

## PARALYMPIC OATH

The taking of the Paralympic Oath is an important part of the protocol procedures during the Opening Ceremony at the Paralympic Games. After the Paralympic flag has been raised, an athlete from the team of the nation that is organizing the Paralympic Games mounts the official rostrum. He or she holds a corner of the Paralympic flag and raises his/her right hand while reciting the following solemn oath, thereby renewing his/her commitment to a fair competition and the ideals of the Paralympic Movement on behalf of all participants:

*In the name of all the competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Paralympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams.*

The official, also from the host country, does the same, but with a slightly different oath:

*In the name of all the judges and officials, I promise that we shall officiate in these Paralympic Games with complete impartiality, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship.*

The Paralympic Oath has a long tradition which goes back to the first Paralympic Games in Rome in 1960. The wording is an adapted version of the Olympic Oath, which was originally written by Pierre de Coubertin. De Coubertin had suggested the introduction of an Athlete's Oath of impartiality and fairness as early as 1906. The first Athlete's Oath at an Olympic Games was taken by the Belgian fencer Victor Boin in Antwerp in 1920.<sup>1</sup> It read:

*We swear that we will take part in the Olympic Games in a spirit of chivalry, for the honour of our country and for the glory of sport.*

Over the years, the original text has been modified several times. The first Official's Oath was taken at the XI Olympic Winter Games in Sapporo in 1972.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wendl (1995): The Olympic Oath – A Brief History. In: *Citius, Altius, Fortius* 3 (1), 4-5, <http://www.la84foundation.org/SportsLibrary/JOH/JOHv3n1/JOHv3n1c.pdf>.



Speakers of the Athlete's Oath and Official's Oath at the Opening Ceremonies of Paralympic Summer and Winter Games<sup>2</sup>:

Games	Official's Oath	Athlete's Oath
Rome 1960	-	Franco Rossi ( <i>unconfirmed</i> )
Tokyo 1964	-	Shigeo Aono (Swimming)
Tel Aviv 1968	-	Zvi Ben-Zvi (Athletics)
Heidelberg 1972	<i>unknown</i>	Marga Floer (Athletics, Archery)
Örnsköldsvik 1976	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>
Toronto 1976	<i>unknown</i>	Eugene Reimer (Athletics)
Geilo 1980	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>
Arnhem 1980	Henk Boersbroek	Irene Schmidt (Table Tennis)
Innsbruck 1984	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>
New York 1984	Jack Abramson (Swimming Events Co-ordinator)	Ólavur Kongsbak from Faroe Isles (Swimming)
Stoke Mandeville 1984	Ronald Nicholls (Shooting Official)	John Harris (Athletics)
Innsbruck 1988	<i>unknown</i>	<i>unknown</i>
Seoul 1988	<i>unknown</i>	So-Boo Kim (Table Tennis)
Tignes-Albertville 1992	<i>unknown</i>	Ludovic Rey-Robert (Alpine Skiing)
Barcelona 1992	<i>unknown</i>	José Manuel Rodríguez Ibáñez (Athletics)
Lillehammer 1994	<i>unknown</i>	Cato Zahl Pedersen (Alpine Skiing)
Atlanta 1996	<i>unknown</i>	Trischa Zorn (Swimming)
Nagano 1998	Takashi Takano (Ice Sledge Racing Referee)	Ryuei Shinohe (Alpine Skiing)
Sydney 2000	Mary Longden (Equestrian Referee)	Tracey Cross (Swimming)
Salt Lake City 2002	<i>unknown</i>	Sarah Billmeier (Alpine Skiing)
Athens 2004	Vlassis Tamvakieras (Athletics Official)	Maria Kalpakidou (Swimming)
Torino 2006	Mauro Scanacapra (Ice Sledge Hockey Referee)	Fabrizio Zardini (Alpine Skiing)
Beijing 2008	Hao Guohua (Goalball Judge)	Wu Chunmiao (Athletics)

<sup>2</sup> Thanks to Dr. Ian Brittain (University of Bedfordshire, UK) for providing the names of a number of the oath takers following research in historic sources such as contemporary official reports and newspapers. Note that some names are still missing.