

= 2012 Summer Paralympics =

The 2012 Summer Paralympics , the fourteenth Summer Paralympic Games , and also more generally known as the London 2012 Paralympic Games , were a major international multi @-@ sport event for athletes with disabilities governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) , that took place in London , England from 29 August to 9 September 2012 . These Paralympics were one of the largest multi @-@ sport events ever held in the United Kingdom after the 2012 Summer Olympics , and were the largest Paralympics ever : 4 @,@ 302 athletes from 164 National Paralympic Committees participated , with fourteen countries appearing in the Paralympics for the first time ever . A total of 503 events in 20 sports were held during these games ; for the first time since their suspension after the 2000 Paralympics , events for the intellectually disabled were also held in selected sports .

The lead @-@ up to these games prominently emphasized the return of the Paralympic movement to its spiritual birthplace : in 1948 , the British village of Stoke Mandeville first hosted the Stoke Mandeville Games , an athletics event for disabled British veterans of the Second World War held to coincide with the opening of the Summer Olympics in London . They were the first @-@ ever organized sporting event for disabled athletes , and served as a precursor to the modern Paralympic Games . Stoke Mandeville also co @-@ hosted the 1984 Summer Paralympics with Long Island , New York , after its original host , the University of Illinois at Urbana ? Champaign , pulled out due to financial issues .

Organizers expected the Games to be the first Paralympics to achieve mass @-@ market appeal , fuelled by continued enthusiasm from the British public following the country 's successful performance at the Summer Olympics , awareness of the United Kingdom 's role in the history of the Paralympics , public attention surrounding South African sprinter Oscar Pistorius (who , only just prior to the Paralympics , became the first double amputee to compete in the Summer Olympics alongside able @-@ bodied athletes) , a major marketing campaign instituted by the Games ' local broadcaster , and growing media coverage of Paralympic sport . The games ultimately met these expectations , breaking records for ticket sales , heightening the profile of the Paralympics in relation to the Olympics , and prompting IPC president Philip Craven to declare them the " greatest Paralympic Games ever . "

= = Bidding process = =

As part of a formal agreement between the International Paralympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee established in 2001 , the winner of the bid for the 2012 Summer Olympics was also to host the 2012 Summer Paralympics . At the 117th IOC Session in Singapore , the rights to host the 2012 Summer Olympics and Paralympics were awarded to London .

= = Development and preparation = =

As with the Olympics , the 2012 Summer Paralympics were overseen by LOCOG and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) . LOCOG was responsible for overseeing the staging of the games , while the ODA dealt with infrastructure and venues .

The Government Olympic Executive (GOE) within the Department for Culture , Media and Sport (DCMS) was the lead Government body for co @-@ ordinating the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics . The GOE reported through the DCMS Permanent Secretary to the Minister for Sports and the Olympics Hugh Robertson . It focused on oversight of the Games , cross @-@ programme management and the London 2012 Olympic Legacy .

= = = Venues and infrastructure = = =

The 2012 Summer Paralympics used many of the same venues as the 2012 Summer Olympics , along with several new locations such as Eton Manor for wheelchair tennis and Brands Hatch for

road cycling . London 's purpose @-@ built Olympic venues and facilities , including the Olympic Village itself , were designed to be accessible as possible so they could easily accommodate the Paralympics . Some venues also contained additional accessible seating areas during the Paralympics .

= = = Public transport = = =

Transport for London operated the Paralympic Route Network (a downsized version of the Olympic Route Network operated during the Summer Olympics) to facilitate road traffic between venues and facilities . The network provided 8 @.@ 7 miles (14 @.@ 0 kilometres) of lanes specifically reserved for Paralympic athletes and officials . TfL continued to operate its Get Ahead of the Games website during the Paralympics , which provided updates and advice for commuters during the Games . Prior to the Games , concerns were raised by TfL commissioner Peter Hendy that London 's transportation system might not be able to handle the Paralympics adequately . He feared that the end of the school summer holiday (which fell during the Games) would result in increased traffic , and that commuters might not heed traffic warnings or change their travel behaviour as they had during the Olympics .

Sevenoaks railway station was designated as the preferred station for spectators travelling to watch the cycling at Brands Hatch . Organisers chose Sevenoaks over the closer Swanley railway station because of its " existing step @-@ free access and excellent transport links " , and because Swanley did not yet have a wheelchair lift . Whilst organisers did not believe that Swanley would be able to have wheelchair lifts installed by the start of the Paralympics , the station finished their installation by early August 2012 .

= = = Lead @-@ up and promotion = = =

= = = = Handover ceremony = = = =

The formal handover occurred during the closing ceremony of the 2008 Summer Paralympics in Beijing , when Mayor of London Boris Johnson received the Paralympic Flag from Mayor of Beijing Guo Jinlong . This was followed by a cultural presentation by Britain , which was similar to its presentation during the Olympics ' closing ceremony . It featured urban dance group ZooNation , the Royal Ballet , and Candoco , a physically integrated dance group , all dressed as London commuters and waiting for a bus by a zebra crossing . A double @-@ decker bus drove around the stadium , guided by Ade Adepitan , to music composed by Philip Sheppard . The top of the bus was open and folded down to show a privet hedge featuring London landmarks such as Tower Bridge , The Gherkin and the London Eye . Cherisse Osei , drummer for Mika , and Sam Hegedus then performed , before the top of the bus folded up into its original form , sporting multi @-@ coloured Paralympic livery . Both the Paralympic and Olympic flags were formally raised outside of London 's City Hall on 26 September 2008 . British Paralympians Helene Raynsford and Chris Holmes raised the Paralympic flag .

= = = = Paralympic Day and Super Saturday = = = =

On 8 September 2011 Trafalgar Square staged International Paralympic Day , hosted by Rick Edwards , Ade Adepitan and Iwan Thomas , to coincide with a visit to London by representatives of the IPC . The event celebrated the Paralympic Games , showcasing and demonstrating the 20 sports that would feature during the Games (with some sessions also made inclusive to people with hearing disabilities) . It also featured appearances by Paralympic athletes Oscar Pistorius , Ellie Simmonds and Sascha Kindred , and the unveiling of a bronze statue of Pistorius by Ben Dearnley . British Prime Minister David Cameron and London 's mayor Boris Johnson also appeared . Two days later on 10 September , supermarket chain Sainsbury 's and Channel 4 presented Sainsbury 's

Super Saturday , a family event at Clapham Common . The event featured showcases of Paralympic sports , and a concert featuring pop music acts including Nicola Roberts , Olly Murs , The Wanted , Will Young , Pixie Lott , Dappy , Sugababes , The Saturdays , Chipmunk and Taio Cruz .

=== Channel 4 promotional campaign ===

Channel 4 , the host broadcaster of the 2012 Summer Paralympics in the United Kingdom , promoted its coverage of the Games with a multi @-@ platform advertising campaign that included television adverts , online content , and billboard advertising , some of which carrying the tagline " Thanks for the warm @-@ up . " Overall , Channel 4 's campaign aimed to change the public 's view of the Paralympics , encouraging viewers to see the Games as an " event in its own right " rather than as an afterthought to the Olympics . As part of the campaign , Channel 4 produced a two @-@ minute @-@ long trailer for its coverage entitled Meet the Superhumans , which was directed by Tom Tagholm with input from Deborah Poulton , 2012 Paralympic Project Leader and Alison Walsh , Editorial Manager of Disability , both at Channel 4 . The trailer , set to Public Enemy 's song " Harder Than You Think " , focused on the competitive and " superhuman " aspects of Paralympic sport , while acknowledging the personal events and struggles that reflected every athlete 's participation in the Games . Meet the Superhumans premiered on 17 July 2012 , and aired simultaneously as a " roadblock " advert on 78 different commercial television channels in the UK (which included rival channels ITV1 and Sky1) .

The advert was met with critical acclaim : Adweek 's Tim Nudd declared it " the summer 's most stunning sports commercial " , while Simon Osborne of The Independent felt it was " an act of branding genius " and " a clear bid to bring the Paralympics from the sporting wings to centre stage . " The advert was seen by an estimated audience of 10 million viewers ; Channel 4 's marketing and communications chief Dan Brooke estimated that reaction to the advert through social media was double that of the première of the BBC 's trailer for its Olympics coverage .

Meet the Superhumans won a Golden Lion award at the Cannes Lions Festival in June 2013 , losing the overall award to Dumb Ways to Die . Sir John Hegarty , the jury president said of it : " When you 've got some really outstanding work it is tragic in some ways it can 't get a bigger award , but there can only be one grand prix " , while jury member Carlo Cavallone added " [Meet the Superhumans] is an amazing campaign , one of the golds that went through [the judging process] immediately ... Everyone felt it had the highest level of craft . It puts an issue that was really important before London 2012 to raise awareness of the Paralympics [and] they were hyper successful ? Dumb Ways to Die was a tough contender . "

=== Royal Mail stamps and gold post boxes ===

In August 2009 Royal Mail unveiled a series of 30 stamps (reflecting the 30th Olympiad) about the coming Olympic and Paralympic Games . They were released in batches of ten between 2009 and July 2011 ; each stamp featured an Olympic or Paralympic sport and the London 2012 logo .

As it had done during the Olympics , Royal Mail honoured Britain 's Paralympic gold medallists by painting a post box gold in each of their home towns (along with an additional post box outside the National Spinal Injuries Centre in Stoke Mandeville , in honour of its role in the Games ' history) , and featured them on commemorative stamps released throughout the Games . Royal Mail originally planned only to release a series of six stamps with group portraits of Britain 's medallists ; however , the decision was met with backlash from critics , who argued that the organization was discriminating against Paralympians by not granting them the same individual recognition as their Olympic counterparts . Olympic shadow minister Tessa Jowell was also critical of Royal Mail 's plan , saying that the stamps were a symbolic aspect of Britain 's celebration of the Olympics and that " it would be a shame if this important symbol was not offered to our Paralympian heroes as well . "

Royal Mail initially defended its decision , arguing that it would have been " logistically and

practically impossible " to issue individual stamps for each gold medallist , since it expected the British team to meet or exceed its performance at Beijing of 42 gold medals . As a result of the criticism , Royal Mail announced on 15 August 2012 that it would release individual stamps for each British gold medallist during the Paralympics .

== Test events ==

Several Paralympics @-@ specific events were held during the London Prepares series of test events for the Olympic and Paralympic Games ; these included the London International Goalball Tournament , and the London Disability Grand Prix ? which was also the first Paralympic event to be held at London 's Olympic Stadium .

== Torch relay ==

The Paralympic torch relay began on 22 August , when groups of disabled and non @-@ disabled scouts kindled four Paralympic flames on the highest peaks of each nation of the United Kingdom ; Scafell Pike in England , Ben Nevis in Scotland , Slieve Donard in Northern Ireland , and Snowdon in Wales . On 24 August the four flames were used to light ceremonial cauldrons in London , Edinburgh , Belfast and Cardiff during special " Flame Festival " events ; smaller " Flame Celebration " events were also held in various communities over the bank holiday weekend .

On 28 August the four flames were united during a ceremony at Stoke Mandeville Stadium . The flame then travelled a 92 @-@ mile (148 @-@ kilometre) route to Olympic Stadium in a 24 @-@ hour relay , with 580 torchbearers working in teams of five . After a two @-@ hour weather delay , a backup flame was taken straight to the stadium as a contingency , and the relay route was modified . However , as the opening ceremony 's parade of nations took longer than expected , the flame was able to arrive at Olympic Stadium in time .

== Ticketing ==

2 @.@ 7 million tickets were offered in total , including event @-@ specific tickets and those granting access solely to the Olympic Park , along with multi @-@ event passes offered for ExCeL London and Olympic Park that were intended to allow spectators to discover a variety of Paralympic events . Unlike previous Paralympics , tickets were in extremely high demand , and the ticket allocation was increased from the originally planned 2 @.@ 5 million . Whilst the period during the Olympics has historically been the busiest for Paralympic sales , 1 @.@ 4 million tickets were already sold before the start of the Summer Olympics , already surpassing the total number sold in Sydney . The high demand resulted in technical issues with the Ticketmaster @-@ operated website , which led to complaints via social networking services by users who were struggling to order .

Organisers expected the first ever sell @-@ out in the history of the Paralympics . LOCOG 's chief executive Paul Deighton remarked that " the interest in attending the Paralympics has been extraordinary from the start . " This success was attributed to the enthusiasm surrounding Great Britain 's performance during the Olympics , fan interest in South African " Blade Runner " Oscar Pistorius (a Paralympic athlete who was the first ever double amputee to compete in the Olympics) , and affordable prices .

On 8 August LOCOG announced that 2 @.@ 1 million tickets had been sold (600 @, @ 000 in the previous month alone) , breaking the record of 1 @.@ 8 million set in Beijing (1 @.@ 6 million tickets were also distributed by the Chinese government) . IPC president Philip Craven congratulated London for this achievement , crediting it to " the insatiable appetite the public has for top class elite sport " , and noted it would be fitting for a Paralympics held in its spiritual birthplace to have filled venues . By the opening ceremony , 2 @.@ 4 million had been sold , with the remaining 100 @, @ 000 sold during the Games ; 10 @, @ 000 were offered each day . The last 800 tickets to the Opening Ceremony were distributed to police and the military , while Mayor Boris Johnson

arranged for the distribution of 1 @, @ 100 to members of London 's youth athletics clubs . Due to popular demand , a further 100 @, @ 000 contingency tickets were released on 6 September (which included multi @-@ event passes , and event tickets given up by sponsors and partners) , along with 100 @, @ 000 giving access solely to the Olympic Park .

= = = Logo = = =

The 2012 Summer Paralympics used an emblem sharing a common design with that of the Summer Olympics ? the first time this had ever been done . The logo , designed by Wolff Olins , was unveiled on 4 June 2007 , and is a representation of the number 2012 . The Paralympic version has its own distinct colour scheme , and substitutes the Olympic Rings with the Paralympic " agitos " .

= = = Mascots = = =

The official mascot of the 2012 Summer Paralympic Games , Mandeville , was unveiled alongside its Olympic counterpart Wenlock on 19 May 2010 . As characters , they are portrayed drops of steel from a steelworks in Bolton , and feature singular camera eyes ? representing " focus " and the cameras being used to capture the Games . Mandeville is named in honour of Stoke Mandeville due to its significance in the origins of the Paralympics . Mandeville also wears a helmet emblazoned in the red , green , and blue colours of the Paralympic emblem .

= = = Opening ceremony = = =

The opening ceremony was held on 29 August at the Olympic Stadium . It was inspired by William Shakespeare 's play " The Tempest " and themed around the concept of " Enlightenment " . It featured appearances by theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking , along with actors Ian McKellen and Nicola Miles @-@ Wildin playing the roles of Prospero and Miranda from " The Tempest " . The ceremony also featured a performance by British electronic music group Orbital . The leading UK disabled theatre company Graeae played their version of the polio survivor Ian Dury 's 1981 protest song ' Spasticus Autisticus ' .

The final bearers of the Paralympic flame represented several generations of Paralympic athletes . Joe Townsend , a Royal Marine who lost both of his legs after stepping on a land mine on duty in Afghanistan (who represented the future , as he plans to compete in Rio) , delivered the flame to Olympic Stadium via a zipline from the ArcelorMittal Orbit tower . He passed the flame to long @-@ time British Five @-@ a @-@ side football captain David Clarke , who then passed it to the lighter of the Paralympic cauldron , Margaret Maughan , who was the winner of Britain 's first gold medal at the first official Paralympics , in Rome .

= = = Closing ceremony = = =

The closing ceremony was held on 9 September at the Olympic Stadium . Entitled " The Festival of the Flame " , the ceremony was themed around the gathering of people in celebration , and was directed by Kim Gavin , who also directed the closing ceremony of the Summer Olympics just a few weeks prior . The ceremony featured sequences set to a live performance by the British rock band Coldplay , who were accompanied by guest performers such as the British Paraorchestra (who accompanied the band on " Strawberry Swing " , and also performed the Paralympic anthem) , Barbadian singer Rihanna (who performed her collaboration with Coldplay , " Princess of China " , and her solo hit " We Found Love ") and American rapper Jay @-@ Z (who performed " Run This Town " with Rihanna and Coldplay , and joined in a reprise of " Paradise ") . To mark its hosting of the 2016 Summer Paralympics , the Paralympic flag was passed from Boris Johnson , Mayor of London to Eduardo Paes , Mayor of Rio de Janeiro . LOCOG chief Sebastian Coe and IPC president Philip Craven both congratulated London for its successful hosting of the Paralympics ; Coe was proud that both the Olympics and Paralympics in London could be labelled " Made in

Britain " , while Sir Phillip felt that the Games were the " greatest Paralympic Games ever . " Ellie Simmonds and Jonnie Peacock shared the honour of extinguishing the Paralympic cauldron , sharing its last flame on torches to others throughout the stadium to represent its eternal spirit .

= = The Games = =

= = = Participating nations = = =

London 2012 had the largest number of athletes and participating nations of any Paralympic Games . A total of 4 @, @ 302 athletes from 164 countries competed in the Games . This represented an increase of 291 athletes and 18 countries from the 2008 Games , which had 4 @, @ 011 athletes from 146 countries .

Fourteen countries made their Paralympic début : Antigua and Barbuda , Brunei , Cameroon , Comoros , the Democratic Republic of the Congo , Djibouti , the Gambia , Guinea @-@ Bissau , Liberia , Mozambique , North Korea , San Marino , the Solomon Islands and the US Virgin Islands . Trinidad and Tobago returned to the Games for the first time since 1988 .

Andorra made its début in the Summer Paralympics , having already made three appearances at the Winter Paralympics . Malawi , which would have been making its debut at the Games , and Botswana , were both due to send delegations but withdrew hours before the opening ceremony citing a lack of government funds .

The following National Paralympic Committees sent delegations to compete :

= = = Sports = = =

The programme of the 2012 Summer Paralympics featured events in 20 sports . The number of events in each sport is noted in parentheses .