

## NWBA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT FACT SHEET

**WHAT:** For the first time, the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) will host its national championships for six different divisions all in one city, creating one of the largest wheelchair basketball athletic events in the United States, with more than 1,000 male and female athletes with physical disabilities competing.

**WHEN:** March 18 – March 22, 2009

### WHERE:

- Gold Crown Field House: 150 South Harlan Street, Lakewood, CO 80226 (hosting majority of games)
- Craig Hospital: 3425 W. Clarkson St., Englewood, CO 80113
- Metro State College of Denver: Auraria & 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Denver, CO
- Whitlock Recreation Center: 1555 Dover St., Lakewood, CO



### DETAILS:

- Previously, the NWBA staged national championship tournaments for each division separately in different locations; this is the first time all the divisions (with the exception of the college division) will be consolidated at one site for the championships.
- Teams in all divisions will have to qualify for the Nationals via regional tournaments that the NWBA sanctions – the teams playing in Colorado will be the best of the best.
- More than 1,000 athletes are expected to participate in the six divisions.
- The event will have an economic impact on Denver and Lakewood as area hotels will book more than 4,000 room nights over the course of the tournament.
- The Gold Crown Field House boasts Colorado's largest hardwood floor (more than 42,000 square feet) and can host six basketball games simultaneously under one roof.
- One of the six courts at the Gold Crown Field House will serve as a preparation and repair area for athletes to have damage to their competition wheelchairs repaired immediately onsite by special mechanics and welders.
- Craig Hospital, one of the nation's leading rehabilitation centers, will also host a series of games, as will Metro State College of Denver.

### DIVISIONS:

- **Championship Division (CD):** Most competitive division; teams can be co-ed
- **Division III (DIII):** Competitive division of male and female players
- **Women's (W):** Competitive division for elite female players
- **Varsity (V):** Competitive division for high-school age players; participants can be up to 21 years old, if still in high school; teams are co-ed
- **Junior Varsity (JV):** Competitive division for players ranging in age from approximately 12-15 years old; no age restriction in this division, judgment to play on JV team is more based on skill
- **Prep (Prep):** Youngest competitors in NWBA; division for players ages 8-12; teams are co-ed

### MEDIA CONTACTS:

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## DAILY SCHEDULE:

- Wed., March 18: Tournament Games at Gold Crown Field House from 8:30 AM to 11:00 PM
- Thu., March 19: Tournament Games at Gold Crown Field House, Metro State College of Denver, Craig Hospital from 8:30 AM to 10:00 PM
- Fri., March 20: Tournament Games at Gold Crown Field House, Metro State College, Craig Hospital, from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM  
Women's Division Championship at 2:30 PM at Metro State College
- Sat., March 21: Championship Game Schedule (All Games at Gold Crown Field House):  
12:45 PM: Division III Championship Game  
2:30 PM: JV Division Championship Game  
4:15 PM: Varsity Division Championship Game  
6:00 PM: Champions Division Championship Game
- Sun., March 22: Prep Division Tournament Games at Whitlock Recreation Center from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM  
1:30 PM: Prep Division Championship Game at Whitlock Recreation Center



**NATIONAL  
WHEELCHAIR  
BASKETBALL  
ASSOCIATION**

**ABOUT THE NWBA:** The National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) is comprised of over 200 basketball teams within twenty-two conferences. The NWBA was founded in 1948 (making it older than the NBA!), and today consists of men's, women's, intercollegiate, and youth teams throughout the United States of America and Canada. In our pursuit of excellence, the National Wheelchair Basketball Association provides qualified individuals with physical disabilities the opportunity to play, learn and compete

in the sport of wheelchair basketball. It all started at the conclusion of the Second World War when severely injured men were facing the rest of their lives with a permanent physical disability and they still had the same problems and frustrations and the same unbridled and unfocused energy. They had to find an outlet and sports provided it. Sometime around 1946 in Veteran's Administration Hospitals, sports programs started such sports as ping-pong, catch and pool, then from bowling, swimming and volleyball to the more energetic water polo, softball, touch-football and basketball. It was basketball that in a few short years out shadowed all the other sports in popularity. In April of 1949, a group of University of Illinois students, working under the inspired and tireless efforts of Tim Nugent, Director of Rehabilitation, formed the first National Wheelchair Basketball Tournament. That was the beginning of the sport as we know it today. The National Association, its 22 conferences and more than 200 teams are all directly related to the original plan made by the organizing group of students with physical disabilities.

## **2009 NWBA Championships Story Angles**

**NOTE:** These are just a few samples from the hundreds of amazing athletes, all of whom have similar stories, which will be competing in Colorado at the NWBA National Championships:

- Tim Nugent, original founder of the NWBA in 1949, will be in Denver to attend the championships. Although officially retired since 1973, Tim, age 84, is still active with the organization and is one of the true titans and pioneers in the world of wheelchair basketball.
- Jeff Glasbrenner's hectic life can be summed up in a few words – Husband, Dad, Ironman and Paralympian. Glasbrenner is a full-time athlete and stay-at-home dad to son Gavin and daughter Grace. When not taking care of his kids, you can find Glasbrenner running, on the court, in the pool or on his bike. He is a three-time Paralympian in the sport of wheelchair basketball and is also an Ironman triathlete. Last year, Glasbrenner completed the grueling Ironman World Championship race in Kona, Hawaii. Glasbrenner is a below-the-knee amputee as the result of farming accident when he was 8 years old.
- Stephanie Wheeler has risen to become one of the top women's wheelchair basketball players in the world. She's played a pivotal role on two gold medal-winning U.S. Paralympic Teams (2004, 2008) and won multiple national championships while playing basketball at the University of Illinois. Now, Wheeler is a PhD student and star athlete at the University of Alabama and has helped build that program into a national powerhouse in just five years. Wheeler was paralyzed in a car accident at the age of 6 and was raised by her grandparents in a small town in North Carolina.
- Paul Schulte is a three-time Paralympian in the sport of wheelchair basketball. But, his contributions to the sport expand far beyond his amazing on-court performances. Schulte is also an engineer and works as a wheelchair designer for Top End, one of the top wheelchair manufacturers in the world. Schulte is so revered in the sport of wheelchair basketball; he even has his own signature chair. It's only the second signature chair in the history of the sport and Schulte's chair is currently one of the top-selling chairs in the world.
- Patty Cisneros isn't just one of the best women's wheelchair basketball players in the world, she's now helping to set other young women on that same path. Cisneros has been a part of back-to-back gold medal-winning U.S. Paralympic Teams and captained the team to victory at the 2008 Games in Beijing. She is also the head coach of the University of Illinois Women's Wheelchair Basketball Team. Cisneros took over the head-coaching role in the fall of 2007 and led the team to a national championship that season.
- Hannah and Tatyana McFadden have typical lives of kids growing up in America. Their mom, Debbie, shuffles them between school, sports games & practices and other extracurricular activities. But, life didn't start out this way for either Hannah or Tatyana. They were born in Russia, both with physical disabilities, and put in orphanages. Debbie says she had no intention of adopting a child from Russia, much less two, but when she stepped foot in the orphanage and met Tatyana, her life changed forever. Tatyana is a multiple Paralympic Games medalist in track and is now also playing basketball at the University of Illinois, where she is finishing her freshman year. Little sister Hannah is an up-and-comer in the sport and plays with the Bennett Blazers (Baltimore, Md.)
- Kelvin Colmbs and his Hill on Wheels (Lexington, Ky.) teammates are headed to Denver to defend their 2008 NWBA Division III national championship. Colmbs is committed to helping his team get back to the top, but you won't keep him on the court – or on the ground - for long. Hill is an FAA certified commercial pilot & flight instructor. Flying is his passion and he enjoys sharing it with others.
- Mark Yuen is not your typical teenager. He plays wheelchair basketball with the Nebraska Red Dawgs (his parents drive him 120 miles, round-trip, each Saturday for practice), works as the manager for his high school basketball team and is working on his second-degree black belt in karate. He obtained his first-degree black belt in 2005, at the age of 12. He was born with cerebral palsy.
- Rachel Voss woke up from a nap on the day after Christmas in 2002 and couldn't move her legs. An abnormal collection of blood vessels in her spinal cord, called an Arterio-Venous Malformation (AVM), had paralyzed her. Voss endured an endless spate of medical opinions and tests until it was determined she would be in a wheelchair for the rest of her life. Voss wasn't given much opportunity to be active in her school PE classes, even having one teacher put her in a closet during his class, but she soon discovered Paralympic sport. Voss is now active in wheelchair basketball, track & field and swimming and has already traveled the globe for numerous international competitions. She is currently a senior in high school, hoping to attend the University of Illinois in the fall.