

During those 16 days, over 10,000 athletes will compete in 26 sports and 37 disciplines. Many people are unaware, however, that just 12 days after the conclusion of the 1996 Summer Olympics, a sporting event of similar magnitude will begin. The Paralympic opening ceremony will be held August 16 and over the next 12 days of competition more than 4,000 athletes from 102 nations will compete in 19 different sports.

The origin of the Paralympic movement dates back to 1946 when Sir Ludwig Guttmann organized the International Wheelchair Games to coincide with the 1948 London Olympics. Since that time, the official Paralympic organization was established and Paralympic games have been held nine times in nine countries across the globe. The 1996 Atlanta Paralympics will mark the 10th and largest gathering with an expected 1.5 million spectators. Very large number of people coming to Atlanta from all over the world. Over the years those competing in the Paralympics have expanded from wheelchair athletes to include amputees, the blind, those with cerebral palsy, dwarfs, and those with a variety of other physical limitations. While the disabilities of the athletes range across a wide spectrum, they are united in their dedication to perfection and their quest for excellence.

Many of us, myself included, were not aware of the levels at which these athletes compete. It is truly marvelous. Their times and scores in sports ranging from cycling to powerlifting, judo to swimming, are world class by any standards. The Paralympic world records for various events are, in some cases, just shy of the Olympic world records which is truly amazing. Tony Volpentest, born without hands and feet, ran the 100 meter event in 11.63 seconds—within 2 seconds of the Olympic record held by Carl Lewis. Kim Brownfield, a paraplegic, bench pressed 602 pounds—at that rate he will soon be moving mountains. Without a doubt, the men and women who will be competing in the Atlantic Paralympics are elite athletes, training and performing at the highest levels of their sports.

While their scores and records are awe inspiring, perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the athletes who qualify for the Paralympics is their seemingly impossible achievement of con-

quering their physical impairments. The Paralympic motto is "The triumph of the human spirit." Indeed it is this spirit, above all else, that invites us to share in their victories and revel in their accomplishments. Gathered amongst us in Atlanta in 1996 will be men and women more physically challenged than most of us, yet they will attain levels of excellence far higher than most of us will ever dream of. Through incredible dedication and perseverance and despite every pressure to the contrary, these men and women have accomplished extraordinary feats.

As you can well imagine, each of these athletes has a tremendous success story behind their achievements, a success story behind their achievements. One that particularly struck me is that of Al Mead, an above-the-knee amputee, who captured the silver medal in the long jump in the 1992 Paralympic Games in Barcelona with a jump of 4.62 meters.

Like many of these athletes, Al was not born with his disability. He was an active 9-year-old, when one day at school he took a hard fall. Afterwards, his left leg was numb and circulation eventually stopped. He faced three operations as doctors tried to correct the problem. First, his foot was amputated; then, his leg just below the knee; and finally, just above the knee. He still remembers when he was having that ordeal wondering why everyone was so upset. The way Al figured it, his leg would grow back as soon as he got out of the hospital.

Al, relying heavily on his family's religious faith, remained optimistic during this hospitalization and recovery. Once he returned home from the hospital, he decided to continue doing all the things he had done prior to the operation—despite his doctor's advise to "take it easy." Anyone who knows 9-year-old boys ought to know better than to expect them to sit still for any length of time. Indeed, while waiting for his prosthesis to arrive, Al taught himself how to ride his bike with only one leg. Then, once his leg arrived, Al became more active, playing baseball, hockey, and basketball with community and school teams. Al recalls playing alley football one day when he caught a pass and was running towards the goal line only to have his leg fall off in midstride. While his opponents and teammates were rubbing their eyes

in disbelief, Al was laughing at the happenings.

Al attended Morehouse College in Atlanta where he now lives with his wife and two children. He is the vice-president of an executive search firm and the music director at his local church. Al has competed in numerous National Handicapped Sports' competitions where he has broken national and world records in the 100- 200- and 400-meter events and the high jump and long jump. He is currently training for the Paralympic Games, and I particularly look forward to watching Al perform in 1996 in his home State and his home town. I also look forward to watching thousands of his fellow athletes who may not have 100-percent bodies but who have 100-percent hearts and give 100 percent of their efforts to their stunning athletic achievements.

Mr. President, I will be speaking on this subject several times in the next several months, all the way to the Olympic Games in 1996 because I think it is very important for those of us in this body, those of us who watch this body on television and those people who follow this body throughout the country to understand what a remarkable event is going to take place after the regular Olympic Games in the Paralympic Games in 1996.

I believe that all of us will be very interested and fascinated to watch remarkable athletes such as Al Mead who will be competing in 1996. I believe that my colleagues and the American people will be both awed and inspired by what we discover.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in his capacity as a Senator from the State of Missouri, directs the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,
JANUARY 30, 1995, AT 1 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:27 p.m., adjourned until Monday, January 30, 1995, at 1 p.m.