

Day 1 – Paralympic Torch Bulletin Board

- The Rio 2016 Paralympic Torch Relay started its journey through Brazil on this Thursday, September the 1st, in Brasília. The flame was lit at a ceremony in Dona Sarah Kubitschek City Park, from energy gathered from positive messages sent by people from all over the world, through the hashtag #ParalympicFlame. At the federal capital, the flame symbolizes equality, remembering people that sports can break social barriers of prejudice towards people with disabilities.

- Ulisses Araújo, a teacher from the Education Secretariat and founder of the Special Physical Education Training Centre Association, was the messenger of this Paralympic value. “The flame in Brasilia is the first to be lit in Brazil. As our city starts the relay, equality is our departure point in sports and in life”, said Ulisses, who is also a consultant of accessibility implementation at the Olympic and Paralympic Centres of the Federal District and has elaborated the district law of the Bolsa Atleta Paralímpico program.

- After lighting the torch at the ceremonial cauldron, Ulisses delivered the flame to athlete Cláudio Silva. He was part of the adaptive volleyball team that earned a gold medal at the Paralympic Pan American Games of 2007. “I always wanted to participate at the Paralympic Games, and today, I have accomplished this dream by carrying the torch. I’m ending in the best way possible a victorious career”, he celebrated.

- The relay continued to Parque das Garças (park). From there, it paid a visit to the Rede Sarah unity at Lago Norte, where the flame was carried on board an adaptive boat by sailing athlete Ana Paula Bech. In July, she participated at the World Championship in Holland. “The Paralympic athlete’s life doesn’t end without victories, because it’s always built on overcoming”, she affirmed.

- Lúcio Pinheiro, who also carried the torch at Rede Sarah, is a football 5-a-side referee and acted at the Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Paralympic Games. Next week, he will be in Rio to participate at his third edition of the Games. “I’m here today representing the kids from this modality”, he said.

- The flame also went to the Cultural, Educational and Professionalizing Institute for the Physically Disabled of Brazil (Icep). Suede Leite, social manager of this entity, stressed the importance of the Brasília value. “I was very happy to know that the city motto was equality, something we fight for everyday”, he said.

· Badminton will make its debut at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. And native of Brasília Rômulo Soares can't wait for that to happen. The athlete carried the Paralympic torch this Thursday in Brasília. "Brazil and the world are about to know our sport", he declared.

· Indigenous girl Iganani Suruwaka was born at the Amazon, on the Suruwaha tribe, with brain paralysis. Her mother, Muwaji Suruwahá, had to escape from the village to avoid indigenous infanticide. The child, for not being able to walk, was sentenced to death by poisoning in her own community. This cultural practice is not regarded as a crime by Brazilian authorities. At 13 years old, Iganani carried the Paralympic torch this afternoon, at Parque da Cidade, with the help of her mother. She had a special cheering crowd that brought posters with the phrase: "Our medal is accessibility".

· Native of Brasília Haroldo da Costa went through a kidney transplant in 1997 and has participated at five editions of the World Transplant Games. According to him, carrying the Paralympic torch crowned his sports career. "I have three medals, and next year I'll be playing tennis in Spain".

· "I can't describe the emotion of carrying the torch", said Andrey Barbosa, prior to the big moment. He loves animals and has been doing hippotherapy for six months to treat autism, a disease he presents in medium level. This afternoon, with the Colorado horse, he carried the Paralympic flame at Parque da Cidade. "I didn't expect this to happen", he affirmed.

· "If pedagogy didn't exist, this wouldn't be happening", said Márcia de Mello about the emotion of carrying the Paralympic torch today. She has been working with inclusive education for 40 years, and has recently written a book which gathers stories of disabled children. "These are stories of success, of overcoming", she affirms.

· The race has started at the Brazilian kart track! Social assistant Paulo Beck carried the Paralympic flame on board an adaptive kart. He was the leader of the Paralympic delegation of Barcelona 1992. "From then until now, the structure of Paralympic sport has greatly improved in the country", he says. Today, he enjoyed his moment as driver: "It's an honour, to have this moment at an unexpected sport, which normally isn't practiced by people with disabilities. There are no limits for any kind of human being, apart from those set by us and society".

· "Write it down: I'll be at Tokyo 2020", guaranteed Jéssica Vitorino. This native of Brasília has practiced goalball since 2009. She was part of the Brazilian team that was champion of this modality at the 2015 Toronto Parapan Games. "I have the best expectations possible regarding this moment I'm about to live today", she said, prior to carrying the torch.

· Antônio Padilha was the last torchbearer of the day. Professor of electric engineering at the Brasília University, he does researches and development of technologies for people with motor disabilities, such as robotic prosthesis and systems for helping on physical exercises using neuromuscular electric stimulation. “All people with disabilities struggle a lot on their everyday lives. And sometimes even more so when they choose to work with sports”, said Padilha, who currently coordinates the EMA Project (Empowering Mobility & Autonomy), which conceived a tricycle assisted by electric stimulation.

· Tomorrow, the Rio 2016 Paralympic Torch Relay proceeds to Belém (PA). The lighting ceremony will take place at 11:00AM at the Propaz Foundation, at Dorothy Stang Square.

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