

424 Athletes with Disabilities from Across U.S. Return to Grand Rapids to Compete at The Hartford Nationals July 10-16

Paralympic gold medalist and wheelchair basketball player Matt Scott to surprise six athletes with custom-fit adaptive sports equipment

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Hartford Nationals conducted by Move United, the largest and longest-running national sport championship event for athletes with a physical disability, visual impairment, or intellectual disability, returns to Grand Rapids, July 10-16. The event again will be hosted by the West Michigan Sports Commission (WMSC) and Move United member organization, Mary Free Bed Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports.



An athlete competes in long jump during last year's The Hartford Nationals conducted by Move United

Athletes competing qualify through one of more than 35 sanctioned competitions that took place across the country throughout the Move United member network, a national governing body, or a high school athletic association sanctioned event. This year, 424 athletes with disabilities and 146 coaches from 38 states and the District of Columbia are competing and participating. Featured sports include archery, boccia, para powerlifting, paratriathlon and aquathlon, shooting, swimming, track and field, and wheelchair and para standing tennis.

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“What I love about this competition is that it is the origin story for so many Team USA Paralympians,” said Move United CEO Glenn Merry. “When the world stage returns to Los Angeles in just two years, we will trace their competitive transformation to The Hartford Nationals.”

During the event, The Hartford, joined by Paralympic gold medalist and wheelchair basketball player Matt Scott, will surprise six athletes with custom-fit adaptive sports equipment. In addition, one athlete, nominated by their peers, will receive The Hartford's Human Achievement Award. This honor recognizes an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the adaptive sports movement and serves as a role model to others. The award includes a \$2,500 grant to support the recipient's training and travel as they pursue their athletic goals.

"The Hartford Nationals is a powerful example of what is possible when adaptive athletes have greater access to sport," said Claire Burns, chief marketing and customer officer at The Hartford. "Through our long-standing partnership with Move United, we're helping make adaptive equipment and competitive opportunities more accessible. We're proud to support an event that not only showcases elite talent but also helps build a more inclusive future for adaptive sports."

In addition to the competitions taking place, clinics and educational sessions will include sports such as adaptive judo, field hockey, wheelchair softball, swimming, and tennis. Paralympians Daniel Romanchuk, Brian Siemann, and Eliaz Willis will also lead track clinics. Other Paralympic athletes, such as Amanda McGrory and Chuck Aoki will serve as announcers during the competitions.

The local organizing committee is spearheaded by the West Michigan Sports Commission, selected through a nationwide bid process to host the event in 2025 and 2026, with support from Mary Free Bed Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports. Local venues hosting competition events throughout the week include Calvin University's Gainey Athletic Facility (track & field and welcome ceremony), Calvin University's Venema Aquatic Center (swimming), Mary Free Bed YMCA (archery and para powerlifting), Millennium Park (paratriathlon), MSA Fieldhouse (boccia and shooting), MVP Athletic Club (tennis) and the Grand Rapids Public Museum (closing celebration).

"The West Michigan Sports Commission is honored to again host The Hartford Nationals in Grand Rapids with Mary Free Bed Wheelchair and Adaptive Sports, and we look forward to building on the positive momentum of a successful 2025 event," said West Michigan Sports Commission President Mike Guswiler. "We encourage even greater participation from the West Michigan community – whether volunteering or spectating, events are free and open to the public. We hope to welcome even more athletes from across the country and surpass last year's record attendance."

For a full schedule of events or for more information, visit thehartfordnationals.org.

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