

News Of Sports

Army Amputee Continues To Serve Through Adaptive Sports And Reconditioning

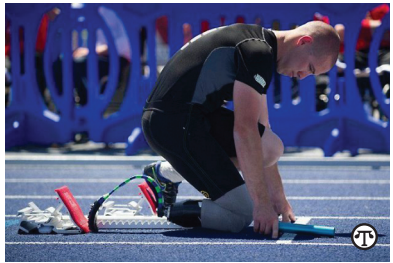
(NAPSA)—Seven months after joining the Army, Sgt. Ryan McIntosh stepped on an improvised explosive device during a routine orchard-clearing mission in Afghanistan. He came home with a deeper commitment to the uniform, despite losing his right leg below the knee.

Three years later, McIntosh continues to serve on active duty through a special program for soldiers found medically unfit for duty.

“I’m a right leg amputee but I still wear the uniform,” McIntosh said. “People have told me I wouldn’t be able to do a lot of things but I didn’t limit myself.”

McIntosh made news last year when he served as a ballperson at the U.S. Open after winning four medals at the 2012 Warrior Games, including gold in wheelchair basketball. Now he leads the adaptive reconditioning program to enhance soldiers’ recovery and transition at the Brooke Army Medical Center Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) in San Antonio, TX. Here, soldiers like McIntosh focus on one mission: to heal and prepare for transition. In these programs at all 29 WTUs around the country, soldiers participate in a wide variety of sports, such as wheelchair basketball, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and field, archery and shooting, all customized to their physical abilities.

“I’m helping other soldiers with their physical therapy by finding sports for them to get back into,” he said. Adaptive reconditioning activities provide a wide variety of benefits, such as less stress, reduced dependency



(U.S. Army photo)

Sgt. Ryan McIntosh listens for the starting gun at the Warrior Games. Since losing his right leg below the knee, he discovered the benefits of adaptive sports and leads a program to introduce other wounded warriors to these activities.

on pain medications and increased self-confidence.

“I have learned that I am a much stronger-willed person than I ever imagined,” said Army Capt. Lacey Hamilton, who sustained a traumatic brain injury and physical injuries during her own deployment to Afghanistan and who competed with McIntosh at the Warrior Games. Hamilton earned a bronze in 2012 and qualified for cycling and track in 2013. “I was determined to not let my injury get in the way of living life.”

In its fourth year, more than 200 athletes qualified to compete at the 2013 Warrior Games. Wounded, ill or injured service members representing all branches of the U.S. military and the United Kingdom Armed Forces will compete for gold in seven sports.

For more about the Warrior Games and wounded, ill or injured soldiers participating in adaptive sports, visit the Warrior Transition Command website: www.WTC.army.mil.