Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games Recap

April 8, 2010







Vancouver, B.C. –Several Hanger patients had the honor of participating in the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games and represented the United States of America well.

Staff Sgt. Heath Calhoun was selected by his peers to serve as flag bearer for the U.S.A Paralympic Team during the opening ceremonies on March 12, 2010. Calhoun then went on to compete in the Men's Sitting Slalom, the Super G race, and the Super Combined race.

During the Men's Sitting Slalom, Calhoun struck one of the gates with the tip of his ski and was unable to finish the race. However, Calhoun finished his next event, the Super G, in 8th place. Calhoun's last event was the Super Combined race which included a morning run of Super G and an afternoon run of Slalom. Calhoun's first run was solid, placing him in 4th place. By the afternoon, the 45 degree temperatures and sun had significantly melted the snow on the course causing it to be very slow and slushy. Calhoun ended up in 10th place.

Speaking about his experience at the Games, Calhoun said, "It was a great experience for me. I am not happy that I didn't medal for the United States. I really wanted to. But since I competed in three events, I got to keep my three competition bibs and I gave them to my kids to wear. These games will be a great memory for me."

The youngest member of the U.S.A Paralympic Sled Hockey Team was 17-year-old Hanger patient Josh Pauls from the Edison, New Jersey patient care center. The sled hockey team won its second-ever gold medal at the Games thanks to a 2-0 shutout victory over Japan. The team did not surrender a goal in all five of its games, outscoring their opponents, 19-0. With the victory, Team U.S.A. became the first-ever team to claim its second Paralympic Winter Games sled hockey gold medal. Team U.S.A last won gold at the 2002 Paralympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, Utah.

During the Games' closing ceremonies, five-time U.S. Paralympian and Salt Lake City, Utah Hanger patient Monte Meier served as flag bearer for Team U.S.A. Besides having competed in five Paralympic Winter Games, Meier's ski racing career resume boasts four Paralympic medals – one gold, two silver, and one bronze.

Meier, who has been ski racing for 19 years and retired at the conclusion of the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, said "This being my fifth (Paralympics), I've never carried the flag. It's a huge honor to not only to be representing the whole U.S. Paralympic Team, all the sports, but also my country. I couldn't think of a better way to go out, carrying the flag at the closing."

Team U.S.A finished fifth in the overall medal count, taking home a total of 13 medals from the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. Russia led all countries, winning 38 medals, including 12 gold.

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