



**Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008** – Ability Online welcomes **Josh Dueck** -RBC Olympian, and sit-skier extraordinaire! Josh is off to the winter Paralympics in Vancouver 2010 to compete in sit-skiing for Canada!

Josh Dueck is not only an extraordinary athlete, he is also an amazing and inspiring individual. On Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup>, Josh joined 15 Ability Online members in the first of many featured chat sessions with Paralympians and athletes with disabilities.

In the Ability Online chat, Josh shared his story of getting back onto the ski slopes only 9 months after receiving a spinal cord injury from a skiing mishap. Josh's determination to "keep the dream alive" is only one example of his inner strength. He mentioned the importance of having support from friends and family, of setting goals and priorities, and most of all, in loving life and all that it has to offer no matter what challenges come our way.

Early in the chat, Josh got the members talking about their own sports involvements, and we quickly learned who was into skiing and who wasn't! Bowling anyone?? But regardless of your interest, the message is clear. Get out and get involved in either recreational or competitive sports –because you really can "**Feel the Rush**" when playing on a team, or winning a race. Here are some other highlights from the chat with Josh....

**Alexandra:** What is super g?

**Josh:** Super G is the second fastest event in racing, Also known as super giant slalom.

**Ashley:** How old do you have to be to start skiing?

**Josh:** I don't know that there is an age limit to start. I have seen people as young as 4 or 5 years old...and seen 50 year olds compete!

**Ashlee:** How many championships did you win?

**Josh:** I am currently a two time Canadian Champion.

**Krystian:** I would like to try it or look more on it.

**Josh:** Being active in any sport is such an amazing thing ...check out [www.feeltherush.ca](http://www.feeltherush.ca) for profiles on all kinds of sports.

**Roger:** Some day I want my son to compete.

**Ward:** Will you be competing In the World Winter Games?

**Josh:** I will be competing in the 2010 Paralympics in Vancouver.

**Alexandra:** Cool!

**Josh:** I need you to cheer me on though!

**Laura:** I will!

**Ashley:** Do you think I will be good at skiing some day Josh?

**Josh:** Yes Ashley, I do believe that you can be a good skier. You have to believe in it though.

**Ward:** When did you start skiing?

**Josh:** I started skiing when I was 13...I broke my back when I was 23.

**Laura:** Hey Josh what ski do you use a mono or bi-skis?

**Josh:** I started sit skiing 9 months after I broke my back and use a mono ski. The poles are called outriggers.

**Ashlee:** I love bi-skis!

**Roger:** Now that's guts....you got my full respect.

**Ward:** How did you get the back injury?

**Josh:** I broke my back in a ski accident. I was a coach and miscalculated a demonstration jump.

**Ward:** Not good.

**Darlene:** Ouch!

**Laura:** Where do you ski out of?

**Josh:** I ski at Silver Star Mountain, but I do travel all over the world to ski and compete.

**Stephen:** That's in BC isn't it?

**Josh:** Yes

**Ashlee:** When I was younger sports were not my thing.

**Josh:** When I was younger I was not at all into sports –I was a terrible athlete, but I am getting better now

**Roger:** Better - 2 time champ, I think you passed better!

**Ashlee:** I would have to credit camp for my love of sports.

**Laura:** I credit Jeff Penner actually for my love of sports.

**Josh:** I will tell Jeff the kind words you speak of him.

**Ward:** Josh –what do you do in the off season when you want to work out?

**Josh:** I ride a hand-cycle, play tennis, row (boat) and go to the gym.

**Ashlee:** I'd love to play tennis

**Josh:** Tennis is my favourite sport other than skiing.

**Krystian:** ....there is a risk out there, that's part of life. So if you get hurt skiing don't worry. It is a big risk.

**Josh:** You are right Krystian –risk is a part of life. I always try to weigh risk vs reward. It is important to listen to your body as well. I like to think of it as my “gut instinct”.

**Ashlee:** Yes that’s true.

**Roger:** Know your limits?

**Josh:** ..and play within it!

**Laura:** ya I like to push my limits a bit though

**Josh:** You have to push your limits I agree

**Ashlee:** me too, I paid for that a few times!

**Laura:** Haven’t we all!

**Josh:** You need to take risks and challenge yourself in order to evolve and grow.

**Laura:** so skiing was in your blood.

**Josh:** you could say that. I found something I loved early in life and when you find something you love – never give that up.

**Ashlee:** That’s right.

**Laura:** Why did you pick skiing over all the adapted sports out there?

**Josh:** Skiing is like art to me.

**Michelle:** which is more thrilling - the skiing you did before or what you are doing now?

**Josh:** I like the adventure and thrill of flying down the mountain...it gives me the greatest sense of freedom

**Ashlee:** No kidding

**Roger:** Sort of the rush you get on a motorcycle?

**Josh:** it is very similar to the feeling of riding a motorcycle...plus I love the challenge of sit skiing.

**Laura:** Did I read somewhere you have only been sit skiing for 4 years?

**Josh:** You have done your homework Laura -4 years is correct

**Ward:** I guess your family is very supportive of you?

**Josh:** Yes, my mom and dad support me with all their heart. I am very thankful to have such great parents.

**Ward:** That’s great to hear.

**Ashlee:** that’s great.

**Laura:** did you have to modify a lot of your life or were you able to maintain a close to normal life after the accident?

**Josh:** I found that there were some serious changes to my life after the accident, but for the most part I remained the same person.

**Laura:** Glad to hear it.

**Roger:** But some people would have just given up, you adjusted to it.

**Josh:** Life just changed - that’s it. Not for the better or worse, just different. I love my life now, more than ever before.

**Laura:** I understand.

**Josh:** This is the best moment of my life right here with you right now.

**Laura:** Cool opportunities eh?

**Josh:** For everyone one opportunity that I lost –I gained 10

Ward: Wow.

**Krystian:** You are inspirational Josh. You should go on tv and talk about your inspirational thoughts on life

**Darlene:** That's awesome

**Roger:** I thank you for coming to Ability Online and don't be a stranger. You really make a difference.

**Josh:** You're welcome Roger. I will gladly accept your invite and return again soon. I travel a lot with my team –so it is tough to get a computer sometimes.

**Roger:** Ya got a fan club right here.

**Laura:** How do you juggle it all?

**Josh:** I do my best to make time for myself and family. I am a very organized person. Sport, family and fun help to keep the balance in my life.

**Kristina:** How do you do all the things you like to do?

**Josh:** with purpose. More specifically, I set goals and create a schedule to manage my time.

**Kristina:** Thanks for helping me Josh.

**Josh:** The world has so much to offer.

**Krystian:** you rock Josh and are inspirational and you are special to Ability Online

**Darlene:** Is there one place you like skiing more than another? I see you have been to Chile and even Switzerland?

**Josh:** Switzerland was the most scenic and Chile the most amazing.

**Kristina:** Who can join the Paralympics Josh?

**Josh:** any person with a physical disability is eligible for the Paralympics.

**Kristina:** Do you have to be in a wheelchair?

**Josh:** You do not need to be in a wheelchair. There are three categories for the Paralympic sports – visually impaired, standing with a disability or sitting with a disability. Don't forget, you can find more info at [www.feeltherush.ca](http://www.feeltherush.ca)

All members thanked Josh for joining them for this special chat event and wished him good luck with his future races.

**Josh:** It was both a pleasure and an honour chatting with you this evening.

While Josh is an extremely busy person, he has offered to stay connected with the Ability Online members –so if you missed this chat, feel free to write to Josh on Ability Online. Write to **Josh Dueck** and he will do his best to get back to you as soon as possible. But remember, he travels and competes all over the world – so be patient and cheer him on!

Other sites that may be of interest to anyone interested in the Paralympics:

ParalympicSportsTV,

<http://player26.narrowstep.tv/assets/players/3206/html/player.html>

- Official site of the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Summer Games, [www.en.beijing2008.cn/paralympic/](http://www.en.beijing2008.cn/paralympic/)
- Official site of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games, <http://www.vancouver2010.com/en>