18 March	IPC Exhibition	Snow Dome, Whistler

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE OF ONLINE COVERAGE AT www.ParalympicSport.TV

Thursday 18 March		
19:00	Ice Sledge Hockey Semifinal	LIVE
Proudly presented by Visa and Samsung		
 		

Please note: All times are CET. This schedule is subject to change

PREPARE TO BE INSPIRED

The Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games are broadcast on www.ParalympicSport.TV.



BECOME A FAN ON FACEBOOK: Stay up to date with what happens on ParalympicSport.TV and become a fan on Facebook! Be the first to get news and videos from the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, with additional LIVE programming information. Simply log in to Facebook, type in the address www.facebook.com/ParalympicSport.TV, and click on the “Become a Fan” button at the top of the page.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Lieven Coudenys and Rob Prezioso return as the IPC’s official photographers during the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. Photos of daily events and competitions can be viewed and purchased from Lieven Coudenys and Rob Prezioso through their respective websites. For more information about Lieven Coudenys, please visit his official website at www.coudenys.be/paralympics. For more information about Prezioso Photography, please visit the official website at www.prezioso.com.au.

TICKETS

For information about tickets, please visit www.vancouver2010.com/paralympic-games/tickets.

VANCOUVER 2010 INFORMATION

For more information on the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, please visit www.vancouver2010.com.

PARALYMPIC INFORMATION

For more information about the Paralympic Movement, please visit www.paralympic.org. For more detailed information on this Newsletter, please send an email to jeff.wolfshohl@paralympic.org.