



YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

Duncan Campbell has seen an awful lot of changes in the sport he and four other Canadian pals invented some 34 years ago.



“They are huge,” said Campbell, a member of the organizing committee for 2008 Canada Cup. “The changes have been phenomenal in strategy, training and the chairs used.”

He is referring, of course to Murderball-come-Wheelchair rugby.

How did it all come about? “Back in 1974 track and field and swimming were about the only sports available to us so one day the five of us were at a gym throwing around a volleyball and we began to experiment, throwing the ball into a can, racing down the court passing the ball back and forward, crossing an imaginary goal line...and we said let’s make up some rules and see if this thing flies.”

It did, and one year later the new sport was a demonstration at the National Games for the Disabled in Edmonton. One year later the sport had grown across the country and was an actual medal event at the National Games in Newfoundland where then national president Roger Mondor donated a trophy to the winning Province.

The sport went International for the first time at the 1982 Stoke-Mandeville Games, but then only as a demonstration sport. It worked, though, as the game grew in stature and in 1996 in Toronto the first world championship was held. The rest is history.

Today there are 29 countries participating in wheelchair rugby and Duncan can look back with much satisfaction. “But it’s a game where we are continually attempting to improve it. We’ve developed many rules over the years and you know what, we’re still developing them.”

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