

Press Release

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## A Golden Opportunity for Disability Sport

With the Olympics and Paralympics on our national horizon we are hearing more of the need to recruit medal –winning talent to compete on behalf of Great Britain. A campaign has been launched to fast track any British athlete with a disability into the 2012 Paralympics Games. The key words appear to be “medals” and “legacy”. But what is the real situation in disability sport?

One of the largest clubs dedicated to sport for the disabled is situated in Maidenhead. It is called **WAMDSAD**, an acronym for **Windsor Ascot Maidenhead District Sports Association for the Disabled**. Formed in 1975, this multi-sport club provides a wide range of opportunities for people with physical and sensorial disabilities to get involved with sport. Individuals can be sure of a warm welcome and the chance to try out different sports free from the pressure to perform and in the company of others seeking a new challenge. The club motto of “Fun, Friendship and Opportunity” sums up the ethos of this unique organisation.

The success of this club is reflected in its participation in local, regional, national and international competitions. From its very inception it has had members in Team GB at every Paralympics- bringing home medals of every colour.

There are few clubs which can offer the disabled an introduction to sport, opening that doorway to competition and guiding them along the various pathways from grassroots to elite levels of performance.

At the present moment **WAMDSAD** has amongst its members two or three 2012 competitors and perhaps another four or five potential newcomers to Paralympics sport. All have worked hard to get where they are today. But it must be through local clubs like **WAMDSAD** who form the base structure of disability sport that success can be achieved.



The physical and the psychological benefits to be gained from sporting activity are well recognised and have been experienced by many members of this club. Some have come to the door with a mixture of reluctance and apprehension,

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Vice Presidents: PHILIP LEWIS MBE · GEOFF MASON · Sir STEVE REDGRAVE CBE ·  
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WAMDSAD Ltd registered office as above



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only to enter and discover an environment of support, encouragement and fun. Having chosen a sport or sports, they are then guided by coaches in developing the relevant skills. They can follow this path to whatever level then suits their needs. It is not surprising that people often discover some natural talent that they were unaware of, and are motivated to exploit it.

The recruitment of would-be competitors for the Paralympic Games in London 2012 by advertising for people who think that they have "what it takes" is a flawed exercise with less than one thousand days to go to the actual competition. As far as a legacy to the Games is concerned, we recognise the need to establish a network of multi- sport , multi-disability sports clubs for physically and sensorially disabled people that operate in their local communities. These clubs would provide the awareness of disability sport, recruitment, training, coaching and access to equipment and facilities, and work to feed potential performers into the elite squad organization. Of course, these clubs would need funding whether through local and national authorities, the Lottery, Sport England or even by local sponsors and patrons, but surely funding for medal success is always possible.

The need now is for commitment to disability sport. **WAMDSAD** is committed, who is going to join them?

Ends

For further information contact Mike Davis, Chief Executive, WAMDSAD, tel: 01628 627690, or email [info@wamdsad.co.uk](mailto:info@wamdsad.co.uk)

WAMDSAD is an established multi-sport club for the disabled with large purpose-built clubhouse on the Braywick Sports Ground, Maidenhead. Formed in 1975 the club now has over 600 members engaged in sport from 'grassroots' entry level to Paralympic participation. WAMDSAD is a registered charity.

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