

Warrior-Athletes Competition Inspires International Imitation



Families cheer with pride for Warrior Games athletes.

(NAPSA)—For the fifth consecutive year, warrior-athletes from across the country compete in Paralympic-style competitions—demonstrating their resilience, camaraderie and courage.

The Warrior Games

The U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs hosts these 200 wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans at the 2014 Warrior Games. The competition is hosted by the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) and supported by the Department of Defense as well as many military-serving nonprofits, including the USO, Semper Fi Fund and the Fisher House, for the purpose of supporting wounded warriors' transition back to civilian life.

The competition is fierce as Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Special Operations athletes compete for medals in cycling, swimming, wheelchair basketball, sitting volleyball, archery, shooting, and track and field. The venues are adorned with flags from each branch of the military as anthems play in the background while athletes compete for the coveted "Ultimate Champion" and "Chairman's Cup" awards.

"We've found that group dynamics and camaraderie of team sports and athletic events offer these heroes, our active-duty service members and veterans, a wealth of emotional support for their transition back to civilian life," said Janet Foutty, leader of the Deloitte Federal Government Services Practice, sponsor of this year's event. "These games have become a springboard for many to continue participating in sports in their communities long after the event."

The Invictus Games

The Warrior Games have become such a huge success that Britain's Prince Harry has started his own version—the Invictus Games. One of Deloitte's employees, Will Reynolds, who raced in last year's Warrior Games on the Army cycling team, will participate in the first-ever Invictus Games in London this year, sponsored by The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry. Of the similar event, the Prince, who attended Warrior Games last year, told the BBC in an interview "[I was] happy to steal it off the Americans, I think, is probably the best way of explaining it. The Americans have had the Warrior Games now for the last four and a half, five years."

What They Accomplish

"The USOC is incredibly humbled to have played a small role in providing our nation's heroes with competitive sports opportunities through the Warrior Games and, more important, significantly enhancing the availability of sports programming for injured service members and veterans with physical disabilities throughout the country," said Charlie Huebner, USOC Chief of Paralympics.

The real effect of the competition is the long-term benefit to servicemen and -women of getting involved in rehabilitative sports after a serious injury resulting from their service. The ultimate goal of these games is not the medals or the accolades, but the help these athletes get as they transition back to civilian life and physical and emotional well-being.

Learn More

For further facts, visit www.teamusa.org/warriorgames/.