

Press Releases: Winter Paralympic Games Highlight Importance of Adaptive Sports Diplomacy Programs

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

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As the PyeongChang Winter Paralympic Games commence on March 9, the U.S. Department of State is recognizing the important issues of disability rights and equal access by expanding its support for adaptive sports diplomacy exchange programs worldwide in 2018.

The State Department's International Sports Programming Initiative is supporting a delegation of American coaches and young athletes with disabilities to attend the games in partnership with the Utah-based National Ability Center. The coaches and athletes will receive training for adaptive alpine skiing and snowboarding and will also attend the Paralympic Games' opening ceremonies, in partnership with Yonsei University. A reciprocal visit of Koreans with disabilities will also take place to the United States later this year. In addition, a separate program for training in adaptive sport and recreation programs will occur in Thailand through the National Ability Center in collaboration with Clemson University.

From March 24-April 29, the State Department will partner with the University of Tennessee for its annual disability sports mentorship program, Sport for Community. Drawing upon themes from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), this five-week exchange pairs emerging global leaders in sports with mentors from U.S. adaptive sports organizations. The goal is to expand opportunities for people with disabilities through sports-based action plans.

Additionally, a slate of Sports Envoy and Visitor programs are planned in 2018 for expert American coaches and athletes to provide clinical lessons and promote the development of community organizations for persons with disabilities. The first Sports Envoy program will be held March 10-16 in Kuwait and will feature Paralympian and National Wheelchair Basketball Hall of Famer Trooper Johnson. Envoy programs in May and June will send American Paralympians and disability sports leaders to China, Botswana, and Venezuela. Throughout the year, youth athletes and coaches in wheelchair sports from around the world will come to the United States to participate in Sports

Visitor programs.

For press inquiries, contact the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at ECA-Press@state.gov. To learn more about State Department sports diplomacy, follow our programs on Twitter @SportsDiplomacy.

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