

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

The Hartford Ski Spectacular celebrated its 20th anniversary with approximately 800 of its closest friends on December 2–9, 2007. The Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge, Colo., again hosted the onslaught of skiers, instructors, and volunteers who came to participate in the nation's largest winter sports festival for athletes with disabilities.

This year's event boasted a variety of instructional programs and the popular NorAm (Level II) slalom and giant slalom races and the Corporate Challenge Team and Level I contest. Free clinics were part of the Disabled Sports USA (DS/USA) Youth Sports Mentoring Program in order to enable chapter staff and potential mentors to create and sustain meaningful and productive relationships between youth and adults with disabilities within the DS/USA chapter network.

Scholarships went to 16 youth under 20 so they could attend the National Race Festival at this year's event. The scholarship winners were matched with current and former U.S. Disabled Ski Team members, who acted as elite athlete mentors.

More than 120 special guests, including severely injured servicemembers and their families, attended the event this year, sponsored by the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project, a partnership between DS/USA and the Wounded Warrior Project.

Not only did 2007 mark the anniversary of the The Hartford Ski Spectacular but DS/USA also celebrated its fortieth year of providing adaptive sporting opportunities to athletes with disabilities. The fortieth Anniversary Celebration, hosted by disaboom, was held in conjunction with the annual Casino Night fund-raiser. The proceeds went to



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the National Race Festival Scholarship Program for aspiring youth.

Contact: [www.dsusa.org](http://www.dsusa.org).

## CHALLENGES & VICTORIES

by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver

Four U.S. marines who were injured in combat operations are dealing with their disabilities by rising above their limitations and competing in marathons.

Sergeants Chad Carter and Chris Chandler, and Cpls. Robert Pratt and Matt Dominguez, Marine Medical Rehabilitation Platoon, Headquarters and Service Battalion, have taken to the sport to continue their healing process.

On October 28, 2007, in Washington D.C., Chandler, who is a below-knee amputee, ran the Marine Corps Marathon on a prosthetic leg. It was the first time he had raced in a marathon since sustaining his injury in 2001 in Afghanistan.

Carter, Pratt, and Dominguez competed in the handcycling category of the New

York City Marathon, October 4, which took them on a 26.2-mile course through the diverse neighborhoods of New York City's five boroughs.

"I like doing marathons because they keep me active and focused on something," said Carter, a 28-year-old native of Williamsburg, Iowa. He broke his back while serving with the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, in Iraq in 2003.

Carter, who crossed the finish line in Manhattan's Central Park in 3 hours, 36 minutes, 24 seconds, said the time he spends competing and training for races takes his mind off his injury.

"It's a really self-satisfying feeling knowing I can complete a marathon," said Carter, who set a goal of finishing one in less than three hours.

Since Carter arrived at Naval Medical Center San Diego nearly four years ago, he has participated in four marathons throughout the United States as a member of the Achilles Freedom Team.

The team was founded by Achilles Track Club vice president Mary Bryant in 2004, with the intent of helping wounded servicemembers' recovery by giving





LANCER CPL. ROBERT W. BEAVER/CHEVRON

Cpl. Robert Pratt competes in the 2007 Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, held in June in San Diego, using a handcycle donated by the Achilles Track Club.

hem a challenge. Soon after the team's reation, Bryant began recruiting ounded warriors to compete with the eam in several marathons held across he country.

"This allows me to still be competi- ive, although I can't run," said Dominguez, a native of Trinidad, Colo., who sustained a leg injury from an

improvised explosive device attack while on patrol in Haditha, Iraq.

The four Marines planned to compete and complete their next race, the Las Vegas Marathon, on December 2, 2007.

"As an infantry marine, I was always trying to finish first or be the leader," said Dominquez. "Racing helps me find that competitive rush."



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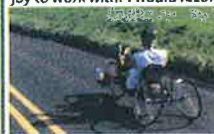


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