

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18/09/2019

WheelPower, the National Charity for Wheelchair Sport hosts annual National Junior Games at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Buckinghamshire 30 September - 3 October 2019

WheelPower, the National Charity for Wheelchair Sport are hosting their annual National Junior Games (NJG) 2019 from 30 September - 3 October at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, the birthplace of the Paralympic Movement. The primary focus of the National Junior Games is to encourage the disabled children who take part in the Games to lead a healthier and more active lifestyle, which improves their mental and physical wellbeing.

In addition to giving the participants a chance to play and enjoy sport, the Games provide a platform for those with sporting talent (12-18 years old) to be identified and nurtured along the Paralympic pathway.

The 2019 National Junior Games coincides with the 50th anniversary year since Stoke Mandeville Stadium was first opened by HRH The Queen in 1969. The Stadium has hosted many events for young disabled people inspiring them to be active, play and compete in sport at all levels. The national event is an opportunity for participants from various backgrounds to gain confidence in their abilities, meet new friends, and inspire each other with a new healthier and happier way of life through sharing life experiences and real-life stories. Ultimately, the National Junior Games is a key catalyst behind noticeably improving the quality of the lives of the disabled children.

Martin McElhatton, Chief Executive of WheelPower says, "WheelPower's National Junior Games provide a wonderful opportunity for young disabled people to achieve their personal best, find a sport they love and inspire them to continue playing sport and being active throughout their lives."

Previous National Junior Games participant, Alex Towns-Phill from the Village School in Kingsbury, London comments: "It's been different, usually when you go on trips they don't give you as much freedom to do what you want, but here they let you try different types of sports. I've tried shooting, archery, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, wheelchair cricket, I've tried a multitude of different sports so I'm happy that I took the opportunity to come".

WheelPower Head of Sport, Pasan Kularatne comments, "The National Junior Games are a fantastic way in which disabled children can experience and engage with sport and physical activity. The key aim of the National Junior Games is about supporting the young people in achieving a healthier lifestyle. Some will aspire to compete in sport and maybe reach the Paralympics, however, the main objective of the whole event is to ensure that all participants are encouraged to try something new. The Games also provide a platform for the sharing of ideas and experiences between participants, teachers, parents, carers and guardians.

Transforming lives through sport

WheelPower, Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Guttman Road, Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, HP21 9PP
Tel: 01296 395995 Email: info@wheelpower.org.uk www.wheelpower.org.uk

WheelPower is thoroughly excited to run the Games this year and we are looking forward to welcoming participants both new and those returning again”.

The flagship event, aimed at disabled children aged 12-18 years old, provides a superb opportunity to take time out of the classroom and discover sport and physical activity in a safe, welcoming and friendly environment. This year some 125 participants from across the country are expected to attend.

The Games will combine have-a-go sessions with coaching from some of the country’s leading disability sports professionals, and competitions in a range of different age groups and sports. The sports and activities include; archery, athletics, wheelchair basketball, boccia, wheelchair fencing, golf, handcycling, polybat, powerlifting, wheelchair rugby, swimming, table games, table tennis, tennis and zone hockey.

The initiative is all in line with WheelPower’s strategy, [‘Pushing Forward’](#) which aims to transform lives through sport and physical activity, and enable more disabled people to lead healthy and active lives.

Further previous participants cannot recommend the National Junior Games highly enough.

Jessica Green from Colchester, Essex attended last year’s Games and her mum states:

‘It’s been incredible fun, it’s an experience that you can’t get anywhere else, especially the breadth of accessible sports available to try’.

Sam Joyce from Ashford, Kent comments on his experience of the National Junior Games:

“It means that I can come along and try out a variety of different sports that usually wouldn’t be accessible to me. It’s a lot of fun as well. You don’t really think about it, but then you have all these doors opening up to you. It’s incredible.”

Parents, guardians, personal assistants, and teachers will be involved in supporting participants during activities to ensure that they get the best experience possible throughout the event. All sports coaches are qualified, have DBS checks and have lots of experience of delivering activity to disabled people.

-ENDS-

FOR MORE INFORMATION, TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW, OR TO ATTEND THIS EVENT:

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NOTES TO EDITOR:

For the latest news, please check WheelPower's social media:



Venue address:

STOKE MANDEVILLE STADIUM
Guttman Road
Stoke Mandeville
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 9PP

Further Case Studies:

Previous participants have commented on how the National Junior Games experience has noticeably improved their lives:

- Nakita Wright and Mum, Natasha – Trowbridge, Wiltshire

“Yes we have struggled at home with adaptations, getting her inclusive in school, we’ve had a quite tough year in regards to her inclusion in sports within school. Her sports day was quite a challenging day for myself, they said that they were including her, but they isolated her out and made her race on her own against her own time. To me that wasn’t inclusion that was isolation. Unfortunately, where we live there isn’t so much within the local amenities, but we’ve been encouraged to come up to Wheelpower and everyone’s been so nice and welcoming. It’s just opened doors and shown us there’s a big wide world out there.

- Ryan Billingham, accompanied by Francesca Trezise– Barnham, Angmering, West Sussex

“I’ve been coming to Stoke Mandeville for the last 13 years and it’s such an amazing place, the children get so much out of it, trying all the different sports that they can try, and you see their faces how different it is from when they are at school and that to me is amazing as well. When they are trying something for the first time and if they are successful or they’ve somehow made something from it the smile of their face tells it all and how they can be talent spotted as well from this. My son was an athlete as well, he was a wheelchair user and talent spotted from doing all these different things and then

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having those opportunities to go off and travel if they get really good as well, well, it's amazing'.

Participants from the following locations are available for interview:

Leicestershire
Swindon
Buckinghamshire
Blackpool
Plymouth
London
Dorset
West Sussex
Southampton

Images (more images available on request):



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About WheelPower:

WheelPower have been providing opportunities in sport for people with physical impairments for nearly 70 years.

Based in Stoke Mandeville, the home of the Paralympic movement, WheelPower is at the heart of wheelchair sport.

From first-timers to Paralympic medallists, WheelPower support and promote participation at all levels. We have seen how playing sport can enrich lives, offering tremendous physical and psychological benefits, whatever your age or ability.

Each year, WheelPower supports over 62,099 disabled people to participate in sport and activity across the country ([17/18 Impact Report](#)).

Join us in this mission as a participant, supporter or volunteer and together we can help transform lives through sport.

About the 'Pushing Forward' Strategy:

Pushing Forward is WheelPower's Strategic Plan for the period between 2017 and 2021, in line with the Government Sport England Strategy ('Towards an Active Nation'). It aims to move the organisation forward, building on its heritage, traditions and people to provide opportunities which will enable more disabled people to lead healthy and active lives.

Pushing Forward will deliver our Mission to 'Transform Lives Through Sport' and is based on our core values as an open, inspiring, forward looking and innovative organisation.

Pushing Forward will:

- Increase participation in sport and physical activity
- Provide iconic and inclusive facilities at Stoke Mandeville Stadium
- Ensure WheelPower is a credible and robust organisation
- Inspire people through our work, our heritage and the power of the Paralympic Games

Pushing Forward will create opportunities to encourage inactive wheelchair users as well as those already taking part and is an exciting new chapter for WheelPower.

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National Junior Games 2019 - Sports Programme (Provisional)

	Morning session (9am to 12pm)	Afternoon session (1pm to 5pm)	Evening session (7pm to 9pm)
Monday 30 th Sept	Arrival	Athletics (Field Indoors), Boccia, Cue Sports, Fencing, Polybat, Shooting, Table Cricket, Table Tennis, Tennis (from 1pm to 3pm), Wheelchair Rugby, Zone Hockey	Athletics (Field Indoors), Boccia, Cue Sports, Fencing, Polybat, Shooting, Table Cricket, Table Tennis, Wheelchair Rugby, Zone Hockey
Tuesday 1 st October	Athletics (Field), Boccia, Table Tennis, Table Cricket Athletic (Field), Badminton, Cue Sports, Fencing, Golf, Handcycling, iSPAR (Boxing), Polybat, Shooting, Tennis, Zone Hockey	Athletics (Field), Boccia, Table Cricket, Table Tennis Badminton, Cue Sports, Fencing, Golf, Handcycling, iSPAR (Boxing), Polybat, Shooting, Tennis (1300-1500), Zone Hockey	Boccia Wheelchair Cricket match & taster session (1800-2100) Zone Hockey
Wednesday 2 nd October	Athletics (Track & Field), Boccia, Manual Slalom, Polybat, Table Tennis Archery, Basketball, Boccia classification, Cue Sports, Fencing, iSPAR (Boxing), Powerlifting, Shooting, Tennis	Swimming (1230-1545), Electric Slalom, Boccia Archery, Basketball, Boccia classification, Cue Sports, Fencing, iSPAR (Boxing), Polybat, Shooting, Table Tennis, Tennis (1300-1600)	Disco
Thursday 3 rd October	Polybat, Table Tennis Archery, Basketball, Cue Sports, Tennis	Presentations 1200 Departures	

Key: **Bold Text** (Competition Sports), Simple Text (Have a Go sessions) *Please note that athletics will begin at 10am each day, an athletics competition schedule will be published.