



On Tuesday May 13th we held our second Paralympic Chat Event with Bradley Bowden and Paul Rosen. It was a lively chat room with lots of questions for the players. Both Paul and Brad were comfortable answering any question, as well as sharing some of the more humorous aspects of the game. How's the jaw feeling Paul?

Paul and Brad are members of the Canadian National Sledge Hockey team. They were both part of the team who won gold at the 2006 Paralympic Winter Games (2006) in Turin and the World Championships in Boston in 2008. Brad has been a member of the team since 1999. Paul joined the team in 2001 and was the oldest rookie in the history of the Paralympic Winter Games when he debuted in 2002 at age 41.

As part of our involvement with “Feel the Rush” to inspire youth with disabilities to get involved in sports and hopefully aspire to be part of the Paralympics, these chat events are a great way for the Ability Online members to find out first hand how exciting it is to travel and compete around the world.

Here are the highlights from our chat with Brad and Paul –who have promised to return to meet with more members who weren't able to login at that time. Check in with Ability Online for future announcements.

Brad did the typing for Paul as they were sharing a computer in their hotel room in Alberta, following the filming of an instructional video for sledge hockey.

Upon entering the chat room, the players were immediately greeted by several fans who were anxious to say hello.

Tori was the first to jump in with her question.

Tori: Its weird I have heard 2 different things about where sledge hockey was invented –Norway or Sweden?

Brad (with Paul's input): I think it was Sweden in the 50's.

Ward: How many years has the game been played in competition?

Brad: Probably started in the 80's.

Tori: I wish sledge hockey was on tv more often.

Ashlee: Me too

Brad/Paul: Yeh so do we. We're trying our hardest to change it. We just have to keep winning 😊

Ward: I am not really sure what sledge hockey is.

Brad: Check out www.hockeycanada.ca/sledgehockey/. There are some pics there and video clips, but as far as explaining the sport Ward, it is just like regular hockey, except we're on aluminum sleds and have two sticks to shoot and push ourselves around.

Tori: I noticed that Hockey Canada has a sledge hockey logo now

Ashlee: At first I had a lot of trouble sitting up on the sledge, sure took some work.

Tori: That's probably why it would be harder for me cuz I only have one arm that works.

Tori: What position do you play?

Brad: I am a left winger. Paul is goalie.

Ashlee: I played defence.

Brad: Cool. Defence is tough. Lots of pressure back there.

Ashlee: I actually had someone hit me during a game, right where there is a little space between your helmet and your neck...We had a player that got hurt and half our team wanted to go after the person that hurt the player.

Tori: I wonder why there is less fights than in regular hockey?

Brad: Fighting is very rare in sledge cause if you fight you get kicked out of the game. No one wants to take a chance at getting in a fight because it is a selfish thing to do to our team.

Tori: I think that should happen in any hockey game.

Ashlee: I'm so excited my sledge is coming up from storage. I fell in love with the game after a youth exchange in 2002.

Ward: How long have you been playing?

Brad/Paul: I have been playing for close to 14 years and Paul 8.

Ashlee: I played for 4 years or so.

Danielle: How do you increase your speed?

Brad: Well personally I found that the more I did a lot of intense pushing and starting and stopping drills...plus getting in better shape and sort of slimming down a bit and building up some muscle seemed to help. You just need to work on your arms through lifting weights and strengthening certain muscle groups and also just by doing hard pushing.

Tori: I was crushed when Paul's medal was stolen.

Ashlee: Oh no kidding!

Brad for Paul: He says thank you for your support.

Tori: I was happy when Don Cherry stood up to find the culprit.

Brad/Paul: Paul says Grapes is a great guy.

Kyrstian: I think paralympic people are inspiration to the world and you guys will make a difference.

Zachary: Brad do you have your own website?

Brad: I do yes. I'm working on redoing my site at the moment, but if you want you can check out www.bradbowden.com and www.paulrosen.ca

Tori: I wonder do the refs have to watch themselves for getting run over by you?

Brad: Ya the refs get in the way. They do get in the way.

Ward: Does the game last as long as a regular hockey game?

Brad: Our periods are going to be changed to 20 minutes next season, they were 15 minutes at our last worlds.

Kristin: How do you get on the team? Is there a waiting list?

Brad: No, there isn't a waiting list. You just have to be at a level where you can participate at the National level, and then you might get invited by a scout on the team to try out. You come out, and if you are good enough to be selected you make the team. I wish there was a waiting list so we had more players to draw from.

Tori: Is there a team that is co-ed or starting for National or just men's?

Brad: No co-ed team yet at the National level. It's either men's or women's.

Tori: Do you play any summer sports?

Brad: I just got cut from the National Wheelchair Basketball team. I was on the team since 2003 and won a gold medal and world championships with them.

Brad: Hey guys, I forgot to mention, there will be a sledge hockey documentary coming out in September called "Sledhead" which follows us into the past Worlds.

Krystian: What channel will it be on?

Brad: City is going to have it on in September. Then a full length movie of some of the film festivals and maybe in theatres. The site for that is www.sledheadthemovie.com

Tori: the goal sledges look pretty small.

Brad from Paul: Yes they are, and it depends on the disability of the goal tender.

Ward: Do you play sledge hockey all year long or do you take the summers off?

Brad: Some of us try to play all year. Some of us –Paul- take breaks.

Tori: which teams are your rivals besides USA?

Brad: Our main rivals are Norway, USA, Germany, and Japan

Krystian: You guys are cool , Paul and Brad, I bet it would have hurt when you lost your teeth. You guys are an inspiration like Josh the other paralympic person is, and you guys rule! And I hate pucks, I really like soft pucks better, if there was any and you wouldn't lose your teeth Paul. Thanks for letting Paul and Brad come tonight and thanks for planning this, its fun.

Brad/Paul: Thanks.

Tori: I admire your guys

Brad/Paul: Thanks Tori

Ward: I will look at both of your sites after the chat and learn more about your sport.

Final Questions.

Ward: How many years has it been a paralympic sport?

Brad/Paul: It's been a paralympic sport since Lillehammer in 92

Tori: that young

Ward: Those were great games that year. I still have the opening ceremonies on VCR tape.

Ward: When will you be playing your next game and where will it be?

The next Paralympic winter games will be in Vancouver in 2010

Ward: I meant will you be playing in Ontario any time in the near future?

Brad: I am heading up to Sudbury on the 30th of this month to play with a team up there for fun.

Brad: Well I wish I could stay on all night and chat. But we have to shower and that. We came right after our on ice session and we stink.

Mark: Ok –thanks for chatting with us!

Ward: Have a great evening guys and thank you for sharing your stories with us

Brad: Thanks for coming online with us guys. It was fun for both of us –and remember if you want more info on the Paralympics check out

www.feeltherush.ca

Michelle: I will post all the other sites as well for people to get more information.

Brad/Paul: Keep checking up on this site, our sites and

www.hockeycanada.ca/sledgehockey/ and we will be back here again.

Ok guys take care and enjoy your summer!

Other sites to check out:

The Sledge Hockey section of Hockey Canada 's website,

http://www.hockeycanada.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/21749/la_id/1.htm

- The players pages on Real Champions or their own website so everyone can keep up to date on what the players are doing.

- 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/

- Official site of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games,

<http://www.vancouver2010.com/en>