



## Athlete Profile: Diana Woods

**U.S. Navy Veteran**  
**35 years old**  
**Suffolk, Virginia**

Suffolk, VA resident and U.S. Navy Veteran Diana Woods is excited about competing with fellow Veterans during the 38<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games coming to Orlando July 30<sup>th</sup> to August 4<sup>th</sup>.

The youngest of six children, Diana Woods sought to continue playing competitive field hockey upon her high school graduation. When a recruiter told her that she could try out for the USA Field Hockey team while in the Navy, Woods was all in. Unfortunately, Woods didn't end up on the team, but she still found ways to compete in athletics throughout her Navy career, playing soccer on co-ed base teams.

About five years into her Navy career, Woods and her husband welcomed a daughter. Woods began suffering back pain shortly after giving birth to her daughter, but assumed it was a side effect from the epidural she'd received. When Navy doctors failed to locate the cause of her back pain, Woods' condition continued to slowly decline over the next two years, to the point where she had difficulty standing. Woods again went to the hospital, this time given a battery of neurological tests, and the doctor admitted her right away, later diagnosing her with stage four non-Hodgkin's Burkitt Lymphoma.



It's not just Woods who looks forward to the National Veteran Wheelchair Games each year; her daughter does as well. And not only does Woods get to put her athleticism to the test, her family is there to watch her do it. Woods explains, "Being able to do what I did in high school as an adult, I just think it's awesome. Not only for me, but my family goes to the Games with me. My daughter, my nieces, my sister, so they're able to see -- look, all these people, life is going on. We all have struggles. Not just people in chairs. Everyone."

*"Go out and just try it...Keep an open mind on trying new things because you never know the outcome of how it will benefit you in the end. It will change your life, for sure."*

- Diana Woods