

National Veterans Wheelchair Games



Athlete Profile: Sean Gibbs

Sean Gibbs

U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

**46 years old – Winter Garden,
Florida**

At age 23, former U.S. Marine Sean Gibbs broke his back and suffered other serious injuries in a motorcycle accident that left him a paraplegic.

Today, this married, father-of-two leaves his Winter Garden, Fla., home 15 to 18 hours a week to practice hand cycling as he prepares for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games being held in Orlando from July 30 to August 4th.

“For me, the Games were like a homecoming. I wasn’t even a year post injury and I got started with hand cycling in the 1996 Games in Seattle,” Gibbs, 46 recalled. “I ran cross country and track in high school so it was natural for me to go into some kind of racing sport in the Games.”

Since his injury, Gibbs has competed in about 10 Wheelchair Games, pausing to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Business. Considered an “elite” athlete in hand cycling, he competes nationally at Paralympic events and “runs” alongside other marathoners at events in Miami and New York where disabled athletes are able to compete.

“There are a lot of challenges to being in a wheelchair,” he said. “For me, and others like me, it’s important to focus your energies on being productive and living a healthy life. The Wheelchair Games bring back that spirit of competition and achievement – and it provides a great resource for networking. We learn from each other – there’s a ton of talking among Veterans about what works and what doesn’t. That cross talk improves our lives greatly,” he said.

“I’d like to leave my mark on the 38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games with my children... that all these days of practice and early morning training is for a good reason...I have something important I want to achieve.”

