



IPC GOVERNING BOARD BIOGRAPHIES

- Name: Chelsey Gotell PLY
- IPC position: Member at Large
- Elected: 2021
- Position (outside of the IPC GB): Osteopathic Manual Practitioner and clinic owner
- Nationality: Canada
- Languages spoken: English
- Paralympic Games participated in: Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008
- Paralympic medals won: 3 gold, 2 silver, 7 bronze
- Social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#)



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

I was classified as an S13 swimmer in 1999 after a fellow swimmer saw me competing at a provincial swimming competition and told me about Para sport. I had no idea sport for people with disabilities existed at that time but am so glad I became part of the Paralympic Movement.

What has been your career path?

I competed internationally as a swimmer from 2000 to 2011. I graduated from university with a degree in psychology and went on to work for the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games Organising Committee from 2010 to 2014. In 2012 I started volunteering with my NPC supporting Games-time operations of the Canadian delegation at the London 2012, Sochi 2014, Toronto 2015 and Rio 2016 Games before moving into governance roles within my NPC and the IPC. From 2017-2022, I was Chairperson of the IPC Athletes' Council.

Outside of sport I own my own osteopathic practice and do policy and social impact work related to Para sport and advancing the lives for people with disabilities.

INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE

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

100%, the people are what I enjoy the most. I really enjoy working alongside my colleagues, IPC members from around the world and athletes to advance the movement for future generations of Para athletes. We have so many incredibly talented and passionate people involved in our movement and having the opportunity to work alongside them is something I thrive on. I also really enjoy working alongside other stakeholders within the larger sport system to help advance the priorities and voice of the Paralympic Movement.

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

Sydney 2000 was my first Paralympic Games. Prior to this, I had no idea sport for people with disabilities existed. Walking into a sold-out stadium in Sydney completely changed the trajectory of my life. Also being part of sweeping the podium at the Beijing 2008 Games with my two fellow Canadian teammates, twice, was pretty special. Finally, having the opportunity to meet and welcome fellow Paralympians and refugees from Afghanistan Zakia Khudadadi and Hossain Rasouli as they arrived at the Paralympic village for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games alongside IPC President Andrew Parsons was one of the most emotional and unforgettable experiences of my life.

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

Our Games have the ability to totally transform people's lives. They have the ability to take what is often the most marginalised group within any community around the world and give people a space where they see more for themselves. This potential carries so much fire and light for me and it's power cannot be measured. As a person with a disability, who has seen this transformation first hand from the time I got involved through to today, I can only beam with excitement as I envision what the future holds for the Paralympic Games and the impact they have on individual people and society as a whole.

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Beyond the Games, what are your passions?

I have two young children, Emily and Adam, so I enjoy spending time with them and seeing the world through their eyes. I love cycling and swimming and spending as much time as possible along the ocean. I also really enjoy mentoring other athletes through their transition from sport and finding their passion outside of the field of sport.

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 really like to see a true shift in how society perceives people with disabilities and that this shift be reflected not just in how society interacts with people with disabilities but in how cities or infrastructure are built or refurbished to be fully inclusive and accessible, how people with disabilities are given equal opportunities to be educated and be gainfully employed at all levels of organisations.

Who for you embodies the Paralympic Movement?

For me, it's the collective. It's the athletes who train long hours to master their sport, the volunteers, sport administrators and supporters who devote countless hours to bettering our movement for the next generation. It's those who are passionate about what we stand for and carry the flame of the movement in them at all times. Although we are still a relatively young movement, seeing the foundation that we are built on and the integrity and values shine through in so many of the friends I have gained through the Paralympic Movement is pretty incredible.

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