

15 March 2010

IN FOCUS

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MCKEEVER BROTHERS WIN GOLD ON HOME SOIL

The Men's Cross-Country 20km Visually Impaired category kicked off this morning with 13 pairs of skiers from ten countries. At the beginning, the race for gold occurred between Canadian favourite Brian McKeever (B3) with guide Robin McKeever, Russia's Nikolay Polukhin (B2) with guide Andrey Tokarev and Germany's Wilhelm Brem (B1) with guide Florian Grimm.

At the 5km checkpoint, Polukhin was in the lead with a time of 13:00.8, but at the 10km mark, McKeever was in the lead with a time of 25:33.4, with Polukhin and Brem following behind. Three quarters into the race, McKeever had a significant 33-second lead with a time of 38:27.3 and Polukhin trailing in second with a time of 39:00.0. Nearing the end, it was clear that the McKeever brothers would take gold and it would become the battle for the bronze with Vasili Shaptsiaboi of Belarus passing Brem. Shaptsiaboi also won bronze in the Men's 3km Visually Impaired category on Saturday.



While the crowd was visibly excited, they were instructed to keep their voices down as it was important for the guides to be able to communicate to their racing partners, especially in the last 100m stretch although some fans could not help but cheer.

When a reporter commented that it seemed that the McKeever brothers had won the race comfortably, Brian referred to the time calculations that have to be done at the end.

"With the percentage system being the way it is, you are never sure if you are going to get it until it is all over," he said. "You have to push right through, but we had a good plan. We stuck to our pace that we wanted to do."

The McKeever brothers are looking forward to their next race in the 10km, as that is Brian's strongest race.

Shaptsiaboi, who won his second bronze of these games, said the best part of the race was, "the last lap because I knew I was going for a medal." He was happy with the weather, commenting that it was, "excellent, no snow and the sun is good."

MORE EXCITING SLALOM FINISHES AT WHISTLER CREEKSIDE

In both the Men and Women's Slalom events (Standing category) crashes played an important role in the final race standings.

After a fast race from Karolina Wisniewska (CAN, LW3-1), strong medal contender Petra Smarzova (SVK, LW6/8-2) fell at the beginning of her second run. This allowed for Wisniewska to



win a bronze medal. She was joined on the podium by fellow Canadian and gold medallist Lauren Woolstencroft. Woolstencroft had an incredibly fast run with a combined time of 1:51.97 and finished 6.38 seconds ahead of silver medallist, Andrea Rothfuss (GER, LW6/8-2).

After winning by such a large margin Woolstencroft stated, "I'm really surprised. Slalom has not really been my event this year at all. It felt way better than when I've been racing all year."

In the Men's Slalom, a crash also added to the excitement of a great race. Adam Hall (NZL, LW1) finished his first run with a lead of over two seconds. That lead turned out to be crucial in the last run as Hall fell after one of the final few gates. He was able to quickly get up and rush to the finish line.

Hall's final time of 1:45.40 was only 0.57 seconds faster than skiing legend and silver medallist Gerd Schoenfelder. Cameron Rahles-Rahbula (AUS) finished in the bronze medal position.

"I knew I had a good advantage through the first run. To come down here and see your name and your country on the top of the list is pretty amazing," Adam Hall said upon reflection of his fall and gold medal run, "It's all about courage and trying to inspire other people."

WHEELCHAIR CURLING SESSION FIVE

Today, after trading even blows with Sweden, who took Silver in the World Championships last year, Norway was unable to stop the team from taking four in the sixth end and could not steal enough to come back in a 6:4 loss.



USA beat Italy 8:2 today as Italian skip Andrea Tabanelli missed several crucial draw shots and take-outs, blanking the fifth end and allowing the Americans to steal a single in the sixth.

Canada remains undefeated in the tournament after defeating Japan 13:2. There were no signs of the early afternoon shakiness that took over the team in the last two days as they stole the first three ends from Japan, scoring six points in total to start the game.

Korea also struck early and struck hard, as they completely blanked Great Britain in the first half of the game with three steals. Great Britain came back in the second half with two steals of their own but was unable to make enough before running out of rocks in the last end. Korea defeated the 2006 Torino Silver medal team 7:4.

PARALYMPIC ORDER PRESENTED

The Paralympic Order was presented this afternoon by IPC President Sir Philip Craven to long-time contributor to the Paralympic Movement, Canadian Jerry Johnston. Mr. Johnston has worked a long time developing Paralympic Sport in Canada, as well as in other parts of the world including Australia. The Paralympic Order is a testament of his work, commitment and dedication to athletes with a disability, and building more opportunities.

Mr. Johnston founded the Alberta Amputee Ski Association in 1970, and that same year helped establish the Japanese Handicapped Ski Association. To organize the sport nationally in Canada, he also formed the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing (CADS) in 1976. He has been involved in the Canadian Paralympic Movement for over 20 years,





and was inducted into the Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance (CSIA) Hall of Fame in 2000 and the Canadian Paralympic Hall of Fame in 2003.

The Paralympic Order is the highest tribute a person connected with the Paralympic Movement may achieve.

SOCHI RECEPTION LOOKS AHEAD

In an evening of celebrating the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee held a special reception in the Paralympic Hospitality Centre for various members of the Paralympic Movement. President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee Dmitry Chernyshenko made a pledge to the audience that Sochi has made a commitment to pushing the Paralympic Games in Russia.



Reminded of the International Paralympic Winter Day in Moscow last year, Mr. Chernyshenko said that the people of Russia are excited to be hosting the Paralympic Games in 2014.

“We have here in Vancouver volunteers from all over Russia, representing 17 provinces,” he said. “We are here to learn. We have made several commitments to assure that accessibility is a priority.”

IPC CEO Xavier Gonzalez said that the IPC is looking forward to building upon the relationship with Sochi, and making the Sochi Games successful.

The evening also had officials from Alpine Skiing, Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing in attendance.

FIRST EVER TEAM PHYSICIAN MEDICAL CONFERENCE

The first ever medical conference was hosted jointly by both the IPC and the Vancouver 2010 Organizing Committee (VANOC) today, with an audience of about 60 attendees, including team physicians, sport representatives, researchers, and general physicians. The conference was a unique opportunity for physicians to share knowledge in the medical area related to Paralympic Sport, with speakers that included representatives from the Paralympic Movement. Some of the subjects at the conference that were covered were sport injuries and the World Anti-Doping Agency Boosting Survey.

Contributions to the conference also came from VANOC with regard to the operations of the Games and how to tailor the needs and services of the athletes, as well as presentations given about medical care on the field of play.

Because of the high success of the medical conference, it was decided that a similar initiative will take place at future Paralympic Games.

PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

Vivi Christodouloupoulou is the first female athlete from the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) of Greece to be competing in the Paralympic Games. For the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Games, she began training two years ago. As there are few skiing locations in Greece, she has been training constantly for her event abroad in France and Austria. She is





participating in the Giant Slalom event of Alpine Skiing on Wednesday, and her goal is to finish both runs. She is both nervous and excited about being the first female athlete in the Paralympic Games. After the Vancouver Games, Christodouloupoulou will return to Athens, where she will first rest for a few weeks before continuing her training for upcoming competitions like the European Cups.

Thomas Clarion (B1) of France, who has his birthday today, has practiced Cross-Country Skiing since 2004 and enjoys the sport because he gets to practice it out in nature and it is very physical. He trains in the French Alps as he lives between Genova and Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. He placed sixth in the Visually Impaired category of the 20km race today. He was happy with the results, as this is his first Paralympic Games. It was a close race as he clocked in at 52:39.8 (real time: 1:01:57.4), just a minute and a half behind the McKeever brothers who took gold with a time of 51:14.7.

CALENDAR

16 March	Alpine Skiing – Giant Slalom	Whistler Creekside
16 March	Ice Sledge Hockey – KOR-CZE, SWE-ITA, USA-JPN, NOR-CAN	UBC Thunderbird Arena, Vancouver
16 March	Wheelchair Curling – CAN-SUI, GER-ITA, NOR-JPN, USA-SWE, KOR-ITA	Vancouver Paralympic Centre
16 March	IPC Exhibition	Snow Dome, Whistler
16 March	German Youth Camp Event	German House, Whistler
16 March	Schenker Reception	Paralympic Hospitality Centre, Whistler

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE OF ONLINE COVERAGE AT www.ParalympicSport.TV

Tuesday 16 March		
10:00	Alpine Skiing (Men's and Women's Giant Slalom Visually Impaired and Sitting)	LIVE
Proudly presented by Visa and Samsung		
 		

Please note: All times are PST. 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.