

= United States at the 2008 Summer Paralympics =

The United States sent a delegation to compete at the 2008 Summer Paralympics in Beijing , China . A total of 213 U.S. competitors took part in 18 sports ; the only 2 sports Americans did not compete in were soccer 5 @-@ a @-@ side and 7 @-@ a @-@ side . The American delegation included 16 former members of the U.S. military , including 3 veterans of the Iraq War . Among them were shot putter Scott Winkler , who was paralyzed in an accident in Iraq , and swimmer Melissa Stockwell , a former United States Army officer who lost her left leg to a roadside bomb in the war .

The United States finished third in the gold and overall medal count , behind host nation China and Great Britain . The finish was an improvement from the 2004 Paralympics , where the U.S. finished fourth in the gold and overall medal count . The U.S. saw significant gains in Paralympic swimming , winning 17 gold medals and 44 total medals , 9 more than they took home from Athens . U.S. swimmers set a total of 16 world records , 23 Paralympic records , 48 Pan American records and 99 American records . U.S. coverage of the Games was provided by the Universal Sports Television Network and the official website of the U.S. Paralympic Team , usparalympics.org.

= = Disability classifications = =

Every participant at the Paralympics had their disability grouped into one of five disability categories : amputation (either congenital or sustained through injury or illness) ; cerebral palsy ; wheelchair athletes (often overlapping with other categories) ; visual impairment (including blindness) ; and les autres (any physical disability that does not fall strictly under one of the other categories , for example dwarfism or multiple sclerosis) . Each Paralympic sport then had its own classifications , depending on the specific physical demands of the competition . Events were given a code , made of numbers and letters , describing the type of event and classification of the athletes competing . Some sports , such as athletics , divided athletes by both the category and severity of their disabilities . Other sports , such as swimming , grouped competitors from different categories together , the only separation being based on the severity of the disability .

Athletes may have competed against individuals with different classifications in the same event . For example , track and field athlete Jim Bob Bizzell competed in the men 's 200 meters T44 ; the prefix T designated a track event and 44 was the disability classification . Although he finished behind Oscar Pistorius (competing under the T43 class) , Bizell set a world record in the T44 classification . For specific classification information , see the pages for individual sports at 2008 Summer Paralympics # Sports .

= = Medalists = =

The following American athletes won medals at the games ; all dates are for September 2008 . In the ' by discipline ' sections below , medalists ' names are in bold .

= = Archery = =

The American archery team consisted of seven men and one woman . The highest placed finishers were Lindsey Carmichael and Jeff Fabry , who each won a bronze medal . T. J. Pemberton and Joe Bailey competed against each other in the quarterfinals of the men 's individual compound open , with Pemberton winning and going on to finish fourth in that event .

= = Track and field (athletics) = =

The American track and field team consisted of 26 men and 17 women . Among them was shot putter Scott Winkler , a U.S. Army veteran who was paralyzed in Tikrit , Iraq in 2003 after he fell off a truck while holding 50 pounds of ammunition . The team set six world records and won a total of nine gold , fourteen silver , and five bronze medals , two more medals than the team won in Athens .

Jessica Galli won five medals , more than any other team member , while Amanda McGrory , Tatyana McFadden , and Jim Bob Bizzell each won at least three medals . Jeremy Campbell was the only U.S. track and field athlete to win two golds .

Men

Legend : Q ? Qualifiers for the final as decided on a basis of rank within heat ; WR = World Record ; PR = Paralympic Record

Women

Legend : Q ? Qualifiers for the final as decided on a basis of rank within heat ; WR = World Record ; PR = Paralympic Record

= = Boccia = =

The U.S. boccia team consisted of a single competitor , T. J. Hawker . Hawker lost his four pool stage matches and did not advance to the knock @-@ out stage .

= = Cycling = =

The initial members of the 2008 U.S. Paralympic Cycling Team were named on June 6 , 2008 after the 2008 U.S. Paralympics Cycling National Championships in Morrison , Colorado . The final roster included thirteen athletes (seven men and six women) . The team entered the Games with a goal of two gold and ten medals total . They surpassed their goal , finishing with fourteen medals : five gold , five silver , and four bronze .

Factor time

To ensure a fair event when athletes with differing disabilities compete , times achieved were sometimes modified by a percentage rate , to produce a result known as " Factor Time " . It is this time that decided the result of the races , and is listed below . Where this differs from the actual time recorded , actual time is also listed .

= = = Road = = =

Men

Women

= = = Track = = =

Men

Women

= = Equestrian = =

The only equestrian events held in the Paralympic Games are in the Dressage discipline . Five American riders competed , in both individual and team events .

= = Goalball = =

Goalball is a Paralympic sport played by athletes who are blind and visually impaired . At the 2008 Paralympics , the U.S. men 's goalball team hoped to repeat their bronze medal performance in Athens , but lost to Sweden in the final . The U.S. women 's goalball team improved on their silver medal performance in Athens , defeating China in the gold medal match .

Men

Women

= = Judo = =

Jordan Mouton was selected as the only U.S. representative in the women 's division at the 2008 U.S. Paralympic Trials for Judo . All four American men went uncontested at the Trials and were automatically selected for the team . Greg DeWall , a first @-@ time Paralympian , won a bronze medal in the Men 's + 100 kilogram class .

= = Powerlifting = =

The U.S. powerlifting team consisted of two competitors , Mary Stack and Andy Wise . All of Stack 's lifts were declared invalid . She faltered and missed on her first two attempts to lift 110 kg . On her third attempt , Stack managed to lift the weight but the judges did not accept the lift and she was disqualified . Wise completed two valid lifts , the maximum of which was 150 kg , and finished in eleventh place .

Key : NMR = No marks recorded

= = Rowing = =

The 2008 U.S. Paralympic Rowing Team was selected after the 2008 U.S. Rowing National Championships in West Windsor , N.J. and was composed of nine athletes . This was the first time rowing has appeared as a medal sport in the Paralympic Games . Laura Schwanger , who has multiple sclerosis and won ten medals in track and field across three Paralympics , battled back from breast cancer treatment to win a bronze medal in women 's single sculls at age 49 . The U.S. mixed coxed four team rallied in the final 100 m of their 1000 m race to take the silver medal .

Qualification Legend : R = Repechage ; FA = Final A (medal) ; FB = Final B (non @-@ medal)

= = Sailing = =

The United States entered crews in all three of the sailing events , held in the Qingdao International Sailing Centre . Maureen McKinnon @-@ Tucker and Nick Scandone clinched a gold medal in the SKUD @-@ 18 class with two races left in the series . First @-@ time Paralympian John Ruf won a bronze medal in a competitive 2 @.@ 4 mR final race , where the top seven players of the fleet started within single @-@ digit points of each other .

= = Shooting = =

The U.S. sent two athletes (one man and one woman) to compete in the shooting events at the Paralympics .

= = Swimming = =

The 2008 U.S. Paralympic Swimming Trials were held on April 3 ? 5 at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis , Minnesota . A total of 38 swimming athletes (20 male and 18 female) were selected to represent the U.S. at the 2008 Paralympic Games . Melissa Stockwell , a former United States Army officer who lost her left leg to a roadside bomb , became the first Iraq War veteran to be selected for the Paralympics . The roster also included Dave Denniston , an NCAA champion in the 200 @-@ yard breast stroke , two @-@ time Olympic hopeful , and world record breaker who was paralyzed in a 2005 sledding accident .

The U.S. Paralympic Swimming Team left Beijing with 17 gold , 14 silver and 13 bronze medals . The total of 44 medals was 9 more than they took home from Athens . Out of the 38 athletes on the team , 19 received a medal . U.S. swimmers set a total of 16 world records , 23 Paralympic records , 48 Pan American records and 99 American records .

Men

* Listed as finishing heats in ninth place , but started the final in place of eighth @-@ place qualifier

Rudy Garcia @-@ Tolson Legend : Q ? Qualifiers for the next round as decided on a time only basis . Ranks shown are overall rank against competitors in all heats ; WR = World Record ; PR = Paralympic Record

Women

Legend : Q ? Qualifiers for the next round as decided on a time only basis . Ranks shown are overall rank against competitors in all heats ; WR = World Record ; PR = Paralympic Record

= = Table tennis = =

The United States sent four athletes (three men and one woman) to compete in Paralympic table tennis .

Men

Women

= = Volleyball = =

The U.S. women 's sitting volleyball team upset world number one Netherlands in five sets to reach the gold medal match , where they lost to China for a silver medal . The men 's sitting volleyball team failed to qualify for the Paralympics after losing to Brazil at the 2007 Parapan American Games .

Women 's sitting volleyball

= = Wheelchair basketball = =

The United States qualified for both men 's and women 's wheelchair basketball tournaments at the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation qualifying tournaments for the Americas . The men 's team finished in fourth place after losing to Great Britain in the bronze final . The women 's team successfully defended their 2004 gold medal with a win over Germany .

Men

* Iran withdrew from its quarterfinal match against the United States on September 19 , 2008 . The match had been rescheduled from 11 : 15am to 9 : 00am , but was changed without any logical reason according to the head of Iran 's delegation . As a result , the U.S. was awarded the win by the score of 20 ? 0 and automatically advanced to the semi @-@ finals .

Women

= = Wheelchair fencing = =

The United States sent five athletes (four men and one woman) to compete in wheelchair fencing .

= = Wheelchair rugby = =

At the Paralympics teams in the sport of wheelchair rugby are made up of mixed classification quadriplegic athletes of both sexes . The United States qualified by winning the 2006 World Wheelchair Rugby Championships and went on to win its third gold medal since wheelchair rugby was introduced as a demonstration sport at the 1996 Atlanta Paralympics .

= = Wheelchair tennis = =

The American wheelchair tennis team consisted of nine players . Lee Hinson , Paul Moran , Jon Rydberg and Stephen Welch competed in the men 's events , Beth Arnoult and Kaitlyn Verfuert competed in the women 's events , and Brent Poppen , Nick Taylor and David Wagner competed in the mixed quadriplegic events . The tennis team was coached by Dan James , with Jason Hartnett

as assistant coach , David Schobel as team leader , and Bill Taylor as the personal care assistant . Taylor and Wagner successfully defended their title in mixed doubles , which they had won four years earlier at the 2004 Paralympics . The two men competed against each other in the bronze medal match of the mixed singles event , with Wagner prevailing .

= = Media coverage = =

U.S. coverage of the 2008 Paralympic Games was provided by the Universal Sports Television Network . Daily live and delayed highlight shows as well as coverage of the opening and closing ceremonies was available on @-@ demand at UniversalSports.com from September 6 ? 17 . Daily video highlights were also available at the official website of the U.S. Paralympic Team , usparalympics.org. The Universal Sports television broadcast began on October 8 , followed by seven days of three @-@ hour segments of coverage and a special presentation highlighting the events that was broadcast by NBC on October 18 . A 90 @-@ minute documentary was presented by NBC on November 9 , and was followed by another broadcast of the Games on Universal Sports from November 10 ? 16 .