

Foundation for History of Physiotherapy **Physiotherapy in perspective, 50 years past - present.**

The role of the physiotherapist in the Paralympics



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Introduction

The first Paralympic Summer Games started in 1960. In 1980, the Netherlands had the honor of organizing this largest sporting event in the world for athletes with a physical disability in the National Sports Center Papendal in Arnhem.

After 60 years, the Summer Paralympics will take place in Tokyo for the 15th time this year. Time to look back.

Paralympics International



Sir Ludwig Guttmann

It was an idea of Sir Ludwig Guttmann, to regularly organize competitions for people with disabilities. Guttmann organized in the hospital, in Stoke Mandeville, competitions for patients with a

limitation to promote recovery in the broad sense. For example, in 1952 an event took place in this regard for the first time place, where a Dutch delegation of athletes also took part in competitions. At the time, sporting events were also organized in Haarlem for war victims.

The most important thing was that there was a realization that you can also exercise with a disability in addition to the many other benefits that sport offers. Archery was an area where people with disabilities competed against athletes without disabilities. Only recently, in fact.

In 1960, the Summer Games for people with disabilities were held in Rome for the first time. These Summer Games in Rome are seen as the first Paralympic Games. The Paralympic Games and the Olympic Games were connected from that moment on.

Four Paralympic values have been established: **Courage, Determination, Inspiration and Equality (fraternization)**. That should appeal to every physiotherapist.

This year's Paralympic Games will be held in the Japanese capital Tokyo from August 24 to September 5.

This year's Winter Games will be held in Beijing in 2022.



Gertjan van der Linden, national coach of the Dutch women's wheelchair basketball team, supervises the training of his Paralympic selection. As an international, Van der Linden was named the best player in the world.

Paralympics in Nederland

On 21 July 1980, Princess Margriet opened the first Paralympic Games in the Netherlands at the Papendal National Sports Center in Arnhem. The Olympic flame was lit by the

Amersfoort basketball player Harrie Veenema. An event that lasted ten days.

See video: [opening Paralympics Papendal](#)



Princess Margriet opens the Paralympics at the National Sports Center Papendal in 1980.

International newspaper



Olympic Village with Princess Margriet during the opening.

The news was brought daily by a specially published international newspaper 'the Olympic Village' with the visit of Queen Beatrix on the front page.

In the 2nd photo on the right, the Olympic Plaza with Theo Kwaak, physiotherapist from Heliomare, from where a delegation of physiotherapists was present including Adriaan Kraaijpoel and Elly Nossent, about the three Olympic participants from Heliomare (archers) to guide.



Theo Kwaak, physiotherapist, on the Olympic Plaza



Paralympics in Nederland (1980)

The Paralympic Games have been held in the same city where the Olympics are held since 1988; although this was only officially introduced in 2001. The chance that we will be able to organize the Paralympics in the Netherlands again is therefore only possible if we also make it to the Olympic Games here. All the more so to cherish these memories.

The role of the physiotherapist in the Paralympics.

It is interesting to find out how the first physiotherapists were involved in the Paralympics at the time and how this is taking place today.

First of all, the games in Arnhem gave an enormous boost to disabled sports in the Netherlands and from that moment on, this branch of sport became more and more professional, just like in the rest of the world.

In the Netherlands, there has always been the NEBAS, the sports association for physical, In

Peter Dijkstra, physiotherapist for the Olympic team, treats wheelchair basketball player Xena Wimmenhoeve at the Papendal sports center for a wrist injury before the Tokyo Summer Games.

visually and sensory handicapped.

In 2008 the name 'Gehandicaptensport Nederland' was introduced, which stimulates and facilitates sports and exercise for all people with a disability.

Disabled Sports Netherlands wants to inspire athletes with disabilities to excel and experience the power of sport, regardless of level or disability.

The Yearbook of Sports Medicine (2010) states that the Olympic ambition will lead to an increase in the number of active sports participants, which will have both positive consequences (better health, social aspects, lower disease burden) and negative consequences in the sense of more sports injuries, increase in costs as a result of sports injuries. This is where the role of the physiotherapist comes into play, which will become increasingly prominent in guiding sports participants, in this case also athletes with a disability.



Many physiotherapists are involved in the Dutch Paralympic Team, but of course there are also physiotherapists involved throughout the year to

to guide athletes to this major event. Nevertheless, Ester Vergeer (this year Chef de Mission) thinks in 2008 that the attention for this sector could be improved.



Esther Vergeer

"There is insufficient recognition of the necessity, importance and function of Dutch sports for the disabled and insufficient recognition of the high level at which I myself practice sports", says Esther Vergeer (Issue NPI 2008).

Scientific research into adapted sports practice also has yet to get underway, Van der Woude notes (Issue NPI 2001).

The future role of the physiotherapist in the Paralympics

Interest in adapted sports in the Paralympic context continues to grow. For example, teachers from the Arnhem-Nijmegen University of Applied Sciences went to Beijing with the mission: "To investigate what contribution we as physiotherapists (both students and training) can make to sports with a disability and to determine whether sports with a disability can be given more attention in the curriculum." A beautiful

development that will hopefully be followed by the other courses and the results of which can influence

are on outstanding questions. After all, the role and functioning of the physiotherapist in the supervision of athletes with a disability deserves our attention, in addition to the applied scientific questions.



Local initiatives

There are also local initiatives to encourage adapted sports practice. This is how it organizes rehabilitation center Heliomare the 'Paralympics' in its own way,

Called "Heliolympics" . A great initiative to promote the Olympic idea and to stimulate/enthusiasm adapted sports.

Princess Irene opens the Heliolympics in Heliomare.



*"Sport connects, evokes emotions and connects.
Peter Heerschop".*



*Co-organizer Heliolympics and movement agog Ans Konijn
and Peter Heerschop, Paralympics ambassador.*

In addition to the role of the physiotherapist in the Paralympic Games, we also see that technology has made many leaps forward and therefore also offers more possibilities for adapted sports at top level. It is wonderful to see how athletes today sprint with such a light carbon spring, which of course cannot be compared with the

material at the time in 1980 (Paralympics Arnhem). Huub Vossen was also present at the Paralympics in Arnhem in 1980 and he can still remember the 100 meter sprint very well. *"The Paralympic athletes were able to sprint insanely hard with the material at the time,"* said Huub Vossen.



*"Paralympians, you are an example to so many."
Erica Terpstra*

References

1. Paralympic speech. Info: http://www.ikjijwij.info/pdf/speaking_information_paralympic.pdf
2. Yearbook Sports Medicine, 2010.
3. Paramedics and Disabled Sports. Issue NPI 2008. Info: https://adoc.pub/14-zorg_increasingly-more_often_complex_paramedische_zorg_neemt_hoge_vl.html
4. Annual plan 2021 Disabled sports Netherlands.

Sources

1. Information Foundation for History of Physiotherapy (SGF).
2. Wim Schoemans, MSc, MA. Physiotherapist, philosopher. Secretary SGF.

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Imagery

1. History of physiotherapy foundation (SGF). Meeting point for Medical History in the Netherlands (TMGN) Foksdiep 8 Urk.
2. Theo Kwaak, Huub Vossen, physiotherapists rehabilitation center Heliomare.

1980 Paralympics in Nederland

Olympische Spelen voor Gehandicapten



21 juni - 5 juli

Prijs Price **fl. 5,-**

Plaats Place	Arnhem Papendal
Datum Date	2-7
Tijd Time	09.00 - 18.00
Nummer Number	58921

HOF ARTS SCHIPHOL

Werp- en springnummers
De **Paraplegies** kennen slechts werpnummers die vanuit de stoel worden bedreven. Zowel bij discus, kogel als speer worden hun rolstoelen in de werpring vastgezet zodat deze niet kunnen vertrollen of omslaan. De **Blinden** beoefenen alle werpnummers volgens de normale reglementen. Zij worden door hun coach geholpen bij het opstellen in de werpsector of cirkel en het verlaten daarvan.
De springnummers worden 5f met aanloop of vanuit stand gesprongen al naar gelang de mate van blindheid van de atleet. **Geamputeerden** beoefenen alle werp- en springnummers met of zonder hun protheses, al naar gelang de mogelijkheden die de amputatie hen toestaat. **Spastici** kunnen alle disciplines volgens de atletiekvoorschriften uitvoeren.

