



Press Release

For Immediate Release
December 1, 2006

Press Contact: Lauren Rayner
435.200.0983

NATIONAL ABILITY CENTER

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National Ability Center Makes Bobsled History

On October 30, 2006 a small group of National Ability Center athletes and staff gathered at the Utah Olympic Park to witness the unveiling of an historical event. A shiny red bobsled emerged from its crate representing the official launch of the National Ability Center's campaign to initiate bobsled as a Paralympic Sport. In December, the National Ability Center's athletes, Aaron Laningham and Matt Profitt, will become the first athletes with disabilities ever in history to forerun a World Cup Bobsled Race. Our driver Aaron, who is a paraplegic, has been bobsledding 4 years with the National Ability Center, and second season athlete and break man, Matt Profitt, an above the knee amputee, is thrilled to be a part of this historical event.

In 1992, famed veteran NASCAR driver, Geoff Bodine, noticed the need for an American bobsled manufacturer and started the Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project, creating some of the fastest bobsleds in the world. "We need to put American athletes in American equipment," says Bodine, citing that previous to his project the last American sled to compete in an Olympic event was in 1956. The National Ability Center was thrilled to have Geoff Bodine carefully retrofit one of their sleds resulting in a World Cup race worthy bobsled which can accommodate the needs of athletes with disabilities. The sled is equipped with a sleek NASCAR style seat, shoulder harness, seatbelt, roll cage, head rest, and leg straps to accommodate the safety of athletes with disabilities. Bodine is currently working with the FIBT to build bobsleds with this adapted design for other countries enabling them to create programs for their athletes. There needs to be seven teams total in order for Bobsled to be considered for the 2010 Winter Paralympics in Vancouver, BC. In addition, Bodine is working with veterans with disabilities and the military to provide opportunities for participation in this exciting new sport.

The National Ability Center has been offering a bobsled training program for the past four years as bobsled is easy to adapt for athletes with disabilities as all sleds are hand controlled. Long time National Ability Center supporter and International Paralympic Committee President, Phil Craven, charged the National Ability Center to spearhead a campaign to make bobsled a Paralympic Sport. With the support of the International Paralympics, the FIBT, and US Paralympics, National Ability Center is creating a team with the support of World Class Level.

Join the National Ability Center in this historical event by attending the World Cup Bobsled Race at the Utah Olympic Park in Park City, UT on December 8th and 9th, 2006. The National Ability Center athletes will be forerunning races at 1:45pm and 5:45pm on the 8th and 3:45pm on the 9th. The event is free for spectators and parking is available at the main lot. A special reception will be held to honor Geoff Bodine and bobsled supporter Robert Raymond.

P. O. BOX 682799
PARK CITY, UTAH

8 4 0 6 8 - 2 7 9 9

VOICE/TDD {435} 649-3991

e mail info@nac1985.org

A Chapter of Disabled Sports USA