

‘Anything is possible’:

Aron Ralston lost his right arm, but three months later he was climbing mountains again. Like Aron, there are many people in the world of sport who have achieved fantastic things even with a disability. Read these three amazing stories.

Oscar Pistorius ‘The fastest man on no legs’



Oscar Pistorius, the South African runner, was born without bones in both legs. Doctors had to amputate both his lower legs when he was only eleven months old. This disability didn't stop Oscar. He got special prosthetic legs and became a successful sports player and won medals in several team sports at school. In 2003, he decided to become a runner. He did so well at the Paralympic Games (the Olympic Games for athletes with disabilities) that he became known as ‘the fastest man on no legs’.

But Oscar dreamed of competing against athletes without disabilities. He had to fight the sports authorities, but finally they let him. In July 2011, Oscar won a 400m race in Italy! He described this as his biggest success. His dream is to win gold at the Olympic Games. ‘I've never felt sorry for myself,’ Oscar says. ‘I just enjoy what I do and do it as well as I can.’

What do these words mean?

You can use a dictionary.

disability medal compete athlete
authorities shark raise

Do you know other people
with disabilities who have
achieved amazing things?

Talk to a partner.

disability and sport

‘I love it too much to stop’ Bethany Hamilton



When she was only thirteen, surfer Bethany Hamilton lost her left arm in a shark attack off the coast of Hawaii. Many people thought that she would never surf again. But although she nearly died in the attack, just one month later Bethany was back in the water. It wasn't easy learning to surf with only one arm. ‘The hardest thing was just learning how to stand up and position yourself in the right place,’ she says.

Two years later, Bethany came first in the National Championships, a top surfing competition. Like Aron, Bethany, says other people helped with her success.

‘Anything is possible’ Rick Hansen

By the age of fifteen, Canadian Rick Hansen was winning competitions in five different sports. Then he had a serious car accident and had to use a wheelchair. But Rick didn't allow this to end his dream of becoming a top athlete. After years of hard training, he was accepted onto the Canadian Paralympic Team and won three gold and two silver medals in the games of 1980 and 1984.

Winning wasn't enough for Rick – he wanted to help others too. In March 1985, he began his ‘Man In Motion World Tour’.

He travelled through 34 countries in 26 months, through all types of weather, in his wheelchair. When Rick returned to Canada he had raised more than 26 million dollars to help athletes with disabilities!

‘What was the most difficult part of the tour?’ people asked.

‘Starting,’ said Rick. ‘I couldn't have done it without the help of other people.’

