

Disabled Sports: Hong Kong & International Perspective

從香港及國際角度看傷殘人士體育運動

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Abstract

Disability covers a wide spectrum of groups including physical, visual, hearing, intellectual and psychiatric. In this article physical disability is the core for description. Disabled sports are therefore deliberated basing on the history and achievement of the Hong Kong Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (SAP) in the last 3 decades and the involvement and impact of international federations, namely the FESPIC (Far East & South Pacific) Federation and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) on SAP.

摘要

「傷殘人士」的含義很廣泛，包括體障、視障、失聰、智障、精神病患等。本文旨在探討傷殘人士體育運動的發展，並以香港傷殘人士體育協會過去三十年的歷史及成績為骨幹，展示遠南運動聯會及國際傷殘奧委會在其發展中的影響。

Introduction

When one thinks of the 'disabled', one often imagines a person in a wheelchair (Beech, 1990). According to Max Murray and Billy Sankey (1991) physical, visual, hearing, intellectual and psychiatric disability form the main disability groups. As there is a variety of disabilities, only the physical aspect, and in this paper particularly in relation to sports is narrowed down for deliberation both in Hong Kong and international perspective.

In the article "Development of Sports for the Physically Disabled" York Chow (1989) states "... Although many areas in rehabilitation have yet to be improved, we can be proud of the opportunities given to the disabled in the area of sports

in Hong Kong." Chow further presents a short history on the development of sports for the disabled in Hong Kong looking forward to the development of elites, and broadening the interest in sports for disabled. As the history tells us (Chow, 1989) more and more disabled people took up sports as a leisure and recreation activity, and a variety of programs had to be developed to cater for different interest.

Disabled Sports in Hong Kong, opportunities to develop sports interest and realize the physical potential and pursuit of excellent of the disabled were all reinforced in the Chiang's article (2000) and Chiang's presentation (2002) on the "Paralympic Sports in Hong Kong – Past Present and Future" at the 7th International Symposium of Asian Society for Adapted Physical Education and Exercise.

Disabled Sports: Hong Kong Perspective

Early Stage to 1970's

The sports for the disabled should be back-dated in the 1940's when Sir Ludwig Guttmann, "Father of Sports for the Disabled" introduced sports into the medical rehabilitation program of his spinal patients at the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in the U.K. in the mid 1940's. His philosophy and foresight had far-reaching influence on the lives not only of spinal cord paralysed persons but many other types of disabled persons throughout the world (34th International Stoke Mandeville Games Souvenir Programme, 1985). The importance of sports for the disabled has also been gradually recognized in Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong sports were started in different hospitals and centers during the 1960's as part of the medical rehabilitation program. In 1965, the first government superintendent physiotherapist Lady Rigby (Chow, 1989) presented a trophy for wheelchair basketball tournament. This marks the beginning of competition for disabled sports. In the early years most of the matches were played between patients of Kowloon Rehabilitation Centre (KRC), a center attached to a government hospital and those of the Margaret Trench Medical Rehabilitation Centre (MRC) which was operated under a voluntary agency, the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation. An archery club for disabled was formed in Aberdeen Rehabilitation Centre (ARC), a center run by the Social Welfare Department of the government. Physiotherapists therefore played an important role in sport activities in those days.

The first attempt to provide a comprehensive sports day for the physically disabled came in 1970 when a committee of the Joint Council (Rehabilitation Division) of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service led by Dr. (then Professor) Harry Fang planned the 1st Annual Sports Day for the Physically Handicapped. This event coincided with the visit of the New Zealand Paraplegic team on its return from the International Stoke Mandeville Games (ISMG). The venue was at Royal Air Force base, next to the former Hong Kong International Airport. The program included wheelchair races, table tennis, shot-put, javelin, wheelchair obstacle races, archery and wheelchair basketball (Chow, 1989).

The sports day was very successful and the close relationship between disabled sportsmen of Hong Kong and overseas was established. It was the beginning of contact at international competitions. A working group continued to plan for the

2nd sports day in 1971. The Hong Kong Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (SAP) was then formally inaugurated as an independent body in January 1972 under the leadership of Prof. Sir Harry Fang, the "Father of Rehabilitation & Sports for the Disabled" and Mrs. Maureen Wagg.

The Objectives of SAP are (Constitution, page 1) :

- To promote and encourage sports activities among the physically disabled.
- To organize different sports activities and sports training for the physically disabled.
- To promote public awareness of the importance of sports for the disabled.
- To organize various sports competitions for different levels.
- To select athletes and organize the Hong Kong teams for all international competitions.
- To up-grade the standard of performance among physically disabled athletes.

with the motto -

"It is ABILITY and not DISABILITY that counts"

Financially, SAP has been supported by the Social Welfare Department and the Community Chest of Hong Kong (Ng, 1992). Funds for sending teams overseas could be sought via another government body, the Council for Recreation & Sport (a statutory body called Hong Kong Sports Development Board now). It is also worthy mentioning that SAP is the first organization in the world to affiliate to the National Olympic Committee, namely the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC).

Locally, sports increased from 5 in 1972 to 11 in 1991 (Ng, 1992) and 13 at present (Promotion Pamphlet, 2003). They are Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Wheelchair Basketball, Boccia, Wheelchair Fencing, Judo, Lawn Bowl, Power lifting, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis & Wheelchair Tennis. Training and competition programs have also been changed to more specific to meet the needs of different disabilities as well as different age groups. In addition to the Executive Committee, Sub-committees began to set up in 1970's to deal with issues of different aspects like development and promotion (Development Sub-Committee), medical & sports science (Sports Medical Sub-Committee), technical and competition (Technical Sub-Committee) and special schools etc (Ng, 1992).

1980's

Internationally, Hong Kong began to participate in overseas games after its establishment in 1972. The organization and the winning of medals in the FESPIC (Far East and South Pacific) Games for the Disabled in 1982 had a tremendous impact in the public and the disabled in particular (Chow, 1989; Chiang, 2000 & 2002). This urged the disabled to take an active part in sporting activities thus making Hong Kong to send teams abroad regularly.

In 1980's sports for the disabled were further developed after the successful organization of the FESPIC Games in Hong Kong. More and more disabled people took up sports as a leisure and recreation activity, and a variety of programs had to be developed to cater for different interest. (Chow, 1989). The number of programs organized and the tremendous results attained in the 1984 and 1988 Paralympics (8 medals in 1984 and 17 medals in 1988); the wheelchair table tennis consisting only 6 players ranked second in 1992 Barcelona Paralympics out of 87 nations; the fencing team ranking first in Fencing in 1996 Atlanta Paralympics; 8 gold, 3 silver & 7 bronze medals in the Sydney Games with a ranking of 21 out of 127 nations; and the current Busan FESPIC Games (28 gold, 15 silver & 16 bronze with a ranking of 5 out of 43 nations) vividly showed the successes of both the local and international events achieved by the disabled. (Chiang, 2000; 2002; Busan FESPIC Games Report, 2003)

1990's & Early 2000's

In 1990's emphasis had been on the pursuit of excellence, the school and development programs. York Chow stated with evidence and elaboration in his Chairman Report (1993) as follows:

The Hong Kong flew high at the 9th Paralympic Games at the Barcelona by winning 3 gold, 4 silver, and 4 bronze medals. Our outstanding wheelchair table tennis players have earned high respect from all countries, and our fencers and CP athletes also contributed to our positive image in the sports for the disabled movement worldwide... . Our blind bowlers will be able to participate at the Commonwealth Games at Victoria, Canada next year. This will be the first time for our disabled athletes to participate and integrate at the able-bodied international sports arena. "The '94 FESPIC Games at Beijing in September 1994 will provide competitions for both elites and novices...". The Association aims at developing programs ranging from grass root to elite level, so that members

of all aspirations could be given an opportunity to participate. Programs have been further reinforced by active participation of special schools and the establishment of a development officer with the SDB fund.

Statistics of an attendance of 14,964 on joining regular sporting activities and 790 on competitions in the same Annual Report has evidenced that the aims of the Association at developing both grass root and elite level have been achieved. This can further be supported by the data of 19,549 attendance in 1,241 competitions in the year 2001-2002. (Annual Report, 2001-2002, page 18)

In spite of the superb performance the Association visualizes the aging of athletes and identifying the urgent need of recruiting members for both development and training of new blood for elites. (Annual Report, 2001-2002, page 7). The Association had therefore proposed to the FESPIC Federation to entrust Hong Kong in hosting the inaugural FESPIC Youth Games in December 2003. It is hoped that the Games will boost and expedite the whole process of promotion and development of disabled sports not just in Hong Kong, but in the FESPIC region.

"30 years" is not a short period of time. Highlights in the past three decades can be summarized in the chronology of historic development of disabled sports in Hong Kong (Retrieved from <http://www.hksap.org>) so that followers would possibly envisage how the Association had crossed over the obstacles and hurdles and treasure their values.

- 1944** ● Sports being recognized as the means of Rehabilitation; sports starting to grow with the establishment of related organizations
- 1964** ● US Wheelchair Basketball Team's visit to Hong Kong after the Tokyo Paralympics 1964 with sports demonstrations
- 1965** ● Friendly match among rehabilitation centers on Wheelchair Basketball & Archery
- 1970** ● 1st team in participating in overseas competition- 2 polio athletes representing Hong Kong in the 3rd Commonwealth Games for Disabled, Scotland
- 1st Sports Day organized after the visit of the New Zealand team during their return from the International Stoke Mandeville Games

- 1972
 - Formation of SAP in taking over the work of the Sports Committee of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) with the employment of 1st staff (sports coordinator)
 - 1st team in participating in Paralympics – Hiedelberg
- 1973
 - Headquarters in operation; 1st Flag Day; becoming member of HKCSS; participating in activities organized in response to the Hong Kong Festival
- 1974
 - Member of the Community Chest with annual subvention
 - 1st swimming coaching course
- 1975
 - Choi Hung Sub-Office in operation with 2 mini buses in transporting members for activities
 - Participating in the 1st FESPIC Games, Oita & Beppu, Japan with 973 participants from 18 nations / territories (1974 FESPIC Federation established)
- 1976
 - HKSAP affiliated to ASF&OC (the then SF&OC, Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China), and being the first disabled organization in the world accepted as a member of the NOC
- 1977
 - 10-month recruitment program (“Have A Go”) in 16 districts; Ebenezer School for the Blind loaned as weekend activity center ; regular monthly classification started
 - Receiving subvention from the Social Welfare Department
 - Inviting respective NSAs to assist in annual competitions
- 1978
 - Outstanding athletes awards established
 - Employing the Sports Director in looking after overall sports development and management
- 1979
 - Sending physiotherapists to UK for Cerebral Palsy Classification
 - Assisting Macau to form Macau SAP
 - Organizing the 1st International Meet for preparation of the FESPIC Games 1982
- 1980
 - 1st Wheelchair Marathon organized in Macau
 - Regular training of elite athletes started
- 1981
 - International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP), additional funding from government
- 1982
 - Disciplinary action to misbehaved athlete
 - 3rd FESPIC Games held in Hong Kong with 743 athletes coming from 23 nations / territories to compete in 14 sporting events
- 1983
 - Triangular Wheelchair Meet among Guangzhou, Hong Kong & Macau with 10 Km race, table tennis and wheelchair basketball
 - Mr. David Griffiths’ Beijing – Hong Kong Fund Raising Marathon; such expediting the formation of the China SAP
- 1984
 - Receiving funding support on athletes training from the former Urban Council
 - Assisting the formation of Guangzhou SAP
 - Participating in the 1st All China Games for Disabled, Hefei, Anhui
- 1985
 - Corporate sponsorship received; Sports medicine sub-committee established
 - Stephen Cheung winning 1 gold, 4 silver and 1 bronze in Canada National Games with a world record of 29
- 1986
 - Establishment of the Sports Aid for Disabled Fund (SADF)

- 1987**
- 3 Hong Kong & 5 overseas wheelchair athletes participating in the Hong Kong Marathon organized by the Hong Kong Amateur Athletic Association
 - Organization of the 6-City Wheelchair Basketball Tournament in celebrating the 15th Anniversary of SAP
 - Inclusion of special schools as Corporated Member so as to appeal Promotion and Participation
- 1988**
- Participating in the "Sports Stars Awards" organized by the Coca Cola
 - FESPIC Federation Executive Committee Meeting held in Hong Kong with the attendance of members from 8 nation / territories
 - Additional funding from Community Chest in development scheme on CP Sports
 - Regional development scheme lessening transport problem of the disable
- 1989**
- Five members of the Executive Committee taking the post in international organizations
- 1990**
- Funding in line with NSAs received (including 2 staff) from the newly formed Hong Kong Sports Development Board (SDB)
 - FESPIC Regional Workshop conducted with participation of 65 representatives from 18 nations / territories
- 1991**
- four experts invited to conduct classification workshop and assisting in the 3rd All China Games for Disabled in GuangZhou
- 1992**
- 4 experts invited to conduct classification workshop and then assisting in the 3rd All China Games for Disabled in Guangzhou
 - Organizing the FESPIC Top 12 Table Tennis Tournament in celebrating the 20th Anniversary of SAP
- 1993**
- With the inception of Taipei he Triangular Wheelchair Meet changed to Quadrangular format
 - Nomination of SAP coaches for the Outstanding Coach Award organized by the Hong Kong Coaching Committee
- 1994**
- 2 outstanding blind bowlers invited to participate in the 15th Commonwealth Games with the achievement of winning 2 bronze medals
 - Organizing the World Wheelchair Fencing Championships (first time held outside Europe)
- 1995**
- Organizing the General Assembly of the CP-ISRA (Cerebral Palsy – International Sports & Recreation Association) with the participation of 80 representatives from 34 member nations. (first time held in Asia)
- 1996**
- 9 wheelchair basketball teams entering for the 3-a-side Basketball Tournament
 - In the Atlanta Paralympic Games (24 athletes in 6 sports) 5 gold, 5 silver & 5 bronze medals won; Mr. Ben Cheung & the CP 4x100M Relay Team winning the "Sports Star Awards" of Coca Cola in outstanding athlete and team respectively
- 1997**
- Dr. York Chow, Chairman of SAP elected as Vice President of International Paralympic Committee (IPC)
 - Mr. Ben Cheung, 1st disabled athlete receiving scholarship from Hong Kong Sports Institute; and elected as "10 Outstanding Young Persons of the World" in the following year
 - 1st FESPIC Table Tennis Championships organized in celebrating the 25th Anniversary of SAP
- 1998**
- 97 athletes including both physically and mentally disabled first ever in participating in the 7th FESPIC Games with the attainment of winning 65 medals, breaking 4 world records, and ranking 5th out of 34 countries / territories

- 1999 ● Support of HKSAR Government and SF & OC to bid for the FESPIC Games

- 2000 ● The 28 members of Hong Kong China Delegation at the 2000 Sydney Paralympics in winning 8 gold, 3 silver and 7 bronze medals with 3 world records; ranked 21st out of 127 nations/territories

- 2001 ● 1st FESPIC Boccia Championships held in Hong Kong

- Prof Sir Harry Fang, the President of SAP awarded the Paralympic Order, highest honour in Paralympic Movement; Dr. York Chow, the Chairman re-elected as Vice President of IPC

- HK\$50 million granted by the government as the "Hong Kong Paralympians Fund" to providing support to disabled athletes during all stages of their sporting career and thereafter

- So Wa Wai "Magic Kid" CP athlete with 4 world records winning the "Leader of the Year Award" in sport (The Hon Timothy Fok & Dr. Lee Lai Shan receiving the same award in the following year)

- 2002 ● 115 athletes (both physically & mentally disabled) winning 28 gold, 15 silver & 16 bronze medals with a ranking of 5 out of 43 nations / territories in the Busan FESPIC Games

- Prof Sir Harry Fang, the President of SAP awarded the FESPIC Order by the FESPIC Federation in recognition of his contribution in the FESPIC Movement.

- 2003 ● FESPIC Youth Games in December

The above achievements are not a one-day or one-man work. It accumulates the totality and joint effort of all concerned – the old & new and the past & present. The impact and influence has been originated from our pioneer of disabled sports President Prof. Sir Harry Fang, related personnel and the Association's ongoing programs (Promotion Pamphlet, 2003; Annual Report, 2001-2002, page 38) and involvement & participation of international events.

Disabled Sports: International Perspective

In terms of international scenario Hong Kong has been very much influenced by involving and participating in the FESPIC Games, Championships & the FESPIC Federation regionally and the Paralympic Games, World Championships, World Cups & the International Paralympic Committee internationally.

FESPIC Games Effect & the FESPIC Federation

Prof Fang (2002) commended the achievements of Dr. Y. Nakamura on the founding of the FESPIC Federation 1974 in the ability and capability of organization of the 1st FESPIC Games in Japan in 1975 that "...His success came he had because been able to draw the whole community together...". His projects were well supported by the Japan's business sector like "...Honda, Toyota, Sony, Fujitsu and many well-known Japanese corporation...".

The concept of 30% of the athletes being novices would encourage new athlete participation, new blood recruitment and broad base participation. This will definitely stimulate more interest and active involvement of developing countries. The 3rd FESPIC Games held in Hong Kong did serve the purposes. To realize the success of the Games, Dr. Harry Fang (then Prof. Sir Harry Fang) President of SAP, took the chair of the Organizing Committee, assisted by the Executive Director Mrs. Maureen Wagg, Chairman of SAP in 70's and early 80's.

As reported by Chiang (2000) a lot of preparatory work had been done. The organization of international meet with an attendance of 6 countries / territories, recruitment and training of potential athletes, involvement of respective NSAs, and sending teams to expose in international competition experience in the aspects of competition, technicality, coaching, classification, transport, volunteer, catering & services in general. What they had learnt and acquired would then be put into practice at home in Hong Kong as clinics, workshops and seminars, etc. All these training, experience, exposure and interaction added to the overall success of the Games in 1982.

The performance and achievement of the team in 1982 FESPIC Games were unquestionable (winning 121 medals & placing 5th among 23 nations / territories). This was due to the joint effort of the coaches and the Association, as well as the endeavour and hard work contributed by the time, energy and will power of the athletes from the preparatory

period to the end of the Games. This had set a firm foundation of disabled youths in the 80's, initiated the concept of "integration", namely training with the able bodied counterparts, and entailing the excellent performance in the 90's and present.

The Busan FESPIC Games Report (2003) has outlined the history of the FESPIC Games. "FESPIC" stands for the Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled. The Games is an international multi-sports meeting held every 4 years, just second to the Paralympic Games, and parallel to that of the Asian Games of the able-bodied counterparts. The objectives of the Games are :

- To encourage sports participation among the disabled;
- To improve social perspective towards the disabled through sports participation; and
- To enhance mutual friendship and cooperation among the disabled.

The first FESPIC Games, started with 8 sports, was held in Oita & Beppu Japan in 1975. Over the past decades, the scale of the Games has kept expanding with active participation from respective member nations / territories of the FESPIC region. An overview of the previous FESPIC Games is shown below.

	Dates	City / Country	No. of Sports	No. of Nations	No. of Participants
1 st	1-3 June 1975	Oita & Beppu, Japan	8	18	973
2 nd	20-26 Nov. 1977	Parramatta, Australia	10	16	430
3 rd	31 Oct – 7 Nov. 1982	Sha Tin, Hong Kong	9	23	744
4 th	31 Aug. – 7 Sep. 1986	Surakarta, Indonesia	12	19	834
5 th	15-20 Sep. 1989	Kobe, Japan	12	41	1,646
6 th	4-10 Sep. 1994	Beijing, China	13	42	2,081
7 th	10-16 Jan. 1999	Bangkok, Thailand	14	34	2,258
8 th	23 Oct. – 1 Nov. 2002	Busan, Korea	17	43	2,420

Under the leadership and guidance of Prof Fang, members of the SAP executive committee had become actively involved in the Executive, Sports Technical, Medical, Development and Steering Committees of the FESPIC Federation in late 80's. This has paved the way of the Hong Kong's respected representation and positive influence on the FESPIC development and later in the international scene of sports for disabled. The sanctioning of almost all events in the BUSAN Games with ranking points counted towards the Athens Paralympics 2004 by appointing IPC International Classifiers and Technical Delegates at the Games was the end result, after a long period of argument, debate and negotiation. It was an excellent indication of high standard and prestigious quality regional competition. This whole process of seeking all events being sanctioned by IPC depends very much upon the endless effort put forward by Dr. York Chow, Chairman of SAP and Vice President of IPC, and the sustained hard work performed by the Busan Organizing Committee.

As the FESPIC Federation has visualized the rapid development of disabled sports globally, the quota system stipulated for entry in Paralympics, and the 2 big Games in 2006 (FESPIC in Malaysia) & 2008 (Paralympics in Beijing), a Task Group on Strategic Planning for 2002-2006 was formed recommending action plans to the FESPIC Council Meeting (28 October 2002) to:

- Identify target sports & sports human resources;
- Coordinate the existing and new competition events with relevant seminars to gear the IPC 4-year sports calendar cycle
- Seek IPC support in accrediting technical / classification personnel in the FESPIC region either with an international or regional status;

- Start and organize education programs (elementary coaching & management courses) for the purpose of NPC development; and
- Establish good communication in updating information on disabled sports through internet centralized in FESPIC website

Should the FESPIC Federation follow this trend of direction of development their status of disabled sports worldwide will remain high without further queries from any disabled sports family in the FESPIC region or IPC.

Paralympic Games Effect & the IPC

As Prof Fang is the “Father of Sports for Disabled in Hong Kong” none will deny Sir Ludwig Guttmann being the “Father of Sports for Disabled (or Paraplegics) in the World”. It was Sir Ludwig, a British neurosurgeon to propagate sports being the best means of rehabilitation. The first international competition for the disabled was initiated in 1952 in the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Aylsbury, UK where Sir Ludwig practised

his profession. It was then named as the International Stoke Mandeville Games which sparked off the idea of Olympic Games for the Disabled (the then Paralympic Games).

According to Reinecke and Reiff (2002), ‘Paralympic’ comes from a combination of 3 sources:

- The Latin adjective “par” (“similar” or “the same”)
- The Greek preposition “para” (“next to” or “alongside”), and
- the Paralympic Games being held parallel to the Olympic Games

Chiang (2002) emphasized that the development for Sports of Disabled has never stopped since the first competition in 1952. He summarized different names that had been used for Paralympics in different years before the establishment of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). The chronology is also collaborated with the historic development of IPC (Reinecke and Reiff, 2002) as follows.

1960	I Paralympic Games Rome (9 th International Stoke Mandeville Games)	Wheelchair athletes only
1964	II Paralympic Games Tokyo (13 th International Stoke Mandeville Games)	Wheelchair athletes only
1968	III Paralympic Games Tel Aviv (17 th International Stoke Mandeville Games)	Wheelchair athletes only
1972	IV Paralympic Games Hiedelberg (21 st International Stoke Mandeville Games)	Wheelchair athletes only
1976	V Paralympic Games Toronto (Olympiad Games for the Disabled)	With amputee & visually impaired in addition in wheelchair
1980	VI Paralympic Games Arnhem (Olympic Games for the Disabled)	Cerebral palsy athletes competing first time
1982		<i>Formation of ICC (International Coordinating Committee of Sports for the Disabled in the World)</i>
1984	VII Paralympic Games (VII Stoke Mandeville World Wheelchair Games) (New York International Games for Disabled)	Wheelchair athletes Amputee, visually impaired & cerebral palsy athletes
1988	VIII Paralympic Games Seoul (“88 Seoul Paralympics)	“Paralympic Games” as official name thereafter

1989		<i>Formation of IPC (International Paralympic Committee) Motto : Mind, Body, Spirit Milestone of Paralympic Movement : Same city with same competition venues as Olympics</i>
1992	IX Paralympic Games Barcelona (IX Paralympic Games)	
1996	X Paralympic Games Atlanta (1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games)	
1999		<i>IPC Headquarters in operation in Bonn</i>
2000	XI Paralympic Games Sydney (2000 Sydney Paralympics)	

The IPC is the governing international organization of elite sports for the disabled. Under the ambit of the IPC it organizes, supervises and coordinates the Paralympic Games and other multi-disability competitions on elite level like world and / or regional championships (Reinecke and Reiff, 2002). At present there are 160 some members coming from respective National Paralympic Committees (NPC) and five international federations of different disabilities, namely World Stoke Mandeville

Wheelchair Sports Federation (WSMWSF), International Sports Organization for the Disabled (ISOD), International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) Recreation Association (CP-ISRA) and International Sports Federation for Persons with Mentally Disabled (INAS-FID). 18 and 4 sports are now on the Summer and Winter Paralympics respectively. They are as follows. (Paralympic Sports, retrieved from <http://www.paralympic.org>.)

<u>Summer Sports</u>		<u>Winter Sports</u>
● Archery	● Sailing	● Alpine Skiing
● Athletics	● Shooting	● Nordic Skiing
● Boccia	● Soccer	● Ice Sledge Hockey
● Cycling	● Swimming	● Wheelchair Curling
● Equestrian	● Table Tennis	
● Fencing	● Wheelchair Basketball	
● Goalball	● Wheelchair Rugby	
● Judo	● Wheelchair Tennis	
● Powerlifting	● Volleyball	

With the exception of boccia, goalball, powerlifting and wheelchair rugby the other 14 are the same sports of the Olympic Games though there are a few less in Paralympic Games.

On account of restricted number of athletes in the Paralympics (4,000 in 18 sports coming from about 120 some nations) Quota System has been stipulated and classification from medical to functional also switched since 1992 Barcelona Paralympics in order to demonstrate a more competitive but

less classes Paralympics. So a lot of side effects have prevailed. Severely disabled athletes, less developed countries with “low technological” equipment will be outcast from the Games because the qualifying round have already been too expensive thus establishing bar from their participation.

To attain a medal in Paralympics would become difficult. Should one be qualified and admitted for entry in the Games one might seek ways and means of escaping from the normal by the abuse of drugs. Fortunately the disabled athletes are

not that prominent in the doping case as compared with the able-bodied counterparts (2 athletes tested positive in approximately 500 in competition tests in Sydney Paralympics). However, educational courses, conferences and researches on this subject have been conducted to publicize to the nations, management, coaches and athletes the demerits and negative effect of addicting drugs with a hope to make it minimal or null to the best, because doping can sometimes do to people beyond repair.

In terms of fairness in competitions Classification System has been established over decades with ongoing revision, amendments and improvements. However, the inclusion of the mentally disabled in 2000 Sydney Paralympics was a very positive and directive combination of having all elite disabled to compete in one Games. However, the Spanish Sports scandals upset the whole concept of fairness in classification. As Wheeler (2002) states "... the trust placed in individuals and organization was violated to the detriment of the Paralympic dreams of many athletes with intellectual disabilities ..." It has created a very bad and negative image to the disabled sports not just in the intellectual disability sports community, but as a whole in the disabled sports family. A suspension to INAS-FID participation in IPC sanctioned events has been effected until the decision to be established in the IPC Management Meeting on 31 January 2003. INAS-FID still cannot satisfy the IPC in establishing "... a fair competition under the eligibility system and protest procedures ..." as stated in IPC President Phil Craven's letter to the President of INAS-FID(2003). Intellectually disabled athletes will not be allowed to compete in the 2004 Athens Paralympics. However, they will be allowed to compete in 4 sports as exhibition events (IPC Newsflash May 2003). All in all the athletes will suffer, Hong Kong in particular because Hong Kong has been one of the few nations / territories adopting a very comprehensive and objective criteria in classifying athletes with intellectual disability.

The use of equipment for Competition in the aspect of technical advancement Chow (1999) stated the fact of rapid increase in wheelchair and prosthetic technology in the Paralympic Games. It is true that time record has been broken with better performance with the aid of the "hi-tech" equipment. However, on the other end of the continuum the "hi-tech" would deprive the competition opportunity of the athletes coming from the less developed countries. It comes to a race between the rich and the poor. The IPC and the 5 international federations should allow the time and energy to deliberate the issue thoroughly in order to have a comparatively more level and fair competition among athletes.

Conclusion

The above phenomenon provides avenue for the urgent need and necessity of promoting more on the development of disabled sports worldwide. The quota system, the functional classification, decreasing severely disability's participation, wheelchair & prosthetic technology, the doping issue, and last but not least, the sports scandal matter all add to the extreme of elite sports for disabled. On the contrary, the development aspect on the other end of the continuum should not be neglected. By and large the main focus of discussion is on money term, the availability of funds. The Cambodian Volleyball team had encountered a devastating result in the 2000 Sydney Paralympics in losing all the matches. After less than 2-year preparation and having received fair funding support from the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, they underwent a good development program from the "rehabilitation to recreation and finally to sport" concept. They were able to switch their life from the "Killing Fields to Playing Fields" by winning the gold medal in volleyball at the current Busan FESPIC Games. The hearts of disabled athletes were filled with respect and admiration of fans, coaches, and their rivals as witnessed at the competition arena. What a job well done! We should pay salute and tribute to each and every one of them.

Under the lense of Hong Kong on promotion and development of disabled sports (Busan FESPIC Games Report, 2003) it is good to see the emergency of young and female potentials in sports fencing, boccia and athletics. It would be the golden opportunity to recruit young athletes, not necessarily the female, to add to the pool of programs and training. Promotion and development of disabled sports in the normal schools would best be the direction to scout more potentials to fill the gap of retirement of the old. Availability of funds seems not a problem for such purpose.

It has been a general saying that the FESPIC Games has been the yardstick to test athletes before taking part in higher level of competition. Hong Kong had seized the opportunity of initiating the FESPIC Youth Games and hosting the inaugural competition in December 2003. The Games would be able to serve the FESPIC countries to encourage more disabled youths participating in sports and identify their potentials. Hong Kong as a host should do more on promotion and development of disabled sports, as well as scout more talents as potential elites for major international games and/or championships in future. This also applies to other FESPIC nations.

In concluding, it is hoped that "Sports Culture" be developed in FESPIC Youth Games 2003. Should we host any big Games like the FESPIC Youth Games in December 2003 we can refer and adopt the format of the BUSAN Games to arrange nearby local community or schools to act as cheering/supporting group for the participating countries. It serves an excellent opportunity of "Civic education", "Sports Culture" and PR effect to the general public. We do hope the dream would come true.

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