

The 1967 Paraplegic Games in Winnipeg: A history of the origins and impacts of  
Canada's first international para sport competition

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

1967 was a celebratory year in Canada, as the country recognized its Centennial, celebrating 100 years of Confederation. The celebrations took place throughout the year with thousands of events and activities ranging from sports to arts to business and everything in between taking place across the nation. With these events came new infrastructure: libraries, theatres, sport complexes, art galleries and more were built throughout the country to aid in this historic celebration.

Canada invited the world to celebrate the Centennial in Winnipeg where the fifth annual Pan American Games were held. As a result of hosting the Pan American Games, Winnipeg benefited from the building of the Pan Am Pool, the Pan Am Track (now known as the University Stadium) and the Winnipeg Velodrome. The first two facilities are still utilized by Winnipeggers today. The connection between the 1967 Pan Am Games and Pan Am Pool is well known in the city. What is less well-known is that these venues were also used for another international sports competition, in the very same year as the Pan American Games. “The Paraplegic Games – Pan Am 1967” was Canada’s very first international multi-sport competition for athletes in wheelchairs. It took place just days after the Pan American Games in Winnipeg at some of the same venues.

Disability sport, para sport, and Paralympic sport are all very similar terms; however they are not interchangeable. Disability sport is an all-encompassing term that describes the sports participation of anyone with a disability.<sup>1</sup> This includes athletes with a physical disability, athletes with an intellectual disability or athletes who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Any person who identifies as having a disability and plays sport, falls into the category of disability sport, however they do not train or compete against one another. Special Olympics is a world-wide organization for athletes with an intellectual disability who compete at the grass-roots level all

the way to the Olympic level – the Special Olympics.<sup>2</sup> Athletes who are Deaf or hard of hearing have the Deaflympics to compete in, which is run by the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf.<sup>3</sup> Finally, athletes with a physical disability compete in the Paralympics, overseen by the International Paralympic Committee.<sup>4</sup> This project focuses on athletes with physical disabilities.

This brings us to the difference between para sport and Paralympic sport. To many people outside of the disability sport community, these terms are regarded as interchangeable considering they both refer to athletes with physical disabilities. However, within the disability sport community they are quite different. There is a larger argument about what the terms mean and how they should be used, but for the purpose of this thesis, they will be used as follows.

Paralympic sport refers to those sports that are competed in at the Paralympics. So Paralympic athletes are athletes who are in training to attend the Paralympic Games or who have attended previous Paralympics. Para sport is a more generic term that encompasses all sports for people with physical disabilities. Para sport includes both grass-roots level programs for athletes with a physical disability as well as elite-level training and competition, basically any training or competition that is not the Paralympics. So, for this thesis, the 1967 Paraplegic Games as well as any training that took place beforehand for the Games will be referred to as para sport.

### **The Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am 67)**

Immediately following the 1967 Pan American Games in Winnipeg, the very first Pan American Wheelchair Games or “The Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am 67)” took place. The Games are variously referred to in contemporary accounts as the Pan American Wheelchair Games, the Para Pan Am Games, and the Paraplegic Games. For this study, I will refer to them as the Paraplegic Games to make a clear distinction from the Pan American Games. A much smaller

event than the Pan American Games, the Paraplegic Games were the first event parallel to the Pan American Games in which wheelchair athletes were allowed to compete. Prior to the Paraplegic Games similar events took place such as the British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games in 1962 and the Stoke Mandeville Games that began in 1948, then evolved into the Paralympics in 1960.<sup>5</sup>

The official program of the 1967 Paraplegic Games provides a brief overview of the event.<sup>6</sup> It lists the nine sports that both men and women competed in (although it is not clear if both men and women participated in all nine sports), including archery, basketball, rifle and pistol shooting, snooker, swimming, table tennis, track and field, volleyball, and weightlifting. Athletes came from Canada, the United States, Argentina, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago to compete. The Pan Am Games took place over two weeks and included competitions in 21 sports, whereas the nine events in the Paraplegic Games took place over four days. The Paraplegic Games made use of two venues from the Pan American Games - the Pan Am Pool and the Pan Am Stadium - and also utilized the University of Manitoba Fieldhouse and the Miller Road Range.

The program also includes a schedule of events, each athlete's name organized by gender and country, various acknowledgements, a brief explanation of what a "paraplegic" is, and the origins, aim, and purpose of the Games. Following World War II and the use of sport as rehabilitation for injured veterans, international wheelchair sports competitions were held annually since 1952 at the Stoke Mandeville Spinal Injuries Centre,<sup>7</sup> established by Dr. Ludwig Guttmann. From these beginnings, new wheelchair Games were born, including the Paralympics following the Olympics and the British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games following the British Empire and Commonwealth Games. The program notes that the "Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 67)

came into being following official recognition from the International Executive of the Pan-Am Society Organization in September 1966.”<sup>8</sup> From this, an organizing committee led by the Canadian Paraplegic Association began planning the Games. The Canadian Paraplegic Association was formed in 1945 as an organization providing support for people with spinal cord injuries (SCI); a division opened in Winnipeg, at Deer Lodge Centre in 1946.<sup>9</sup> It is also noted that many of the organizers were people with SCIs.

Classification -- a system put in place to ensure fair competition between athletes – is central to para sport (as is discussed in Chapter 2). Athletes are grouped into categories based on their disability/level of impairment. For the 1967 Paraplegic Games, there were four classes based on the medical diagnosis of athletes. Class A included athletes “paralyzed above segment T10-complete paralysis’, Class B were ‘paralyzed above segment T10-incomplete paralysis’, Class C were ‘paralyzed at segment T10 or below’, and Class D were described as ‘Cauda Equina with functioning thigh muscles.’<sup>10</sup>

Except for two contemporary articles from medical journals, little has been written about the 1967 Winnipeg Paraplegic Games.<sup>11</sup> Written from a medical perspective, Basil Grongo, a Winnipeg based doctor with a specialization in SCI, focuses on the classification system and how the athletes were assessed and segregated to provide a “keen finish” to the competitions.<sup>12</sup> Based on previous classification rules put in place for the Stoke Mandeville Games, a medical committee in 1967 categorized each athlete, although the process by which this occurred is unclear. These descriptions of classes were highly medicalized and based on the level of spine paralysis, which would have had to been determined by a doctor, implying that only athletes with spinal cord injuries were eligible to compete. Grongo addresses some problems with the classification process, mainly that if the disability was not the ‘standard’ or that if there were

multiple impairments, it was hard to place that person into a class.<sup>13</sup> If there was any doubt among committee members as to which class to place an athlete in after these examinations, they would be examined by three doctors, one whom was Grongo.

By contrast in another contemporary account, Jane Peacock, who worked at the Manitoba Rehabilitation Hospital, lays out a brief timeline of events regarding the planning and implementation of the Games, in greater depth than the information found in the event program. There is also reference to the organizations and people who were instrumental in organizing the Games, such as the Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Dr. Gutmann, and Mr. Mervin Thomson, head of the organizing committee. Peacock makes five arguments for why the Games were a success, including it being the first time in history that six countries came together in the Western Hemisphere for para sport, the creation of a Pan Am Wheelchair Games Council, and educating the public that paraplegics had more capabilities than previously thought.<sup>14</sup> Peacock also notes that there was a national basketball meet in Saskatchewan as well as multiple wheelchair basketball teams active throughout Canada in the prior 15 years, which provides a glimpse into the nature of wheelchair sports in Canada before the Paraplegic Games.

In addition to hosting the first Paraplegic Games in Canada, Winnipeg is also home to the Deer Lodge Centre, site of the first documented account of wheelchair sports in Canada.<sup>15</sup> Winnipeg is also the location where the sport of murderball was created by a group of quadriplegics in 1977. Murderball, now known as wheelchair rugby, is a very popular para sport that is played all around the world and is in the Paralympic Games.<sup>16</sup> Beyond brief histories on the websites of Deer Lodge Centre and Wheelchair Rugby Canada, a more detailed examination of the origins of the competitions at Deer Lodge and the sport of wheelchair rugby is absent from the historical literature of para sport.

## **Research Objectives**

The history of people with disabilities is a relatively new field of research within academia. Even within other minority groups' histories, disability is very often left out.<sup>17</sup> There are mentions of disability being present throughout history, so the lack of research does not reflect the prevalence of disability in society. In fact, with 1.6 billion people worldwide being disabled, disability is the world's largest minority that spans throughout all cultures, ages, economic classes, and genders.<sup>18</sup> With limited disability research, it is not a surprise that within the field of sport history, there is comparatively little research on disability sport.

This research project will fill gaps within para sport history and contribute to the writing of Canadian and Manitoban para sport history. Within the current para sport literature, there are only brief mentions of Canada, with the focus primarily on Stoke Mandeville in England. The inaugural Paraplegic Games were the first international multi-sport competition for athletes in wheelchairs in Canada. As noted, Deer Lodge Centre was the first documented place in Canada for wheelchair sports and Canada is also where a major Paralympic sport, wheelchair rugby, was created. These are three significant events that show how rich para sport history in Canada is, although none of them feature in the existing literature. While these were momentous events for disability sport in Canada, they also all happened to occur in Winnipeg. This project will not only begin to write the history of para sport in Canada but also of that in Winnipeg.

This thesis is the first study to focus specifically on the history of the 1967 Paraplegic Games. The objective of this research is to learn more about this event by viewing it through the lens of the social model of disability, which views disability as a 'normal' part of life where society and the built environment need to adapt for full accessibility and inclusion. (The social model is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). The contemporary accounts of the 1967

Paraplegic Games (discussed above) reflect the medical ideology that existed when looking at para sport. This research project will take the focus off the medicalized nature of para sport and instead view the 1967 Paraplegic Games as a monumental moment in Canada's para sport history. This localized case study on the 1967 Paraplegic Games in Winnipeg will bring to light connections throughout the country that helped to grow para sport.

### **Research Questions**

This research project focuses on the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 67). Beyond the two contemporary articles previously mentioned and the Games program, there is little published on these Games. Considering these Games are unresearched, there are many different research approaches that could be taken. The Games could be examined through a medicalized lens, considering their effectiveness in assisting in physical rehabilitation, which was a primary goal of wheelchair sports at the time. Another approach could be a comparison of the Paraplegic Games to other similar Games at the time, such as the Stoke Mandeville Games and the British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games. A third approach could look at the national impacts that the 1967 Paraplegic Games had, if any. The approach that this research project is going to take is a localized case study, examining why the Pan American Games were chosen for Canada's first international wheelchair sport competition and exploring what the impacts from the Paraplegic Games were.

This research project will look to answer two main research questions. First, how did the Paraplegic Games come to fruition? To answer this question, there will be discussions on why the Pan American Games were approached to have a parallel set of Games as well as the actual organization of the Games themselves. The second research question is what were some of the

impacts of the Paraplegic Games? Local, national and international impacts will all be explored along with various educational impacts that resulted from the Paraplegic Games.

These questions will be answered using archives, including from Sport Manitoba, the Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, the University of Manitoba and Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba. Archival research will be supplemented with semi-structured oral history interviews. The methods to be used in this research project are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

### **Significance of Research**

Three significant historic events in Canadian para sport history took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Yet the history of none of them has been researched before this project; there is no written history of how para sport emerged in Winnipeg, despite it being home to the inaugural Paraplegic Games, a first for Canada. The only academic articles published about these Games were written for medical journals whose focus is the medical model. This study is the first to write about the Games using the social model, taking the focus away from the medical aspects of disability.

Para sport is rooted in the medical model. It came about as a rehabilitation tool for people with spinal cord injuries. Much of the literature surrounding para sport today is still written from a medicalized perspective. The classification system, for example, is still a significant and controversial topic in para sport. It has changed now to a more functional classification system rather than the medical diagnosis which is where it started. There are still medical professionals involved in the classification system, which still involves athletes going through tests to prove what they are capable of. As long as classification remains a feature of para sport, the latter will

remain tied to the medical model. This project, however, examines para sport from the social model in hopes to help change how para sport is viewed.

Besides filling gaps within the literature, researching these Games honors the people who overcame many barriers to make the very first Paraplegic Games a possibility. It will give them a chance to have their story told, to discuss how and why they chose the Pan American Games to include a wheelchair aspect, and what some of the challenges and successes were. The results of this research will educate others in Winnipeg on the history of para sport within their own city. For current para athletes, they will be able to learn where sport started for them in their city. For others outside the para sport community, they will get a chance to learn about para sport and the rich history it has in Winnipeg.

Education around para sport and disability in general, specifically in Winnipeg, is scarce. One way to educate is to bring more awareness to a topic. Winnipeg has an incredible history of para sport, and it is the hope that this project will interest others to want to learn more about it. I plan to disseminate the findings to the public in various conference presentations and articles, which will be discussed more in Chapter 3. By building more awareness around para sport, not only will education occur, but the community will grow. This growth will result in more accessible sport options, for athletes, coaches, and volunteers. This will lead to more people with disabilities being active and leading healthier lifestyles as well as more societal acceptance for people with disabilities.

The methods through which this study's research questions are addressed are described in more detail in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 answers the first research question, how did the Paraplegic Games come to fruition, followed by the second research question, what were the impacts of the Paraplegic Games which is discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 concludes this thesis by discussing

how the organizers of the Paraplegic Games challenged the prevalent medical model with their goal of social change, as well as future research projects. But first, Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the history of para sport.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> David Legg, “Paralympic Games: History and Legacy of a Global Movement” *Physical medicine and rehabilitation clinics of North America* 29, no. 2 (2018): 417–425.
- <sup>2</sup> “About” Special Olympics, updated January 2023, <https://www.specialolympics.org/about/our-mission?locale=en>.
- <sup>3</sup> “About the ICSD” International Committee of Sports for the Deaf, updated January 2023, <http://www.ciss.org/icسد>.
- <sup>4</sup> “About the International Paralympic Committee” International Paralympic Committee, updated January 2023, <https://www.paralympic.org/ipc/who-we-are>.
- <sup>5</sup> Steve Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008).
- <sup>6</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program, by 1967, N021587, Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am) 1967 (Winnipeg, Man), [https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587_djvu.txt)
- <sup>7</sup> Ian Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained* (Taylor & Francis, 2010).
- <sup>8</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program.
- <sup>9</sup> “Spinal Cord Injury Canada: A Brief History” Spinal Cord Injury Canada, updated January 2020, <https://sci-can.ca/timeline>.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 220.
- <sup>11</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program; B.J.S., Grogono, M.D., “Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967).” *Manitoba Medical Review* 48, no. 6 (June-July 1968): 218-230.; Jane Peacock, M.A.O.T., S.R.O.T., “Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967).” *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy* 35, no.1 (1968) 15-18.
- <sup>12</sup> Basil Grongo, “Paraplegic Games (Pan American 1967)” *Manitoba Medical Review* 48, no. 6 (June-July 1968), 223.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 223.
- <sup>14</sup> Jane Peacock, “Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967)” *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy* 35, no.1 (1968), 16.
- <sup>15</sup> “History” Deer Lodge Centre, updated January 2023, <https://deerlodge.mb.ca/about/history/>
- <sup>16</sup> “The Sport” Wheelchair Rugby Canada, updated 2018, <https://wheelchairrugby.ca/the-sport/>
- <sup>17</sup> Roy Hanes, “Introduction” in *The Routledge History of Disability*, edited by Nancy Hansen, Roy Hanes, and Diane Driedger (London: Routledge, 2017), 1.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The 1967 Paraplegic Games held in Winnipeg, Manitoba was the very first international wheelchair sports competition in Canada, yet its history has not been written. In fact, there is little scholarship on the history of para sport in Canada. This literature review examines the broader literature surrounding para sport history. With the limited amount of historical research in this area, the focus remains on Dr. Ludwig Guttmann and the games that took place at the hospital in Stoke Mandeville, which continues to be known as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement.

To situate the proposed study, this literature review begins with a discussion of the two main models of disability. Following this, a look at the work of Guttmann, the ‘father’ of the Paralympic movement, leads into a consideration of the origins the Paralympic movement and Paralympic Games. Each of the main themes throughout the literature on the Paralympic movement will be discussed, including organizational structure, athlete classification, the trend from participation to performance to marketing, and finally media representation. This is followed by an examination of the conflict between the Paralympic movement and disability advocates, specifically the disability rights movement. A section on how the voices of para athletes have been portrayed within the current literature follows. Finally, gaps in the current literature are addressed alongside how this research project contributes to filling these gaps.

### **Models of Disability**

A common theme found within broader disability, disability history, and disability sport literature is a discussion of the various models of disability. The two most prominent models in disability sport history are the medical model and the social model. The medical model, which was the first model that was used to view people with disabilities, puts emphasis on the person

with a disability as the problem who needs to adapt to fit into society.<sup>1</sup> People with a disability are viewed as lacking something because they do not fit into the 'normal' stereotype and require different adaptations to be able to participate in society. With the medical model, it is up to the person with a disability to adapt themselves to fit into every aspect of society; the more 'normal' they can make themselves, the better. Disability is the first thing viewed in the medical model; the person comes second.

On the other hand, the social model places the blame on society, both societal attitudes and the failure of the built environment to be inclusive to people with disabilities.<sup>2</sup> The social model emerged out of a critique that the medical model puts too much emphasis on the person with the disability and does not acknowledge any other barriers. To combat this view, the social model does the opposite of the medical model by blaming accessibility issues on society, taking the focus completely off of the person. In other words, disability is caused by the social world, not by a physical or intellectual impairment. The social model argues that if society was originally built to be accessible for all people, attitudes towards people with disabilities would be more positive and there would be much more acceptance and equality.

The social relational model is the newest model of disability, which came about as a result of critiques of both the medical and social models. While the medical model puts all the blame on the person and the social model puts all the blame on society, the social relational model views society as needing to change, while also including people with disabilities and their lived experiences.<sup>3</sup> The social relational model uses relationships with people to define the meanings of disability and impairment, and it is with these relationships that oppression can occur.<sup>4</sup> With the social relational model being so new, it is not acknowledged in the historical

writing of the Paralympic movement. As a result, the consideration of Para sport to follow focuses solely on the medical and social models of disability.

### *Medicalized Para Sport*

The literature of para sport and the Paralympic movement discusses the medical model more than the social model. This is due to the roots of para sport being engrained in the medical model. Para sport began as rehabilitation for injured World War II veterans. With medical advances that led to veterans with spinal cord injuries (SCI) surviving longer than a few weeks, Dr. Ludwig Guttmann, a doctor in a British hospital at Stoke Mandeville, turned to sport as rehabilitation.<sup>5</sup> There was no protocol for treating people with SCIs as they were previously viewed as hopeless cases that could not be saved by any sort of medical intervention. Guttmann created the protocol for treating people with SCIs, and sport was one part of this treatment plan.<sup>6</sup> This shows that from its beginnings, para sport was primarily intended as a medical intervention. Rehabilitation was used to assist injured or ill people in returning to their lives with as minimal changes as possible. If an injured veteran could participate in sport, it was thought that this would prove they could be a productive member of society.<sup>7</sup> In this same mindset, part of being a productive member of society was to be psychologically healthy. Sport provided veterans with a new purpose that Guttmann thought would help cure their depression.<sup>8</sup> However, there is no documentation about whether sport led to more people with disabilities getting jobs or if it did lead to lower rates of depression amongst veterans. The existing scholarship focuses only on sport and not any larger impacts sport may have had.

Sports that were originally created for able-bodied people were adapted for people in wheelchairs to participate in, however only certain sports were allowed. Wheelchair polo began on the SCI unit at Stoke Mandeville but was then cut out of the treatment plan because it was

thought to be too aggressive, so archery, a seemingly safer option, was chosen instead.<sup>9</sup> In the beginnings of para sport, athletes were called patients and were treated as such. Patients needed to rehab to be able to rejoin society, meaning that they could not take part in any type of activity that could worsen their condition, such as aggressive sports. One of the goals for using sport as rehab was to reduce mortality rates as well as avoid any secondary injuries.<sup>10</sup> In the beginning, people who participated in para sport were viewed as patients only and not athletes.

Another example of para sport being medicalized is the 1968 Paralympic Games. The Games were set to be held in Mexico where the Olympics were being held but ended up in Israel instead because there was not enough known about how higher altitudes affected SCI.<sup>11</sup> This further shows that the athletes were seen as patients first and medical needs were prioritized. It is noted by both Brittain and Bailey that a team was to be sent to Mexico to determine what the effects of high altitude on athletes with SCIs would be, but before this could occur a letter was received from Mexico saying they would not be hosting the Paralympics. Brittain claims that Mexico pulled out of hosting the Paralympics due to financial constraints and lack of accessibility; whereas Legg & Steadward state that Mexico did not have any organizations that catered to people with disabilities to provide expertise on the effects on high altitude on SCI's.<sup>12</sup>

Sports that were created for able-bodied people were the same sports used for people with disabilities, just with adaptations. Archery, track and field, and swimming are examples of sports that needed only minor adaptation for people with disabilities to participate in. But basketball, for example, needed some more adaptation and, as a result, wheelchair basketball was born.<sup>13</sup> The majority of sports contested at the Paralympics have an Olympic counterpart. There are only three sports that have been created specifically for people with disabilities in mind: boccia, wheelchair rugby, and goalball. While these sports were created for people with disabilities, this

was done in a way that makes it so anyone can participate in them. That athletes with disabilities had to find a way to compete in sports that were created for able-bodied athletes is further evidence of the dominance of the medical model. If sport for people with disabilities was created through the social model, more sports such as boccia, wheelchair rugby, and goalball, which were specifically designed with athletes with disabilities in mind, but can be played by anyone, would have been created.

A final example of how para sport is rooted in the medical model is classification. Classification will be discussed later in this chapter as it is one of the main themes in the literature.

### **Dr. Ludwig Guttman**

The Stoke Mandeville Hospital is the acknowledged institution where people with physical disabilities began participating in sport, specifically people with SCIs. Guttman is credited in the literature as being the person who began sport for people with disabilities, which kicked off the Paralympic movement. The key para sport history authors – e.g., Brittan, Bailey, Howe, Legg, Steadward, and Peers – note the same timeline of events, all from different perspectives. Nevertheless, it is well established that the sports used as a form of rehab turned into a competition that eventually became the Paralympics. In less than 10 years, Guttman turned a small archery competition into an international multi-sport competition.<sup>14</sup>

The Stoke Mandeville Hospital is located in Buckinghamshire, England, so much of the Paralympic history originates from there. Before sport began at Stoke Mandeville, there were sports organizations for the Deaf, as well as sport programs in schools for the blind.<sup>15</sup> These programs are mentioned briefly in the history of para sport, but why they were developed and how they grew is a missing piece of disability sport history. Legg mentions that there are less

well-known examples similar to Stoke Mandeville in the United States, Canada, and Australia, but instead of discussing them, goes on to discuss Stoke Mandeville.<sup>16</sup> Since Stoke Mandeville is recognized as the beginning of the Paralympic movement, anything that was done prior to this is often omitted from the published history of disability sport.

Guttmann is a key figure in the Paralympic movement. His impact on sport for people with disabilities is written about from a variety of different perspectives. One perspective of Guttmann is that he was a saviour to people with SCIs and without him, the Paralympic movement would not have happened. Bailey, Brittain, and Legg & Steadward frame Guttmann as the father of the Paralympic movement and refer to him positively in their writing.<sup>17</sup> He is given credit for turning patients' depression into optimism because of his treatment plan for people with SCIs.<sup>18</sup> Guttmann is also credited with being instrumental in changing mindsets towards people with SCIs. They went from being viewed as people to be pitied to productive members of society or eventually elite athletes.<sup>19</sup> Guttmann was also strategic in his actions. He was the only person, at the time, who believed that people with disabilities would one day compete in the Olympic Games.<sup>20</sup> It was no coincidence that when he started the Stoke Mandeville Games they were held at the same time as the Olympics.<sup>21</sup> Brittain is the only author who claims that Guttmann viewed patients as elite athletes, elite enough to earn an Olympic title.<sup>22</sup> Others claim that he never made the switch to viewing patients as athletes, they were always viewed and treated as patients first.<sup>23</sup>

Another perspective on Guttmann was that he was very controlling. He was in control of the rules and regulations and appointed colleagues, other doctors, and medical professionals as sport administrators in order to keep control of para sport.<sup>24</sup> Howe and Peers both portray Guttmann as overly controlling, so much so that any ideas that did not come from him were

dismissed.<sup>25</sup> They argue that he did not take athletes' opinions into account, even when an athlete would directly talk to him with a solution to an issue.<sup>26</sup> Peers even goes so far to say that patients of Guttmann's did not have a choice and were forced to become athletes and compete in his Games.<sup>27</sup> Howe has a different account of how Guttmann started using sports as a form of rehabilitation. He contends that SCI patients, out of boredom on their unit, grabbed sticks and a ball and started passing the ball around, playing what they called wheelchair polo.<sup>28</sup> It was only after Guttmann happened to stumble upon the patients playing that he began using sport as rehabilitation.<sup>29</sup> With the movement under Guttmann's control, athletes were always patients first which shaped para sport in a very medicalized way. Wheelchair polo stopped being played in the rehab unit and archery was played instead, under the advisement of Guttmann, as he viewed wheelchair polo as too risky for his patients.<sup>30</sup>

Guttmann was a white, privileged, able-bodied man who undisputedly played a huge role in the development of para sport. Within the literature, the only two scholars who write of Guttmann more critically both have disabilities and have competed in the Paralympic Games. The written history of the Paralympic movement fails to acknowledge the importance of lived experience and does not credit athletes who helped grow the movement.<sup>31</sup> The history of the Paralympic movement often highlights what able-bodied people, such as Guttmann, did for the movement and for people with disabilities.<sup>32</sup>

### **The Paralympic Movement**

The first documented competition of athletes in wheelchairs was in 1948, the first official Stoke Mandeville Games.<sup>33</sup> This is the starting point for the published histories of the Paralympic movement. It took 60 years for the first book about the Paralympic movement to be published: Steve Bailey's *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.<sup>34</sup> In the years since, more

research has been published about the Paralympic Movement. While there is now more literature, most of it focuses on the influence of Stoke Mandeville and Guttman, often omitting what has occurred in other parts of the world. Some common themes within the writing of the Paralympic movement include: the creation of organizations and their roles, the classification system, the shift from participation-based to performance-based sport, and the representation of para sport in the media.

### *Organizational Structure*

Legg and Steadward discuss the Paralympic movement and the structural changes that took place from 1948 to 2008.<sup>35</sup> Their analysis revolves around how sports for people with disabilities, which began as a medical rehabilitation, turned into a worldwide sporting competition.<sup>36</sup> They point out that the shift from rehabilitation/participation to competition happened at a similar time to Guttman passing away. The organizational change that came out of this saw Stoke Mandeville's influence wane as the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) was formed. At this time, society started viewing patients as athletes. Two Canadian athletes contributed to this shift, Terry Fox, and Rick Hansen.<sup>37</sup> It is implied that this shift occurred because Guttman was no longer alive to control the movement and emphasize a patient-first narrative.

Brittain outlines the history of the Paralympic movement through organizational changes, detailing when organizations were created, the role they had on the movement and who oversaw each organization at any given time.<sup>38</sup> He offers little detail on how sport for people with disabilities grew, focusing instead on how the organizations governing sport for people with disabilities grew.<sup>39</sup>

Peers offers a different perspective by pointing out that the organizations that have governed para sport since its beginnings at Stoke Mandeville have always been run by able-

bodied men.<sup>40</sup> Peers compares the Paralympic movement to the disability rights movement. While the former has always been run for people with disabilities, the latter is run by people with disabilities. It was not until 1990 that the IPC organized an athlete's council, however this council was only advisory, and athletes had no vote on any matter.<sup>41</sup> This shows that the IPC was still very much an organization *for* people with disabilities, rather than *of* people with disabilities.

### ***Classification***

Classification is a system that was created once there were more disability groups competing in sport; it was no longer just SCI patients.<sup>42</sup> With a wider variety of disabilities participating in sport, those who governed para sport, believed classification was needed to ensure fair competition.<sup>43</sup> Athletes got classified based on their impairments and then were put in a class with people who had similar impairments. The modern-day classification system, functional classification, looks at the physical function of the person and classes them with others who have similar physical functions. Classification is still very much a part of the Paralympics today keeping para sport rooted in the medical model.

The system of classification has been characterized as a way to keep control of the Games, to foster fair competition, and to keep athlete numbers low.<sup>44</sup> LeClair argues that some athletes are extremely opposed to classification, and find the whole process unacceptable.<sup>45</sup> There is no counterpart to classification in the Olympic Games; only athletes with disabilities are put under a microscope by medical professionals to see what they can and cannot do. There are many athletes who do not like the term disabled, they see it as limiting and confining, however with classification, the focus stays on the disability and not the athlete.<sup>46</sup> In order to compete at the Paralympics, an athlete must go through classification, which points out their disability and

all the things they cannot do because of their disability. Classification does the opposite of empowering people with a disability, which is a huge reason why athletes dislike it.

The other common theme in the literature regarding classification is how exclusive it can be for sport that is supposed to be inclusive. Functional classification was created as a way to foster competition. Legg and Steadward discuss functional classification as a system that separates the elite, prioritizing their competition while further marginalizing those seen as having more severe disabilities.<sup>47</sup> The IPC can cut classes in different events if they decide there are not enough people to compete. Both Brittain and Howe point out that typically women and people with higher medical needs are the ones whose classes get cut first.<sup>48</sup> This leads to what Howe describes as the hierarchy of acceptability within disability sport where disabilities are categorized and ranked.<sup>49</sup> This hierarchy puts blanket stereotypes on different disabilities to the point that athletes do not want to identify as having a disability because they get categorized as not being competent enough to do anything for themselves.<sup>50</sup> The hierarchy of acceptability can also lead to para athletes having negative perspectives of other para athletes whom they view as being more disabled than themselves.<sup>51</sup> Classification is another system that keeps para sport medicalized and controlled by able-bodied people.

### ***Participation to Performance to Marketability***

Noted within the literature are different stages that the Paralympic movement has gone through over time. Each author uses slightly different terms to describe these eras, but to make it as simple as possible, these stages are going to be labelled as follows, the participation era, the performance era, and the marketing era. The first era, beginning in the 1940s focuses on participation. The original intent of para sport was to help injured veterans return to society, it was a rehabilitation tool beginning at the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in 1944. However, given the

competitive nature of sport, rehabilitation turned competitive, seeing a small archery competition in 1948, the first Stoke Mandeville Games, occurring on the same day of the summer Olympics that year (which took place in nearby London). In this era, athletes competing at the Stoke Mandeville Games were strictly athletes with SCIs and they were classified based on their level of injury. Howe uses examples from his time at the Paralympics to illustrate the differences in these eras.<sup>52</sup> During the participation era, when he participated in the Paralympics, athletes did not go to compete in just one sport, they competed in a multitude of sports. With this came some issues, one of those that Howe noted, was that at the 1996 Games, the athletes' village was full of parties.<sup>53</sup> There were some athletes who were not there to compete but to have a good time, so they would spend their days drinking rather than resting or training.<sup>54</sup> By 1960, the Stoke Mandeville Games turned international and became what we now know today as the Paralympics, with the first one occurring that year.<sup>55</sup>

Once the Paralympics were established, the participation era was over as the focus shifted to performance. Rather than competing in a multitude of sports, athletes began to focus on one sport. This era was the shift to including athletes with other types of disabilities into the Games which created the functional classification system. In the 1976 Paralympics, people with vision impairments and amputations were able to compete for the first time, and then in the 1980 Paralympics, athletes with cerebral palsy were invited to compete.<sup>56</sup> Howe claims that the largest factor affecting athletes in this era was the development of technology, more specifically sport specific wheelchairs and equipment.<sup>57</sup> Not only did this further marginalize athletes who did not need this technology, but it also marginalized those who did need it but lived in countries that could not afford it.<sup>58</sup> Legg & Steadward have a different opinion and note that the largest factor affecting athletes and competition levels in the performance era was the shift from medical to

functional classification, which led to only the most elite athletes being able to compete.<sup>59</sup> They also mention that Guttmann's passing occurred at the same time as the shift from participation to performance, suggesting that this too played a role in the shift. With Guttmann's passing, the medicalized view of sport was slowly replaced by attitudes more reflective of the social model, where patients were finally viewed as athletes and the Paralympics expanded to all athletes with physical disabilities.

In the late 1980s, the Paralympics were becoming more well-known with more spectators watching every year, and some argue that this was the beginning of the shift to the marketing era, changing the focus from performance to making the Games profitable. In this era, Brittain argues that classification is a tool controlled by the IPC to provide a more marketable event, he does so by discussing classification as a way that allows for spectators to better understand and enjoy the Games.<sup>60</sup> This leads to more people attending the Games, as well as watching on tv, because there is a high level of competition that is entertaining to watch. He argues that people will not want to view the same event over and over so the IPC cuts classes, ensuring there are never too many classes in a given event. Classification is also organized in a way that provides close competition within each class. While Legg & Steadward note that there is an increase in brand marketing to bring in more spectators, they also point out that in this era there has also been an increase of para sport in academia.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Media Representation***

A final theme that comes up in the literature about the Paralympic movement is how the Paralympics has been portrayed in the media. Brittain and Howe both observe that the narrative is controlled by able-bodied people, specifically, white, able-bodied men.<sup>62</sup> It is also widely agreed upon that the media coverage for the Paralympics has always been scarce, although

Bailey notes that the 1964 Games in Tokyo had extensive media coverage.<sup>63</sup> Even with the lack of media representation, Brittain argues that the majority of the coverage that occurs does not actually showcase athletes, but rather reinforces segregation and negative stereotypes of disabled athletes by patronizing them and framing athletes as “objects of pity.”<sup>64</sup> There has been little change in media representation over time as Brittain points out.<sup>65</sup> There is still a lack of understanding around disability in the media, with disability representation on TV at only 7%. Without representation, young kids with disabilities lack role models in all aspects of life, not just sports.

Howe has experience as a disabled journalist and notes that the media rooms at the Paralympic Games he attended were inaccessible.<sup>66</sup> At an event that is supposed to highlight accessibility, the behind-the-scenes infrastructure is not meant for people with disabilities. This is reflective of the lack of representation in media jobs. People with disabilities are not expected to be working in media, so no thought is given to making venues accessible. Howe also discusses the types of stories that are told out of the Games, mainly feel-good stories that revolve around an athlete’s disability that have little to do with the Games themselves.<sup>67</sup> Quotes are recycled and taken out of context to ensure that there is a positive spin and anything negative surrounding the Games is left out entirely. Peers’ echoes this, writing about two protests at the Games that went unreported in the media, including a protest by the Korean boccia team in 1992 as well as a protest in 1997 that was reported as having been avoided due to the IPC’s president, Robert Steadward’s (a white, able-bodied male) quick intervention.<sup>68</sup>

### **Disability Advocates/Disability Rights Movement**

Since sport for people with disabilities has its roots in the medical model, many disability advocates have held negative views of the Paralympics. Peers as well as Smith and Bundon

mention the disability rights movement as being in constant conflict with the Paralympic movement.<sup>69</sup> The explanation that Peers has for this attitude is that the Paralympic movement has always been run by able-bodied people, so-called experts, who believed they knew what was best for people with disabilities.<sup>70</sup> Guttman is credited by Peers as being a main figure in the conflict with the disability rights movement; he did everything the way he wanted to, rather than taking input from athletes.<sup>71</sup> Organizations within the disability rights movement were those that were organized and run by people with disabilities. Canadian examples include the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Canadian Paraplegic Association.<sup>72</sup> The first international sport organization for the Deaf was created and run by Deaf people, the Comité International des Sports Silencieux (CISS), proving that sport and self-advocacy could be intertwined.<sup>73</sup>

Many disability advocates support the social model rather than the medical model and want the rest of society to adapt and accept people with disabilities openly. One of the largest issues that disability advocates have with the Paralympic movement is that it is ingrained in the medical model, which Smith and Bundon argue is the cause of the dispute between the Paralympic movement and the disability rights movement.<sup>74</sup> They mention that the Games followed their own path without consideration or insight from those in charge of the disability rights movement that was ongoing at the same time.

From these critiques, Goodwin and Peers identify innovative sport programs for people with disabilities to participate in that follow more closely to the social model, such as reverse integration, alternative sport, and meaningful choice.<sup>75</sup> Reverse integration is where able bodied people take part in disability sports, such as a group of non-wheelchair users playing wheelchair basketball. Alternative sport steps away from what is deemed as 'normal' sporting values such as competition and the outcome. Alternatively, this type of program emphasizes recreation, co-

operation, and the process of playing and learning.<sup>76</sup> Meaningful sport programs provide athletes a choice in every aspect of their sport experience. An example of a meaningful sport program is Special Olympics. The structure of Special Olympics is one where athletes choose from a variety of different sports and decide their competition level. They can choose to compete locally, nationally, or internationally, or they can choose not to compete at all. The goal of these sport programs is to redefine labels that have been used negatively in the past to be more positive.<sup>77</sup>

### **Athletes' Voices**

Athletes' voices and their opinions remain absent in Paralympic research. Part of this is due to the historical nature of athletes not having a say as well as researchers and/or writers not historically having been people with disabilities. Howe, LeClair, and Peers are the only scholars mentioned in this literature review who identify in their writing as having a disability. Peers argues that the majority of Paralympic research prioritizes and celebrates the organizers and institutions within the Paralympics but does not give nearly the same amount of attention to the athletes.<sup>78</sup> The lack of representation reflects the absence of people with disabilities in other areas of disability sport, such as coaching, media, Games organization, and even as athlete role models.<sup>79</sup>

Aside from these scholars writing with their lived experiences, there are a few studies that highlight athletes' experiences, usually through interviews. LeClair did a study over a 12-year period on Canadian women swimmers and collected data through observation and interviews.<sup>80</sup> The main theme of this study was disability identity. Swimmers in this study did not like to be identified as having a disability and struggled when 'coming out' as disabled when they entered the Paralympics. LeClair does discuss sport, but the focus is on how athletes felt about themselves in terms of disability throughout their swimming career.<sup>81</sup> Britain interviews

12 track and field athletes on their experiences and opinions of disability and sport.<sup>82</sup> Emphasis was placed on the difference between acquired and congenital disabilities and how athletes' self-perceptions differ between the two groups. Brittain asked participants for their three wishes to make disability sport better. Not one person said anything about the attitudes of society changing, which Brittain notes as a lack of awareness of the true cause of disability issues.<sup>83</sup> This demonstrates the continuing power of the medical model in disability sport as some athletes do not even see the way society views disability as an issue.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

The written history of para sport fails to address how sport became popular in disability communities outside of rehabilitation for SCIs.<sup>84</sup> The beginnings of the Paralympic movement only discuss how sport was introduced for people with SCIs. Persons with other disabilities are only mentioned as they joined in the sport system that was created by Guttman for SCIs. However, there is no discussion around how the other groups of disabilities originally got involved in sport.<sup>85</sup> Peers and Legg identify disability sport organizations that were around before Stoke Mandeville, but do not go into depth about their respective histories.<sup>86</sup> Since the Paraplegic Games only included athletes in wheelchair, this will gap will not be addressed in this study.

As Brittain argues, research into the history of the Paralympics is still relatively new in the last 15-20 years.<sup>87</sup> For this reason, it makes sense that there remain gaps in the literature. When the Paralympics began, no one thought they would last or ever be as successful as they are today, so records were not kept as diligently as they were for the early Olympic Games.<sup>88</sup> The Paralympic movement has been the focus of the majority of historical para sport research. Since the origins of the Paralympic movement were in England, that is the location discussed the most.

Any history of recreational para sport is also unrecorded. The literature focuses on the Paralympics and those athletes who were elite enough to compete.

The lack of recorded history of disability sport is just as true for Manitoba as it is the rest of the world. Yet, Manitoba has a rich history in para sport, with it being the first place in Canada where injured veterans began using sport as rehabilitation.<sup>89</sup> As well, wheelchair rugby was invented in Winnipeg, by a group of quadriplegics.<sup>90</sup> Finally, as this study will explore, the Paraplegic Games, the first event associated with the Pan American Games that included people with disabilities was hosted in Winnipeg in 1967.<sup>91</sup> These are only three examples of the history of para sport in Manitoba. However, there is no additional published research to be found within the historical record. This is the gap this study aims to fill.

## **Conclusion**

The literature that discusses the history of para sport focuses heavily on the Stoke Mandeville Hospital and the Games that began there, which eventually became the Paralympics. The discussions around the Paralympic movement all begin with Guttman and his involvement in the origins of para sport. The rest of the history of para sport is far less complete. The history of para sport in Manitoba is one of these non-existent histories, and this research project will be the first to begin exploring the history of para sport in Manitoba. The next chapter will discuss the methods that will be used for this research project.

## **Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> Brett Smith and Andrea Bundon, “Disability models: Explaining and Understanding Disability Sport in Different Ways” In *The Palgrave Handbook of Paralympic Studies*, ed. Ian Brittain and Aaron Beacom (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 15-34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Steve Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> David Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens* (Routledge, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Elaine Mauerberg-DeCastro, Debra Frances Campbell, and Carolina Paioli Tavares, “The Global Reality of the Paralympic Movement: Challenges and Opportunities in Disability Sports” *Motriz: Revista de Eduacao Fisica*, 22, no.3, (2016) <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1980-6574201600030001>.

<sup>11</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.

<sup>12</sup> Ian Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained* (Taylor & Francis, 2010).; David Legg and Robert Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition” *Sport in Society* 14, no. 9 (2011): 1099–1115.

<sup>13</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.

<sup>14</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.

<sup>15</sup> Danielle Peers, “Sport and Social Movements by and for Disability and Deaf Communities: Important Differences in Self-Determination, Politicisation, and Activism” In *The Palgrave Handbook of Paralympic Studies*, eds. Ian Brittain and Aaron Beacom, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> David Legg, “Paralympic Games: History and Legacy of a Global Movement” *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinics of North America*, 29, no.2, (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmr.2018.01.008>.

<sup>17</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.; Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.; David Legg, and Robert Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition” *Sport in Society* 14, no. 9 (2011): 1099–1115.

<sup>18</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Peers, “Sport and Social Movements by and for Disability and Deaf Communities: Important Differences in Self-Determination, Politicisation, and Activism.”

<sup>24</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.

<sup>25</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.; Peers, “Sport and Social Movements by and for Disability and Deaf Communities: Important Differences in Self-Determination, Politicisation, and Activism.”

<sup>26</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.

<sup>27</sup> Peers, “Sport and Social Movements by and for Disability and Deaf Communities: Important Differences in Self-Determination, Politicisation, and Activism.”

<sup>28</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Danielle Peers, “(Dis)empowering Paralympic Histories: Absent Athletes and Disabling Discourses” In *The Palgrave Handbook of Paralympic Studies*, edited by Ian Brittain and Aaron Beacom, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Legg, and Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition.”

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Peers, “Sport and Social Movements by and for Disability and Deaf Communities: Important Differences in Self-Determination, Politicisation, and Activism.”

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Legg, and Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition.”

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- <sup>43</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.
- <sup>44</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.; Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.; Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.; Legg, and Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition.”
- <sup>45</sup> Jill LeClair, “Transformed Identity: from Disabled Person to Global Paralympian.” *Sport and Society*, 14, no.9 (2011) <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/17430437.2011.614768>.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>47</sup> Legg and Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition.”
- <sup>48</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.; Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup> Legg and Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition.”
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>57</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> Legg and Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition.”
- <sup>60</sup> Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.
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- <sup>63</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.
- <sup>64</sup> Ian Brittain, “Perceptions of Disability and their Impact Upon Involvement in Sport for People with Disabilities at All Levels” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 28, no. 4 (2004): 447.
- <sup>65</sup> Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.
- <sup>66</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>68</sup> Danielle Peers, “(Dis)empowering Paralympic Histories: Absent Athletes and Disabling Discourses” In *The Palgrave Handbook of Paralympic Studies*, edited by Ian Brittain and Aaron Beacom, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
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- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>74</sup> Smith and Bundon, “Disability models: Explaining and Understanding Disability Sport in Different Ways.”
- <sup>75</sup> Donna Goodwin and Danielle Peers, “Disability, Sport and Inclusion” In *Inclusion and Exclusion Through Youth Sport*, eds Symeon Dagkas, and Kathleen Armour, (London: Routledge, 2011).
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>78</sup> Peers, “(Dis)empowering Paralympic Histories: Absent Athletes and Disabling Discourses.”
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<sup>80</sup> Jill LeClair, “Transformed Identity: from Disabled Person to Global Paralympian” *Sport and Society*, 14, no.9, 2011.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Brittain, “Perceptions of Disability and their Impact Upon Involvement in Sport for People with Disabilities at All Levels.”

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Howe, *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through an Anthropological Lens*.

<sup>85</sup> Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement*.

<sup>86</sup> Peers, “Sport and Social Movements by and for Disability and Deaf Communities: Important Differences in Self-Determination, Politicisation, and Activism.”; Legg, “Paralympic Games: History and Legacy of a Global Movement.”

<sup>87</sup> Brittain, *The Paralympic Games explained*.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> “History” Deer Lodge Centre, updated January 2023, <https://deerlodge.mb.ca/about/history/>.

<sup>90</sup> The Sport” Wheelchair Rugby Canada, updated 2018, <https://wheelchairrugby.ca/the-sport/>.

<sup>91</sup> Legg and Steadward, “The Paralympic Games and 60 Years of Change (1948-2008): Unification and Restructuring from a Disability and Medical Model to Sport-Based Competition.”

### Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

This chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical framework in which this research project is situated. Following this is a discussion of the methods selected to address the project's research questions. This section includes a justification for the methods chosen as well as details regarding the research participants who were interviewed and how they were recruited. This leads into a discussion of how the data collected was analyzed, followed by a limitations section. Concluding this chapter will be a consideration of self-reflexivity, my position as a researcher, and how I approached this research.

#### **Methodology**

This research proceeds from a humanistic interpretive paradigm where knowledge is produced by understanding and interpreting experiences of individuals.<sup>1</sup> Considering this research project relies on lived experiences as one of the sources of data collection, the interpretive framework allows for the subjectiveness of the data. With this subjectiveness, both the researcher and the research participant play an active role in the data collection. As Guba states, "Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two [inquirer and inquired]."<sup>2</sup> This paradigmatic approach allows the space for me to reflect on my personal biases while simultaneously having the voices of the interviewees be heard. I am also able to reflect on my own experiences that led me to this research in an effort to reduce my subjectivity during the interview process. Disability research historically has not utilized the voices of the people with disabilities, and as Hanes states, "...it is now time to tell that story and to provide a voice to a population that has been historically silenced."<sup>3</sup> This research project, under the interpretive paradigm, will give power to people with disabilities to have their voices be heard and shared.

One of the largest issues with the interpretive framework, which can become very problematic if not addressed, is the reflexivity of the researcher.<sup>4</sup> One way to combat this issue is to ensure that the researcher has a deep understanding of the culture in which the data is being produced in order to accurately reflect on what the data truly means to the study.<sup>5</sup> I believe I was able to address this issue before it ever became problematic as I am an active member of and advocate within the disability community and have been for over 10 years now. Through my involvement, I have come to understand my role within the disability community as an able-bodied ally. At the end of this chapter, there is a more thorough reflection of my role as a researcher and what researching with the disability community means to me.

This paradigm also allows me to consider different perspectives of the same event and have them all be seen as the “truth.” When undertaking a historical research study on a topic that has not been previously researched, relying on the memories of those present at the event plays a large role in the data collection. So, if there is discrepancy in the interview transcripts about how a certain aspect of the event was experienced, neither experience has to be picked as “the one truth.” The interpretive paradigm allows both experiences to be viewed as equally meaningful. This allows for a more complete picture of the inaugural Paraplegic Games as all perspectives are given the same amount of credibility.

## **Methods**

The methods that were used to research the 1967 Paraplegic Games are historical in nature. Oral history interviews and archival research were the two main methods for collecting data. This section describes how both oral history and archival research were used to conduct this research while providing justifications for both methods. The way in which the research participants were

identified is addressed along with the questions that were asked in interviews. The ways in which the data was analyzed and interpreted concludes the discussion of methods.

### ***Archival Research***

The first method of data collection that was utilized for this research project is archival research. Archival analysis is a form of historical research in which documents and/or other physical artifacts of a culture are examined to answer a specific research question.<sup>6</sup> This involves “the rigorous collection and organisation of evidence, and the verification of the authenticity and veracity of information and its sources.”<sup>7</sup> It is not enough to just examine what the words are saying in an archival document, but who wrote it, what was their relation to the event, why was it written, who the intended audience was, and how and why was it preserved over time. The answers to these questions can be just as important as the document or artifact itself. One of the many reasons to use historical research is to “uncover the unknown.”<sup>8</sup> That is precisely what the archival research was used for in this research project. The 1967 Paraplegic Games is an event absent from published para sport history. The intention of archival research was to uncover first-hand accounts of the Paraplegic Games such as letters, photographs, meeting notes, brochures, etc., as well as media coverage of the event.<sup>9</sup>

What is included and maybe even more importantly, what is not included within archives on the Paraplegic Games in 1967 says a lot about its importance in historical memory. There was a lot going on prior to the Paraplegic Games. The Pan American Games took place in Winnipeg during Canada’s Centennial, which was an important event for the city as facilities were built in preparation for the event. With the Pan American Games being seen as significant in the moment, the Paraplegic Games may not have been viewed as that significant which could have influenced how documents were archived.

For this research project, I accessed a number of different archives. The first archives I was able to access were from Sport Manitoba and the Manitoba Wheelchair Sport Association. Unfortunately, there were fewer than five resources on the Paraplegic Games found in the combined archives. The Provincial Archives of Manitoba were the next archives I accessed. There I found two file folders of information on the Paraplegic Games. The sources in these archives consisted of invitations and programs to all aspect of the Paraplegic Games including opening and closing ceremonies, a variety of articles that were published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, various letters, meeting minutes of the executive organizing committee of the Paraplegic Games, and budget information. The University of Manitoba Archives had three file folders of information on the Paraplegic Games. Again, a variety of letters, articles, and meeting minutes were found in these archives along with agreements between the University of Manitoba and the Paraplegic Games Committee and a presentation on inclusive sport and recreation. The final archives I accessed were ones that I did not know existed prior to starting this project. After receiving ethical approval and sending out the recruitment poster, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba reached out stating that they had a box of materials from the time of the Paraplegic Games. Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba was previously called the Canadian Paraplegic Association, which was the organization that played a large role in the occurrence of the Paraplegic Games (this organization will be discussed more in Chapter 4). Within these archives there were many pictures and photo albums, more letters and meeting minutes, and every article that was published about the Paraplegic Games in *ParaTracks*, the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Winnipeg Tribune*. Also included were applications for funding, organizational and budget charts, draft programs for the hospitality and sport aspects of the Games, and some medical/classification

information. When accessing the Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba Archives, I was told from staff there that they kept most of the paperwork from when the Games were organized.

### *Oral History*

Oral history is a unique form of narrative inquiry where individual recollections of past events in a person's lifetime are shared.<sup>10</sup> Oral traditions were the way historical and cultural knowledge was passed down in many Indigenous cultures; traditions, recipes, directions, and stories of any kind were passed down from generation to generation verbally. History was not written down.<sup>11</sup> These oral traditions eventually started to be recorded, which gave us written history whose records were eventually stored in archives. Oral historians are not interested in discovering objective information, but rather in collecting an array of narrative stories from different individuals within a community to learn more about how the community interacted.<sup>12</sup> There is not one truth to be found within oral history research. There are multiple different perspectives on any given topic and the goal is to learn about as many of the perspectives as possible to create a more intricate historical picture.

Oral history is a very useful form of research for the histories that have been marginalized and overlooked.<sup>13</sup> One of these marginalized histories is disability history. Oral history "can also aid in the process of humanization – of challenging stereotypes and facilitating identification with individuals who were once perceived as 'other' but who can now be recognized in their full humanity."<sup>14</sup> This is yet another reason to use oral history in the proposed study, as people with disabilities in the past have not always been portrayed as equal to "normal" humans. Allowing people with disabilities to share their experiences through this research will assist in removing the stereotype that people with disabilities are somehow less than able-bodied people.

It was long thought that any records important and worth saving would have been stored in archives, however this is an extremely ablest and privileged mindset about historical research.<sup>15</sup> While there is some archival material about the event, oral accounts provided the missing pieces that can fill in details of peoples' experience of the event and its significance. There is no current written history of the inaugural Paraplegic Games in Winnipeg, so using oral history as a method, to uncover the memories of those who planned, participated, and/or attended the Games has assisted in creating a more detailed history of the event, when combined with archival research.

### **Participant Information**

Upon receiving ethics approval in September 2023, the recruitment process was able to begin. I sent out a recruitment poster (see Appendix A) to a variety of different connections I already had, including Sport Manitoba, Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, Manitoba Possible, Accessible Sport Connection Manitoba, and several smaller para sport programs. The recruitment poster includes a brief outline of the research project, who I wanted to talk with, and my contact information. It was through these contacts that I was able to find my first research participant, Claire Simpson. Claire is the wife of the late Allan Simpson, who was the Managing Director of the executive organizing committee of the Paraplegic Games. While Claire and Allan were not married at the time of the Games, they met soon after in 1970 and she learned all about his involvement in wheelchair sport. At the time of the Games, Claire was attending the University of Manitoba and recalls some distant memories of seeing articles for the Paraplegic Games and as a wheelchair user was interested, but she did not end up attending them herself. Claire became close friends with many of the people on the organizing committee and was able to share with me what was shared to her about the organizing of the Paraplegic Games.

The second research participant is Gail Burnside. Gail works at Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba (SCI MB), formerly the Canadian Paraplegic Association. I met Gail while completing archival research at SCI MB. When I told her about my research project, she informed me that she actually attended the Paraplegic Games when she was younger. We set up an interview for the next time she would be working in the office that coincided with when I would be back analyzing the archives. Gail had a family friend, Teresa Dushard who was post-polio. Teresa and Gail would attend the Monday Night Clubs (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4) to participate in different wheelchair sports. Teresa did not compete in the Paraplegic Games, but the two of them attended some of the track events. Gail was able to recall what the atmosphere and energy was like at the Paraplegic Games and share her perspective on what she perceived were some of the impacts from the Paraplegic Games.

The third and final research participant I interviewed was Robert Steadward. I reached out to David Legg, who I had met prior through the National Parasport Collective – a collective of para sport leaders throughout Canada - with my recruitment poster as I was having difficulty finding another person in Manitoba to interview. Legg suggested I reach out to Steadward, and provided me with his contact information, as he believed Steadward was involved with the 1967 Paraplegic Games. I emailed Steadward, and he was willing to be interviewed for this project. Since Steadward lives in Alberta, we set up a virtual interview using Zoom. Steadward unfortunately did not attend the Paraplegic Games as they conflicted with his wedding. Steadward was involved in organizing Edmonton's first National Wheelchair Games in 1968 and later went on to become the honorary and founding president of the International Paralympic Committee, known at the time as the Canadian Federation of Sport Organizations for the Disabled. While he did not attend the Paraplegic Games himself, he had numerous conversations

with Simpson leading up to the Paraplegic Games and was heavily involved in Canadian para sport in the decades following the Games. He also directly worked with Simpson in para sport for many years following the Paraplegic Games. Steadward was able to provide me with his interpretation of how the Paraplegic Games were organized and what the goals of the organizers were.

All of the interview participants opted to use their own names rather than a pseudonym in the research. Table 3-01 shows the dates on which each research participant was interviewed.

<b>Participant Name</b>	<b>Interview Date</b>
Claire Simpson	November 15, 2023
Gail Burnside	January 17, 2024
Robert Steadward	February 15, 2024

*Table 3-01: Interview participants with the date they were interviewed on.*

When I initially reached out to Legg, along with a suggestion to interview Steadward, he shared with me interview notes from when he interviewed Simpson in 1997 for his doctoral dissertation. He also shared with me the relevant parts of his dissertation that discussed para sport in Canada before and after the Paraplegic Games, as well as some information about the Games themselves. The documents he provided me were extremely beneficial to understanding some of the context around why certain decisions were made and who Simpson was as a person.

### **Oral History Interviews**

Prior to the interviews being conducted, I had a conversation with each research participant about what the interview process would entail. We discussed the consent form, recording of the interviews, what the data would be used for after the interview and then set a time and date for the interview to occur. I also asked them where they would like a gift card to so that I could purchase it before our interview as a thank you for sharing their time and experience with me.

The gift cards were given to the research participants before our interview began. Steadward declined a gift card.

The oral history interviews were semi-structured, and an interview guide (see Appendix C) helped lead and re-direct the interview as needed. Some of the questions were skipped. For example, the question asking about which sport they competed in, was skipped for all the research participants as none of them competed in the Games. As the interviews progressed and the research participants started sharing their experiences, the interview guides were put to the side as new questions about the information they were sharing came up. Each of the interviews were completed in an hour to an hour and a half, and began with closed, background questions that included name, age, and role in the Games. Then I moved on to asking open-ended questions about their experiences with the Games. No follow-up interviews were required for any of the research participants.

By using oral history as a method under the interpretivist framework, the interview process was very flexible with control of the discussion being passed back and forth between the research participant and myself. I asked a question and then let the research participant take the lead on how they wanted to answer that question. There were a few moments in the interviews where the research participant shared stories that had nothing to do with the question, however it reflected their experience of the Paraplegic Games. There were also moments when a research participant forgot the original question and wanted to circle back. The interviews were very fluid and conversation-like, but at the same time, we were able to get through the majority of the questions on the interview guide.

After the interview, I asked each research participant if there was anything else they wanted to share with me before I turned off the recording device. Once the device was turned

off, we had a quick debrief where I thanked them for their time and reminded them that I would send them a copy of the recording as well as the interview transcript within two weeks. I reminded them to read through the transcript or listen to the recording, whichever they preferred, and let me know if there were any changes they wanted to make.

Immediately after leaving the interviews, I went straight home to upload the recordings to a private, password-protected drive. The interviews were all transcribed within two weeks of the interview date and were also stored on the private drive. Only myself and my advisor, Dr. Russell Field, had access to this drive throughout the duration of the research. The interview consent forms were stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office on the University of Manitoba campus.

### **Data Analysis**

Archival analysis was used for all the archival material found that mentions the 1967 Paraplegic Games. This involved the examination of the documents considering the study's research questions.<sup>16</sup> The information that was collected from the archives was not to be viewed as simply "accumulation of facts or dates" but was explored for how it clarifies the larger picture of the Paraplegic Games.<sup>17</sup> The goal of the archival analysis was to establish the context of the Paraplegic Games and how they came to be. This was done by interpreting the documents through the lens of the social model, while also having an understanding that the medical model was prevalent in many documents. The archival material was examined to learn about how the Paraplegic Games were organized, as well as learning about the impacts that came directly from the Games, athletes, and administrators. The archival analysis created a baseline understanding of the Games for me that I was able to use when conducting the interviews.

After the interviews were completed, transcribed, and member checked, they were analysed through thematic analysis, which is where the data is categorized into different themes.<sup>18</sup> The first step was to become familiar with the transcripts. After reading through each transcript multiple times, I was able to come up with different themes, also called codes. The first level of coding consisted of any familiar information.<sup>19</sup> In other words, information within the interviews that was constant with information found in the archives was identified. From there, the second level of coding was to determine subcategories, commonalities that came up throughout the three interview transcripts.<sup>20</sup> The main themes were the third level of coding, and these were determined by using the subcategories.<sup>21</sup> The subcategories that I identified were organization - the Canadian Paraplegic Association - Allan Simpson, Finances, Guttman/medical model, timeline, competition, local impacts, national impacts, international impacts, and future questions. These subcategories will be discussed further in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Within oral history, there can sometimes be discrepancies within the information collected, however conducting this research under the interpretivist framework allows for the discrepancies to still be considered true. For example, there are some differing reports mentioned in Chapter 4 on where the original idea for hosting a Paraplegic Games associated with the Pan American Games originated, but by using the interpretivist framework, all the differing perspectives are portrayed equally.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

In order to make this study feasible, there were a few delimitations that I had to put in place. Firstly, I chose to keep the focus local, to Winnipeg. While there are national and international impacts discussed in Chapter 5, there is more research that could be done at both levels. Another delimitation is the approach I took to this research topic, before this study, the 1967 Paraplegic

Games were unresearched and as mentioned in chapter 1, there were a variety of different approaches that could be taken. This research project did not learn about the entirety of the Games, but rather focused on how the Games came to fruition and what some of impacts were. A final delimitation is the number of research participants I interviewed, three. While initially, I had hoped for 4-6 participants, I was only able to find three.

The focus of this research is the 1967 Paraplegic Games, an event that took place over 50 years ago. This acts as a limitation in that research participants were difficult to locate given the chronological distance from the event. While completing the archival research, there were many names of people who could have been potential research participants, but unfortunately upon further research, most of them are deceased. Another possible limitation of this study was the number of archival records. Para sport records in general have not been well kept so there was a possibility that there will be a dearth of records kept from the 1967 Paraplegic Games. Without learning about the SCI MB archives, this would have been a limitation of this study. However, I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of archival material I was able to locate that related to the Paraplegic Games. The nature of oral history interviews and relying on people's memories as a main source of data can be seen as a limitation. However, the methodological approach chosen for this study was an attempt to mitigate this limitation.

### **Reflexivity**

As an able-bodied female, when embarking on this research, it was of the utmost importance to me that the voices of people with disabilities were heard. This guided me in choosing the methodology and methods for this project. I do have experience in the disability sport community as a coach, a volunteer, in paid positions, and as an ally, but that does not compare to the lived experience of someone with a disability. I have spent the last few years listening,

learning, and reflecting on my role as an able-bodied researcher within the disability community. My reflections have led me to an understanding where I know that without becoming disabled myself, I will never fully understand what it is like to be disabled. However, I can do everything in my power to showcase the voices of people with disabilities in the hope of breaking down some barriers to a more inclusive society. Able-bodied allies are needed within all aspects of disability advocacy, including sports and that is where I fit. I also want to acknowledge that my role in the disability community is ever changing, the more I learn from the community, the more I am able to evolve.

Para sport is still a very new area of research and most of it is framed through a medicalized lens. As an ally and researcher, I can be part of the shift in research from viewing para sport through the medical model to the social model. Disability is not a negative thing, it is a part of life and the more it is discussed and researched in academia, the more normalized it becomes. There are countless barriers that exist in today's world that people with disabilities have to face and overcome in every aspect of their life. This is the broader picture of doing disability research that needs to be recognized. It is not just about the research; it is about creating a more inclusive world where people with disabilities feel welcome. All of the choices made in this research from the paradigm to data analysis were made with this bigger picture in mind. It is my hope that the story told through this research will assist in normalizing disability in sport and educate those who have yet to experience it.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Yvonna Lincoln, Susan Lynham, and Egon Guba, "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences" In *Handbook of qualitative research*, 5. Eds. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2018), 108-50.

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- <sup>2</sup> Egon Guba, *The paradigm dialog* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990), 27.
- <sup>3</sup> Roy Hanes, "Introduction," in *The Routledge History of Disability*, edited by Nancy Hansen, Roy Hanes, and Diane Driedger (London: Routledge, 2017), 3.
- <sup>4</sup> Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba, "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences."
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Michael Atkinson, *Key Concepts in Sport and Exercise Research Methods* (Sage, 2012).
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, 24.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, 23.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> Fiona Skillen and Carol Osborne, "It's Good to Talk: Oral History, Sports History and Heritage" *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, no.15 (2015) 1883-98.
- <sup>11</sup> Edna Elias, "Oral History Methods and Theory" (lecture, University of Lethbridge, virtual, May 12, 2022).
- <sup>12</sup> Nigel A. Raab, *Who is the Historian?* (North York, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2016).
- <sup>13</sup> Skillen and Osborne, "It's Good to Talk: Oral History, Sports History and Heritage".
- <sup>14</sup> Sarah K. Loose, and Amy Starecheski, "Oral History for Building Social Movements, Then and Now" In *Beyond Women's Words – Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*, Edited by Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembrzycki and Franca Iacovetta, 236-43, Routledge, 2018, 237-8.
- <sup>15</sup> Nigel, *Who Is the Historian?*.
- <sup>16</sup> Atkinson, *Key Concepts in Sport and Exercise Research Methods*.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, 21.
- <sup>18</sup> Clarke, Victoria, and Virginia Braun, "Thematic analysis" *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12 no. 3, 2016, 297–98.
- <sup>19</sup> Mohammadreza Firouzkouhi, and Ali Zargham-Boroujeni, "Data analysis in oral history: A new approach in historical research" *Iranian journal of nursing and midwifery research*, 20, no. 2. 2015, 161–164.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 4: The Organization of the Paraplegic Games

### **Introduction**

What began as a request for an exhibition wheelchair basketball game to be hosted in conjunction with the 1967 Pan American Games turned into the first multi-sport international wheelchair games in Canada. This chapter explores how this happened while also answering the research question, how did the Paraplegic Games come to fruition? Both interview transcripts and archival material will be used to answer this question. This chapter begins with a discussion of the context of international wheelchair sport and wheelchair sport in Canada in the 1960s, which led to some advocates in Canada wanting to host their Games for wheelchair athletes in 1967. Following this will be a discussion of the Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA), the organization that was instrumental in organizing the Paraplegic Games, alongside some key members of the organizing committee, including the leader, Allan Simpson. A discussion follows of what went into getting the Games approved as well as the structure of how the Games were organized including partnerships with other organizations, who the athletes were, and how the athlete classification system worked. The summary of the 1967 Games considers the opening ceremonies, some of the results of the competition, and the closing ceremonies. This chapter concludes with some lessons learned from the event, which anticipates the discussion of the next chapter, where the impacts from the inaugural Paraplegic Games will be considered.

### **International Wheelchair Sport Competitions in the 1960s**

To understand why the Pan American Games were chosen for Canada's first international wheelchair sport competition, we must first go back in history and understand the development of international wheelchair sport competitions, as suggested by Robert Steadward during our interview.<sup>1</sup> Along with this, we will also look at Canada's para sport participation prior to the

Paraplegic Games. As, discussed in Chapter 2, the history of wheelchair sport competitions is tied to Stoke Mandeville Hospital beginning in 1948 and the International Stoke Mandeville Games (ISMG), which started in 1952.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the 1967 Paraplegic Games, the Stoke Mandeville Games were not associated with any able-bodied sport competitions at their inception; they were completely independent until 1960. In that year, the Olympic Games occurred in Rome and the ISMG occurred in the Olympic Stadium following the completion of the Olympics, marking this as the first Paralympics.<sup>3</sup> The next international wheelchair sport competition was the British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games which took place in 1962 – in conjunction with the British Empire and Commonwealth Games, which took place that year in Perth, Australia – and were a direct result of the Stoke Mandeville Games joining the Olympics.<sup>4</sup> Following suit, the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) joined onto the already existing Pan American Games, making the first few years of the ISMG the only independent international wheelchair sport competition.

Another factor that played into the Pan American Games being used for the Paraplegic Games was Canada's recent success on an international level. Canada had only competed in the most recent international games, the 1966 British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games. Winnipeg athlete, Ben Reimer travelled to Jamaica to compete and brought home a bronze in javelin.<sup>5</sup> Before Reimer competed, he was a 26-year-old in the Manitoba Rehabilitation Hospital and had "lost his zest for living."<sup>6</sup> June Rankine-Wilson was a physiotherapist who was instrumental in Reimer's sport participation. She was originally from Australia where she had seen paraplegics competing in sports prior to moving to Winnipeg and working at the hospital. She brought up the idea of competitive sports to Reimer and told him about the Stoke Mandeville Games where there were athletes from many different countries who were just like him.<sup>7</sup> Reimer started to

warm up to the idea and began weightlifting with his coach, Cyril Berrington. After mastering weightlifting during the winter, once the spring came, he moved onto javelin and archery.<sup>8</sup> News spread throughout the hospital of Reimer's progress, and he was surrounded with support as he headed to be Canada's first athlete competing at the British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games. Reimer returned triumphant with a bronze medal which sparked excitement in the Winnipeg disability community for competitive paraplegic sports.<sup>9</sup> The Sanitorium Board of Manitoba *News Bulletin* reported that Ted Sims, the director of pharmacy services at the Manitoba Rehabilitation Hospital, "mentioned the possibility of adding a paraplegic competition to the 1967 Pan-American Games" to both the Manitoba Wheelchair Sports and Recreation Club and the Manitoba Branch of the Canadian Paraplegic Association.<sup>10</sup> This led to the formation of the committees that would organize what became the first-ever Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967).

Although Canadians had only recently appeared at international competitions, they were no stranger to paraplegic sports. Within Canada, there were various organizations across the country providing para sport and even some local competitions. In Winnipeg, there was a "Monday Night Club," which was reported to have started in 1962, that was hosted by the Manitoba Wheelchair Sports and Recreation Club.<sup>11</sup> As the name states, people with disabilities met on Monday evenings at the gym in the Manitoba Rehabilitation Hospital to participate in sports and recreation.<sup>12</sup> There was floor hockey, volleyball, wheelchair basketball, as well as cribbage, checkers, and bridge.<sup>13</sup> There is also evidence of some friendly competitions occurring between patients on the front lawn of the Deer Lodge Rehabilitation Hospital in Winnipeg.<sup>14</sup> The events in this competition consisted of archery, milk-bottle pitching, basketball throwing, ring tossing, croquet, and golf putting.<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere in the country, the first official wheelchair basketball team was founded in Montreal in 1952, organized by the CPA's Quebec division.<sup>16</sup>

Bill Hepburn became the manager of this team after introducing basketball to a group of patients. The 15 athletes who made up this team were known as the Wheelchair Wonders.<sup>17</sup> The Wheelchair Wonders were the first Canadian team to compete at the Stoke Mandeville Games, in 1954, where they competed against teams from England, France, Israel, and Holland.<sup>18</sup> They also travelled to New York City to compete in the United States National Wheelchair Games.<sup>19</sup> Another wheelchair basketball team was created in Vancouver, the Dueck Powergliders, organized by the British Columbia division of the CPA.<sup>20</sup> The team manager was Douglas Mowat, who was a quadriplegic, while the coach was Norman Watt of the University of British Columbia.<sup>21</sup> The Dueck Powergliders eventually formed the Pacific Northwest Wheelchair Basketball League with teams from Victoria, Seattle, Washington, and Tacoma.<sup>22</sup> There were also clubs formed in Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Halifax, typically beginning with a basketball team and then branching out into other sports such as archery and javelin.<sup>23</sup> A basketball tournament was held in Saskatoon, in the spring of 1966, hosting teams from Regina, Edmonton, and Winnipeg.<sup>24</sup> Other than these small clubs dispersed through the provinces, managed by the respective division of the CPA, there was no formal organization to govern wheelchair sport in Canada prior to the Paraplegic Games. Without an official organization to govern these clubs at the time, there was a lack of administrative organization, and along with transportation barriers, not many of these clubs lasted very long.<sup>25</sup>

### **Receiving Approval for the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 67)**

Before the actual planning of the Paraplegic Games could begin, approval was needed from the Pan American Games Society to have a paraplegic component within the 1967 Pan American Games. In the spring of 1966, the wheelchair basketball team in Winnipeg approached the city of Winnipeg and the Pan American Games Council to ask for a demonstration game in the

upcoming Pan American Games.<sup>26</sup> This initial request was turned down although there is no information in the evidence as to why. While the CPA had nothing to do with this request, news of this rejection spread quickly throughout the disability community in Winnipeg and sparked an uproar from the participants at the Monday Night Club. Allan Simpson (the future Managing Director for the executive organizing committee for the Paraplegic Games, who will be discussed in the next section) felt that Canada was “in a dismissal state of affairs as far as rehab and wheelchair acceptance.”<sup>27</sup> With both the Stoke Mandeville Games (Paralympics) and the British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games as examples of successful sporting events occurring in parallel with able-bodied events, Simpson argued that there was no reason why an event organized in Canada could not be successful as well.<sup>28</sup> Upon the wheelchair basketball team’s rejection, Simpson was given the go ahead by Allan Mann, Executive Director of the CPA, (who will also be discussed in the next section) to create a committee under the CPA and put together a similar request for an exhibition wheelchair basketball game at the Pan American Games. Simpson went to the Pan American Games Council in late spring, early summer 1966, with support from the CPA and the examples of previously run successful paraplegic competitions hoping for a better outcome, but, this request was also rejected.<sup>29</sup> Again, the reason for this rejection is not included in the evidence, however Simpson stated that, “They said it was against the rules, so we decided to hold our own. My dander was up.”<sup>30</sup>

It was at this point that Simpson and his committee started reaching out to a few different countries, such as the United States, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, and Jamaica, to gather their interest in attending a parallel Pan American Games.<sup>31</sup> The counterparts in New York were contacted, while Don Goaling in Jamaica, and Hector Rameriz and Antonio Lococo out of Argentina were some of the specific people who were contacted.<sup>32</sup> Simpson even travelled to

Mexico to meet with doctors out there and invite some of their athletes to Winnipeg to compete in their parallel Pan American Games that had yet to receive approval from the Pan American Games Committee.<sup>33</sup> Upon returning from his trip to Mexico, in September of 1966, Simpson and his committee, along with other disability advocates protested at a hotel near the airport in Winnipeg where the Pan American Games organizers were meeting and demanded a parallel set of Games for disabled people.<sup>34</sup> This protest lasted an entire day. On September 30, 1966, Simpson finally received recognition from James Daly, president of the Pan American Games Council, to host a parallel set of Games for the disabled following the Pan American Games, with the caveat that while the Paraplegic Games could use the same facilities and equipment, they would not receive any financial assistance from the Pan American Games Council.<sup>35</sup> This official recognition also meant that there was finally acceptance of the Paraplegic Games and that there would be technical, administrative, and promotional assistance between the Pan American Games Committee and the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Committee.<sup>36</sup> Another positive response came on December 22, 1966, this one confirmation of the partnership with the CPA.<sup>37</sup> But just like the Pan American Games Council, the CPA would not be able to provide any financial support.

### **The Organizers: The Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA) & Executive Organizing Committee**

As of the mid-1960s, all the wheelchair sport opportunities in Canada were organized by the Canadian Paraplegic Association. This section explores what the CPA was and their role was in para sport throughout Canada, more specifically their role in the organization of the Paraplegic Games, including the creation of the executive organizing committee for the Paraplegic Games. The CPA is a national organization that was incorporated in 1945 in Toronto before spreading

throughout the country.<sup>38</sup> The founders of the CPA were paralyzed World War II veterans who met at Lyndhurst Lodge in Toronto.<sup>39</sup> The CPA was created to advocate for and provide paralyzed veterans with necessary supports, as there was no existing organization already doing this. Paralyzed veterans at the Deer Lodge Hospital in Winnipeg started up a sector the following year forming the Central Western Division of the CPA.<sup>40</sup> The Central Western Division of the CPA still exists today, now known as Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba. A few achievements of the Central Western Division of the CPA include advocating to receive government funding for medical care, establishing a specialized spinal cord injury rehabilitation program, creating a housing unit (Ten Ten Sinclair) where self-management skills were taught to assist with independent living, and assisting in the creation of a parallel public transit system for wheelchair users.<sup>41</sup> The CPA was an advocate for all aspects of life for a paraplegic, including sport and recreation. Before organizing the Paraplegic Games in 1967, the CPA created a group called the Winnipeg Para Club, which consisted of the 37 paralyzed veterans who were in Deer Lodge Hospital in 1946.<sup>42</sup> This group grew over time and eventually partnered with two other organizations, the Society for Crippled Children and Adults and the Manitoba Rehabilitation Hospital to run the previously mentioned Monday Night Club.<sup>43</sup> The Monday Night Club was not just about sport and recreation. There were many advocates who attended and would discuss issues such as transportation, accessibility, volunteers, and public fundraising.<sup>44</sup> These Monday Night Clubs as stated by David Legg, who interviewed Simpson, are where the initial discussions for approaching the Pan American Game Council for a parallel set of Games for the disabled occurred.<sup>45</sup> It is assumed that Sims, mentioned previously in this chapter would have been part of these discussions but there is no record of who was involved in these initial discussions.

Within the CPA, there is one man in particular, Allan Simpson, who deserves ample recognition for his contribution to the implementation and organization of the Paraplegic Games. Simpson, a 1966 graduate from the University of Manitoba's actuarial program became the Managing Director of the executive organizing committee that was organizing the Paraplegic Games.<sup>46</sup> He was a quadriplegic himself, so he inherently understood the bias that people had towards disabled people and spent his life working to change this. He believed in the "value of sport to building social acceptance and social welcome and undo the myth of a burden and a challenge to society."<sup>47</sup> Simpson did not see sport as merely rehabilitation, but rather as an avenue for creating social change. Social change to Simpson meant "build[ing] up the self-esteem, the public acceptance and credibility of people with a disability."<sup>48</sup> Sport was used as an avenue to challenge the notions that disabled people should be pitied, instead they should be viewed as strong and capable people deserving of respect, tolerance and equal human rights.<sup>49</sup> The goal of sport being used for social change was a direct challenge to the prevailing medical model that para sport was viewed through. (This idea will be discussed more in Chapter 6). Simpson did everything in his power to create opportunities for disabled people, such as picking up and dropping off people to attend the Monday Night Club before there were public accessible transportation options.<sup>50</sup> Simpson did not have much, if any, sport experience before taking on the task of organizing the Paraplegic Games so he relied heavily on others for advice throughout the whole planning process. Robert Steadward from Edmonton, Ben Lipmen from New York, Don Goaling from Jamaica, Antonio Lococo out of Mexico and even Ludwig Guttmann himself, were just a few of the people Simpson reached out to for assistance and advice.<sup>51</sup> Steadward recalls Simpson reaching out to him in 1967 while looking for athletes from across the country to participate in the Paraplegic Games.<sup>52</sup> Steadward chatted on the phone with

Simpson many times throughout the planning process and gave him advice on what to do in certain situations and who to reach out to for specific needs.<sup>53</sup> Within Winnipeg, Simpson also had a talented group of people supporting him, who formed the executive organizing committee for the Paraplegic Games (see Table 4-01).

Treasurer	Rod A. Beattie
Legal Chairman	Leon Mitchell
Finance Chairman	Carroll (Doc) Meader
Public Relations	John L. Sinclair
National Chairman	Merv Thomson
Sports Chairman	George W. Murphy
Sports Director	Jack Lynch
Services Director	William Porter
Members at Large	Tony Mann, C. M. Berrington, Joe S. Smithson

*Table 4-01: The members of the executive organizing committee for the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program, by 1967, N021587, Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am) 1967 (Winnipeg, Man), [https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587_djvu.txt)*

Among the committee members, Tony Mann, who was also a paraplegic, was the Executive Director of the CPA at the time and was credited by Simpson as being one of the “godfathers of the paraplegic movement.”<sup>54</sup> According to Simpson’s wife, Claire, Mann was the person who pushed Simpson to begin the initial research into holding a paraplegic competition during the Pan Am Games to gain approval from the Pan American Games Committee.<sup>55</sup> Leon Mitchell was one of Simpson’s mentors, a lawyer who was post-polio and assisted with the legal requirements of the Paraplegic Games as well as the consecutive years of wheelchair sport within Winnipeg.<sup>56</sup>

Figure 4-01 shows the Paraplegic Games executive organizing committee. Note the number of people in wheelchairs. Guttmann, the head of the Stoke Mandeville Games, was an able-bodied man. There is no evidence of whether paraplegics assisted with the organization of those Games. However, since sport began as rehabilitation for the patients, it could be assumed that most of the organizers, at least in the very beginning

were doctors, physiotherapists, nurses, etc. There is also not enough written about the British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games to know if any of the organizers were disabled. So, without supporting evidence to prove otherwise, the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) could have been the first international paraplegic sporting competition organized primarily by paraplegics.

## **Organizing The Paraplegic Games**

### *Organization*

With approval from the Pan American Games Council as well as the CPA, the Paraplegic organizing committee had under a year to organize what was to be Canada's largest wheelchair sport competition to date. Two separate committees were created, one to organize the Games themselves as well as all the sport officials, and the other to prepare Manitoba athletes for the Games.<sup>57</sup> The latter committee was needed as only one Manitoban had competed in an international sport competition, so this committee was tasked with first, finding athletes to



Figure 4-01: Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) executive organizing committee. Source: Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program, by 1967, N021587, Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am) 1967 (Winnipeg, Man), [https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587_djvu.txt)

compete and then training those athletes. The executive organizing committee oversaw the logistics of the Games and appointed sport officials. As the planning process ensued, smaller sub-committees were created for specific tasks. Figure 4-02 shows an organizational chart of some of the committees along with their tasks.

<u>PARAPLEGIC GAMES (PAN-AM 1967) ORGANIZATION CHART</u>						
<u>PATRONS</u> --To be confirmed		<u>MANAGING DIRECTOR AND * EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u>		<u>ADVISORY COUNCIL</u> Representatives From:		
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Policy Decision</li> <li>2. Administration and Organization</li> <li>3. International Invitations</li> </ol>		Can. Paraplegic Association Pan-American Games Committee Sanatorium Board of Manitoba Fitness & Amateur Sport - Manitoba Manitoba Track & Field - A.A.U. University of Manitoba.		
<hr/>						
<u>FINANCE COMMITTEE</u>	<u>PROMOTION COMMITTEE</u>	<u>NATIONAL COMMITTEE</u>	<u>GAMES COMMITTEE</u>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fund Raising</li> <li>2. Insurance</li> <li>3. Purchases</li> <li>4. Rentals</li> <li>5. Ticket Sales</li> <li>6. Budget Control</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public Relations</li> <li>2. Printing - pamphlets - information kits - programs</li> <li>3. Press &amp; Radio Coverage</li> <li>4. Progress Reports</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Co-ordination</li> <li>2. Information Services - events - rules &amp; classifications - schedules - travel - follow-up</li> <li>3. Canadian Selection</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Registration &amp; Classifications</li> <li>2. Ceremonial</li> <li>3. Events &amp; Schedules</li> <li>4. Judges &amp; Officials</li> <li>5. Records &amp; Standards</li> <li>6. Equipment &amp; Facilities</li> <li>7. Accommodation</li> <li>8. Transportation (local)</li> <li>9. Hospitality</li> <li>10. Information &amp; Interpreters</li> </ol>			
<hr/>						
<u>SPORTS EVENTS PROPOSED</u>						
Basketball ---	Javelin D. ---	Discus ---	Wheelchair Dash ---	Archery		
Swimming -----	Javelin P. ---	Club T. ---	Wheelchair Relay ---	Darchery		
Weightlifting ----	Shotput ----	Snooker ----	Slalom Race ----	Table Tennis		
* Proposed Structure of Executive Committee: Managing Director, Co-ordinators of Committees, Treasurer, Secretary.						

Figure 4-02: Detailed organization chart of Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Committees. Source: "Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am 1967) Organizational Chart." Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

In the official program for the Paraplegic Games, a number of people were credited with organizing certain aspects of the Games (see Table 4-02). It is unclear if these people were leaders of a committee or if they took care of the particular task on their own. Regardless, they played a large enough role in the organization of the Games to receive acknowledgement in the official Paraplegic Games program.

Accommodations	Stan Wootteen Earl Hiscox
Housing	Judy Hall
Communications	Ed Homme
Opening Ceremonies	J.J. Connors
Budget Control	Don McFee
Facilities and Equipment	Pat Riddell
Transportation	Gerry Catt
Medical	June Thomson
Registration	Murray Harvey
Records and Results	Gordon Witaker
Press Relations	Howard Lowen, Mow Simovitch, Dave Connell

Table 4-02: Credited people and their roles in planning the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program, by 1967, N021587, Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am) 1967 (Winnipeg, Man), [https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587_djvu.txt)

Not mentioned within this group is the head dietitian, Louise Smith, from the University of Manitoba who was in charge of the planning and catering of all meals for the athletes.<sup>58</sup>

Minutes from meetings of the executive organizing committee included reports from a variety of sub-committees, including finance and budgets, the executive secretary, services, sports, promotion, and legal.<sup>59</sup> The July 18, 1967 meeting minutes concluded with plans for the next meeting, which was to take place on July 25, 1967, suggesting that the committee met weekly leading up to the Games.<sup>60</sup> The executive organizing committee also appointed sports directors for each different sport (see Table 4-03).

Archery/Dartchery	F/L. J. Walker
Basketball	James Bulloch
Rifle and Pistol	K. Barnes
Snooker	F. Jowett
Swimming	R. Krull
Table Tennis	A. Werier
Track and Field	E. Ward
Volleyball	M. Tennant
Weightlifting	K. Horsman

*Table 4-03: List of sport directors for each sport competed at the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program, by 1967, N021587, Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am) 1967 (Winnipeg, Man), [https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587_djvu.txt)*

A few other people who were instrumental in the organization of the Paraplegic Games were Frank Kennedy, the Director of the School of Physical Education and Willard Condo, the Vice President at the University of Manitoba. The Pan American Games were planned to take place on the University of Manitoba campus as well as the Pan Am Pool that had been built specifically for the Games, among other venues. After correspondence between Simpson and Condo, arrangements were made and confirmed on February 3, 1967 for the Paraplegic Games to use facilities at the University of Manitoba.<sup>61</sup> The Paraplegic Games were going to be able to utilize the University College Residence to accommodate all the athletes and the new Track and Field Stadium and Student Union Building for competition.<sup>62</sup> The University of Manitoba pool was also made available, but only for training purposes prior to the Games. For the actual competition, the newly built Pan Am Pool was to be used. The use of these facilities was essentially free as in the contract drawn up, the Paraplegic Games Society was to pay the University of Manitoba \$1.<sup>63</sup> Having free housing for all the athletes as well as free venues was a huge help to the financial organization of the event.

*Financial*

While the facilities, equipment, and some administrative assistance were free, neither the Pan American Games Committee nor the CPA were able to provide any funding to assist with the Paraplegic Games. Throughout the planning of the Games, funding was a constant concern as the budget the executive organizing committee created to cover the cost of the Games was approximately \$40,000.<sup>64</sup> The organizing committee quickly set to work, writing an application for the Grant to the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate which was part of the federal Department of National Health and Welfare.<sup>65</sup> This application was submitted in December 1966, only a couple of months after receiving official acceptance into the Pan American Games. In this application, the Paraplegic Games organizing committee asked for \$17,475, which was only a fraction of the total cost of the Games, however the organizing committee had other plans to raise the remaining funds. Some of these fundraising efforts included having a table set up at Polo Park shopping mall to collect donations as well as a variety show with various performances by local artists and dancers, such as the band, The Guess Who.<sup>66</sup> Car window stickers were also sold to raise money specifically for the uniforms for Team Canada, which raised over \$2,000.<sup>67</sup> With the fundraising efforts of the organizing committee as well as the disability community in Winnipeg, the organizing committee was able to raise the majority of the funds needed, only requiring \$14,000 more as of March 1967.<sup>68</sup> As for the grant application, the Paraplegic Games organizing committee was initially turned down as the federal Physical Fitness and Amateur Sports Directorate had already provided a \$25,000 grant to support the Montreal Expo 67 Paraplegic Games - a national paraplegic games that had been scheduled to take place in Montreal during September 1967, before the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) were scheduled. With the contribution to the Montreal Games, the officials in the federal

Physical Fitness and Amateur Sports Directorate figured they had done their part already to support paraplegic sport in Canada.<sup>69</sup> This decision was appealed and one week before the Games, the Paraplegic Games organizing committee was presented with the federal grant of \$17,400.<sup>70</sup>

### *Partnerships*

In addition to the University of Manitoba, the CPA, and the Pan American Games Committee, there were several other organizations that assisted in different areas with the Paraplegic Games. These organizations had all made commitments to the executive organizing committee at the time they wrote the grant to the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate in December 1966. The CPA offered administrative assistance that included office and steno services, telephone, postage, and accounting.<sup>71</sup> The Pan American Games Committee offered advice and consultation, equipment, and facilities, in partnership with the University of Manitoba and assisted with some promotions for the Paraplegic Games.<sup>72</sup> The University of Manitoba also offered some equipment along with facilities for the Games and accommodations for all the athletes, which included a place to sleep and meals for the duration of the Games.<sup>73</sup> Another organization that assisted was the Manitoba Track and Field Association, which provided training facilities for the Manitoba athletes leading up to the Games as well as officials for the Games themselves.<sup>74</sup> The Manitoba Community Recreation Branch also provided their advice and consultation along with training, assistance with finances and communications and loaned the remaining equipment that was needed.<sup>75</sup> The final organization that had committed support as of December 1966 was the Independent Order of Foresters. They provided local transportation, assisted with promotion, ticket sales, attendance, and fundraising, as well as offering more administrative assistance.<sup>76</sup>

One organization that had not yet joined by December 1966 but played a significant role during the Paraplegic Games was CJOB, a local radio station. Their contributions went towards transportation, admission, and lunch costs for 149 people with disabilities who were able to attend and watch the Games at no cost to themselves.<sup>77</sup> People were picked up from various hospitals, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centres and taken out to enjoy a day of sport. The station was also able to provide 127 free tickets to those who may have had their own transportation or wanted to attend events on a different date.<sup>78</sup>

Another organization that the Paraplegic Games organizing committee had identified as an organization to reach out to in the grant application was the Junior League of Winnipeg. The Junior League of Winnipeg became the hospitality committee for the Paraplegic Games, planning all types of excursions throughout Winnipeg for the visiting athletes during the week of the Games. These included a shopping trip to Polo Park, visiting the legislative building, the planetarium, and Assiniboine Park, taking in a show at Rainbow Stage, attending a Winnipeg Blue Bombers' CFL football game, and taking a paddlewheel cruise down the Red River.<sup>79</sup> These events were

- 2 -

HOSPITALITY PROGRAM

\* Code No.

<u>TUESDAY, AUGUST 8th</u>		
	Opening Ceremonies - Track & Field Stadium	7:00 P.M.
	Informal Reception - UMSU Building - West Gym	8:00 - 9:30 P.M.
<u>WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9th</u>		
A	Shopping - Polo Park Shopping Center	Loading Time 9:00 A.M. Reloading 11:00 A.M. Return 12:15 P.M.
B	Paddle Wheel Queen - River Excursion	Loading Time 12:45 P.M. Return 5:15 P.M.
	Indian Handicraft Sale - Main Lounge University College	5:30 - 7:30 P.M.
	Films (see attached list)	7:30 - 9:30 P.M.
C	Football Game - Winnipeg Stadium Winnipeg Blue Bombers vs. Calgary Stampeders	Loading time 6:30 P.M. Return 11:30 P.M.
<u>THURSDAY, AUGUST 10th</u>		
D	Assiniboine Park - Box Lunch & tour of Zoo	Loading Time 10:15 A.M. Return 2:15 P.M.
E	Shopping - Polo Park Shopping Center	Loading Time 2:15 P.M. Reloading 4:30 P.M. Return 5:15 P.M.
	Films (see attached list)	7:30 - 9:30 P.M.
F	Weiner Roast - River Bank behind Tache Hall Folk Singers	9:00 P.M.
<u>FRIDAY, AUGUST 11th</u>		
G	Shopping - Polo Park Shopping Center	Loading Time 9:00 A.M. Reloading 11:00 A.M. Return 12:15 P.M.
H	Legislative Building Tour & Reception	Loading Time 1:15 P.M. Return 5:00 P.M.
	Films (see attached list)	7:30 - 9:00 P.M.
I	Rainbow Stage - Sound of Music Outdoor Theatre	Loading Time 7:00 P.M. Return 11:30 P.M.
J	Tijuana Brass - Winnipeg Arena	Loading Time 6:30 P.M. Return 11:30 P.M.
<u>SATURDAY, AUGUST 12th</u>		
	Interdenominational Service - Cafeteria University College	9:00 A.M.
K	Planetarium - Lecture Wing, University College, Room 394, Second Floor	9:30 - 11:00 A.M.
	Closing Ceremonies - Track & Field Stadium	4:30 P.M.
	Closing Banquet - Canadian Forces Base	Loading Time 6:00 P.M. Cocktails 6:45 P.M. Dinner 7:45 P.M.

\* See Page 4 for reservations procedure.

Figure 4-03: Hospitality schedule of events during the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: "Hospitality Guide." p.2. Historical Collection, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

stretched out over the five days of the Paraplegic Games with different options each day. Upon arrival, each athlete received a hospitality guide with descriptions of each of the activities and a reservation form that they were to fill out and hand back to the hospitality committee by 2:00pm on August 8<sup>th</sup> to secure their spots.<sup>80</sup> Also included in the hospitality guide was the schedule of

events for the week which can be seen in Figure 4-03. Along with all the planned activities, in University College, where the athletes were staying, there was a hospitality centre with two hostesses on duty, a lounge on each floor with televisions, cards, newspapers, and checkers, a games room that had ping pong, pool, and shuffleboard, and a snack bar.<sup>81</sup> Members of the

Junior League of Winnipeg also

took it upon themselves to meet some of the athletes when they arrived at the airport. Figure 4-04 is the Jamaican team being welcomed upon their arrival at the Winnipeg airport.

### *Medical*

With any sports competition, a medical team of some sort is needed in case any accidents or injuries occur. This was no different at the Paraplegic Games. June Thomson was an orderly who oversaw all of the medical needs during the Paraplegic Games.<sup>82</sup> She detailed her experience in an article on the Paraplegic Games in the *Para Tracks* newsletter in August 1967. She recalled



*Figure 4-04: Photo of the Jamaican team being welcomed at the Winnipeg airport upon their arrival for the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photo of Jamaican team." Historical Collection, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.*

the minor strains, blisters, suspected fractures, and muscle pulls that the University College Residence Infirmary saw during the week along with many complaints of headaches, sun stroke, or reactions to something an athlete ate. The way she writes insinuates that she does not believe the latter issues to be the real cause of feeling unwell, but rather late nights and drinking to be the real cause.<sup>83</sup> Luckily, there were no major problems, and no one required hospitalization. The worst injury from the week did not belong to an athlete but rather a basketball referee who was wheeled over.<sup>84</sup> Here is a small section of the article to give a greater insight to what the week entailed for Thomson and the rest of the medical staff,

My tour as ‘medical orderly’ to the para athletes was anything but dull. Did you ever try teaching two new army recruits how to get a quadriplegic in the bathtub when the bathroom is not much larger than the tub itself, and the quadriplegic only speaks Spanish... or try to undress about 190 lbs. of flail quadriplegia in the small hours of the morning after he has been out ‘supervising’ and lost all track of time and place...<sup>85</sup>

This gives a look into what the Paraplegic Games would have been like from the perspective of medical staff. With the medical model still being prevalent at the time of the Games, the attitude from the medical staff towards the athletes would have been that they were patients first which conflicts with Simpson’s goal of using sport for social change. These contrasting attitudes will be discussed more in Chapter 6.

### *Athletes and Classification*

The events put on by the hospitality committee were just one small part of the Paraplegic Games for the athletes who were there to compete in sporting events. The final athlete count was 122 athletes, 60 from Canada.<sup>86</sup> These athletes competed in wheelchair basketball, darts (darts with a bow and arrow)/archery, swimming, table tennis, weightlifting, snooker, track and field, rifle and pistol shooting as well as a volleyball game over five days.<sup>87</sup> Figure 4-05 is a chart of all the athletes who attended, split up by country and gender.

COMPETITORS		COMPETITORS	
<b>ARGENTINA</b>	<b>UNITED STATES</b>	<b>CANADA</b>	<b>MEN</b>
<b>MEN</b>	<b>MEN</b>	<b>WOMEN</b>	
1 HELVIO ARESCA	111 MARTIN BALL	27 VERONICA DEMERAKAS	35 BILL INKSTER
2 HONORIO ROMERO	112 HUBERT BECKLES	30 JAN GODFREY	36 GORDON KIRKLAND
<b>JAMAICA</b>	113 DENVER BRANUM	34 MARIAN HARRINGTON	38 RUSS LEWENDON
<b>WOMEN</b>	114 JOE L. CARTER	37 TERRY KOSTASH	39 BOB LICHTENBERGER
81 VERNA BARACATT	116 ROBERT L. CHRISTMAN	43 KAREN MacPHERSON	41 LARRY LUCK
82 IOLA DEAN	117 LEONARD CHRYSLER	45 IRENE MILLER	44 TED MISANGHUK
<b>MEN</b>	118 ROBERT CLASSON	49 SHIRLEY NAUGHTON	46 DON MITCHELL
83 VINCENT EXCELL	121 CLIFF CRASE	69 LORNA VINDEN	47 DALE MOE
84 CHARLES GRAHAM	123 FRANK FIORELLO		48 GERRY MALO
85 ALBERT HALL	124 STEFAN FLORESCU		50 GARY NAULT
86 DERVEN LONG	125 EVERETT FORD		51 ALLAN NORDAL
87 OCTAVIUS MORGAN	127 WILLIAM GRIGGS	<b>MEN</b>	52 CHRIS PETERS
<b>MEXICO</b>	128 PHILLIP HAMMAKER	11 ANTHONY BAGNATO	53 BEN REIMER
<b>MEN</b>	129 TIM HARRIS	13 DAVID BLAIR	54 PAUL ROBERGE
91 RAMOS MANUEL	132 FRANCIS HOUSTON	14 GERRY BLAIR	55 BILL ROBSON
92 CASILLAS SALVADOR	133 SERGE JELENEVSKY	15 GEORGE BOSHKO	56 JEAN-PAUL ROCHON
<b>PERU</b>	134 GREGORY JENSEN	16 GAETON BOURGOUIN	57 DAVID RUDDERHAM
<b>MEN</b>	137 SIEGFRIED KLEMENS	17 ORENE BOURNE	58 WALTER SCHMID
95 (Name Unavailable)	138 DANIEL KOTTIER	19 PIERRE BROUSSEAU	59 GUNTHER SCHUSTER
<b>TRINIDAD</b>	139 PETER KRAJEWSKI	20 JOHN BRYANT	60 RENE SHANK
<b>MEN</b>	140 RENO LEVIS	21 DUNCAN CAMERON	61 JIM SICKLER
101 BENJAMIN BONNETT	141 ROBERT LIONETTI	22 LEROY COATES	62 JOE SMITHSON
102 HILTON MITCHELL	143 JAMES E. MATHIS	23 PETER COLEMAN	63 STAN STRONG
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	144 JOHN NUSSBAUMER	24 DON COWGER	64 DOUG THIEBERT
<b>WOMEN</b>	145 TOM O'BRIEN	25 WAYNE CUNNINGHAM	65 RON THOMPSON
115 HOPE CHAFFEE	146 JOHN O'DONNELL	26 ALBERT DECKER	67 ED TOEWS
119 JOANNA CORNETT	147 GARY ODOROWSKI	28 TONY FABIAN	68 BRIAN TURNBULL
122 BETTY DULL	149 CARLOS RODRIGUEZ	29 GUY FANGEAT	70 J. VON DEN NIEUWENDYK
126 CARIL GIESSE	150 BLAINE ROMANUS	31 CHARLIE GROVER	71 BILL WASNOCK
130 NORMA HIPWELL	151 LOUIS ROSINI	32 MEL HAMILTON	72 HUBERT WENDLING
131 ROSALIE HIXSON	152 DAN SCHOENHERR	33 PETER HAND	73 DOUG WILSON
135 JOANN KEYSER	153 HUGH SMITH		
136 EUGENIE KIDD	155 DANIEL SULLIVAN		
148 KATHLEEN PRIDDY	157 ALONZO WILKINS		
154 MARIANN SOULEK	158 ORION WILLSEY		
156 JUDITH WEBB	161 EARL HUSTON		
159 MARILYN WOODS			
160 JUDITH HUSTON			

Figure 4-05: List of all the athletes who competed in the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program, by 1967, N021587, Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am) 1967 (Winnipeg, Man), [https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587_djvu.txt)

Since organized wheelchair sport was relatively new in Canada, there was no national team ready to compete. There was also no formal process for choosing which athletes would be competing at large events. So, while the Games were being organized, a team from Canada needed to be chosen and with no National Games planned before the Paraplegic Games, the provincial representatives of the CPA had to get creative. In lieu of a national competition to decide who would compete, playoffs were scheduled in each town in the spring of 1967 and the records from those were compared with the other towns.<sup>88</sup> The top competitors in each event were selected to represent Canada at the Paraplegic Games. The records were shared through a monthly HAM radio hook up that was scheduled between the provincial representatives of the

CPA to discuss the organization of the Paraplegic Games.<sup>89</sup> However, Simpson shared in an interview that there were not too many athletes in Canada, so the CPA provincial representatives made every effort to include any athlete who made a sincere effort to compete in the Games.<sup>90</sup> The Canadian team gathered in Winnipeg four days prior to the beginning of the competition, marking their first time meeting one another.<sup>91</sup> While the United States team had been together for quite some time, team Canada only had four days to figure out how they were going to work together in their first international wheelchair sport competition.<sup>92</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 2, classification is a requirement for all para sport competitions, so naturally, the Paraplegic Games needed classification. At the time of this event, there was not one classification system that was agreed upon world-wide and since Canada had yet to host an international wheelchair sport competition, much discussion had to be had about which classification system they wanted to use. The Stoke Mandeville Games rules and classification made clear that only athletes with spinal cord injuries were eligible to compete.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, the United States National Athletic Wheelchair Association developed their own set of rules and classifications that included more disabilities.<sup>94</sup> There was correspondence between Simpson and Guttman regarding classification. Guttman sent along the Stoke Mandeville Games classification manual along with a letter stating the Paraplegic Games needed to follow suit if they wanted athletes to have an opportunity of being on the world records list.<sup>95</sup> However, being on the records list was not a sure thing even if the Paraplegic Games did follow the Stoke Mandeville Games rules and classification, as it was something that had not yet been considered. Guttman assured Simpson that at the upcoming meeting of the International Stoke Mandeville Committee in July 1967, they would discuss opening the records list for any international paraplegic competition.<sup>96</sup> It does seem as though the executive organizing committee did indeed

follow the Stoke Mandeville Games classifications. There was discussion between Simpson and Basil Grogono, a local doctor who was involved in the Paraplegic Games, around including amputees and “victims of cerebral palsy” in the Games, however with so many unknowns in regard to classification, they decided to keep the competition closed to paraplegia.<sup>97</sup> With only paraplegics being classified, there were four separate classes, Class A through D.<sup>98</sup> For all of the sports, with the exception of weightlifting, the classes remained the same, both Class A and B were defined as paralysis above segment T10, meaning the level of spinal injury would be above one’s upper chest.<sup>99</sup> The difference between the two is that Class A was complete paralysis and Class B was incomplete paralysis meaning that Class B athletes would have some level of function to their upper extremities.<sup>100</sup> Class C was defined as paralysis at segment T10 or lower, and Class D was classified as “cauda equina with functioning thigh muscles”.<sup>101</sup> Class D would have been paralysis at the lowest level of the spinal cord, meaning athletes’ legs were paralyzed but they would have some function of their thigh muscles. For weightlifting, the classifications were based on how much each athlete weighed: Class A was heavyweight, 168 lbs and above; Class B was middleweight, 140 lbs to 168 lbs; Class C was lightweight, 112 lbs to 140 lbs; and, finally, Class D was featherweight, 112 lbs and below.<sup>102</sup> Grogono wrote that, “a small medical committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Thompson categorized each paraplegic according to the Stoke Mandeville rules.”<sup>103</sup> Guttman also sent Simpson a classification form that each athlete would have to fill out, however it is unclear if this was used for the Paraplegic Games.<sup>104</sup> During any standard classification, athletes also need to be assessed by a doctor, however, Grogono writes that the athletes were only assessed by a team doctor if there was doubt in the original assessment; this team included two other doctors alongside Grogono.<sup>105</sup>

Classification differed slightly for team events. The only team sport that competed in the Paraplegic Games was wheelchair basketball, as volleyball was only an exhibition game.

Athletes were still classified in the same way that they would be for individual sports, however with a team sport, each athlete was assigned points based on which class they were in. Athletes in Class A or B were classified at one point, while athletes in Class C or D were classified at three points.<sup>106</sup> There were two separate basketball competitions, 8-point games and 12-point games.<sup>107</sup> In each of the competitions, the athletes on the floor could not exceed the total amount of points for that game.

### **The Paraplegic Games Competition**

After just under a year of organizing for the inaugural Paraplegic Games, the opening

ceremonies kicked off at the

University of Manitoba Track and

Field Stadium on Tuesday, August 8,

1967 at 7:00pm.<sup>108</sup> They opened with

a march of the Regina Independent

Order of Foresters Boys and Girls

Band, followed by the Winnipeg

Police Pipe Band, the Khartum

Temple Drum and Bugle Corps and

the John Travers Cornwall V. C

Royal Canadian Sea Cadets Corps Band.<sup>109</sup> Following the bands was a parade of the athletes (see

Figure 4-06) – who were accompanied by members of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery –

beginning with Argentina, then Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, followed by the United



*Figure 4-06: Photo of the athletes parading around the University of Manitoba track during the opening ceremonies of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photo of Opening Ceremonies." Historical Collection, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.*

States and finally Canada.<sup>110</sup> As each country entered the stadium, the Regina IOF Band played each country's national anthem.<sup>111</sup> Following the athletes' entrance, a speech was given by the



Figure 4-07: Richard Bowles lighting the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967 flame beside Allan Nordal. Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photo of lighting the Games Flame." Historical Collection, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

the torch, as seen in Figure 4-07. Before the opening ceremonies came to an end, the athletes' oath was recited by Doug Wilson, (as seen in Figure 4-08) who was the Rehabilitation Officer of the British Columbia office of the CPA.<sup>114</sup> The athletes' oath was "We declare that we will take part in the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) in the spirit of

Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Richard Bowles, who began by saying, "as athletes in these Games, you are proof of the ability of paraplegics to return to your communities to lead full lives in almost every sense."<sup>112</sup> He also stated that "your spirit of true sportsmanship will give hope and inspiration to all. No greater contribution can be made to society by the paralyzed than to further friendship and understanding between our nations through the medium of sport"<sup>113</sup> These quotes from his speech reject the medical approach to sport and fit in with the more social model approach that the organizers of the Paraplegic Games were taking.

Following his speech, Bowles lit the Games flame after Winnipeg athlete, Allan Nordal, circled the track with



Figure 4-08: Doug Wilson reciting the athletes' oath during the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) opening ceremonies. Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photo of Wilson reciting the Athletes' Oath." Historical Collection, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

true sportsmanship recognizing the rules which govern them and desirous of participating for the honour of our hemisphere and for the glory of sport.”<sup>115</sup> It is not included in the evidence who wrote the athlete oath, if it was the organizers or athletes but it certainly represents the social change goal of the Games, with the noticeable exclusion of sport for rehabilitation. The athletes then took part in a ceremonial march-past which was one lap around the stadium before exiting to begin the competition.

Following the opening ceremonies, the opening sporting event of the Paraplegic Games was an 8-point basketball game between Canada and the United States (see Figure 4-09), where the United States won by a score of 28-18.<sup>116</sup> There were over 1,000 people in attendance at this game, including news crews who were set up with bright lights all around the gym.<sup>117</sup> While this



*Figure 4-09: The wheelchair basketball game between the United States and Canadian team at the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: "Photo." Paraplegic Games Photo Album. Historical Collection, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.*

game was a spectacle that people wanted to watch, the TV attention served as a distraction for the athletes. United States athlete, Gary Odorowski was unhappy with the win stating in an interview that, “the strong television lights in here tonight really hurt my play because I couldn’t really see the rim. I was practicing this morning and hitting shots from 30 feet out, but that was

impossible tonight with those lights glaring at me, I hope they’re gone tomorrow.”<sup>118</sup> Given Odorowski’s opinion, it seems as if it was more important to showcase these athletes to the public rather than have a comfortable space that the athletes could excel in (this will be discussed

more in Chapter 6). The same report noted that neither team really settled into playing until there were only four minutes left to go in the game.<sup>119</sup>

The first full day of competition saw world record breaking performances in swimming by the United States athletes.<sup>120</sup> The world records of comparison were sent to Simpson by Guttmann from the ISMG, however if these names actually made it onto the world record list is unknown. Highlighted in the August 10, 1967, edition of the *Winnipeg Tribune* were some stand out performances from the athletes. Nineteen-year-old Denver Bramum broke the Class D 50m backstroke with a time of 41.6 seconds, the previous world record being 43.1 seconds.<sup>121</sup> He also tied the world record in the Class D 50m freestyle with a time of 33.5 seconds.<sup>122</sup> The second world record was broken by Leonard Chrysler with a time of 39.1 seconds in the Class C-complete 50m freestyle.<sup>123</sup> Also in the 50m freestyle, Joanne Keyser broke the record in the Class C-incomplete classification with a time of 58.3 seconds.<sup>124</sup> Other standout performances in swimming include 13-year old Octavius Morgan from Jamaica earning two gold medals and one silver in the men's C-incomplete class and Karen McPherson of Canada winning three gold medal in the B-incomplete class.<sup>125</sup>

Figure 4-10 shows athletes getting ready to dive into the pool to begin their race; note the lack of accessible equipment, the athletes are in their wheelchairs on the edge of the pool deck. In wheelchair basketball, the Americans beat the Canadians yet again with a score of 30-19 to earn them a gold medal in the 8-point basketball competition.<sup>126</sup>

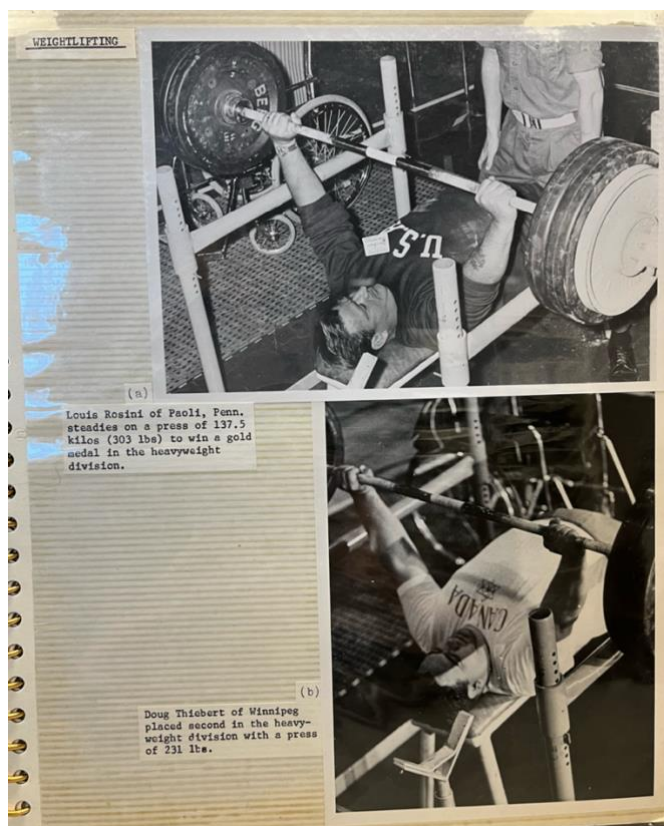
One other highlighted performance on the first full day of



Figure 4-10: Athletes getting prepared for the start of a swimming race at the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photo of swimming." Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

competition was in weightlifting where Allan Nordal of Winnipeg, won the featherweight division lifting 198.25 lbs while only weighing 123 lbs.<sup>127</sup> Tom Harris of the United States took the lightweight title lifting 203.75 lbs while weighing 137 lbs.<sup>128</sup> Along with these events, darchery and table tennis took place with seven medals being won by the Americans.

The second day of competition also had highlights written in the *Winnipeg Tribune* on August 11, 1967, starting with an interview with the previously mentioned world record setting athlete Branum. In the first day of competition, he was able to win six gold medals, however, was not yet satisfied with this outcome as at the last ISMG he attended, he won six gold, three silver and three bronze medals.<sup>129</sup> He stated that “here it seems like a competition just among the Americans. Canada is just getting started in wheelchair sports and the contingents from the other countries are too small to put up much opposition.”<sup>130</sup> Branum continued on in the competition to win gold in snooker and then lead his 12-point wheelchair basketball team to another gold medal.<sup>131</sup> More swimming world records were broken in the second day by American athlete Cornett, she competed in the A-complete class and broke both the 25m freestyle and breaststroke with times of 32.6 seconds and 33.5 seconds respectively.<sup>132</sup> The remaining gold medals in swimming went to Americans with a few exceptions; one went to Morgan of Jamaica, Salvador of Mexico and three to Canadians, Coleman with two and Peters with one.<sup>133</sup> The Americans then swept in archery and both the middleweight and heavyweight categories of weightlifting.<sup>134</sup> Figure 4-11 shows American athlete, Louis Rosini’s winning lift as well as second place, Canadian athlete, Doug Wilson. Although the Americans were dominating, table tennis saw Argentina athlete Romero win the Class C singles and then Romero along with partner Aresca win the Class C doubles.<sup>135</sup> The final medal count can be seen in table 4-04. Going back to



Branum's comment on the Paraplegic Games being just a competition between the American athletes, it is clear to see in the medal count that the Americans dominated in each of the medal categories.

Figure 4-11: Two photos, one of Louis Rosini, USA athlete and Doug Wilson, Canadian athlete, with their medal winning lifts at the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photos of weightlifting." Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Argentina	2	0	1
Jamaica	3	2	2
Mexico	2	1	2
Trinidad & Tobago	2	1	1
United States of America	94	68	53
Canada	28	47	33

Table 4-04: Final medal count for the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division. "Para Tracks" Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter 8, no. 4, August 1967.

Besides the records that were broken and the medals that were won, another way to understand what the competition was like is to look at pictures. In the historical collection from Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, there was a photo album with pictures from the competition alongside captions. Figure 4-12 shows Canadian athlete Wilson competing in slalom at the University of Manitoba track. In the photo, the spectators are in the background and while it was



Figure 4-12: Photo of Doug Wilson competing in Slalom at the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photos of slalom." Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

reported that there was a record number of spectators at the Paraplegic Games, the majority of the seats are empty. However, it appears that there is a row of spectators in wheelchairs on the side of the track, in front of the stands as they were not accessible. Figure 4-13 shows the

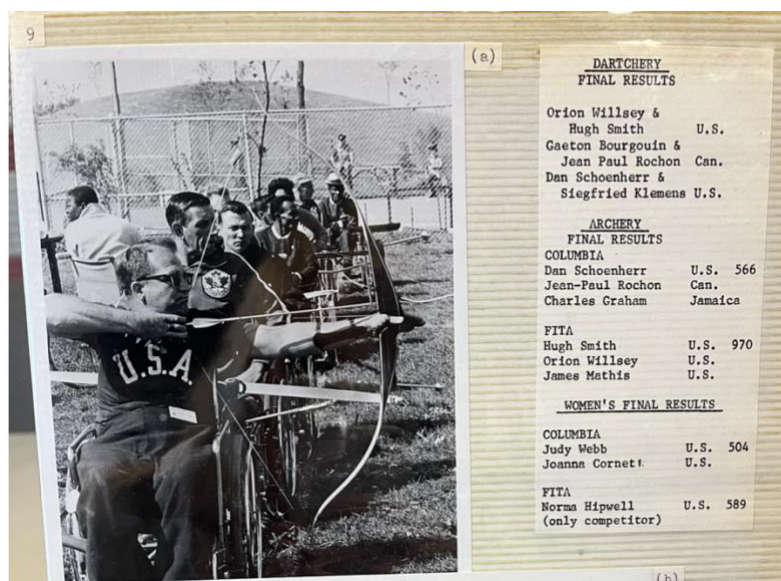


Figure 4-13: Photo of archery/dartchery competition with results at the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photo of Archery/Dartchery." Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

archery/dartchery competition with a list of the final results in the male and female competitions. Similar to the swimming photo, there does not seem to be any accessible equipment in this photo. The bow and arrows appear to be standard bow and arrows that have not had any adaptations made to them. The final competition photo to highlight is a photo of the javelin competition, as seen

in Figure 4-14. Again, there is no accessible equipment, and we can see a person holding down the wheelchair at the back, so the chair does not tip over when the athlete throws the javelin.

Another important element to note in all of the photos is the wheelchairs that are being used. These wheelchairs are what would be known today as “hospital

wheelchairs” as the only place you would see them are for temporary use

while in the hospital. Today, there are customized wheelchairs for everyday use as well as for different sports; a track chair differs from a wheelchair rugby chair. The wheelchairs are specifically designed to help the athlete succeed in the sport they are competing in. This was not the case at the time of the Paraplegic Games. Sport wheelchairs did not exist, so athletes competed in their everyday wheelchairs for all of the different events.

Following the fifth and final day of competition, the closing ceremonies were held. These again took place at the University of Manitoba Track and Field Stadium. The athletes took one final lap around the track in front of a crowd with the Canadian team being the last to leave.<sup>136</sup> The most important element of the closing ceremonies was the passing of the torch from Simpson, the outgoing managing director to athlete Helvio Aresca of Argentina to take home to Buenos Aires where the 1969 Paraplegic Games were set to be held.<sup>137</sup> The second Paraplegic



Figure 4-14: Photo of the javelin competition at the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. “Photo of Javelin.” Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Games will be discussed more in Chapter 5. Figure 4-15 is a photo of the torch being passed off and in turn a Paraplegic Legacy just beginning.

### Conclusion

After any first of an event, there are lessons learned that help inform decisions the next time a similar event is run. The Paraplegic Games were no exception. Ben Lipton, the founder and leader of the

United States National Wheelchair Athletic Association, wrote out a list of suggestions immediately following the Games on August 18, 1967. Some of these suggestions included meetings at the beginning and end of competition between officials, coaches, and trainers; a study on both the rules and regulations as well as the chair regulations, keeping social trips to a minimum during competition – to schedule them before or after the Games and keeping handlers (soldiers to lift athletes) out of the public eye as much as possible.<sup>138</sup>

When you put everything all together, the reason the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) even occurred is not as simple as a group of people approaching the Pan American Games for an addition of paraplegics. There was a combination of international wheelchair sporting events taking off, Reimer's success at the 1966 Commonwealth Games, and the Western Division of the CPA becoming a large advocate for disabled persons in Winnipeg. This was all happening at the same time the Pan American Games were scheduled to take place in Winnipeg in 1967. With paraplegic sport on the rise and a group of disability advocates seeking to create opportunities for



Figure 4-15: Photo of the Games Torch being handed from Simpson to Aresca at the closing ceremonies of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: Paraplegic Games Photo Album. "Photo of Closing Ceremonies Torch." Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

other disabled people, the Pan American Games seemed like the perfect opportunity for Canada to get in on the international paraplegic sports scene. According to Steadward, Simpson's thought was to take advantage of the existing organizing committee and structure of the Pan American Games to bring Canadian paraplegic athletes together as well as athletes from countries just starting up wheelchair sport programs.<sup>139</sup> It seems that the inaugural Paraplegic Games were a success as by the end of the Games planning had already begun for the following Paraplegic Games in Buenos Aires to be hosted in 1969. This is just an example of one of the many impacts of the Games that are discussed in more depth in Chapter 5.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Robert Steadward, virtual interview with the author, February 15, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Steve Bailey, *Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement* John Wiley & Sons, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Bell, "British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games" In *Encyclopedia of International Games*, McFarland & Company, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> John Townsley, "Paraplegic Games Here in August" *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 1, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> Sanitarium Board of Manitoba News Bulletin, "A Dream Come True" July 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Note: This item and all subsequent items from Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba reflect private collections shared by the organization to the researcher.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> "About MWSA" Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, 2024. <http://mwsa.ca/about/>.

<sup>12</sup> Allan Simpson, interview by David Legg, June 3, 1977, Winnipeg, MB. Note: This item and all subsequent items from David Legg reflect personal documents shared by David Legg to the researcher.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> David Legg, "Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1997)" Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Alberta, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Committee, "Application for the Grant to the Fitness & Amateur Sport Directorate" December 1966, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>20</sup> Legg, "Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1977)."

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Committee, "Application for the Grant to the Fitness & Amateur Sport Directorate, Department of Health and Welfare."

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Legg, "Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1977)."

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- <sup>26</sup> Allan Simpson, interview by David Legg, June 3, 1977, Winnipeg, MB.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> Peter Carlyle-Gordge, “Allan Simpson: They said it was against the rules. My dander was up” 1980, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>31</sup> Simpson, interview by Legg.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> James Daly, Letter to Allan Simpson, September 30, 1966, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>36</sup> Allan Simpson, Letter to Williard Condo, January 31, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>37</sup> Tony Mann, Letter to Allan Simpson, December 22, 1966, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>38</sup> Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, “Para Tracks: Special 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition” *Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba Newsletter*, October 2021. <https://scimanitoba.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FINAL-ParaTracks-75th-Anniversary-Edition-REDUCED-October-2021-CANVA.pdf>.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> Tony Mann, Letter to Dr. Frank Kennedy, July 5, 1967, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreational Studies fonds, University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>44</sup> Simpson, interview by Legg.
- <sup>45</sup> Legg, “Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1977).”
- <sup>46</sup> Claire Simpson, interview with the author, Winnipeg, MB, November 15, 2023.
- <sup>47</sup> Simpson, interview by Legg.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> C. Simpson, interview with the author.
- <sup>51</sup> Simpson, interview by Legg.
- <sup>52</sup> Steadward, interview with author.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> Simpson, interview by Legg.
- <sup>55</sup> C. Simpson, interview with the author.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>57</sup> Simpson, interview by Legg.
- <sup>58</sup> Willard Condo, Letter to Allan Simpson, February 3, 1967, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreational Studies fonds, University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>59</sup> “Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am 1967) Committee Executive Minutes” July 18, 1967, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreational Studies fonds, University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> Condo, Letter to Allan Simpson.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>63</sup> “Agreement between the University of Manitoba and the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Committee” July 25, 1967, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreational Studies fonds, University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>64</sup> “Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am 1967) Committee Executive Minutes” March 16, 1967, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreational Studies fonds, University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>65</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Committee “Application for the Grant to the Fitness & Amateur Sport Directorate, Department of Health and Welfare” December 1966, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>66</sup> “Show to Aid Paraplegics” *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 17, 1967.

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- <sup>67</sup> Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division, "Para Tracks" *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter* 8, no. 4, August 1967.
- <sup>68</sup> "Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am 1967) Committee Executive Minutes" March 16, 1967.
- <sup>69</sup> John Sinclair, Letter to Centennial Corporation, n.d. 5-1-74 Paraplegic games '67, Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation Centennial Administration fonds, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>70</sup> "Grant Aids Games" *Winnipeg Free Press*, n.d.
- <sup>71</sup> Paraplegic Games Committee, "Application for the Grant to the Fitness & Amateur Sport Directorate, Department of Health and Welfare."
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>77</sup> Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division, "Para Tracks" *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter* 8, no. 4, August 1967.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>79</sup> Junior League of Winnipeg, "Hospitality Guide" August 8-13, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>82</sup> Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division, "Para Tracks" *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter* 8, no. 4, August 1967.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>85</sup> June Thompson, Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division, "Para Tracks" *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter* 8, no. 4, August 1967.
- <sup>86</sup> "Para Tracks" *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter*.
- <sup>87</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program, by 1967, N021587, Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am) 1967 (Winnipeg, Man), [https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587_djvu.txt)
- <sup>88</sup> David Legg, "Allan Simpson notes" n.d.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>92</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Committee, "Application for the Grant to the Fitness & Amateur Sport Directorate, Department of Health and Welfare" December 1966, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>93</sup> "Special Rules of Meeting of 1967 International Stoke Mandeville Games" Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>94</sup> Paraplegic Games Committee, "Application for the Grant to the Fitness & Amateur Sport Directorate, Department of Health and Welfare."
- <sup>95</sup> Ludwig Guttman, Letter to Allan Simpson, April 22, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>96</sup> Ludwig Guttman, Letter to Allan Simpson, July 6, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>97</sup> Basil Grogono, Letter to Allan Simpson, May 24, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>98</sup> "Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Explanation of Classes" n.d., Faculty of Physical Education and Recreational Studies fonds, University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>99</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program.
- <sup>100</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>102</sup> "Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Explanation of Classes"
- <sup>103</sup> Basil Grogono, "Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967)" *Manitoba Medical Review* 48, no. 6 (June-July 1968): 218-230.
- <sup>104</sup> "International Stoke Mandeville Games Identity Card" n.d., Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Terry Fraser, "Paraplegics Also in a Record Mood" *The Winnipeg Tribune*, August 10, 1967.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Program, by 1967, N021587, Paraplegic Games (Pan-Am) 1967 (Winnipeg, Man), [https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/N021587/N021587_djvu.txt)

<sup>109</sup> "Paraplegic Games Photo Album" 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> "Competitors Oath" n.d., Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Terry Fraser, "Paraplegic Games Wheel into Town" *Winnipeg Tribune*, August 9, 1967.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Terry Fraser, "Six Gold Medals aren't Enough" *Winnipeg Tribune*, August 11, 1967.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> "Paraplegic Games Photo Album" 1967.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ben Lipton, "Suggestions to Improve Future Games" August 18, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>139</sup> Steadward, interview with author.

## Chapter 5 – The Impacts of the Paraplegic Games

### **Introduction**

After exploring what went into organizing the first Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) in Chapter 4, it is now time to turn our attention to what came out of the Games. Again, by using interview transcripts and archival material, this chapter will answer the research question, what was the impact of the inaugural Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967)? There were local, national, and international impacts that occurred from these Games. We will begin with the local impacts, how the Paraplegic Games affected not only the para sport community but the larger disability community in Winnipeg. Moving on to national impacts, one of the largest was the creation of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association. Other international impacts will be identified, including the continuation of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) and how some of the athletes from smaller countries were impacted from their participation in these Games. To conclude, a survey that was created by Basil Grogono and distributed to the athletes will be discussed.

### **Local Impacts**

Within Winnipeg, there was a para sport community prior to the Paraplegic Games taking place. However, with the Paraplegic Games came publicity which created more awareness around the city and in turn grew the para sport community. This section will begin with a summary of the publicity the Paraplegic Games received locally. This will lead into how this publicity may have impacted the attendance at the Paraplegic Games as well as the impacts of the publicity and the Games themselves on both the Winnipeg disability and para sport communities after the Games were complete.

Publicity of the Paraplegic Games consisted mainly of newspaper articles and word of mouth; however, there was also TV coverage of some aspects of the Games, including the opening basketball game.<sup>1</sup> Newspaper articles were found in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the

*Winnipeg Tribune*, the *Manitoba Business Journal*, the *Sanitarium Board of Manitoba News Bulletin*, and *Paratracks*, the newsletter put out by the Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA). The first of these articles was published in the December-January 1967 edition of the *Manitoba Business Journal*. This article was written by Allan Simpson, the Managing Director of the Paraplegic Games, and was titled “Wheelchair Athletes to Invade.”<sup>2</sup> Simpson summarized the main idea for the upcoming Paraplegic Games, to bring together 150 athletes from a few countries to compete in a variety of sports.<sup>3</sup> He goes on to say that with advances in medicine, science and technology, a paraplegic who once was a “dependent invalid” has now become “an independent and productive citizen,” which has resulted in the general public accepting them in both professional and social worlds.<sup>4</sup> Simpson summarizes the history of paraplegic sport and how it has changed over the last few years, stating that “one of the most graphic methods of demonstrating a paraplegic’s potential to the public has been through wheelchair sport.”<sup>5</sup> The article finishes with a discussion of the Paraplegic Games executive organizing committee’s determination in making the first Paraplegic Games, “an athletic success so they will be a stepping stone for future Canadian paraplegic sports at both the national and international level.”<sup>6</sup>

The *Winnipeg Free Press* published a few different articles in the spring of 1967, the first being on April 1, 1967, titled “Paraplegic Games Here in August.” Author John Townsley began by describing a paraplegic as “a determined fellow and his latest move in the long haul of rehabilitation in Canada is to demand his own Pan American Games.”<sup>7</sup> He then briefly summarized the history of international wheelchair sport as well as wheelchair sport in Canada.<sup>8</sup> Intertwined with this summary were quotes from an interview with Simpson whose message was that it was time for Canada to join the hosting of international sport competitions and the

Paraplegic Games were the avenue to do so.<sup>9</sup> Simpson also stated that prior to the announcement of hosting the Paraplegic Games in September 1966, there was only one Winnipeg athlete who they knew of that was interested in competing.<sup>10</sup> The next publication on the Paraplegic Games was on May 17, 1967, also in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. This was an ask for funding to create a colour film of the Paraplegic Games.<sup>11</sup> The description of the Paraplegic Games given in this article shows how prevalent the medical model was at the time given the language that was used: “these are athletic events in which the contestants are partially paralyzed and confined to wheelchairs.”<sup>12</sup> The use and implications of this language will be discussed more in Chapter 6.

Another mention of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) in the *Winnipeg Free Press* was published June 17, 1967, and was an advertisement for a Centennial Variety Show that was occurring that week in support of the Paraplegic Games.<sup>13</sup> The entertainers were donating their talents for the evening, while all profits raised would be donated to the CPA to assist in funding the Paraplegic Games.<sup>14</sup> The program for the show was quite extensive with performances from the Eddie Lane Trio Plus 2, singer Terri Lane, the Bodykovitch Ukrainian Dancers, Jim and the Jesters, “the Contemporary dancers”, the Sweet Adelines, Sandy the go-go dancer, Paul Palace, Art Young, the Tony Francis Combo, Gail Lepp Honk Tonk Paine, Speed Walker, and Carol Wharton, a TV actor, alongside Johnny Swan.<sup>15</sup> It is unknown how much money the Centennial Variety Show raised for the Paraplegic Games. Another article was found that also advertised the Centennial Variety Show being held. Within this article was a discussion of the federal grant that the executive committee received for \$17,400.<sup>16</sup>

During the week of the Paraplegic Games, Terry Fraser of the *Winnipeg Tribune* wrote a series of articles detailing the results of competitions. These articles were the basis of the results at the Paraplegic Games as summarized in Chapter 4. There was one more newspaper clipping

found in the historical collections of the Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba that was published during the Games. It was a picture of the opening ceremonies with a caption stating that “over 3,000 people” were in attendance.<sup>17</sup> The picture (see Figure 5-01) shows spectators in and in front of the stands at the University of Manitoba Stadium while the athletes parade around the track.



Figure 5-01: Newspaper clipping of athletes parading around the University of Manitoba Track at the Opening Ceremonies of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: "Newspaper Clipping." August 9, 1967. Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Beyond the newspaper articles that were both advertising for and reporting on the Paraplegic Games, there was public recognition of paraplegic sport through word of mouth from people who attended the Games that led to attitude shifts. Simpson wrote in a letter to the Executive Director of CPA Alberta, “we heard many comments from some of our mobile friends who for example were sitting on buses hearing children discussing the Paraplegic Games and how they were really something to watch.”<sup>18</sup> Gail Burnside attended the Games as a teenager, and she described the atmosphere as “awesome.” She recalled that people were “gobsmacked” and “just in awe...when you think about it because that was still the time where people were left to be in their house and not come out and not do anything and even in that day, there were still a lot of post-polio people at what is now Riverview” (a health centre in Winnipeg).<sup>19</sup> In Burnside’s

opinion, the biggest impact from these Games was the attitude shift in people around her. This event opened their eyes to everything a paraplegic was capable of; they could do anything able bodied people could do, just a little differently.<sup>20</sup> This is evidence that mindsets towards paraplegics, even if it was just a few mindsets, were changing, just as Simpson had wanted when the planning for the Games began.

The newspaper articles and word of mouth conversations not only promoted the Games, but created awareness of wheelchair sport within Winnipeg that did not exist prior to the Games. Another area where awareness was spread was to university students. With the Games being held at the University of Manitoba, there was much correspondence between the Paraplegic Games executive organizing committee and staff at the University. One of those staff members was Frank Kennedy, Director of the School of Physical Education. He invited the Manitoba Sports and Recreation Club to come speak to his class about wheelchair sport prior to the Games occurring.<sup>21</sup> The students were also invited to observe and/or participate in the Monday Night Club (see Chapter 4) once the hecticness of the Games settled down. It is unknown how many students took advantage of this offer and did attend the Monday Night Club.

Even if no students ended up attending the Monday Night Club, the Paraplegic Games still had an impact on their education. It could have been from the newspaper publicity that more people learned about paraplegic sport and then the Monday Night Club, or people with disabilities who attended the Games may have wanted to become involved. Whatever the case may be, the Monday Night Club grew substantially because of the Paraplegic Games. Previously, there were about 20 regular attendees, however after the Games, this had grown to 60-70 people with more requesting to join.<sup>22</sup> It is not clearly stated if the group grew prior to or after the Paraplegic Games, however the participants started a petition prior to the Games taking place to

protest the club's plans to shut down for the summer. So, it can be assumed that this initial growth occurred leading up to the Paraplegic Games, meaning the awareness generated by newspaper articles on the Games perhaps played a role in this. The petition was successful, and the club stayed open during the summer months.<sup>23</sup>

With a growth in the group, new members brought about new ideas and a few other groups were able to develop such as a wheelchair square dancing group, a wheelchair orchestra, and a wheelchair bowling group.<sup>24</sup> Other social events also came out of this, such as an annual dinner attended by approximately 150 people, outdoor picnics, and a Christmas party to name a few.<sup>25</sup> With the growth of wheelchair sport and recreation, the Manitoba Wheelchair Sports and Recreation Club became an official provincial organization in 1969.<sup>26</sup> Claire Simpson, who is the wife of Allan Simpson, recalls that, "it [wheelchair sport] developed fairly quickly and solidly here in Manitoba through the '70s."<sup>27</sup> It cannot be concluded that this growth was solely based on the success of the Paraplegic Games, but they did act as a starting point to grow the para sport community in Manitoba.

The Paraplegic Games did not only impact wheelchair sport in Winnipeg at a recreational level, but also at a competitive level. As already noted, Simpson remarked upon there being only one athlete from Winnipeg interested in competing as of September 1966.<sup>28</sup> By the time the Games took place, just 11 months later, there were 12 Winnipeg-based athletes who had trained and were ready to compete in the Games. These athletes were Irene Miller, Terry Kostash, George Boshko, John Bryant, Albert Decker, Ted Misanchuk, Don Mitchell, Gary Nault, Allan Nordal, Ben Reimer, Joe Smithson, and Doug Thiebert.<sup>29</sup> With the exception of Reimer, the Paraplegic Games were the first international competition for the each of these athletes. These

athletes did not just compete, but they won quite a few medals, almost 40% of Canada's total medal count.<sup>30</sup> Every athlete from Winnipeg won at least one medal in the Games. On the women's side, Kostash won a gold and Miller won one gold, one silver, and three bronze.<sup>31</sup> One newspaper ran a photograph of athletes, including Miller, preparing for the games (see Figure 5-02), nothing that she "may take part in five sports – basketball, swimming, javelin, discus and the shotput."<sup>32</sup> On the men's side, there were 10 athletes from Winnipeg who competed. All won between one and seven medals. (See Table 5-01).



Figure 5-02: Irene Miller preparing for the Paraplegic Games (1967). Source: Townsley, John. "Paraplegic Games Here in August." *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 1, 1967.

<b>Athletes' Name</b>	<b>Gold Medals Won</b>	<b>Silver Medals Won</b>	<b>Bronze Medals Won</b>
George Boshko	1	5	1
John Bryant	0	0	2
Albert Dekker	0	1	0
Ted Misanchuk	0	0	2
Don Mitchell	0	1	1
Gary Nault	0	4	0
Allan Nordal	2	1	0
Ben Reimer	0	5	0
Joe Smithson	0	3	3
Doug Thiebert	0	1	3

Table 5-01: The Manitoba male athlete's medal count for the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). Source: "Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Final Medal Standings." n.d. Historical Collections, Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

The Paraplegic Games (1967) was not the only competition that the Manitoba athletes competed in in 1967. The Centennial Paraplegic Games occurred in Montreal from September 5-10, 1967.<sup>33</sup> Alongside their manager, Simpson, 15 wheelchair athletes travelled from Manitoba to Montreal to participate in wheelchair basketball, table tennis, archery, and track and field events.<sup>34</sup> It is not known if these athletes would have competed at the Montreal Games regardless of the Paraplegic Games. But it can be said that they were more prepared to compete in a national competition after having competed in an international competition.

### **National Impacts**

While the Paraplegic Games were a first for Winnipeg, they were also a first for Canada; the first international wheelchair sport competition on Canadian soil. This was a monumental moment for para sport in Canada. In a letter to a representative from Edmonton, Merv Thomson, the

National Chairman for the Paraplegic Games executive organizing committee, stated, “although the Games are actually being held in Winnipeg, the whole future of Canadian Paraplegic participation in international competition hinges on the success of this initial undertaking.”<sup>35</sup> In essence, the Paraplegic Games were not just the first international games in Canada, but organizers believed they would shape Canada’s future participation in international wheelchair sport. The evidence suggests that the Paraplegic Games achieved this goal as the success of the Games kickstarted the national organization of wheelchair sports in Canada, and with it, Canada’s ongoing participation in international wheelchair sport competitions. In the following year, 1968, a Canadian team was sent to the Paralympic Games for the first time.<sup>36</sup> According to Robert Steadward, the founding president of the International Paralympic Committee, the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) acted as the torch for wheelchair sport in Canada.<sup>37</sup> He stated in an interview,

...as a result of the success in Winnipeg, it had a spillover effect for the Centennial Games the next month in Montreal and then had a further spillover effect to the first National Wheelchair Games in Edmonton in the next year, in 1968. So, it really was that flame, it really was that torch, that really kickstarted sporting opportunities for Canadians across the country.<sup>38</sup>

According to Simpson, there was a common commitment within the leaders of Canadian para sport to have people with a disability recognized by society as athletes.<sup>39</sup> This commitment was mixed with an energy that came from the Games themselves. Following the Paraplegic Games, Simpson stated, “the energy afterwards - people don’t want to leave the sports events afterwards - the energy, enthusiasm, the seeing of human nature growing and blossoming in society coming together - it’s like a picnic - you didn’t want to leave.”<sup>40</sup> This mix of commitment and energy was the perfect recipe to create the momentum among the leaders in Canadian para sport that was needed to solidify an official organization.

With the para sport leaders in Canada coming together during the organization process, communication between provinces became much more frequent. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there was a monthly HAM radio hook up scheduled between all the provinces.<sup>41</sup> This hookup was scheduled at 11:00am Winnipeg time on Saturday mornings, on the 20-metre band at 14160 KCS.<sup>42</sup> These hookups were actually illegal as they circumvented the Bell Telephone system; however, Bell Canada chose to overlook this and the hookups continued up until the Games.<sup>43</sup> It was through these hookups that Simpson was able to find connections throughout the different provinces to find athletes as well as get assistance with the organization process. During these monthly hookups, it was determined that Canada needed an official organization to govern wheelchair sport. A committee was put together in March 1967 to investigate and advise the establishment of a national wheelchair sport body.<sup>44</sup> This committee included Simpson, and Merv Thomson, the National Chairman for the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967), both from Manitoba, Doug Wilson, the Manager of the Vancouver Wheelchair Sports Group, Bill Hepburn, Manager of the Montreal Wheelchair Basketball team, and Robert Fertile, Vice President of Paralympic Sports in Alberta.<sup>45</sup> Along with the athletes travelling in early for the Games, this committee met four days prior to the start of competition where they began to have meetings on what the structure for a national organization could look like. Leon Mitchell, a lawyer from Manitoba who had been assisting with the Games from the start, drew up a plan for what this organizational structure could look like and presented it at a meeting on August 10, 1967.<sup>46</sup> Table 5-02 summarizes who was present of this meeting. Many of the people who attended this meeting were provincial representative from their respective division of the CPA.

BC	Doug Mowat, Doug Wilson, Vic Cue, Stan Strong, R.P. Ryan
AB	Robert Fertile, Stu Warrior, Bruce Steel, Al Henderson
MB	Rob Beattie, Cyril Barrington, Merv Thomson, Allan Simpson
ON	Tony Pagnato, Bev Hallam, Robert Jackson
PQ	Bill Hepburn, John Rochon
NS	Don Curren, Dennis Doyle, Bill Alton

*Table 5-02: List of people from their respective provinces who attended a meeting leading up to the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) to create an organizational structure for a Canadian wheelchair sport organization. Source: Legg, David. "Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1997)." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Alberta, 2000.*

At the August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, the motion to create a national wheelchair sport association in Canada was unanimously carried after being made by Wilson of British Columbia and seconded by Fertile of Alberta.<sup>47</sup> The board of directors was elected, and it was decided that a draft constitution and by-laws would be presented at the Centennial Games that were being held in Montreal the following month.<sup>48</sup> The first board of directors were as follows: Doug Mowat (BC), Walt Thomson (BC), Harry McBeth (AB), Robert Fertile (AB), Wilhelmina McFayden (SK), Allan Simpson (MB), Mervin Thomson (MB), Bev Hallam (ON), Robert Jackson (ON), John Rochon (PQ), Bill Hepburn (PQ), Don Curren (NS), and Bill Alton (NS). An important fact about this board was that 10 of the 13 members were wheelchair users, meaning that not only were the Paraplegic Games organized primarily by people with disabilities but so too was the national sporting body.<sup>49</sup> At the Centennial Games in Montreal, on September 9, 1967, the constitution was drawn up and ready for submission, elections were held for the executive members of the board, and they were officially named the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (CWSA).<sup>50</sup> The executive members that were voted in can be seen in Table 5-03. And then, on November 24, 1967, CWSA was officially incorporated under the Federal

Corporations Act: Corporate and Consumer Affairs Canada.<sup>51</sup> In the first year, CWSA had an official membership count of 288 people.<sup>52</sup>

Chairperson	Robert Jackson (ON)
Vice Chairperson	Doug Mowat (BC)
Treasurer	Bob Hall (ON)
Executive Director	Bev Hallam (ON)
Athletic Director	Vic Cue (BC)
Recreation Director	Merv Oveson (BC)
Medical Director	Alan Kirby (SK)

*Table 5-03: The first executive members of the Canadian Wheelchair Sport Association board. Source: Legg, David. "Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1997)." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Alberta, 2000.*

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, Canada sent its first team to the Paralympic Games in 1968. After not having a system in place for choosing the Canadian team for the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967), approximately one year later there were pre-Paralympic trials hosted by the Paralympic Sports Organization based in Edmonton. The trials were held at the University of Alberta where 147 athletes competed to earn one of the 20 spots that would make up Team Canada.<sup>53</sup> While there was a more formal process for the selection of athletes in 1968, there was still much debate on the actual selection process. The board of CWSA disagreed on whether they should select the Canadian team with at least one representative from each province or if they should select the athletes with the best records, regardless of which province they came from.<sup>54</sup> After lengthy discussions that lasted until 5:00AM, it was decided that CWSA would select the best athletes to form team Canada. Ironically, when these athletes were chosen, each province did end up having at least one athlete representative.<sup>55</sup>

Two years following the first Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967), a second international wheelchair sport games were held, the Pan American Wheelchair Games. This will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter, however, on a local level, Joe Smithson from Manitoba was sent to compete in these Games.<sup>56</sup> On a national level, Canada was represented at the Pan American Wheelchair Games with 17 athletes and 10 coaches and administrators, with at least one athlete from each of the provincial members in CWSA.<sup>57</sup> With the Games occurring in Argentina, the cost was extremely high and CWSA was only able to fund 10 of the athletes and a few of the coaches so some of transportation costs were paid by the athlete or the home sport association.<sup>58</sup> The Canadian team was selected at a National Games that occurred in Hamilton, Ontario.<sup>59</sup>

### **International Impacts**

The final level of impacts from the inaugural Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) that will be discussed occurred at an international level. The Games brought together countries who had limited resources for people with disabilities, let alone sport resources. These impacts were felt most by smaller countries' wheelchair sport undertakings. In a letter from the President of the Asociación Nacional de Lisiados del Aparato Locomotor in Mexico, Jorge Beltran Romero expressed his gratitude to Simpson for his support with the two athletes from Mexico.<sup>60</sup> Romero stated, "we have now a group of persons who are awakening from a long slumber, realizing the possibilities of the handicapped."<sup>61</sup> Romero shares that there was little support in Mexico before the Paraplegic Games, but because of the Games, there were facilities being offered for training, students to volunteer as trainers, and physiotherapists, "pressmen", TV and radio sports programs, and even doctors who all expressed interest in assisting in whatever means necessary to help advance wheelchair sport.<sup>62</sup> Another country that benefited was Trinidad & Tobago

whose athletes won two gold medals, one silver, and one bronze at the Paraplegic Games. Upon their return, the Trinidad & Tobago Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled made an appeal to community members, stating that these athletes could be outstanding competitors at the Paralympics the following year if only they had proper training. They needed assistance and not pity.<sup>63</sup> This appeal was heard by some as the athletes gained access to train in a big international pool, although at the time the appeal was written, they were still hoping for more assistance.<sup>64</sup>

Another international impact of the Paraplegic Games was the creation of a council for future Paraplegic Games in connection with the Pan American Games, that would later be named the Pan American Wheelchair Games Council. Upon gaining permission for the Paraplegic Games to go ahead back in the fall of 1966, Simpson asked about future games. The Pan Am Games Committee agreed to the continuance of a wheelchair sport component similar to the Paralympics and British Commonwealth Paraplegic Games, again without any financial support.<sup>65</sup> An integral meeting at the University of Manitoba for the future of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am) took place on Friday, August 11, 1967, with John Golding (Jamaica), Ben Lipton (USA), Antonio Lococo (Argentina), Remy (Trinidad & Tobago), and Simpson (Canada) all present.<sup>66</sup> After discussions confirming that this committee wanted to continue on with the Pan Am Games, conversation focused on what type of disabilities should be eligible, the name of the Games, what languages should be used, and what the committee would look like.<sup>67</sup> It was decided that instead of following the Stoke Mandeville eligibility model (discussed in Chapter 4) as was the case for the 1967 Games, they would follow the United States model, which was more inclusive with amputees and people with cerebral palsy being eligible to compete. The Pan American Wheelchair Games Council decided to move forwards with the United States model and add to it as needed, so all physical disabilities would eventually be eligible.<sup>68</sup> With the

decision to include other disabilities, the council decided that moving forwards, the name would be the Pan American Wheelchair Games. The council for the Games would be composed of a president, secretary, and chairperson with the secretary being a permanent position as to not lose records, while the president and chairmen would change based on the location of the Games.<sup>69</sup> The official languages of the Games were to be English and Spanish.<sup>70</sup> A medical committee was also established with doctors from each country who were to set up a classification system and examine the athletes prior to the next competition.<sup>71</sup>

The decisions made at this meeting came to fruition in 1969 at the second Pan American Wheelchair Games that occurred in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where 14 countries came together.<sup>72</sup> These Games marked the first international competition that amputees and other physical disabilities were allowed to participate in, under a new classification system.<sup>73</sup> This was a huge leap in para sport as the Stoke Mandeville/Paralympics had been running for over 10 years but still only allowed people with spinal cord injuries to compete. In just two years, the Pan American Wheelchair Games had already expanded to be more inclusive, which reflects Simpson's desire to use the Paraplegic Games for social change. The main difference between the leaders of the Paralympics and the Pan American Wheelchair Games was their attitude towards sport, with the former believing sport was to be used strictly for rehabilitation while the latter believed in sport for social change.

While Guttman and Simpson had different mindsets when it came to wheelchair sport, Guttman still acknowledged the hard work that was put in by Simpson and his team. He was scheduled to attend the 1967 Games himself, but he had to undergo surgery and therefore was unable to travel.<sup>74</sup> On October 27, 1967, Guttman wrote in a letter to Simpson: "I am writing to send you my warmest congratulations. I think that by organizing these games you have done

very great work, and I hope that the Paraplegic Games Organization will go from strength to strength.”<sup>75</sup>

### **The “Para Sportsmen” Survey**

Beyond the different impacts that have been mentioned, there was another impact of the 1967 Paraplegic Games that does not fit neatly into the categories of local, national, and international. During the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967), a “para sportsmen” survey was distributed to all the athletes to gather medical information. The “para sportsmen” survey was facilitated by Basil Grogono, a doctor based in Winnipeg who specialized in spinal cord injuries, and handed out to every participant at the Paraplegic Games. The purpose of the survey was to determine what kind of person participated in wheelchair sports as well as to begin a computer study of spinal injuries.<sup>76</sup> However, with some language barriers and a lack of interest in completing the survey, there was only a 54.9% return rate (see Table 5-04) with the majority of the surveys only being partially completed.<sup>77</sup>

Country	Number of athletes	Number of returned surveys
Argentina	2	0
Jamaica	7	4
Mexico	2	2
Trinidad & Tobago	2	0
USA	49	28
Canada	60	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	122	67

*Table 5-04: Chart of the number of returned "Para sportmen" surveys. Source: Lai, Y. S. "Para Sportsmen Survey Report." October 1, 1967. Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.*

The survey was comprised of three sections: the first, and most-often completed section was socio-demographic information, e.g., name, date of birth, address, sex, marital status, country of origin, occupation, and education. It was found that Canadian athletes who responded took on quick jobs such as vocational or technical training, while American respondents furthered their education in order to get better jobs down the line.<sup>78</sup> Canadian respondents also listed their training experience in weeks or months, while the American respondents listed theirs in years.<sup>79</sup> Most paraplegics were mobile and able to drive themselves with adapted hand controls. Many people lived on their own after an initial stay, on average about a year, with family or in a hospital after their accident.<sup>80</sup> Grogono was not able to get much information on income, and he felt the question might be too personal so a solution for the future was to "devise some innocent looking questions to get the information that we want."<sup>81</sup> From an outsider's perspective, it is difficult to see how this is related to the initial purpose of this survey.

The second section of the survey gathered information concerning paraplegia, while the final section was focused on "complications," referring to various medical complications. (See

Figure 5-03 and 5-04).<sup>82</sup> In the majority of returned questionnaires both of these sections were left blank or only partially completed. A reason for this that was identified in the survey report was that there could have been too many medical terms that the average person was not familiar with.<sup>83</sup>

page 3.

**B. INFORMATION CONCERNING PARAPLEGIA**

1. Level of Lesion: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of Onset: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Cause:
  - (I) Trauma: (a) Car accident \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Motorcycle accident \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) Swimming or Diving \_\_\_\_\_ (d) Fall from height \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) Gun shot wound \_\_\_\_\_ (f) War incurred injury \_\_\_\_\_
  - (g) Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Specify)
  - (II) Disease: (a) Poliomyelitis \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Spinal Cord Disease \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) Spinal Tumor \_\_\_\_\_ (d) Multiple Sclerosis \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) Muscular Dystrophy \_\_\_\_\_ (f) Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Specify)
4. Treatment:
  - (a) Time between injury and hospital admission \_\_\_\_\_ hours.
  - (b) Time between injury and operation on spine \_\_\_\_\_ hours \_\_\_\_\_ days.
  - (c) Operation: (i) Number of times of operation on spine \_\_\_\_\_
  - (ii) Decompression \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iii) Fusion(Posterior) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (iv) Fusion(Anterior) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (v) Traction \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) Time immobilized after operation \_\_\_\_\_ days / \_\_\_\_\_ months.
  - (e) Time spent in initial hospital \_\_\_\_\_ months.
  - (f) Time spent in Rehabilitation Hospital \_\_\_\_\_ months.
  - (g) Number of re-admissions to hospital:
    - (i) General check-up \_\_\_\_\_ times.
    - (ii) Urinary tract infection \_\_\_\_\_ times.
    - (iii) Pressure sores \_\_\_\_\_ times.
    - (iv) Others \_\_\_\_\_ times.
5. Extent of Motor Disability:
  - (I) Bowel: (a) Normal \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Automatic \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) Suppository \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) Enema \_\_\_\_\_
  - (II) Bladder: (a) Normal \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Automatic \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) Condom \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) Catheter \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) Suprapubic \_\_\_\_\_
  - (f) Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Specify)

Figure 5-03: Page 3 of the "Para Sportmen" survey, Section B: Information Concerning Paraplegia. Source: Grogono, Basil. "Para Sportsmen Survey." n.d. Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

COMPLICATIONS page 5.

Pressure Sores:

1. Number since injury \_\_\_\_\_
2. Time first acquired after injury \_\_\_\_\_ days \_\_\_\_\_ weeks \_\_\_\_\_ months.
3. Number during past 3 years \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does it occur always in the same location: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Location:
  - (i) Sacral (i.e. Tail Bone) \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (ii) Ischial (i.e. Hip Area) Right \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (iii) Ischial (i.e. Hip Area) Left \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (iv) Trochanter (i.e. Buttock) Left \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (v) Trochanter (i.e. Buttock) Right \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (vi) Heel or ankle - Left \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (vii) Heel or ankle - Right \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (viii) Shins - Left \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (ix) Shins - Right \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (x) Back \_\_\_\_\_ times.
  - (xi) Elbow - Left \_\_\_\_\_ Times.
  - (xii) Elbow - Right \_\_\_\_\_ times.
6. Number of operations \_\_\_\_\_ times.
7. Time required for healing? \_\_\_\_\_ days \_\_\_\_\_ weeks \_\_\_\_\_ months \_\_\_\_\_ years.
8. How acquired? Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Number of consecutive hours sitting up per day: \_\_\_\_\_ hours.
10. Total number of hours sitting up per day: \_\_\_\_\_ hours.
11. Type of cushions used - if so, what type: \_\_\_\_\_

Urological:

1. Acute Infection requiring bed rest and antibiotics:  
Number of times: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Epididymitis \_\_\_\_\_ times.
3. Fistula \_\_\_\_\_ times.
4. Stones \_\_\_\_\_ times.
5. Any other complication of the Genito-urinary System: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Specify)

6. Operations:

- (i) Suprapubic \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) Ileo Conduit \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) Nephrectomy (i.e. Kidney Removal) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) Transurethral Resection (i.e. T.U.R.) \_\_\_\_\_
- (v) Sphincterotomy \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 5-04: Page 4 of the "Para Sportmen" survey, Section C: Complications. Source: Grogono, Basil. "Para Sportsmen Survey." n.d. Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Some of the findings in the final two sections include fewer traffic accidents leading to paralysis than Grogono had anticipated, since accidents had increased in the last decade, and pressure sores being the most common while people were in hospital initially following their accident.

Another finding was that paraplegics in Jamaica spent their lives in rehabilitation centres and only got sent home when the space was needed for new patients. It was also hard for the average person to find a job in Jamaica and seemingly impossible for a paraplegic.<sup>84</sup>

From the limited information received from the survey, Grogono still concluded that there were five “requirements” to become a “para sportsman”. These requirements included:

1. Security – one does not have to worry about the daily bread
2. Mobility – one must be able to go for practice often enough
3. Youth – young enough to cope with the vigorous activities
4. Physical Ability – must have the right muscles to do the job
5. Motivation – personal interest overrules level of lesion.<sup>85</sup>

It was also concluded by Grogono that this survey was not enough by itself to be accurate in any research and he proposed that “the only method to gain valid, correct information is to conduct personal interviews, however they cannot be done alone it must be a joint effort of the social workers, the physical medicine experts, the urologists, the psychiatrists, etc.”<sup>86</sup> If Grogono had gotten the data he had hoped, a research topic he had mentioned was to learn if there was correlation between the level of lesion to the level of achievement of an athlete and if so, could it predict the success of future paraplegics?<sup>87</sup> The two research questions were “Can we predict when a paraplegic will attain his physical limit?” and “Is the level of lesion the dominating factor to the events participated?”<sup>88</sup> Grogono believed that if he had medical records of all the athletes, he would be able to answer these questions. However, within the report of the “para sportmen” survey, it was never mentioned if this research project remained just an idea or if it did move forwards.<sup>89</sup>

While the goal of the organizers of the Paraplegic Games was social change, as it has been stated before, the medical model was very much dominant at the times of the Games. The complete impact of the survey remains unknown without knowing if research projects were able to move forwards. Looking back on the survey now, many of the questions seem like an invasion

of privacy, however, it was not viewed as such back then. In reference to this survey, Steadward stated, “it wasn’t judged as being invasive at all, we were just trying to dig in and get as much information about people who wanted to participate in wheelchair sports.”<sup>90</sup> So at the time, the impact of the survey, even given the low response rate, was that doctors learned more about paraplegic athletes who wanted to compete in sports, information that they would not have without the Paraplegic Games.

### **Conclusion**

The impacts from the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) can be seen at a local, national, and international level. Manitoba developed an official wheelchair sport and recreation association that according to Claire Simpson, grew steadily in the years following the Games.<sup>91</sup> The Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association was also established as a result of the Paraplegic Games. As discussed in Chapter 4, a lot of the para sport clubs throughout Canada before the Paraplegic Games did not last due to not having a formal organization.<sup>92</sup> The creation of CWSA would have helped to solve this problem so that clubs were able to formalize and continue growing. At an international level, the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) created a legacy sporting event, as the Games are still running today, now called the Parapan American Games.

Social change was the main goal for Simpson when organizing the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). To Simpson, social change meant changing the status quo of how disabled people were viewed in society.<sup>93</sup> In para sport specifically, at the time of the Games, athletes were viewed as patients first and the goal of sport was rehabilitation. This can be seen in the medicalized survey that was distributed to the athletes. However, we can also see evidence of this mindset changing in the 1969 Pan American Wheelchair Games by allowing athletes with other disabilities to compete. Another example of changing people’s mindsets was the Pan

American Games organizers changing their initial decision to allow the Paraplegic Games to take place. While social change was beginning to occur as a direct result of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967), the medical ideology of paraplegics participating in sport was still very much dominant, which will be discussed more in Chapter 6.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Terry Fraser, "Paraplegic Games Wheel into Town" *The Winnipeg Tribune*, August 9, 1967.
- <sup>2</sup> Allan Simpson, "Wheelchair Athletes to Invade" *Manitoba Business Journal*, (1967): 194-195.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> John Townsley, "Paraplegic Games Here in August" *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 1, 1967.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> "Beat of the City" *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 17, 1967.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> "Show to Aid Paraplegics" *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 17, 1967.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> "Grant Aids Games" *Winnipeg Free Press*, n.d.
- <sup>17</sup> "Photo" *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 9, 1967.
- <sup>18</sup> Allan Simpson, Letter to Pierre Gariepy, September 29, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Note: This item and all subsequent items from Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba reflect private collections shared by the organization to the researcher.
- <sup>19</sup> Gail Burnside, interviewed by the author, Winnipeg, MB, January 17, 2024.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Tony Mann, Letter to Frank Kennedy, July 5, 1967, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreational Studies fonds, University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> "About MWSA" Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, 2024. <http://mwsa.ca/about/>.
- <sup>27</sup> Claire Simpson, interview with the author, Winnipeg, MB, November 15, 2023.
- <sup>28</sup> Townsley, "Paraplegic Games Here in August."
- <sup>29</sup> "Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Final Medal Standings" n.d., Historical Collections, Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division, "Para Tracks" *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter* 8, no. 4, August 1967.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Marvin Thomson, Letter to Mr. Littlefair, April 6, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

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<sup>36</sup> David Legg, “Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1997)” Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Alberta, 2000. *This item and all subsequent items from David Legg reflect private documents shared by David Legg to the researcher.*

<sup>37</sup> Robert Steadward, virtual interview with the author, February 15, 2024.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> David Legg, “Allan Simpson notes” n.d.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Legg, “Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1977).”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> “Committee to investigate the establishment of a National Wheelchair Sports Association” March 22, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Legg, “Allan Simpson notes”

<sup>47</sup> Legg, “Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1977).”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> “Manitoba Wheelchair Sports & Recreation Club Newsletter” n.d., Historical Collections, Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> George Romero, Letter to Allan Simpson, September 1, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Milton Bartley, “Paraplegics in Need of Training Facilities” Trinidad & Tobago Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, n.d., Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> “Meeting of the International Delegates to the Paraplegic Games Notes” August 11, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Sobre Sillas De Ruedas, “Juegos Panamericanos” n.d., Historical Collections, Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ludwig Guttmann, Letter to Allan Simpson, October 27, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Basil Grogono, “Para Sportsmen Survey” n.d., Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>77</sup> Y. S. Lai, “Para Sportsmen Survey Report” October 1, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Steadward, interview with the author.

<sup>91</sup> C. Simpson, interview with the author.

<sup>92</sup> Legg, "Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1977)."

<sup>93</sup> Allan Simpson, interview by David Legg, June 3, 1977, Winnipeg, MB

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### **Introduction**

Throughout the evidence collected in this research project, we have learned more about the organization and the impacts of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). This includes why the Pan American Games Committee was approached in the first place, with international wheelchair sport competitions on the rise and Canada wanting to join in on the hosting. We also learned about the back and forth with that occurred with the Pan American Games Committee in order to receive approval for the Paraplegic Games to occur in the first place, and the lengths Allan Simpson went to in order to receive this approval, including a day long protest. We learned about the creation of the executive organizing committee which was primarily people with disabilities as well as the multiple organizations who provided their support towards the Games in a variety of ways. We now know how the executive organizing committee went about planning the games, from the financial aspects to choosing athletes and classification. We have more context into the competition itself including the opening and closing ceremonies as well as what some of the outcomes of the athletic events were, including world-record breaking performances. We were also able to see what some of the impacts of the Paraplegic Games were, at a local, national, and international level. A few of these impacts include the growth of the Monday Night Club in Winnipeg, the creation of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (CWSA), and the continuation of the Pan American Wheelchair Games – the most inclusive international wheelchair games in their time.

It is evident that the organizers and athletes of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) actively fought against the medicalized approach to para sport. They, specifically Simpson, wanted to change the discourse from a medical approach to a more social approach, not just in the para community but also the broader disability community. In both Chapters 4 and 5, there

are various examples of the medical model remaining the dominant approach to para sport, such as the lack of inclusion in the classification system, June Thomson's experience in charge of the medical team, the language used in some of the contemporary newspaper articles covering the event, and the medicalized survey discussed at the end of Chapter 5. Conversely, there are also examples of the Paraplegic Games executive organizing committee actively fighting against the medical model. Whenever Allan Simpson, the Managing Director of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967), discussed the Games in articles and interviews as well as in meetings of the executive organizing committee of the Paraplegic Games and the first board of the CWSA, where the majority of members were people with disabilities, Simpson would advocate for a social approach to disability. This was realized when the 1969 Pan American Wheelchair Games became the first international wheelchair sports competition to use a more inclusive classification system that resulted in the inclusion of more disabilities, as discussed in Chapter 5.

This chapter explores some of these examples in more depth beginning with the medical model that was dominant in para sport at the time of the 1967 Paraplegic Games. This is followed by a discussion of how the executive organizing committee actively challenged and fought against the medical model. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future research on the history of para sport in Manitoba.

### **Medical Model**

Even with the leaders of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) using a more social approach to organizing the event, there were still many people who viewed the athletes as patients first.

Robert Steadward believes this attitude still exists, stating in an interview, "you know the feelings and the attitudes that these people are patients, not athletes, in some countries and with some people, it still exists today."<sup>1</sup> As noted in Chapter 4, June Thompson stated,

My tour as ‘medical orderly’ to the para athletes was anything but dull. Did you ever try teaching two new army recruits how to get a quadriplegic in the bathtub when the bathroom is not much larger than the tub itself, and the quadriplegic only speaks Spanish... or try to undress about 190 lbs. of flail quadriplegia in the small hours of the morning after he has been out ‘supervising’ and lost all track of time and place...?<sup>2</sup>

She and the medical team viewed the athletes as patients and treated them as such. It seems as if accessibility for housing the athletes was not thought about prior to the Games as she mentions that the bathtub was not very large and therefore not accessible.<sup>3</sup> She also insinuates that because the athletes were disabled, they were unable to complete tasks without assistance such as undressing in the evening.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that the medical team viewed wheelchair athletes as helpless, which is the opposite of the message Simpson was trying to instill through the Paraplegic Games.

The classification system that was used for the Paraplegic Games followed the Stoke Mandeville Games classification system, which only allowed athletes with spinal cord injuries to compete. While the United States National Athletic Wheelchair Association did create their own classification system that included more disabilities, it was very new, having been used in their national games for the first time in 1966.<sup>5</sup> Basil Grogono, the Winnipeg-based doctor who conducted the medical survey at the Paraplegic Games, wrote a letter to Simpson encouraging him to limit participation in the Paraplegic Games to “poliomyelitis and other paraplegia victims” rather trying to create different classification systems for “cerebral palsy victims” and amputees.”<sup>6</sup> Not only are Grogono’s descriptions of the athletes extremely medicalized and patient-centred, but he did not support opening the Games to other disabilities. Another doctor who took this position was Ludwig Guttman. As discussed in Chapter 4, his letters to Simpson were not supportive of opening the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) to other disabilities either. It is perhaps not surprising that doctors were in support of only people with spinal cord injuries

participating in the Games as they viewed sport as rehabilitation. The language used defined the athletes by their disability and using the term “victim” is about as far from social change as one could be.

Another example where the athletes were not viewed as athletes during the Paraplegic Games was in the first wheelchair basketball game that took place between Canada and the United States which was recorded and televised. As discussed in Chapter 4, athlete Gary Odorowski complained of the bright television lights making it difficult to see the rim.<sup>7</sup> In this scenario, the athletes were not necessarily seen as patients but rather as a spectacle. With the lights impairing the athletes’ abilities to play, a decision was likely made to prioritize televising the game rather than giving the athletes a comfortable environment where they could thrive. Another factor that could have played into the performance of the athletes was a crowd of over 1000 people. This is most likely the largest crowd that the majority of the athletes had played in front of. The Canadian team had never actually played together before this game. They had only met four days prior to this game, so not only would they have had to deal with learning how to play as a team, but also the pressure of being on display.

In reflecting upon the press accounts about the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) that were discussed in Chapter 5, the majority of these newspaper articles included quotes from Simpson and his goals for social change through sport. Nevertheless, some of the language used reflected a medical view of people with disabilities. One *Winnipeg Free Press* article noted that, “these are athletic events in which the contestants are partially paralyzed and confined to wheelchairs.”<sup>8</sup> “Confined to wheelchairs” is a phrase that can be read as suggesting that the person is in some type of prison, when in reality the wheelchair gives the person more freedoms. The use of the word “contestants” rather than athletes, again suggests that perhaps the writer did

not see the athletes as athletes. This language is a prime example of the medical model being the dominant way to view people with disabilities.

However, there is some evidence that the medical discourse may have begun shifting as a result of the way the Paraplegic Games was organized and discussed in public by the organizers. In the speech given by Richard Bowles, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, during the opening ceremonies (see Chapter 4), Bowles stated, “as athletes in these Games, you are proof of the ability of paraplegics to return to your communities to lead full lives in almost every sense.”<sup>9</sup> While he did use the term athletes, the phrase “almost every sense” still leaves doubt as to what he believed people with disabilities were capable of.

These are only a few examples of the medicalized model to para sport being dominant at the time of the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967). The next section will discuss some examples where Simpson and the executive organizing committee actively fought against the medical model for a more social approach.

### **Social Change**

It is clear to see that in 1967 when the Paraplegic Games took place, there were many people who viewed the athletes as patients so the discourse surrounding them was very medicalized. Simpson and his team challenged this medical discourse at every chance they got as they saw sport as an avenue for social change. This included the way the organizers discussed the Paraplegic Games not only in public, but in private as well. An example of this can be seen in the article “Wheelchair Athletes to Invade,” where Simpson used phrases such as “highly skilled athletes,” “independent and productive citizens,” and “a remarkable group of paraplegics [who will] demonstrate not only their athletic skills but also their complete mastery over restrictive disabilities” when referring to people with disabilities.<sup>10</sup> This is a stark contrast to the previously

cited article where people with disabilities were viewed as “victims.” Simpson did not just have this mindset when speaking in public, these were his personal views that he whole-heartedly believed as his wife, Claire, recalls: “Allan was very aware that a lot of people with disabilities were still, you know, not getting out of their homes much, not active in their community and he saw sports as a way to facilitate that.”<sup>11</sup> Simpson did not believe sport was only for competition purposes either but that it could be used at the recreation level as a vehicle for inclusion.

Another example of social change occurring through the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) was evident in the executive organizing committee being comprised primarily of people with disabilities. The difference between leaders joining into or being a part of the community they are serving changes the way they approach helping the community. Being disabled themselves, the executive organizing committee saw past the rehabilitative aspect of sport and looked towards the future. People could only rehab for so long before they were “capable enough” to rejoin society. The executive organizing committee envisioned what sport could look like for people with disabilities when rehabilitation was not the end goal and then made that happen. Proof of the end goal not being rehabilitation can be seen in the grant application to the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate where the organizing committee states, “disabled persons should be allowed the right to compete at a level which will give expression to their athletic skills and full recognition for the abilities they possess.”<sup>12</sup> Evidence of the impact of this approach can be seen in the inclusion of people with other disabilities in the 1969 Pan American Wheelchair Games. Two years into the parallel set of games for the Pan Americans and a more inclusive system was used; this did not happen in the Paralympics until 1976 when the Games were hosted in Toronto and called Torontolympiad.<sup>13</sup> This speaks to who was in charge of organizing each set of Games, disabled people and allies with a focus on social change, or able-

bodied doctors with a focus on rehabilitation. CWSA's board was also comprised primarily of people with disabilities and after the success of the more inclusive classification system in the 1969 Pan American Wheelchair Games, they adopted it for all their national competitions.<sup>14</sup>

In his final post-Games message, included in the August 1967 edition of *Para Tracks*, a newsletter put together by the CPA, Simpson discussed his thoughts about the future of wheelchair sport in Canada and internationally. In Canada, he reflected upon the type of disability classification that should be used moving forwards, and whether Canadian competitions should follow the United States' model or develop their own.<sup>15</sup> Using the Stoke Mandeville classification was not an option here, most likely because of the lack of inclusion of disabilities other than spinal injuries. Simpson also wondered how sports could be combined with recreation for the more severely disabled at the highest level, insinuating that high-level quadriplegics should have an option to compete. His suggestion for this was for other para athletes to assist high-level quads since Canada did not have the resources to have separate sports and recreation groups.<sup>16</sup> His final suggestion involved aligning CWSA with other existing amateur sport bodies such as the Amateur Athletic Association.<sup>17</sup> From the beginning, Simpson always thought that wheelchair sport could be combined with able-bodied sport, and the two groups could one day compete with each another in the same competition.<sup>18</sup> According to his wife, Claire, Simpson always believed that there was a place for disabled sport but there were many sports that could be combined with regular sporting groups.<sup>19</sup> At no point in his message did Simpson refer to rehabilitation. He was thinking about the future and how sport could be made more inclusive for all people with disabilities.

Another example of looking toward making sport more accessible came during a presentation given by Tony Mann, the Executive Director of the Western division of the

Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA), at the 1967 Canadian Symposium of Recreation. Held in Montreal, this symposium took place one month before the Paraplegic Games. In his presentation, "Recreation for the Handicapped," Mann spoke about the social benefits of recreation and sport for people with disabilities, rejecting the notion that the only benefits of sport for people with disabilities revolved around medical rehabilitation. He began his presentation by noting the importance of recreation and all the positive benefits it brings people, so it was only natural that these benefits would also be applicable to people with disabilities. This may have been a concept unfamiliar to many in the audience. This meant that disabled people often showed up to places of recreation only to find them inaccessible. These issues were becoming more prominent as the rate of disabled people in society was going up.<sup>20</sup> Mann stated, "In many cases there is still the preconceived idea that the disabled person will always be a burden on others and spoil the fun, that the numbers are too small and the solutions too complicated to do anything about it..."<sup>21</sup> A suggestion given during this presentation was to start in universities, specifically in physical education programs, that way students could be taught about the importance of recreation for the disabled and when they became employees, they would be able to implement these types of programs.<sup>22</sup>

Other issues mentioned were financial barriers, physical facilities and architectural barriers, and a lack of organizations specifically for recreation for persons with disabilities.<sup>23</sup> Even though these barriers existed, it did not stop people from partaking in recreation. He gave the example of the Monday Night Club in Winnipeg that was organized by people with disabilities for themselves in partnership with some smaller organizations. The benefits of these nights went way beyond the benefits of recreation for health. People with disabilities were able to be around like people who understood what they were going through, they were able to find

something they could excel at which boosted self-esteem and confidence, and they were able to have somewhere to go to get out of their house where they would feel accepted.<sup>24</sup> Finishing off the presentation, Mann gave suggestions for whose responsibility it is to ensure that people with disabilities are granted recreation opportunities. In order he listed, government sources who provide funding, schools and courses training professional recreation staff, local recreation departments, municipalities and service clubs, rehabilitation agencies, welfare departments, and people with disabilities themselves.<sup>25</sup> There was a specific task assigned to each suggested area. For example, municipalities and service clubs were encouraged to build new facilities that are accessible without the person with a disability having to be dependent on another person to assist them getting inside.<sup>26</sup> The message Mann was trying to get across is that accessibility and inclusion is everyone's responsibility and if all the groups mentioned worked together, barriers would get eliminated and people with disabilities would have full access to recreation.

At the time of the presentation in 1967, Mann's approach to creating inclusive and accessible recreation opportunities would have been an anomaly given that recreation for disabled people was primarily structured for rehabilitation. However, many of the barriers that Mann addressed in his presentation are barriers that still exist today. The social model of disability places emphasis on society to change and be more inclusive and accepting of people with disabilities, which is exactly the point Mann was trying to make in his presentation. Simpson and the executive organizing committee shared this belief as well. With para sport rooted in the medical model upon its inception, we can see the hold it had in 1967, as well as the hold it still has today with many of the barriers identified in 1967 remaining barriers today. With what we know about para sport prior to the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967), it was very

medicalized and while the Paraplegic Games were the first to fight against the medical model, they certainly were not the last, as the fight for a more social approach to para sport continues.

### **Future Research**

While there have been changes over the last 50+ years, para sport today remains predominantly in the medical model. There is much more research that can be done to assist in moving para sport from the medical model to a more social model. One area of this research is the history of para sport, there is still a lot to uncover about the history of para sport in Winnipeg. This research project has led to more questions specifically about the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967), such as the legacy the Games created. The Pan American Games took place every four years, however the second Pan American Wheelchair Games took place two years after the inaugural Games, why is that? Another question is around the classification system, how did CWSA create the more inclusive one? Was it from the United States National Athletic Wheelchair Association or did they create their own? Another area to research in this regard is the switch at the Paralympics to the new classification system that included more disabilities in 1976.

Another topic to be considered within Winnipeg is the role of Deer Lodge Centre, which was originally built as a military convalescent hospital for returning WWI soldiers and is the first documented place of wheelchair sport in Canada. It was paralyzed veterans at the Deer Lodge Centre who started the Western Division of the CPA and there were sports competitions held on the front lawn, which may be the first documented wheelchair sport competitions in Canada.<sup>27</sup> Research into this would discover what approach was taken at Deer Lodge, rehabilitation versus the social change mindset that was incorporated at the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967).

Winnipeg is also where wheelchair rugby was invented in 1977 by a group of quadriplegics out of the rehab hospital at the Health Sciences Centre. Then called murderball,

wheelchair rugby is a more accessible version of wheelchair basketball that quadriplegics can play. Again, this is a more social approach as a game was invented specifically for people with disabilities to play, rather than most sports which were adapted from able bodied sports.

Research into the creation of wheelchair rugby can provide context into why the inventors came up with the idea in the first place, how this idea progressed, and what types of barriers they faced in creating a contact sport for people with disabilities. Another area to research could identify any connections to either Deer Lodge or the Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) and the social approach that was taken for the latter.

In and around the same time these three events took place, there was a disability advocacy movement also occurring in Winnipeg. It will be important to understand the ways in which this wider context in the disability community influenced sport and recreation opportunities as well as in which the ways these opportunities may have contributed to the wider disability advocacy movement.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Steadward, virtual interview with the author, February 15, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> June Thompson, Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division, “Para Tracks” *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter* 8, no. 4, August 1967.

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division, “Para Tracks” *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter* 8, no. 4, August 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Paraplegic Games (Pan Am 1967) Committee, “Application for the Grant to the Fitness & Amateur Sport Directorate, Department of Health and Welfare” December 1966, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Note: This item and all subsequent items from Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba reflect private collections shared by the organization to the researcher.

<sup>6</sup> Basil Grogono, “Letter to Allan Simpson” May 24, 1967, Historical Collections, Spinal Cord Injuries Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>7</sup> Terry Fraser, “Paraplegic Games Wheel into Town” *Winnipeg Tribune*, August 9, 1967.

<sup>8</sup> “Beat of the City” *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 17, 1967.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Allan Simpson, “Wheelchair Athletes to Invade” *Manitoba Business Journal*, (1967): 194-195.

<sup>11</sup> Claire Simpson, interview with the author, Winnipeg, MB, November 15, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Paraplegic Games Committee, “Application for the Grant to the Fitness & Amateur Sport Directorate.”

<sup>13</sup> Steadward, interview with author.

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<sup>14</sup> Sobre Sillas De Ruedas. “Juegos Panamericanos.” Historical Collections, Manitoba Wheelchair Sports Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>15</sup> Canadian Paraplegic Association Central Division, “Para Tracks” *Canadian Paraplegic Association Newsletter* 8, no. 4, August 1967.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> C. Simpson, interview with the author.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Tony Mann, “Recreation for the Handicapped Presentation” June 1967, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreational Studies fonds, University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> David Legg, “Strategy Formation in the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (1967-1997)” Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Alberta, 2000.

Fall 2023

# Interview Participants Needed

## A First Look at the 1967 Paraplegic Games: Exploring the Barriers and Impacts

This research project is to learn about the inaugural Paraplegic Games (Pan American Wheelchair Games) that took place in 1967 in Winnipeg Manitoba. Interviews will be between an hour to an hour and a half.



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

### INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CRITERIA:

- You attended the 1967 Paraplegic Games as a coach, athlete, administrator or spectator
- You know someone who attended the games as a coach, athlete or administrator

**Principal Investigator:** Colleen Moyer  
moyerc@myumanitoba.ca

**Research Supervisor:** Russell Field  
russell.field@umanitoba.ca

Please email Colleen Moyer for more information or if you are interested in participating at:

**moyerc@myumanitoba.ca**

## Appendix B

**Interview Consent Form**

**Research Project Title:** A First Look at the 1967 Paraplegic Games: Exploring the Barriers and Impacts

**Principal Investigator:** Colleen Moyer – moyerc@myumanitoba.ca

**Research Supervisor:** Russell Field - [russell.field@umanitoba.ca](mailto:russell.field@umanitoba.ca)

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

1. The purpose of this research is to learn about the inaugural Paraplegic Games that took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1967. The main research question of this study is to learn if the original goals outlined in the official brochure were achieved. Did the 1967 Paraplegic Games lead to further development of wheelchair sport locally? Did the Games lead to more education about disability sport, rehabilitation, and social culture? And were people with disabilities the ones leading this education? This is the first research project on the 1967 Paraplegic Games and the overarching goal is to begin writing their history, while simultaneously writing the history of para sport in Manitoba.
2. Your role will be to share your experiences of the 1967 Paraplegic Games through an interview. There will be an initial meeting to get to know one another and to over the project details, including the consent form. At this meeting, we will set a time and date for the interview that will take approximately 1-1½ hours. There is a possibility of a second follow up interview, but that will be discussed only if the need arises. The total time commitment will be between 3-5 hours.
3. The interviews will be recorded using a recording app on a phone.
4. The benefits to this research are being able to educate others by sharing your story experiences at the Paraplegic Games.
5. It is the hope that you will allow your name to be used in this research so you can be identified as a pioneer in Canadian para sport. However, there is the option to use a pseudonym if you prefer. In all typed up research, including the interview transcript, the pseudonym will be used. Please indicate below, with your initials, if you are comfortable using your own name or if you would prefer a pseudonym.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable using my own name.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to use a pseudonym.

6. A \$25 gift card will be provided to each research participant as a thank you for their time and experience.
7. You have the right to withdrawal from this study without question at any point during the research process, up and until the thesis has been written and the webpage has been

- made. You will receive an email or phone call 2 weeks before the completion of the thesis and website which will serve as your last opportunity to withdrawal from the study.
8. There will be a debrief immediately following the interview, where any questions that arise throughout the interview or anything you would like scratched from the record can be discussed. Within one month of the interview, a copy of the interview transcript will be sent to you, either through email or a hard copy in the mail and you will be able to take out or add to any of the comments you made.
  9. The research results will be written up in a thesis, a copy can be made available to you should you desire to read it. The results will also be translated into a website. The data collected from the interview will be included in aspects of the website. Before the website goes public, you will have access to it and can suggest edits before it goes live.
  10. Alongside the thesis and website, a smaller summary of the results will be written up and delivered to you, either through email or a hardcopy in the mail, in June 2024.
  11. All confidential data will be deleted within 5 years of the completion of this research project, Fall of 2029.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Officer at 204-474-7122 or [HumanEthics@umanitoba.ca](mailto:HumanEthics@umanitoba.ca). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Oral History Interview Guide

- Name, age, do you identify as a person with a disability?
- What was your role in the Paraplegic Games?
  - If athlete, what sports did you compete in?
- What was your first experience with para sport?
- Can you tell me about the first time you heard about the Games or that there was a possibility of the Games happening?
- Can you identify some of the barriers that were overcome to make the Games possible?
- Barrier examples – accessibility of University, transportation – local and international, equipment, volunteers, financial
- What was the atmosphere like at the Games?
- Did you attend the Pan American Games prior to the Paraplegic Games? If so, what were some of the differences you noticed?
- Do you know how the Pan American Games Committee was approached? Why them?
- Do you think the centennial being that year had a role in the inaugural Paraplegic Games occurring?
- Were accessibility changes made to the campus? Or did the athletes have to adjust?
- Did you have a part to play in the medical survey? What was your opinion on it at the time?
- How do you think Winnipeg benefited from hosting the first Paraplegic Games?
- How do you think para sport nationally/internationally benefited from these Games?
- How did the Paraplegic Games affect wheelchair sport in Winnipeg?

- What was the para sport community in Winnipeg like prior to the Games? After the Games?
- Were you a part of any form of education as a direct result of the Games?
- In your opinion, how did the Paraplegic Games assist the para sport community?
- How would you like to see the information gathered for this project?