

The last 'Olympics for the Disabled' 1980

Not Moscow, USSR but Arnhem, The Netherlands

By Tony Sainsbury

In the years immediately preceding the Moscow Games, the Olympic Movement was in crisis – benign leadership, boycotts, a controlling administration and poor revenue streams were all contributing factors. While this was still initially the case during those early 1980s a series of events occurred which, individually, might have been less impactful but, collectively, were dramatic and were destined to set the Olympic Movement on the road to where it finds itself today, very successful but now at

another critical moment, some might even say crisis point.

In many commentators' view, those game-changing events were the election of Juan Antonio Samaranch as President, the lack of host for the 1984 Summer Olympics and the emergence of Peter Ueberroth and his commercially minded team in Los Angeles¹, the initiation of the TOP programme and the eventual 'retirement' of the principal controller of the secretariat in Lausanne.

At the same time the nascent organisation that would be responsible for the Paralympics was experiencing similar tectonic movement. As is so often the case, those individual factors are only now appreciated with the benefit of retrospection.

This account attempts to identify those factors from the position sociologist's call, participant observation – that is, from the perspective of an individual who uniquely lived through, and was influenced by, the dynamic events of those days.²

Arnhem not Moscow 1980

The starting point to this narrative needs to be why Arnhem for the Paralympic Games 1980 and not Moscow the Olympic city in order to provide essential background to those ground breaking changes.

In Paralympic folklore some misguided credence is given to the view, given the existence of the Cold War,

that the reason Moscow declined the opportunity to host the 1980 Paralympic Games was "because there are no disabled in the USSR!" Even the most anti-Soviet protagonist would find this version of the response unlikely, particularly as there is no documentary evidence supporting it.

What was more likely was the statement emanating from that side of the Iron Curtain that "there was no national organisation for disabled sport in the USSR!"³

In spite of the 'fake news' of the day, the minutes quoted below are factual.

In 1977 Sir Ludwig Guttmann reported to the ISMGF⁴ Council Meeting that there had been no response to his efforts "to ascertain from the USSR whether it would be possible to hold the 1980 Olympiad for the Disabled in Moscow".⁵ Discussions with ISOD⁶ then led to a joint agreement to accept the invitation of the Netherlands Sports Organisation for the Disabled (NIS) to host the 1980 Games.

There were in fact two nations who indicated their interest in organising those 6th Paralympic Games – the Netherlands and Sweden. The choice in the end was less based on organisational ability and more about political influence among the decision makers.

The Netherlands and Sweden were the representatives of two opposing camps. The former, the founding partner with Great Britain and Sir Ludwig of the ISMGF whose first four versions of the Paralympics were the preserve of those with spinal cord injury. The latter was the adopted home of the new kid on the block, ISOD, the guardian of blind sport and amputee sport. ISOD was also founded by Sir Ludwig but its members constantly agitated about his potential for a conflict of interest with his presidency of ISMGF. As the deciding meeting for 1980 was principally ISMGF-led, Sweden really had little chance of success.

In 1976 ISMGF allowed athletes with visual impairments and amputees to partake in the Toronto Paralympics

Arnhem 1980 Games logo and dates.



Tony Sainsbury OBE | Sole director of Unitman Sports Consulting based in the Netherlands working with multi-sport major events on their Village masterplans and operational development. Five times Chef de Mission GBR Paralympic team and Chef de Mission Paralympic Refugee team (IPA) Rio 2016. Head of Villages London 2012 from 2003 to 2013.

and, for 1980 agreed to include athletes with cerebral palsy. The door of a multi-sport, multi-disability Paralympics was starting to creak open in spite of the body of weight pushing from the other side! Sir Ludwig's sudden death in early January 1980⁷ would accelerate such integration and may have matured even earlier in its history but for the circumstances and arrangements for the 1984 Paralympic Games, split between Stoke Mandeville and New York.⁸

Rehabilitation versus Sport

These Sixth Paralympic Games in Arnhem can be singled out as the 'link' Games between those whose focus was paraplegia and rehabilitation, and the yet unimaginable multi-disability, global, elite multi sports event that is now universally recognised as the Paralympic Games.

What then were the unique features that separated the 1980 Games from those of the Toronto Olympiad⁹ 1976?

Undoubtedly, the most significant factor was the growing movement away from a philosophy based on rehabilitation to that of sport. The death of Sir Ludwig, regrettable at a personal level by his tens of thousands of grateful patients and supporters around the world, was one catalyst of the change to come.



For nearly forty years that indefatigable founder dominated every aspect of international sport for disabled people. He had a huge personality and a self-righteousness that was difficult, indeed impossible to gain-say. He was first and foremost a highly gifted neurosurgeon who changed the life expectancy of the spinal cord injured and reversed the horrendous statistic where 9 out of 10 of such injured died. He saw sport primarily as a means to an end: the end being the rekindling of hope and motivation in broken bodies.

His strength of personality and belief in the extrinsic value of sport acted as a brake on the speed of change to an organisation whose values were built on rehabilitation, but which was 'straining at the leash' to change to one based on sport. The marked difference between the IOC and IPC movement in terms of those driving change was not the sports leadership of the day, sports entrepreneurs such as Ueberroth or marketing gurus, but the athletes themselves and external pressures.

Indeed, the past President of the IPC, Sir Philip Craven MBE bloodied himself politically as a wheelchair basketball player by his stance against coaching incompetence.¹⁰ And as ever, this call for change inevitably led to conflict where the immovable object is met head on by an accelerating force.

In those early days following Sir Ludwig's death, there was a feeling in the air that dramatic events were just around the corner. Arnhem proved opportune. The Dutch organisers, by their very efficient approach based on professional sports administration, contributed to this feeling in a way they could not imagine at the time. Things would never be the same!

However there continued to be unwillingness by some of the ISMGF leadership who were medical professionals to give up their traditional rehabilitation view for one of the importance of sport for its own sake among their (patients!) athletes. Proof of where they saw their priorities can be found in the proceedings of the ISMGF Council Meeting (General Assembly) held during the Games on 1st July 1980 at Het Dorp, Arnhem¹¹ in the following minutes :

Hong Kong asked about the timing (of future Paralympic Games), pointing out that the 1980 Olympics for the Disabled had clashed with the World Rehabilitation Congress¹²

Sir Ludwig Guttmann (1899–1980), the founder of the Paralympic Games. The German-Jewish neurologist emigrated to Great Britain in 1939 where he was tasked by the government with establishing the National Spinal Injuries Centre in Stock Mandeville Hospital in Aylesbury. In 1948, he organised there competitions for disabled people, which became the start of the Paralympic Games. Photo: Picture-alliance

Sir Philip Craven played 188 times for the British basketball team. He was elected for four terms as President of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) from 2001 to 2017 and was IOC Member from 2003 to 2017.

Photos: Tony Sainsbury Archive



This 'criticism' by Hong Kong is indicative of the inherent priorities and agendas of many of the Paralympic leaders at that time. But like King Canute this attitude could not resist being engulfed by the incoming tide of change.

The South African Controversy¹³

Undoubtedly, one of the key factors in recognising that an activity has reached a critical mass or maturity is when it is impacted by wider 'politics', large or small, outside its immediate concern. The fact that this issue appeared at all is yet another important indicator of the way in which these Games were beginning to be seen as a sporting event of some significance: most certainly internally by the athletes, and more and more externally, by politicians and the world.

In years following the boycotts¹⁴ at both Games in the summer of 1976, the South African issue ceased to be a minor matter in the Paralympic world, and for the first time, the cosy community of the 'disabled sports' world' was subjected to the same scrutiny as their able-bodied peers. Arnhem would prove a cross-road. The challenging question for discussion was "Do you really see yourselves as sport or an imitation of sport?"

The significance of this issue and its importance in the evolution of the Paralympic Movement cannot be underestimated, particularly as it took place at a time when so many other radical changes were taking place. It is only with the benefit of retrospection that one sees the whole evolutionary picture unfold.

For that reason it is worth including verbatim (with no grammar, spelling or contextual changes) the report of the Arnhem organising committee concerning the circumstances of the South African matter as described to the participating nations in a special edition of their information bulletins.

Olympics for the Disabled, Arnhem¹⁵

Olympic Bulletin. No. 9
Arnhem, October 1979

To: All member countries of ISOD/ISMGF

It is a long time since you heard from us. We offer our apologies for this. You may know however that over the last few months a political discussion has taken place in the Netherlands about the taking part of South Africa in the Games which, at a certain stage, even endangered the continuation of the Games itself. Under these very confusing circumstances we found it inappropriate to feed you with information which later on might have to be recalled. Chronically the following events took place:

April 1979:

The Board of the Foundation Olympics for the Disabled 1980 released a statement confirming the standpoint that South Africa as a full member of ISOD/ISMGF had the right to take part in the 1980 Olympics with a non-racial team selected on merit only.

29 Aug 1979:

Discussions in the Dutch Parliament on the subject of a South African team taking part in the 1980 Olympics.

Two motions were introduced, one by the socialist party to expel South Africa from the Games, another one by the Christian democrats asking for further investigation with the Special Committee against Apartheid of the United Nations. The reason for all this was that the Netherlands supported in 1976 a U.N. resolution requesting to avoid all sport contact with South Africa in general, with the exception of sport contacts endorsed by said Special Committee.

The motion of the Socialist Party was held while the motion of the Christian Democrats was passed by a majority.

Needless to say that with the help of Mr. Barrish, chairman of the South African Sport association for the Disabled, we did everything to supply Parliament and

the Press, with all the information about the true facts of the state of integration reached by this Association.

30 Sept 1979:

Our Foreign Minister visited in New York Mr. Clark, chairman of the Special Committee. Mr. Clark informed him that the Committee was not prepared to give an endorsement to the South African Association since it was not important if the South African Association operated on a non-racial basis but it was the "apartheids policy" of the South African Government which mattered.

5 Oct 1979:

The Government of the Netherlands produced a letter addressed to our Parliament stating, that as a result of all the information available, the Governments standpoint was, that a South African team in the Olympics for the Disabled 1980 was admit able since a non-racial composition could be expected.

18 Oct 1979:

The letter mentioned above was discussed in Parliament. A (new) motion introduced by the Socialist Party, stating that participation of South Africa in the Olympics for the Disabled in 1980 is unwished for, was passed by a majority of over 2/3 of the votes.

The core of this motion, with complete neglect of the arguments of the Government was laid down in three points

- 1) The Special Committee of the U.N. rejects participation of South Africa in the 1980 Olympics for the Disabled.
- 2) The policy of the South African Government is not based upon an actual willingness to affect the system of apartheid.
- 3) The Netherlands supported the 1976 U.N. resolution.

19 Oct 1979:

Our Board was notified by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that given the situation created by the verdict of Parliament the cabinet had come to the conclusion that maintaining the offer to give material support (accommodation, transportation, food etc) to the Games, if a South African team would take part, would be unwise.

Under these conditions much to her regret, the Board of the Foundation had to take the unwished for decision to cancel the entry of South Africa and to inform Mr. Menzo Barrish accordingly. In due course of this month, you will receive further bulletins on essential matters concerning the Olympics, but we felt that timely and precise information on this important matter was necessary.

With kind regards

C.L. Dekking
(Director general)

The argument which did not prevail was that South Africa could participate as the Olympics for the Disabled was not really a sports event and was, therefore, not subject to the same moral standards as mainstream sport (!).

A further example in the same context is a very British domestic one in which an Anti-Apartheid heroine was banned, by the then called British Paraplegic Sports Society,¹⁶ for distributing anti-apartheid material during the European Table Tennis Championships 1979 at Stoke Mandeville. Her name, Maggie Jones.

Among a number of brutal facts of this sad story are:

- Maggie was banned for life without appeal to the BPSS!
- Pressure was put on regional and club organisations of which she was a member to act similarly.
- She was dishonourably escorted off the Stoke Mandeville premises and told never to return.

It is significant that even during this period when the organisation was slowly maturing, the athletes (in the main) viewed themselves and their rights as subjugated to the medical model to which they were accustomed. A model based on the draconian hospital regimes from which many had come so recently and which were too common in those days.

Even though Maggie Jones was not considered for selection for these 1980 Games, she did have a presence in Arnhem when the London based Anti-Apartheid organisation hired a plane and 'buzzed' the Opening Ceremony flying a banner seeking her re-instatement!!

The year after Arnhem, the International Games found themselves under similar pressure to that which faced the Dutch Parliament and Organising Committee. So much so that, at the ISMGF Council meeting of that year 1981, the future participation of the South African team was suspended although they retained their membership. Possibly the demonstrations outside the gates of Stoke Mandeville during the International Games, running at the same time as the Executive and Council met, added to the pressure to suspend.



Demonstration by disabled people against South African participation in the Stoke Mandeville Games 1981.

Specialisation

A review of the numbers of competitors entered for those early Paralympics leaves the uninformed with a real conundrum. How can a multi-sport event of such complexity with the added overlay of classification,¹⁷ with such few numbers, even take place, never mind be sustainable? The simple answer is that many participants competed in more than one sport or discipline. Even the former President of IPC, Sir Philip Craven, of some distinction as an international player on the basketball court, was known in those early days for his prowess in other sports including swimming.

Arnhem started to see the move away from such multiple entries and the realisation by the athletes that it was no longer sufficient to be simply good at a number of sports. To be successful one needed to concentrate every moment of training and preparation on a single discipline if one was to excel. No longer was it possible to turn up in a wheelchair used for daily living; serious competitors were designing bespoke racing wheelchairs, made to measure and made out of the lightest and most durable materials.

The start of the demise of multi-discipline/sport entry by an individual, and the attention to preparation detail, are yet more indicators that 1980 was the crossroads between sport for rehabilitation and elite sport recognisable as mainstream. The logical outcome of such specialization could have seen the death of the Games and other events of the time, but two factors prevented such an outcome.

For this 100 m race in 1980, wheelchairs were becoming bespoke – a far cry from the titanium, carbon fibre, cost-of-a-small-car versions of today. Far right: Dave Kiley superstar of Team USA in Arnhem takes a shot.



The first was the formation of impairment specific international federations of disabled sport, similar to that for the spinal cord injured (ISMGF) which were formerly managed by ISOD. So for the blind, amputees, cerebral palsy and a group called Les Autres, which were all the other physically impaired athletes not captured by any of the above. Each of them had their own classification systems with a myriad of classes to ensure fair competition. The unforeseen consequence for a time was hundreds more competitors but hundreds more gold medals, some of questionable merit.

However, the breakthrough which addressed this new challenge was being formulated by a German sports scientist, Dr. Horst Strohkendl.¹⁸ He was designing a system of classification not based on level of impairment but the reverse, i.e. to what degree can an impaired athlete function in the dynamic situation on court in order to enable those with different impairments to compete together as basketball players by use of a related points system?

This functional approach was revolutionary and was gradually adopted by other sports, particularly athletics and swimming, which by combining athletes with different impairments reduced the overall medal count and made those awarded worthy recipients. There never was a market for an athletics event where there were 30 plus gold medals awarded just for the 100 metres. These issues found their genesis in those wet and windy days of the summer of 1980.

Arnhem Organising Committee

As is often the case with new organisations, its members are often prepared to put up with less than perfect infrastructure or services just to make things happen. There are many examples, including sport event judges using their personal discretion as to the validity of a result, say in field events based on their perception of fairness in light of the individual's disability!¹⁹

One of the best graphic examples of making do can be seen at the first Paralympics, Rome 1960. A late switch of accommodation for the athletes (all daily wheelchair

users at those first Games) meant that the Italian army had to be drafted to carry the participants up numerous flights of stairs to their apartments and bedrooms as the new block allocated had no elevators.²⁰

In contrast the attention to detail by the Arnhem team was outstanding as one might expect of these highly organised Lowlanders, in spite of the fact that they are not known for any occasional flexibility! Some commentators put such intransigence in Arnhem down to the influence of the military within the organisation committee, others to the paradoxical but charming



The Parade started for the British team in 1980.
Far left: Rome 1960: The Dutch team relaxes out of the heat in the accommodation undercroft: no elevators, stairs on the right!

Dutch personality of liberality on the one hand and strict adherence to rules on the other.

The accommodation notice below might serve as a practical example: perhaps its author was more used to soldiers than athletes:

We ask you not to be present in the encampment building between 9 and 12 o'clock. The daily cleaning of the building will take place during this time.

PLEASE: do not fail to make your bed before leaving your room/dormitory.²¹

In spite of the weather the Games would prove the necessary catalyst for much needed change. But in 1980 the vestiges of the old remained, and Sir Ludwig's spirit was everywhere. Maybe traditional medical and military models are not the best combination for an Organising Committee but whatever, it worked. The Games organisation undoubtedly contributed significantly to the momentum for change.

United Kingdom or Great Britain

Another indicator of the athletes and their support staff determination to be seen as mainstream elite sport, and treated accordingly, can be seen in the context of the Arnhem Opening Ceremony.

The organisers annoyed the British team by insisting on calling Great Britain the United Kingdom,²² a title seldom used in international sport. In typical Dutch spirit of compromise, there was a concession to the objections when the GB team was allowed to parade in the alphabetical slot of "G" behind Germany, but preceded by a Scout carrying the designated name board, United Kingdom.

The Royal Guests arrived by helicopter in the middle of the field at the national sports centre, Papendaal, for a ceremony. They were unaware that they had just missed another controversy which might have made their presence redundant because of a possible embarrassing boycott of the participating nations.

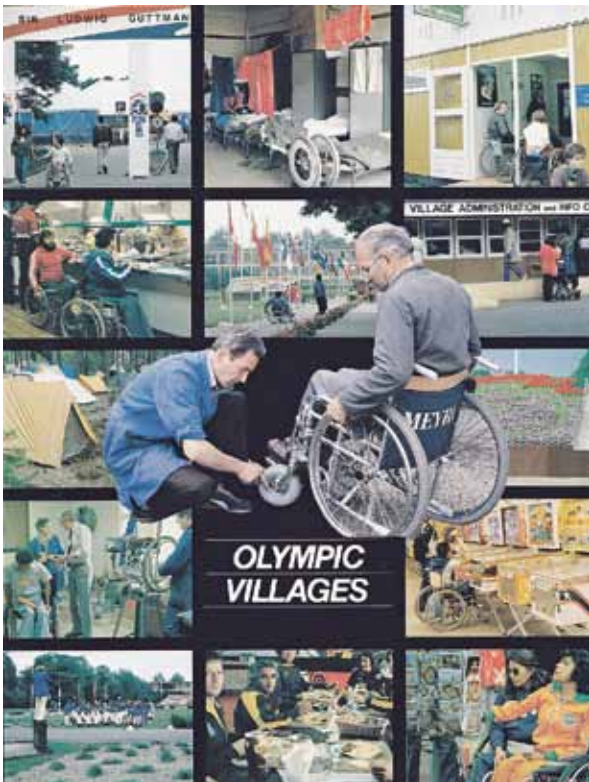
The cause was the instruction to the teams for the Opening Ceremony. It stated that only wheelchair athletes and their staff would be allowed to participate in the Parade at the end of Opening Ceremony. All other team members were instructed to remain seated in the stands, with the inference of a threat of disciplinary action against those who did not heed this directive.

This fear of serious retribution against anyone who did not 'toe the line' was such that this segregated Parade is what actually occurred – unthinkable today. When the same request was made for the Closing Ceremony, it was totally disregarded by the teams and everyone joined in en masse. This was further indication of the still maturing nature of this young movement.

Press & Media attention

The Arnhem Games did show a modest increase in terms of media attention. The UK's BBC had a film crew present throughout led by the famous Welsh rugby star, Cliff Morgan, former Head of BBC Sport. The eventual outcome, shown two weeks after the event, was a part sport and part social documentary. Of course there was

Montage of sights within the Arnhem Olympic Village





The Olympic flame also stopped in Stoke Mandeville in 2012 on the way to London. Photo: Picture-alliance

real disappointment that there was no contemporaneous programming, given the millions spent on the Olympics in Moscow.

The written media continued to show a mixture of enlightened prose coupled with the worst kind of ignorance, as the following extract shows. The athlete who is the focus of the piece below was a multi medallist in a single sport.

*The Disabled Olympics – LOVE, TEARS and TRIUMPH – David Hunn with the so called handicapped ... the possessor of a body so helpless that cutting the meat on his plate is beyond him. Thanks to his blessed buoyancy in the water.....When he gets home he will no doubt find the strength to hold a champagne glass. His wife will have to hold the bottle ...*²³

Then by way of contrast in the same article:

... in the basketball hall the knives are out. Wheelchairs hurtle from end to end, mighty shoulders heave and jostle, and the obstructing is something shocking. Every now and again a major collision overturns a chair and out flies a body. The top is all muscle, the legs only rags. They don't expect help and they seldom get it.

Today the press and media in their presentation of Paralympic athletes are one of the reasons that the public understand and appreciate their elite performances.

Paralympic

In 1980 the Games were called 'the Olympics for the Disabled': a title that did not meet with the approval of the IOC. This title was a metamorphosis of similar titles that had occurred over the years by occasional references in the media to the 'disabled Olympics' or 'wheelchair Olympics'.

After a number of significant exchanges, the title was given luke-warm approval to continue by the IOC provided the title, or anything like it, was never used again. Therefore, Arnhem was the one and only time that the term was officially used.²⁴ This title was critical to Arnhem's marketing strategy as the focus to raise millions of guilders through a TV lottery and other activities.

At the Moscow Olympics of the same year, Juan Antonio Samaranch took over the IOC presidency and, with his inauguration, a new era of marketing was initiated known as the TOP programme. Had those exchanges on the use of the word Olympic occurred a few years later, even the Dutch would have been hard pressed to influence the IOC and would have been working overtime on a new title.

Contrary to popular belief, the word Paralympic(s) was used on occasions in the 60s and 70s in a variety of contexts, for example on the Games buses in Heidelberg '72.

In a promotional article for the Games the following appears –

*Until the Toronto Olympics, the Games of the Handicapped were widely referred to as the Paralympics: mainly because, until then, the blind and the amputees had never taken part. Well in Toronto they did and they will again in Arnhem. The fact that the Games are now open to the blind, to amputees, polio patients and paraplegics makes the name 'Paralympics' a misnomer. So from now on let's talk about the Games in terms of what they really are: the Olympics for the Handicapped.*²⁵

This frequent use of the title of 'Olympics for the Disabled' or 'Olympics for the Handicapped' was an Olympic marketing nightmare and one can understand their concern even in those pre-TOP days. This was in spite of allowing the 'sport for all' organisation for persons with a mental handicap the title Special Olympics.²⁶

The genesis of the word 'Paralympic' can be found originally in the combination of the words paraplegic or paralysed and Olympics. From 1976 the Games ceased to be the preserve of paraplegic competitors. The later adaptation of the term by Seoul '88 was explained, initially without universal enthusiasm by those non-paraplegic adherents, 'as running parallel to the Olympics'.



Cigarette packets from Tokyo 1964

The opponents to the use of the word parallel saw it as a contrived definition in order to preserve the status quo of spinal cord injured dominance, as the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games are never at the same time. Eventually, the definition of the name, running 'along similar lines to' has been universally accepted.

There is no doubt now amongst Paralympic archivists that the word's first international use was in 1964 at the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games where a cigarette company was a Games sponsor. They issued a cigarette packet design for each Olympic sport and one which referred specifically to the Paralympics.

Even then the temptation to use Olympic association was too much to resist as Tokyo 1964 pushed the three wheeled ISMGF logo into a five wheel Games logo stopping short of arranging them in the same pattern as the Olympic rings.

The word 'Paralympic' has now found its way into the daily language of many cultures and without the need for extensive explanation: the old derivations and arguments are only in the minds of antiquarians writing about those days!

Conclusion

The inclusion of more and more disability groups favoured those countries where there was a single organisation managing the whole process at a domestic level and in a sports specific manner rather than disability specific. So much so that those countries who

had founded and maintained a sports structure based on disability factors, of which the UK was one, quickly realised painful change was necessary if they were to meet the ambitions of their athletes.

The realisation of the need for better international collaboration was born out of these days. The formation of the International Coordinating Committee in March 1982²⁷ which led to the creation of the International Paralympic Committee in 1989 was motivated by the Arnhem Paralympics.

Sport needed to be thought of and structured as sport and not in terms of impairment. Not based on what a body could not do but on what a body, no matter how impaired, could do. This mantra around people with impairments rights is the living gift of the Paralympic Movement to society and the world.

Arnhem '80 was a resounding success with every credit possible going to the Dutch organisers. It marked a new era for the reasons described, but because of external factors, was never able to fully capitalise immediately on the potential of its legacy as old ghosts came back to haunt progress.²⁸

Comparisons are rarely fair but one could hypothesise that the Olympic Games only started to become the grown up event known today post-LA 1984 – a reformation which has taken nearly 40 years.

Similarly, one might argue that in the same time period, the Paralympic Games has achieved sustainable maturity with the immense help of the IOC but from a much weaker starting point. Arnhem '80 was undoubtedly that starting point. ■

- 1 The offer of Los Angeles to host the 1984 Olympic Games with Peter Ueberroth was taken up by the IOC as it was the sole bid. In his book *Made in America* he explains how he influenced the organisation of the Olympic Games forever by the adoption of a much more commercially focused operation.
- 2 The author was Chef de Mission of the British Wheelchair team (the title of those days) at the Arnhem Olympics for the Disabled and has been involved with the Movement for over forty years.
- 3 The term 'disabled sport' is controversial and was extensively used: the term 'disabled people' is still the preferred term in social and public references to, and by, disabled people themselves. For some years sportsmen and sportswomen have preferred the term which emphasises sport first, hence athletes with impairments.
- 4 ISMGF – the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation: the founding body of the modern Paralympic Games whose predominant focus was the involvement in international sport of nations representing athletes with a spinal cord impairment, currently renamed as IWAS (International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation).
- 5 Minutes, ISMGF Council Meeting, 1977 Aylesbury, UK
- 6 ISOD – the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled: the body coordinating international sport activities for the visually impaired and amputees until the 1980s, at which time those and other disability sport specific bodies created their own independent international federations.
- 7 Joan Scruton, *Stoke Mandeville – Road to the Paralympics*
- 8 Following Arnhem, the Olympic Games were awarded to Los Angeles who declared that they would not organise the Paralympic Games. The main national disability sport organisation in the USA, the National Wheelchair Athletic Association, declared they would only

The Brazilian Andrew Parsons, who was elected IPC President in 2017 and as IOC Member in 2018, united with the Paralympic Games in PyeongChang with IOC President Thomas Bach the further partnership for the period until 2032.

Photo: Picture-alliance



- organise a Paralympics for its own impairment group, spinal cord injured, and the location would be Illinois. This left ISOD looking for a host which it succeeded in doing in New York. The irony is that because of mismanagement in Illinois and lack of oversight by the NWSA, the organisation collapsed in March 1984 and that element of those Games quickly switched to Stoke Mandeville, UK, where, in spite of the timescales, the Games were considered a resounding success.
- 9 The name adopted for these 5th Paralympic Games since Montreal declined the honour.
 - 10 At the end of the Toronto Games, Sir Philip as a leading member of the British wheelchair basketball team, along with his friend Gerry Kinsella, explained to the coach why they believed the team had failed – observers report that the language was colourful. The coach took exception and reported the two players to the team’s management who in turn reported to Sir Ludwig on their arrival back at Stoke Mandeville. Sir Philip and Gerry were summarily dismissed and told they would never play for GB again. This ban was later commuted to the lesser penalty of suspension, provided they apologised to the coach and Sir Ludwig which proved too difficult. Under a new coach, Sir Philip was selected for the Arnhem team as Sir Ludwig had passed away. Unfortunately, Gerry, considered one of the best players of his day, never represented GB again except in an invitation international in Manchester in the ‘Year of the Disabled 1981’.
 - 11 ISMGF Council Meeting Het Dorp Arnhem July 1980
 - 12 Many of the leading national member officers of ISMGF federations were medical personnel involved with spinal cord impairment.
 - 13 The Gleneagles Agreement of 1977 paved the way for the United Nations ‘Register of Sports Contacts with South Africa’; this was the catalyst for the debate in the Dutch Parliament where named individuals or organisations could be construed as supporting apartheid. This register eventually led to the adoption by the UN General Assembly of its International Convention against Apartheid in Sports December 1985.
 - 14 Because of a tour by the New Zealand All Blacks to South Africa 1976, 26 African nations boycotted the Montreal Olympics and a number of nations boycotted the Toronto Paralympics.
 - 15 Bulletin 9 was eagerly awaited as members were aware of what was being discussed in the background, including the possibility that the Games might be cancelled, with the chance of finding another host in less than a year unlikely.
 - 16 British Paraplegic Sports Society was the UK member of the ISMGF whose Chairman was also Sir Ludwig. During those years, not surprisingly, there was no distinction between the position of the UK and ISMGF on political or organisational matters!
 - 17 Classification is the process in any sport of ensuring fair play so that only those with similar characteristics compete against one another. Examples would be judo, weightlifting in terms of body weight; age in terms of orienteering and initially level of impairment in Paralympic sport replaced by the more acceptable sports and less open to abuse, level of functionality on a sport specific basis.
 - 18 Horst Strohkendl, *The 50th Anniversary of Wheelchair Basketball – A History*, RIP September 2018
 - 19 BSAD Minutes of the Post Games, New York meeting October 1984
 - 20 cf. 7 above
 - 21 *Olympic Village Handbook: Oranje Kazerne 25 June–5 July 1980. Your Accommodation*
 - 22 UK stands for United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland but the initials GBR as the short version of that title is universally accepted in sport. Seoul ‘88 was similarly confused in its final report listing the team correctly as Great Britain but after the United States of America in a version of alphabetical order.
 - 23 *The Observer*, 29th June 1980
 - 24 The one and only time the term was used is not quite true, Canberra bidding for the right to host the 2000 Paralympic Games strangely used the same title ‘Olympics for the Disabled’.
 - 25 *KLM magazine*, Holland Herald, 1979
 - 26 As a USA organisation the USOC gave Special Olympics permission to use the term Olympic in its title in 1971 which was further officially recognised by the IOC in 1988.
 - 27 ICC – International Coordinating Committee created in March 1982 to bring together all the international federations of disabled sport to act as one voice with would be Paralympic hosts and, in particular the IOC, who declined to be engaged with each federation separately. Its last meeting was in Cyprus eleven years later in March 1993 as it handed over the reins to the newly founded, International Paralympic Committee.
 - 28 cf. 7 above