

This case study considers equality for able-bodied athletes, and athletes/persons with a disability, from a financial point of view. A brief history of the Paralympic Games is presented, before asking readers to consider the differences in funding between a) Olympic and Paralympic sports in general, b) the same sport that is awarded less funding at Paralympic level than at Olympic level, and c) individual Paralympic sports. In order to consider these financial issues, brief contextualisation of the history of the Paralympic Games is necessary.

Vision of the Paralympic Games

The vision of the Paralympic Games, according to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), is *to enable Paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world*. This conceptual vision is strengthened by the official motto: *Spirit in Motion*. The word 'Paralympic' was originally intended to combine the words 'paraplegic' and 'Olympic' but it is now thought to represent the term 'parallel' (from the Greek preposition *para*), in recognition of the joining together of many disabled groups alongside the Olympic Movement

History of Paralympic Sport

The inaugural disabled games, often referred to as the first Paralympic Games (although never originally referred to as such) were held in Britain, in Stoke Mandeville. The year was 1948, and the Games were the brainchild of Sir Ludwig Guttman, whose goal was to organise a sports event for World War II veterans who had suffered spinal cord

injuries. This event took place the same year that London hosted the 1948 Olympic Games, bringing with it a much needed sense of motivation and national pride for a capital city that was still recovering from German bombings and coping with the inevitable casualties of war.

Four years after the inaugural Games had taken place, athletes from the Netherlands joined the event, and a fledgling international movement was born. This formed the foundations for the first ever Olympic-styled disability sports event to be held in Rome in 1960, where the games were first referred to as the *Paralympics*. The Paralympic Games grew in size and stature with every subsequent quadrennial event, with the first Paralympic Winter Games taking place in Sweden in 1976.

Fast forward to the present day, and the world watches elite athletes compete for glory in the quadrennially staged Paralympics, which now always occur immediately after the Olympic Games.

Since 1948, the Paralympic Movement has grown dramatically. The number of athletes participating in Summer Paralympic Games has increased from 400 athletes from 23 countries in Rome in 1960 to 3,951 athletes from 146 countries in Beijing in 2008. On the 19th June, 2001, the IOC and IPC signed an official agreement that secured the future of the Paralympic Games, by obliging all future host cities to have to bid for the right to host

both the Olympic and Paralympic Games at the same time.

Paralympic Sport: Classification

Paralympic athletes enter sports competition with varying disabilities, and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) have developed a system of classification that is designed to perpetuate fair play. One might regard this classification system as similar to the weight classes imposed on boxers, with the fundamental difference here being that Paralympic athletes are grouped in classes defined by the degree of function presented by their disability. Traditionally, Paralympic athletes can be classified into six different disability groups; amputee, cerebral palsy, visual impairment, spinal cord injuries, intellectual disability and les autres (athletes who do not fit into the aforementioned groups).

It should be noted, at this point, that some researchers question the validity and reliability of this classification system, and it is prudent to remain cogent of these ongoing conceptual, philosophical and sociological debates.

Comparing Paralympic and Olympic Funding

Team GB hope to bring home the Gold when the Olympic and Paralympic Games come to our shores in 2012. A fundamental and crucial aspect in facilitating this dream is the provision of world-class development and support for our athletes. However, Paralympic funding still falls way behind Olympic funding. The reader is encouraged to investigate all potential reasons for this apparent discrepancy.

London 2012 - Funding Breakdown PER SPORT

Table 1.0 outlines the investment that each Olympic sport will receive for the London 2012 Olympiad (UK Sport). Each financial figure given for its corresponding sport represents the total funding package that has been allocated to the sport over the quadrennial cycle that ends in April 2013.

One might note that the greatest budget has been assigned to rowing (£27,470,000), cycling (£26,922,700), swimming (£25,606,000), athletics (£25,110,990) and sailing (£23,389,800). It is interesting to compare the different levels of funding for each sport, and to consider the reasons why funding might, at first glance, appear to be so unequal for individual sports.

TABLE 1.0 FUNDING PER OLYMPIC SPORT	2009-2013 FUNDING AWARD (£)
Archery	4,496,700
Athletics	25,110,900
Badminton	8,631,700
Basketball	8,751,800

Boxing	8,022,300
Canoeing	16,289,000
Cycling	26,922,700
Diving	6,655,300
Equestrian	13,651,900
Fencing	1,259,746
Gymnastics	10,332,100
Handball	1,448,327
Hockey	14,128,700
Judo	7,636,200
Modern Pentathlon	6,411,400
Rowing	27,470,000
Sailing	23,389,800
Shooting	1,225,350
Swimming	25,606,000
Synchronised Swimming	3,457,600
Table Tennis	1,207,848
Taekwondo	4,488,300
Triathlon	5,392,600
Volleyball	1,359,203
Volleyball - beach	394,607
Water Polo	1,450,895
Weightlifting	680,023
Wrestling	717,650
Total	£256,588,649

- Tennis and Football have never been supported by UK Sport as they are deemed able to self-fund

Table 1.1 presents funding figures for the Paralympic Games in the same quadrennial funding cycle. The first fact that one might primarily be cogent of is that the overall funding budget for all Paralympic sports is £47,085,250, which is very small when compared to the total funding budget of £256,588,649 that has been designated for the funding of Olympic sports.

One might also consider that three of the Paralympic sports with the highest budgets are the same as those proffered the highest budget within Olympic competition. The sports that dominate the Paralympic funding table are; swimming (£10,057,500), athletics (£6,664,700), cycling (£3,845,500), equestrian (£3,666,700) and men's wheelchair basketball (£3,549,700). It is interesting to consider why, at first glance, these sports appear to take financial precedent over others, and to consider the reasons why this might have occurred.

TABLE 1.1 FUNDING PER PARALYMPIC SPORT	2009-2013 FUNDING AWARD (£)
Archery	2,187,500
Athletics	6,664,700
Boccia	2,336,700
Cycling	3,845,500
Equestrian	3,666,700
Fencing	273,127
Goalball	327,832
Judo	1,313,700
Powerlifting	1,107,500
Rowing	2,366,700
Sailing	1,775,000
Shooting	2,111,700
Swimming	10,057,500
Table Tennis	1,623,300
Volleyball	382,430
Wheelchair Basketball - men	3,549,700
Wheelchair Basketball - women	491,761
Wheelchair Rugby	2,393,900

Wheelchair Tennis	600,000
Total	£47,085,250

- Figure for Wheelchair Tennis covers first two years of the cycle, with discussions to progress with LTA about self-funding from that point
- Football deemed able to self-fund

Participation Rates

The Stoke Mandeville Games played host to 130 athletes in 1952, a figure that has risen considerably to 3,951 athletes from 146 countries at Beijing (2008), to a projected 4,200 athletes from 150 participating countries in the London 2012 Summer Paralympic Games. Participation in the Winter Paralympic Games have also increased from approximately 250 athletes from 17 countries in the inaugural Winter Games in Sweden in 1976, to a projected 650 athletes from 45 countries in Vancouver, 2010. However, if one compares these participation figures to those of the Olympic Games, again, a notable discrepancy is evident. Thus, when comparing conceptualisations of equality, we might not only consider financial and economic factors.

FIND OUT MORE

Paralympic Sport TV

<http://www.Paralympicsport.tv>

Paralympic Sport website

<http://www.paralympic.org>

UK Sport Funding Breakdown (per sport)

http://www.uk sport.gov.uk/pages/summer_olympic_sports_-_london_2012/

IPC Guidelines for Persons with a Disability

http://www.paralympic.org/export/sites/default/Media_Centre/Media_Information/2008_07_Guidelines_Reporting_on_Disability.pdf

CREDITS

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