

Disabled people come together at the Birthplace of the Paralympic movement to discover the wonders of wheelchair sport

On Thursday 8 December, 57 physically disabled people aged from 5 to 70 attended a Wheelchair Sports Festival at Stoke Mandeville Stadium in Buckinghamshire. The event was organised by WheelPower, the national charity for wheelchair sport and it provided everyone taking part with an opportunity to try a variety of sports, including Boccia, Tennis, Wheelchair Basketball, Archery and Athletics.



The event was WheelPower's final wheelchair sports festival of the year, bringing together local individuals, school groups and organisations to enjoy a full day of activity at the Birthplace of the Paralympic movement.

For many these events are a first introduction to wheelchair sport and give the participants an insight into the opportunities available to continue playing sport and being active locally. Throughout the day the coaches delivered a series of taster sessions to all of the physically disabled children and adults who attended, all whilst being supported by a wonderful group of volunteers.

One of participants on the day was 19 year old Jasmin from Aston Clinton, who said "It's been a really good day and I would absolutely recommend the WheelPower Sports Festival to other wheelchair users like myself. I really liked the archery and it was something I'd never done before. Maybe I could be the next Robin Hood now! All in all its been such a great experience, to meet new people and to try new things."

Transforming lives through sport

WheelPower, Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Guttman Road, Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, HP21 9PP
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Royal Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales KG, KT, GCB, OM, AK, QSO, PC, ADC

Patrons: Ade Adepitan MBE, Kris Aves, David Barnett, Annabelle Christie, Peter Gossage, Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE DL, Roger Jefcoate CBE DL, The Countess of Westmorland

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Vice Presidents: Ann Cutcliffe OBE, Ernie Guild MBE, Sally Haynes MBE, Glyn Hibbert, Mark Jarrad, Eva Loeffler OBE, Baroness Masham, David Skinner

Chairman: Rob Wilson Chief Executive: Martin McElhatton OBE

Charity registration number: 265498 The British Wheelchair Sports Foundation Limited (WheelPower) registered office: as above Company registration number: 01059490

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George travelled from Berkshire with his mum, and was really looking forward to having a go at everything on offer. "I love sport and have really enjoyed my first festival experience with WheelPower. I've not played wheelchair tennis for about 4 years and very much enjoyed playing it again, as well as the archery which I'd never done before in a chair. Events like this show what is possible and the different sports you can play in the future."



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The Buckinghamshire Sports Festival was supported by a group of local coaches and volunteers who helped the participants to achieve their best throughout the day. One of the volunteers was Francis from Amersham, who explained his motivations for donating his time to help the charity. "This is the first time I've volunteered in disability sports, and it makes me really humble to see how much resilience people have and how much positivity people get from playing sports. I've had a great time, met lots of amazing people and as a result of being here I feel like I'm making more of a difference in the world."

Conor Harris, Sports Event Coordinator from WheelPower was thankful to everyone who helped make the wheelchair sports festival such a success. "It has been a brilliant day here at Stoke Mandeville Stadium and it was fantastic to see the sports hall looking and sounding so busy again. This is the first time we have delivered our festival event in Buckinghamshire since the Covid pandemic and it is great to be back. These events are not only fun but provide an opportunity to try wheelchair sport that many have never had before. It is life changing in so many ways and we hope that everyone who joined us takes away lots of positivity and enthusiasm to continue their sporting journeys in the future."

ENDS

Note to Editors:

About WheelPower

WheelPower have been providing opportunities for people with physical impairments to take part in sport for nearly 70 years. Based in Stoke Mandeville Stadium, the Birthplace of the Paralympic movement, WheelPower is at the heart of wheelchair sport. From first-timers to Paralympic medallists, we 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.

During the Covid-19 pandemic WheelPower continued to offer new opportunities for disabled people to get moving and stay active through a range of online events and digital resources. The Exercise at Home programme included the popular fitness videos, 3x weekly live online classes and the gifting of free exercise equipment. Together they have supported disabled people through a challenging time and will continue to be delivered alongside the charity's flagship wheelchair sport events. In 2022 WheelPower is happy to be returning to a calendar in-person events that include the Inter Spinal Unit Games, the National Junior Games and a series of regional Sports Festivals around the UK.

Website: www.wheelpower.org.uk

To find out more about the full calendar of upcoming WheelPower Events please visit <https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/sport-events>

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