

PARALYMPIC GAMES RIO 2016



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INTRODUCTION

The Rio 2016 Paralympic Games will be the first to be hosted by a South American country. The Paralympic events will be held in Rio de Janeiro 16 days after the closing of the Olympic Games, between 7 and 18 September 2016.

The Games will gather 4,350 athletes from 176 countries competing in 23 sports.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.rio2016.com/ingressos and at the box office. A total of 3.3 million tickets will be available: 2 million will be offered at affordable prices between R\$10 and R\$30; the remaining tickets – including those for the opening and closing ceremonies - will range in price from R\$100 to R\$1,200. The Paralympic events will be held in the same venue areas as the Olympic Games: Barra da Tijuca, Copacabana, Maracanã and Deodoro.

In addition to ensuring Brazil an unprecedented leading role in sports in general and parasports in particular, the Paralympic Games provide the opportunity to sensitize Brazil and the world about how important persons with disabilities are for society, and how much they contribute to it. It is also an opportunity to boost accessibility initiatives in the country, based on the need to adapt both infrastructure and public spaces to receive these athletes for mega sporting events.

Giving further publicity to the Paralympic Games and the excellence of parasports idols is likely to leverage interest in the general population. The competitions will give visibility to these athletes, who are examples of discipline and overcoming one's limits and will certainly put on a thrilling show of high performance in their respective sports.

Ultimately, Paralympic competitions have the potential to promote and raise society's awareness of persons with disabilities by disseminating a positive perception of this segment of the population.

THE PARALYMPIC GAMES IN BRAZIL



Date: 7 - 18 September 2016

Beginning: 16 days after the closing of the Olympic Games

- **11 days of competitions**
- **528 medal - awarding events** - women: 226, mixed sports: 38, men: 264
- **4.350 athletes** from 176 countries
- **3.3 million tickets available** (2 million between R\$10 and R\$30);
- For the opening and closing ceremonies, prices range from R\$100 to R\$1,200).
Purchasable online at www.rio2016.com/ingressos and at the box office

23 sports:



Swimming



Athletics



Football
5-a-Side



Football
7-a-Side



Sitting volleyball



Wheelchair
basketball



Wheelchair
tennis



Table tennis



Sailing



Paracanoe



Rowing



Boccia



Powerlifting



Judo



Wheelchair
fencing



Road cycling



Track cycling



Equestrian



Wheelchair



Archery



Shooting



Triathlon



Goalball

- **Competition Clusters/Regions**

- » **Barra da Tijuca:** 14 sporting events (wheelchair basketball, boccia, road cycling, track cycling, football 5-a-Side, football 7-a-Side, goalball, powerlifting, judo, swimming, wheelchair rugby, table tennis, wheelchair tennis, sitting volleyball)
- » **Copacabana:** 5 sporting events (marathon, paracanoe, rowing, paratriathlon, and sailing)
- » **Maracanã:** 2 sporting events (athletics and archery) plus the opening and closing ceremonies
- » **Deodoro:** 3 sporting events (shooting, equestrian and wheelchair fencing)

BRAZIL

A PARALYMPIC POWER

The Paralympic Games are the culmination of a process of personal and professional development for Brazilian athletes with disabilities, a result of Brazil's big investment in this segment of the population through sports.

Brazil is considered a Paralympic power: it is among the world's best in Olympic sports practiced by persons with disabilities. The country is a three-time champion of the Parapan American Games; its greatest achievement in the history of the Parapan American Games came in Toronto 2015, with 317 medals, including 109 golds. In the London 2012 Paralympic Games, Brazilian athletes ranked seventh in the medal table with 21 golds, 14 silvers and eight bronzes.

The country excels in a number of sports, including Football 5-a-Side, in which it is a three-times (and the only) Olympic champion. In boccia, it is a two-time champion. In swimming, the country is represented by Brazil's greatest Paralympic medallist, Daniel Dias (who was born with a congenital malformation of the upper and lower limbs). Dias has won 15 podiums, 14 world championships and two Laureus awards. In Athletics, we have two-time Paralympic champion Terezinha Guilhermina (visually impaired) and one-time Paralympic champion Alan Fonteles (double amputee); in sitting volleyball (for athletes with locomotor disabilities), Brazil won the men's gold medal at the Toronto Parapan American Games 2015.

PARAPAN AMERICAN GAMES

HOST	COUNTRY	GOLD	TOTAL	(%)
 MEXICO 1999	Mexico	121	363	33%
 ARGENTINA (2003)	Mexico	101	302	33.4%
 BRAZIL (2007)	Brazil	83	254	32%
 MEXICO 2011	Brazil	81	277	29.2%
 CANADA (2015)	Brazil	109	317	34.4%

PUBLIC POLICIES FOR INCLUSION THROUGH SPORTS

Brazil has excelled in parasports (to the point of being considered a Paralympic power) thanks to massive investments by the federal government in public policies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities through sports.

The country has the largest individual athlete sponsorship program in the world: 11,700 grants have been awarded since 2005 to athletes with disabilities so that they can exclusively dedicate to training and competing – an investment of R\$164.8 million over ten years. A result of this investment is the fact that 92% of the Brazilian Paralympic athletes selected to participate in the Toronto Parapan Am were sponsored by the Brazilian Federal Government (252 out of a total 272). In addition, 98% of the medals won by Brazilian athletes at the Parapan Am (254) went to athletes covered by grants awarded by the Federal Government.

The federal government offers two types of grants, all under the Brazil Medals Plan:

- » **Bolsa Atleta (“Athlete Grant”)**: For high-performance athletes that show good results in national and international competitions. A total of 1,323 Paralympic athletes were awarded the Athlete Grant in 2015.
- » **Bolsa Pódio (“Podium Grant”)**: Grant given to the 20 best-placed athletes in the world ranking for their sport. A total of 94 athletes were awarded the Podium Grant in 2015. The Brazil Medals Plan also supports 60 collective sports athletes who practice sitting volleyball, football 5-a-side, goalball and football 7-a-side.

In addition to the grants given for athletes, 99% of the budget of the Brazilian Paralympic Committee (CPB) comes from public funds. Since 2010, the Ministry of Sport has entered into agreements with the CPB totalling R\$67.3 million in investment, which included funds for preparation of permanent teams in 17 sports for 2016, with training and competitions both in Brazil and abroad.

Brazil's public policies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities also include two inclusion-through-sports programs aimed at basic and higher education students:


- » ***Programa Segundo Tempo*** (“**Second Half Program**”): Run in partnership with federal universities to promote quality sports education.
- » ***Programa Atleta na Escola*** (“**Athletes in School Program**”): the Federal Government provides financial support for school-level competitions in 10 Paralympic sports among public and private school students aged 12 to 17. There are currently 40,000 schools in all Brazilian states enrolled in this program.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2012 the Federal Government launched the *Plano Brasil Medalhas* (“Brazil Medals Plan”), aimed at preparing Olympic and Paralympic athletes for the Rio 2016 Games. The target of the Brazil Medals Plan is to help Brazil place among the ten best countries at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, a first for the country. For the 2016 Paralympic Games, the goal is to have Brazil rank among the top five, also an unprecedented result.

One of the pillars of the Brazil Medals Plan is the construction, renovation and operation of training centres for 21 Olympic sports and 15 Paralympic sports.

Most facilities have been planned for use beyond 2016, as a legacy for the next Olympic cycles. After the Games, these venues will be available for sports practice and be integrated into the National Training Network, which will include the Olympic competition venues in Rio and the many Sports Initiation Centres which will be built in hundreds of municipalities in the country, including sports training centres, sports complexes and local venues. As for investment in infrastructure specifically for athletes with disabilities, there are 247 Sports Initiation Centres (CIEs) in 236 cities with infrastructure and training venues for



athletes with disabilities of six Paralympic sports (wheelchair fencing, powerlifting, table tennis, sitting volleyball and goalball) and one non-Paralympic sport (indoor football) - an investment of R\$884 million.

The city of São Paulo has received the main centre of excellence in Latin America for parasports: the Brazilian Paralympic Centre, with capacity for use by up to 282 athletes simultaneously and infrastructure for training and competitions in 15 different sports. The federal government invested R\$167 million in its construction.

ADVANCED LEGISLATION

Brazil's commitment to the inclusion of persons with disabilities goes beyond its investments in sports geared towards them.

According to the 2010 Census, persons with disabilities represent 23.92% of the population, or the equivalent to 45,623,910 individuals. The country has made many advances in the inclusion of these Brazilians, designing comprehensive public policies and constantly improving specific legislation for persons with disabilities, all with the aim of protecting their rights and ensuring quality of life, equal opportunity, autonomy and accessibility to this segment of Brazilian society. There are still challenges ahead, but the country has made remarkable progress and is moving increasingly fast towards full protection and inclusion. Brazil's legal framework guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities is considered one of the most advanced in the world. Since the enactment of the 1988 Federal Constitution in 1989, a number of laws have been sanctioned that benefit this segment.

- » **Laws 10,098/2000 and 10,048/2000, regulated by Decree 5,296/2004:** these two laws were an important milestone, leading to significant changes in the reality of persons with disabilities in the country. Here are some highlights:
 - These laws determined that the construction of buildings intended for public or collective use must meet minimum accessibility requirements for architectural and urban design, communication and information. Therefore, all schools, hospitals, supermarkets, universities, airports, tourist places and hotels built after 2000 must necessarily be accessible to persons with disabilities, otherwise they will not be granted operating permits, i.e. official permission to exist, or have their licenses renewed for any activity.
 - Public transport facilities (intercity and interstate urban road transport, urban and metropolitan railroad transport and intercity and interstate rail transport) are also subject to the same rules.

- Urbanization projects for streets, squares and parks are also required to meet minimum accessibility criteria.
- Compliance with the accessibility rules also applies to the issuance of occupancy permits or authorization for renewal thereof when those were issued prior to the accessibility requirements being enacted. This means that old buildings that were built before the law came into force must also be adapted.

The guarantee of mobility conditions for persons with disabilities opened a world of opportunity for a more dignified future. School attendance of persons with disabilities has increased, and therefore they have become better prepared to get jobs and fill the quotas which, by law, ensure them the right to hold positions in both the public and private sector.

» **Law No. 13,146/2015 establishing the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Statute of Persons with Disabilities):** This law came into force in January this year and provides for major structural and functional changes related to the rights of persons with disabilities.

- It changes the definition of 'person with disabilities' and amends the Civil Code regarding the concepts of 'legal capacity' and 'disability'. The rights of persons with disabilities are no longer defined according to their disability, but according to the relationship they are able to establish with society - which will vary for each individual, in accordance with their development opportunities. In the previous Civil Code, for example, Article 1,767 stated that the assets of persons with mental disabilities should be subject to trusteeship, i.e. they were to be managed by another person, a trustee, since they were considered legally incompetent to do so. The new legislation removed this item from the Civil Code. The item of Article 1,548 stating that the marriage of a person with mental disabilities person should be annulled has also been removed. The new Code establishes that "persons with mental or intellectual disabilities of marriageable age may marry by expressing their will directly or through their guardians or trustees."

- It guarantees more rights to persons with disabilities: Accessibility for persons with disabilities in 10 percent of taxi fleets and provision of school support staff in private institutions at no cost to families are some examples. Brazilian hotels and other lodging facilities must offer at least 10 percent of accessible accommodation. Until 2015, that same legal requirement was capped at 5 percent.
- It provides sanctions for discriminatory acts, such as two to five years of prison time for those who prevent or hinder the enrolment of persons with disabilities in private health insurance plans and for those who deny employment, refuse medical-hospital care or other rights to a person because of their disability. Schools that charge higher tuition from students with disabilities are also subject to punishment.

CAPACITY IN THE BRAZILIAN LAW FOR THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

- » Exercise of legal capacity on an equal basis with others - capacity is the rule
- » Trusteeship: extraordinary protection measure, taken when necessary, in a proportionate manner and for the shortest time possible
- » The definition of trusteeship does not cover the right to one's own body, sexuality, marriage, privacy, education, health, work and vote
- » Ability to adopt a supported decision-making process
- » Mandatory annual rendering of accounts by the trustee
- » Trusteeship is not required for issuing documents

LIVING WITHOUT LIMITS

With regard to public policies, in 2011 the Federal Government launched the “National Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Living without Limits”, the first federal plan with the mission to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in a cross-cutting and coordinated manner among all Brazilian states. More than 1,400 municipalities in the country’s 25 states plus the Federal District have joined the program, which comprises R\$7.6 billion in investments. The plan works to promote autonomy and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities, based on a set of actions divided into four areas:

- » **Health Care**
- » **Accessibility**
- » **Access to Education**
- » **Social Inclusion**

Health care

Persons with disabilities in Brazil receive health treatment and equipment free of charge through the Unified Health System (SUS), the country’s public universal health care system. Over three million users benefit annually from the health care network for persons with disabilities.

Accessibility

Persons with disabilities and their personal assistants or caregivers are entitled to receive priority care in all public institutions and health care services, as well as priority entry into accessible public transport stations and terminals and guaranteed safe boarding and disembarking.

Since 2000, when Law No. 10,098/2000, Decree No. 5,296/2004 and NBR standard 9050:2004 were enacted, all designs and works in public and private buildings meant for collective use must necessarily meet specific accessibility requirements.

All Brazilian airports meet the minimum adaptation requirements established by law. In 2014, Infraero began the implementation in Brazilian airports of the Elo system, a solution for airports that do not have boarding bridges. The system consists of a set of air-conditioned connecting modules designed to interconnect departure/arrival lounges and aircraft from ground level, thus allowing passengers to board and deplane in a comfortable, safe and accessible manner. A lift is available next to the stairs giving access to the aircraft for passengers who require special assistance.

For the Paralympic Games, the Brazilian government conducted accessibility simulations at the main airports in Brazil to test boarding and exiting operations and infrastructure. All passenger flows within the airport have also been tested for accessibility, including immigration control, customs, food courts and check-in counters, as well as parking spaces and access ramps.

Access to Education

Between 2012 and 2014, the Federal Government invested R\$312 million in 28,954 public schools through the Living without Limits Program. The funds were used to make architectural improvements to accessibility and for the acquisition of specific furniture and wheelchairs.

A total of 98,000 vacancies were offered between 2007 and 2014 for public school teachers to take courses on inclusive education and assistive technology. In addition, 606 sign language translators and interpreters were hired to work on schools, and 27 Language & Literature/Sign Language degrees were created between 2011 and 2014 in federal higher education institutions in order to ensure accessibility to students with hearing impairment. In the period 2012-2014, the Ministry of Education, through the Living without Limits Plan, provided funding for 1,437 municipalities to acquire 2,307 accessible school transport vehicles, an investment of R\$356.2 million.

A total 17,000 persons with disabilities have been enrolled in the National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment (PRONATEC), a program created by the Federal Government in 2011 to expand and democratize vocational education in Brazil.

In higher education, the Federal Government invested R\$25 million between 2012 and 2014 in the INCLUIR - Accessibility in Higher Education Program, providing financial support for 63 federal universities to establish or strengthen their Accessibility Centres so they could attend to with the educational specificities of students with disabilities.

There has been significant progress in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in education. The number of accessible schools in the country increased 30-fold between 2008 and 2014, from 1,869 to 57,500. The number of persons with disabilities enrolled in basic (primary and secondary) education grew by 67 percent between 2003 and 2014, to 886,815. The number of multipurpose resource rooms in public schools went from 250 in 2005 to 42,000 in 2014, an increase of 16,700%. These rooms feature computers, screen readers, multifunction printers, communication software, manual and electronic magnifiers, accessible teaching materials, printers, and Braille printers and typewriters. Today, they cover 100% of Brazilian municipalities.

Social Inclusion

Regarding employability, the Brazilian Constitution prohibits any wage or acceptance criteria discrimination with respect to workers with disabilities. Private companies with a hundred or more employees are required to fill 2 to 5 percent of their positions with employees with disabilities, as provided for in Law 8,213/91.

From 2009 to 2013, the number of persons with disabilities employed in Brazil increased by 20 percent, totalling 357,800 employees. A total 11,304 companies throughout Brazil offer jobs to persons with disabilities, with an average salary of R\$2,155.52.

Persons with disabilities of any age are entitled to the Continuous Cash Benefit (BPC), an individual, non-transferable (but not lifetime) financial benefit which ensures the monthly transfer of one minimum wage to the recipient provided he/she can prove that they do not have other means of ensuring their own livelihood, including by having it provided by their families.

THE PARALYMPIC GAMES

SPORTS

These are the five sports for which Brazil has promising prospects in the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games:



Athletics

Practiced by athletes with a physical or visual impairment. Competitors are divided into groups according to their functional classification, with events including running, jumping and throwing for both women and men. In races, athletes with more serious visual impairments may receive the guidance of sighted guides, connected to them by a rope. Some athletes with physical disabilities compete with prostheses, and some in wheelchairs. Brazil's eyes will be on: two-time Paralympic champion Terezinha Guilhermina, who competes in the T11 class for the visually impaired; Paralympic champion Allan Fonteles, who will compete in the T43 class for double amputees; and Paralympic debutants Petrúcio dos Santos and Verônica Hipólito. The Athletics competitions will be held at the Olympic Stadium and ticket prices start at R\$20.



Swimming

Swimming is one of the sports that brings together the largest number of participants. While originally only athletes with spinal cord injuries participated in the competitions, today the sport reaches other categories of disabilities, including physical and visual and intellectual impairments. The International Swimming Federation (FINA) has made adaptations to the rules for Paralympic competitions.

Depending on the disability, athletes may start the race in the water, sitting on the platform or standing next to the starting block. There are also cases in which athletes receive the assistance of their coaches or of a volunteer to start the race. Visually impaired competitors may rely on a tapper, a person who uses a foam-tipped pole to warn the swimmers when they should turn or end the race. In this case, competitors are required to wear blackened goggles to ensure a level playing field in the competition. Brazil is strongly represented in swimming, with three Paralympic champions: Daniel Dias, André Brasil and Clodoaldo da Silva. The events will be held at Barra da Tijuca, and ticket prices start at R\$40.



Boccia

Practiced by athletes with severe cerebral palsy and disabilities. Athletes in Paralympic Boccia use wheelchairs, and the aim of the game is to throw the coloured balls as close as possible to a white ball (jack). Players may use their hands, feet, assistive devices and even helpers (in the case of athletes with more severe disabilities) to compete. Brazil has two Paralympic champions from the London and Beijing Games: Dirceu José Pinto and Eliseu dos Santos. The events will be held at Barra da Tijuca, and ticket prices start at R\$10.



Football 5-a-Side

Played exclusively by blind or visually impaired athletes. The ball has internal rattles and the crowd is only allowed to cheer when goals are scored. Football 5-a-side is played on a court that follows the measures of an indoor football court, with some changes to the traditional rules. Most athletes on the field wear blindfolds to avoid any undue advantages for those athletes who can perceive light, with the exception of the goalkeeper, who has regular sight. The match is split into two halves of 25-minute, with a 10-minute half-time. Players are guided by the sound of the rattles inside the ball. Brazil is the only Olympic champion so far. This will be the country's fourth participation in the Games, with a 100 percent success rate in all previous editions and two star players

on the field: Jefinho, who was voted best player in the world in 2010, and Ricardinho, who received the same award in 2006 and 2014. The matches will be held at Barra da Tijuca, and ticket prices start at R\$30.



Sitting Volleyball

Sitting volleyball is a form of volleyball for persons with physical disabilities, particularly lower limb amputees, athletes with cerebral palsy/spinal injury and persons with other types of locomotor disability. The sport is a combination of conventional volleyball and a German sport practiced by persons with reduced mobility called sitzbal, played without a net. Using basically the same rules as conventional volleyball, the sport has a frenetic pace. Brazil won the gold medal in the Parapan Am for men and is a very strong candidate for the podium again next year. The games will be held at Barra da Tijuca, and ticket prices start at R\$60.

ATHLETES

Meet some Brazilian para-athletes who show great medal-winning potential:



Daniel Dias (Swimming)

Born with a malformation that affected his upper limbs and right leg, the Brazilian swimming phenomenon started his career in 2006. Since then, he has won 15 medals in Paralympic Games - 6 golds in London and 8 golds and one bronze in Beijing.



André Brasil (Swimming)

Andre had polio when he was three months old as a reaction to the vaccine, which slightly damaged his left leg. He was introduced to swimming as a form of rehabilitation and began his professional swimming career in 1992. Today, Brasil is one of the country's biggest Paralympic medallists. He has won seven golds and three silvers in his two Olympic participations (Beijing 2008 and London 2012).



Clodoaldo Silva (Swimming)

Due to lack of oxygen during childbirth, Clodoaldo was born with cerebral palsy, which affected the movement of his legs and motor coordination. He was one of the biggest stars of the Athens Paralympic Games, when he won six gold medals and one silver in eight competitions. Voted Best Paralympic Athlete in 2005 by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), Silva has also won several medals in the Parapan Am Games.



Joana Neves (Swimming)

The Rio Grande do Norte-born swimmer has achondroplasia (disproportionate dwarfism caused by genetic mutations). She started swimming at the age of 10 (by medical recommendation), and began to compete when she was 13. By 14, she had already made it to in her first international competition. Having started so young, Neves had amassed quite the solid background when she arrived for her third World Championship in Glasgow: bronze in the 50 m and 200 m freestyle and 50 m butterfly in the 2013, following a silver in the 4x50 m free relay and a bronze in the 50 m butterfly in Eindhoven in 2010. In London 2012 she won the bronze on the 50 m butterfly and is the current Parapan Am champion in the 50 m, 100 m and 200 m freestyle and 50 m butterfly.



Terezinha Guilhermina (Athletics)

Born with retinitis pigmentosa, a congenital disease that causes gradual loss of sight, Guilhermina started in sports through swimming, but switched focus from the water to the running tracks in 2000. She has already participated in three Paralympic Games, and won a total six medals - two golds in London; one gold, one silver and one bronze in Beijing; and one bronze in Athens.



Alan Fonteles (Athletics)

Alan Fonteles became known worldwide in the London 2012 Games. In the 200 m dash, he impressively beat the hitherto world's best Oscar Pistorius, shocking everyone in the Olympic Stadium. Since then, the Brazilian athlete has become the world's best Paralympic sprinter.



Verônica Hipólito (Athletics)

This marathon runner from São Paulo suffers from right-sided hemiplegia, caused by a stroke in 2011 (when she was 12). Hipólito now competes in the T38 class for athletes with cerebral palsy. She won three golds in the Toronto 2013 Parapan Am Games, as well as gold and silver (in the 200 m and 100 m dash, respectively) in the Lyon World Paralympics and three golds (200 m dash, 100 m dash and long jump) in the 2014 Para South American Games in Chile.



Yohansson do Nascimento (Athletics)

The sprinter from Alagoas, born without both hands, quickly stood out. After starting in athletics at age 17, representing Brazil for the first time at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. Then, he won a silver in the 4x100 m relay and a bronze in the 200 m dash. The top prize came in London 2012, when Nascimento won his first gold in the 200 m dash and another silver in the 400 m dash. Expectations are high that this Alagoano will be adding to his medal collection in Rio de Janeiro 2016.



Jefinho - Jeferson da Conceição Gonçalves (Football 5-a-Side)

Glaucoma claimed the sight of the Bahia-born athlete when he was just seven years old. Gonçalves he had been involved in swimming and athletics before starting on football 5-a-side, the sport for which he would be voted best player in the world in 2010. With the Brazilian team, the right wing won two Paralympic Games - Beijing 2008 and London 2012.



Ricardinho – Ricardo Alves (Football 5-a-Side)

The right wing from Rio Grande do Sul lost his sight at age 8, and was introduced to football 5-a-side in a school in Porto Alegre when he was 10. He is now a two-time Paralympic champion (2008 and 2012), a two-time world champion (2010 and 2014) and a two-time Parapan Am champion (2007 and 2011). Alves was also voted best player in the world twice (2006 and 2014).



Dirceu Pinto (Boccia)

In Paralympic boccia, nobody in the world has more medals than Brazilian Dirceu José Pinto. In two participations in the Paralympic Games, Pinto boasted a 100% achievement rate. In all events he played in Beijing 2008 and London 2012, Dirceu won the gold. Individually and in doubles. The four gold medals have ensured Dirceu a place among the greatest Brazilian Paralympic athletes of all times.



Maciel Santos (Boccia)

He was born with cerebral palsy, and is now the most experienced boccia player in Brazil: he was already representing the country in international competitions at age 14. Maciel has been playing Boccia since he was 11 and competed in the London 2012 Paralympic Games, when he won the gold medal for Brazil in the BC2 class.



Renato Leite (Sitting Volleyball)

The São Paulo-born setter was paralyzed as a result of a motorcycle accident when he was 20, and is one of the precursors of sitting volleyball in the country. He has been playing for the Brazilian

team since 2003 and was voted best player in the world in 2014, when he helped Brazil reach its first-ever final match (and silver medal) in a World Championship in Poland.



Natalia Mayara (Wheelchair tennis)

With two gold medals from the Toronto Parapan Am Games, Natalia was voted best wheelchair tennis player in Brazil's 2015 Paralympic Awards. The Pernambuco-born athlete began her quest for a place among the biggest names in sport at an early age: she's been playing wheelchair tennis since age 13. At 16 she won her first titles - including a gold medal in the Paralympic School Games of the Brazilian Paralympic Committee (CPB). She currently ranks 19th in the world ranking of the International Tennis Federation – the best position ever held by a Brazilian athlete in the sport.



Jovane Guissone (Wheelchair fencing)

The fencer from Rio Grande do Sul lost the use of his legs in 2004 when he reacted to a robbery and ended up being shot. He started practicing wheelchair fencing in 2008. His first participation in Paralympic Games was in London 2012, when he won the gold medal for his class.



Bruna Alexandre (Table tennis)

Because of a thrombosis (blood vessel clot) caused by a vaccine reaction when she was just three months old, São Paulo-born Bruna Alexandre had to have her right arm amputated. She has won two bronze medals (individual and women's team) and placed first on several stages of the World Paralympic Table Tennis Championship.



Leomon Moreno (Goalball)

Leomon Moreno was born with retinitis pigmentosa (a degenerative disease with a strong family history). At age 12, he began to practice goalball with the women's team. Two years later, stronger and more experienced, he joined the Men's National Team, with which he won a silver medal in London 2012. Born in Brazilian capital Brasília, Moreno has won medals for the Federal District in both football 5-a-side and athletics events.

THE TORCH

Design

The Paralympic Torch was created from the same design concept as the Olympic one. For the Paralympic Games, the goal was to give blind or vision-impaired torchbearers a tactile experience of the object and what it represents: the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The inside colours vary in shades of orange – the same shades of the Paralympic Games brand, which is different from that of the Olympic Games (the latter has all the colours of the Brazilian flag – green, yellow, blue and white). The indentations that appear when the Paralympic Torch is in ‘expanded’ mode represent the city of Rio from ground to sky, with symbolic representations that range from the famous *Calçada* (ocean-side boulevard) of Copacabana to the Sugar Loaf and other famous mountains in the state capital.

Another highlight of the torch, which weighs 1.7 kg (3.7 lb), are the words written in Braille: “Rio 2016 Paralympic Games Torch Relay”, together with the four Paralympic values (“courage, determination, inspiration and equality”).



Relay

The Paralympic Torch relay will be much shorter than that of the Olympic Torch (which travelled through 500 cities from May to August), since it will occur in the transition period between the Olympic Games (which end on 21 August) and the Paralympic Games.

Between 1 and 7 September, the torch relay will pass through six cities in the five regions of the country: Belém, Natal, Brasília, Joinville, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

In total, 700 people will participate in the Paralympic Torch Relay throughout the country. Each person will carry the symbol of the Games for about 200 meters, and the event is expected to last between 6 and 8 hours in each city.

SOURCES:

- » Ministry of Sport
- » National Secretariat for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- » Brazilian Paralympic Committee
- » Rio 2016 Committee