



get set

The Paralympic Games

History of the Paralympic Games

In 1944, the doctor, Sir Ludwig Guttmann, was working with war veterans with spinal injuries when he started to think about using sport to help them. He was convinced that making them more active would help them recover from serious injury.

So, at the same time as the London Olympic Games in 1948, he organised the first wheelchair Games at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, in Buckinghamshire. Four years later international competitors started to come to the event and interest grew. In 1964 the first official Paralympic Games were held, just after the Olympic Games. By 1984, more than 1,000 athletes from 41 countries were competing in 14 sports.



Now, the Paralympic Games always happen in the same year as the Olympic Games, but it is only since 1988 that they have also used the same venues, such as stadia and other facilities.

Fascinating facts

Did you know that the name 'Paralympic' comes from the Greek word 'para' which means 'beside' or 'alongside'? The name means a competition held in parallel with the Olympic Games.

Did you know that in 2012 there will be 20 sports in the Paralympic Games.

Paralympic Games coming home

The London Paralympic Games will begin on 29 August 2012, when athletes with a disability will compete in 20 different sports.

Staging the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will be a fantastic experience for London.

British Paralympic Association Chief Executive Phil Lane said, "The UK is passionate about Paralympic sport. The movement was born here, at Stoke Mandeville, so it feels as if the Paralympic Games are coming home."