



IPC GOVERNING BOARD BIOGRAPHIES

- Name: Dr Debra Alexander
- IPC position: Member at Large
- Elected: 2017 and 2021
- Position (outside of IPC GB): Clinical Psychologist and Academic; 1st Vice President World Triathlon; African Paralympic Committee Governing Board member; 1st Vice President African Triathlon; and 2nd Vice President South African Sport Confederation and Olympic Committee
- Nationality: South African
- Languages spoken: English, Afrikaans
- Social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#)



When and why did you first become involved in the Paralympic Movement?

My involvement in the Paralympic Movement started about 13 years ago. I mentored Paralympic athletes in preparation for the Paralympic Games as well as facilitating athlete rehabilitation post injury and supporting athletes navigating mental health challenges and difficult life circumstances. I first became involved by accepting an invitation to contribute to the mental health and well-being of South African athletes. I accepted the invitation because of my passions for sport, people, and making a difference in the world by helping individuals to be the best versions of themselves.

What has been your career path?

I have had a parallel career path combining my passions - health, academia, and sport.

I have worked in health care and academia, first in the nursing profession and later as a clinical psychologist and senior lecturer. My education included Bachelors and Honours degrees in the Social Sciences; a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology; a PhD in Neuropsychology/Sport; Nursing

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Diplomas; an Advanced Diploma in Adult Education, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Mindfulness-Based Interventions.

My work in sport has always been as a volunteer and this started in triathlon at grassroots and subsequently evolved into international leadership in Triathlon and Para Triathlon and leadership on the IPC Governing Board.

What do you enjoy most about the role that you have on the IPC Governing Board?

I enjoy and value the diversity on our Board, the leadership, athletes involved in the decision-making process, the welcoming of different perspectives, open dialogue, and robust debate. I value the integrity, transparency, and mutual respect amongst Board Members. I take pleasure in making a meaningful contribution in discussions and enjoy the learning gleaned from colleagues' inputs and from grappling with difficult challenges.

What is your personal highlight(s) from all the Paralympic Games you have attended?

My personal highlights are just being at the Games - witnessing and celebrating courage, excellence, inclusivity, diversity in action; connecting with the membership; teamwork and a plan coming together in celebration of humanity.

- **PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games:** experiencing Paralympic winter sport for the first time and getting to know the IPC leadership, members, and athletes.
- **Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games:** presenting a medal to a Paralympian I had the honour of mentoring on the lead up to the Games.
- **Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games:** - Tai Chi and Chinese Medicine.

Why for you are the Paralympic Games the most transformational event on earth?

The Paralympic Games are the most transformational event on earth because at its core it honours inclusion, not just by bringing together people

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from diverse backgrounds, regions, sports, and genders but by bringing together persons with diverse disabilities and ranges of impairments to compete and celebrate excellence, the power of the human spirit and ubuntu. The global reach of the third largest sports event in the world is a formidable force to, through the performances of Paralympians, inspire future generations by challenging beliefs and changing attitudes towards persons with a disability and driving social change.

Beyond the Games, what are your passions?

Beyond the Games my passions are my family, home, nature, the outdoors, dancing, health, safety, fairness, and well-being.

Over the next decade, what changes would you like to see that would improve the lives of the 1.2 billion persons globally who have a disability?

I would like to see an on-going focus on the #WeThe15 Campaign, by adding to the existing coalition of international organisations that globally campaign for disability visibility, inclusion, and accessibility so that we continue to raise awareness of the discrimination and barriers person with a disability face daily.

Secondly, I would like to see the IPC leading by example in demonstrating continued improvement in the duty of care of Paralympic athletes.

Thirdly, if we as leaders want to see the change, we must be the change in everything we say and do.

Who for you embodies the Paralympic Movement?

So many Paralympians come to mind, and it is hard to single out any one person - I am therefore going to say all Paralympians. Through their courage, determination, excellence in performance and their ability to inspire audiences worldwide, influence stereotypical thinking about disability, challenge stigma and in so doing drive social change, they embody the Paralympic Movement.

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