



TOM VANHOVE

Country: Belgium

Date of Birth: 17/8/1983

Sport: Goalball

Discipline: Male event



Sports Career

Paralympic Games : Competed in 2012

World Championships : Competed in 2018

Why do you wish to become a member of the IPC Athletes' Council?

I've been a goalball athlete on an international level for over 15 years. I've seen the Paralympic Movement growing and professionalising. The Paralympic Games are now one of the biggest sports events on earth, but there is always room for improvement.

I would like that everybody has access to team sports all over the world. I started playing goalball because it was my only team option at that time! By working in a team, you learn more than only sports-specific skills. Not only my social skills, but also my language skills (French and English) improved a lot by participating with the goalball community.

I would like to be the voice of the blind and team sports athletes inside the Council and contribute to a better visibility of team sports, as well as accessibility for everybody in the world no matter what his (social) background is!

Why do you wish to run for the IPC Athletes' Council?

I want to help with the further development of (blind) team sports inside the IPC. Also, accessibility to sport and in life is very important to me and I would like to implement this within the IPC.

What special skills, background and expertise will you bring to the IPC Athletes' Council?

25 years blinds sports club member, +15 year playing on international level, +12 years club board member and organiser of international goalball tournament.

How has sport impacted your life?

Since childhood, I have been practising several sports with my brothers, but at 11, I joined VIGE Noordzee and started with goalball. Since then, (team) sport has become an even more important part of my life.

What is your vision for the IPC Athletes' Council?

It should be the bridge between players and the IPC. A lot of players are not aware of what's happening on the higher level. I think this Council can make the IPC more accessible!

Why is the athletes' voice important to you?

Because after all it is about them! All decisions have an influence on the athletes, so it's very important they get heard!

What is the biggest challenge you have experienced as an athlete? How did you overcome it?

Getting my message of inclusive (team) sports to local media and governments. Even if the NPC is doing a lot, coverage of sports is very limited in (developed) countries.