



UK SPORTS ASSOCIATION For People with Learning Disability

PRESS RELEASE

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Funding Critical for talented local athletes facing Global Challenge

The UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability is pleased to announce its talented team of 25 athletes across four sports representing Great Britain at the 2009 INAS-FID Global Games in the Czech Republic, July 5th to 14th.

Team GB will comprise competitors in swimming, athletics, table tennis and cycling with the best of British joining an expected 2000 athletes from across the world in a multi sport Championships and 7 days of fierce competition.

An impressive line up of local athletes from across the UK will be competing. All are proud to accept the challenge at these important Championships, but without funding will be unable to compete for Great Britain at the Global Games.

“This is a Team of highly committed and motivated athletes who are driven to be the best in the world”, says Tracey McCillen, National Director, UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability (UKSA), *“despite being selected to represent their country, they must also bear the financial burden of competition. We invite athletes to represent GB, but must send an invoice to them for that privilege. This is a critical year for our athletes and for UKSA. Without immediate financial support our work in facilitating these opportunities for athletes with learning disability will end and the athletes themselves will be unable to compete at the Global Games and other significant events”.*

Team GB is led by Chef de Mission, Verona Elder MBE an experienced athlete and Commonwealth Games Gold medallist and a host of professional coaches, all of whom are providing their time voluntarily.

Recently recognised by the International Paralympic Committee, the Global Games is a critical event for British athletes. The eyes of the sports world will be on the Games both from a performance perspective and in anticipation of the outcomes from the collaborative

work of the joint INAS-FID/IPC Working Group. The Group has been tasked with determining the methods by which athletes with intellectual disability may be included in the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

The ban on athletes with intellectual disability competing in the Paralympic Games, imposed after the Sydney 2000 Games continues although progress is being made by the joint Working Group. The IPC decision on inclusion in London 2012 is expected in November 2009.

UKSA working with its members and organisations across the UK, has led a campaign since 2001 for the ban to be lifted. UKSA urges Government to address the lack of funding for athletes across the UK as a result of the IPC ban and LOCOG, the Mayor of London and MP's to ensure that athletes are re-admitted in time for London 2012.

- ENDS -

For further information, a full team list and interviews contact the UK Sports Association, 1st Floor, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 2PU. Tel: (+44) 0207 490 3057 Fax: (+44) 0207 251 8861. Email: info@uksportsassociation.org. 07710 455 067 (out of hours)

NOTES TO EDITOR

1. The UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability (UKSA) is the disability specific Governing Body in the UK for sport and people with learning disability. UKSA facilitates and supports talented sports people with learning disability in the UK to train, compete and excel in national and international sport and is the body responsible for classification of athletes from the UK. UKSA is recognised by UK Sport and is the official Great Britain member of the International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID), a member of IPC. See www.uksportsassociation.org
2. INAS-FID, the International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability. Founded in 1986, is a member of the International Paralympic Committee and is the body responsible for the international competition for athletes with intellectual disability. See www.inas-fid.org
3. Official 2009 INAS-FID Global Games website www.globalgames09.com
4. The ban on athletes with learning disability was imposed by the IPC following an incident at the Sydney Paralympic Games in 2000 when a group of adult non-disabled athletes infiltrated the Spanish learning disability basketball team. The IPC banned every athlete with learning disability across the world from competing at future Paralympics and IPC sanctioned competitions. This has had the additional impact of funding being stopped across the UK and some athletes not having the financial means to continue in their sport. UKSA has since Sydney 2000 been working with its Members, the British Paralympic Association, INAS-FID and other organisations across the UK, including RADRA and the Equality and Human Rights Commission to have the IPC ban removed.
5. LOCOG is the 2012 London Organising Committee of the Olympic & Paralympic Games.
6. Learning Disability is a term used in the UK, with intellectual disability being used internationally. Both refer to the same group of athletes.