



International  
**Paralympic**  
Committee

## Preamble

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**International Paralympic Committee**

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Sport for persons with an impairment can be traced to the 1880s. However, it was the introduction in 1945 of a whole new regime of treatment for persons with spinal cord injuries that led to the development of the world sports movement for athletes with an impairment, today known as the Paralympic Movement. Sir Ludwig Guttmann revolutionised rehabilitation theory and practice at the Stoke-Mandeville Hospital in England by placing particular emphasis on sport. Over the years, what started as a by-product of physical rehabilitation for WWII veterans has evolved into a sport-based movement, where the abilities of the athletes have taken centre stage.

In 1948, Sir Ludwig Guttmann founded the Stoke Mandeville Games (SMG). The first multi-national participation in the Stoke Mandeville Games (Dutch and British war veterans) led to the first International Stoke Mandeville Games (ISMG) in 1952, the precursor of the modern Paralympic Games.

In its beginnings, the Paralympic Movement developed through the establishment of different disability-specific sports organisations, known today as the International Organisations of Sport for the Disabled (IOSDs).

In 1960, the first of these organisations, the International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee (ISMGC), was constituted in Rome. In 1972 this was renamed to International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF) and later became the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF). In 1964, the International Sport Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD) was established to include athletes with an amputation. In 2004, ISMWSF and ISOD joined forces and later took the name International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS). The Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CPISRA) was created in 1978, followed by the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) in 1981, and the International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS) in 1986.

In 1960, the 9th Annual International Stoke Mandeville Games took place in Rome, Italy, a few weeks after the Olympic Games. Due to this symbolic gesture and the participation of more than 400 athletes from 23 countries, these Games are honoured as the first Paralympic Games. Since then, the Paralympic Games have been held in the same years as the Olympic Games, and, starting with the Seoul Paralympic Games in the summer of 1988, they have been hosted in the same cities and venues as their Olympic counterparts. 'Paralympic Games' has been the official term since 1988. The name derives from the Greek preposition 'para' ('beside' or 'alongside') and the word 'Olympics' (the Paralympics being the parallel Games to the Olympics).



The first Paralympic Winter Games were staged in 1976 in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden. Since 1992 in Tignes-Albertville (France), Paralympic Winter Games have also been hosted in the same cities as the Olympic Winter Games.

As the movement developed, the need for more co-ordination and co-operation between the different organisations grew. In 1982, ISMGF, CP-ISRA, IBSA and ISOD joined forces to create the International Co-ordinating Committee of Sports for the Disabled in the World (ICC). In 1986, the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (CISS) and the International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) also joined. The ICC represented the interests of the disability groups and governed the Paralympic Games between 1982 and 1992. However, growing demands for improved national representation and a more sport-focused movement led to the establishment in 1989 in Düsseldorf, Germany, of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) as the recognised governing authority of the Paralympic Movement. Representatives from the six IOSDs, which are recognised as founding members, and 42 National Paralympic Committees and National Organisations for Sport for Disabled were present at the meeting. They approved the first IPC Constitution and elected the first President, Dr. Robert Steadward from Canada. Not until five years later, in 1994, did the IPC assume full responsibility over the Paralympic Games.

In 2001 the IPC General Assembly mandated a review of the direction and structure of the IPC. Under the leadership of the new President, Sir Philip Craven, a strategic review process was implemented in 2002. This process culminated in the approval of a package of proposals at the historic “Engineering the Future” General Assembly 2003 in Torino, and climaxed in 2004 with the approval of this Constitution. The Constitution and its Bylaws govern the IPC and the Paralympic Movement.

In 2003, the IPC adopted a vision that reflects the ultimate aim of the Paralympic Movement:

To Enable Paralympic Athletes to Achieve Sporting Excellence and Inspire and Excite the World.

Under the supreme authority of the IPC, the Paralympic Movement encompasses all athletes and officials belonging to the NPCs, the IOSDs, the International Federations (IFs), the Regional Organisations (ROs), the IPC Sports Committees, IPC Councils, IPC Standing Committees, IPC Councils and any other persons or organisations who agree to be guided by the IPC Constitution and Bylaws. The criterion for belonging to the Paralympic Movement is formal membership or recognition by the IPC.

After its creation in 1989, the IPC located its Headquarters in Bruges, Belgium. In 1997, the IPC General Assembly voted to relocate it to Bonn, Germany, and to establish for the first time a professional staff structure. The official opening of the new Headquarters took place on 3 September 1999 in the presence of more than 500 guests from 60 countries.