

Paralympic Games lead the way in celebrating differences

Published on August 25th 2021

The Games have embodied unity, compassion and cohesion for over 60 years now, since Dr Ludwig Guttman first organised an archery competition for 16 WW2 veterans with spinal cord injuries (a spinal cord injury = *une blessure de la moelle épinière*). The veterans competed in wheelchairs at the first Stoke Mandeville Games, organised to coincide with the 1948 London Olympics.

Fast forward from that initial event, to when the Paralympic Games became an official part of the 1960 Rome Olympics. That year, over 400 athletes from 23 countries participated in eight events.

In addition to being an important occasion in the Olympic calendar and, of course, exciting to watch, the Paralympic Games also have symbolic importance.

People living with disabilities are often misrepresented in media. The Games are an opportunity to challenge the narrative and raise awareness (to raise awareness = *sensibiliser, faire prendre conscience*) of the resilience and determination of people with disabilities, as they push the boundaries (= *les limites*) of what's possible in their respective sports.

As events grow to be more inclusive, the Paralympic Games demonstrate how sport truly is for everyone.

Sport helps us all to recognise, celebrate and embrace our differences, showcasing (to showcase = *mettre en avant*) how the unique abilities of each individual strengthens society.