



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 23, 2008**

## **Female Wheelchair Rugby Players Warm Up for Paralympics at Canada Cup**

**Vancouver, BC** – Three of the eight international teams in town for the 2008 Canada Cup International Wheelchair Rugby Tournament have a female player on their roster in preparation for the Paralympic Games in Beijing in September. The women will be competing for their countries - Canada, Great Britain and China – at the Canada Cup at Bonsor Recreation Centre in Burnaby, BC June 27 - 29, 2008.

“Speaking as a quad, there aren’t really many sports out there for us who are sports enthusiasts. To be able to play on the same field as the guys is good,” says Canada’s Erika Schmutz, only the 3<sup>rd</sup> woman to have made it onto the National team.

New regulations for wheelchair rugby at the Paralympics stipulate that each team must have one female player on their roster if they bring the full complement of 12 players. “For them to open it up for female players who can play at that level, and want to play at that level, means a lot,” says Schmutz. China’s team includes Wenli Zhang while Great Britain’s roster includes with Josie Pearson.

The Canada Cup tournament begins with the round robin games on Friday, June 27, with the medal finals set for Sunday, June 29. Beginning Saturday evening fans of the game around the world will be able to view, in their entirety, two of the premier games played earlier in the day, courtesy of Xable.com, the interactive media network for the disability community. Same day video coverage will also be provided for the final three games on Sunday. Color commentary and a running analysis of the games will be provided by wheelchair rugby experts including Duncan Campbell of Vancouver, one of the founders of the sport and a member of the Canada Cup organizing committee. The games may be viewed by following the Xable link at [www.bcwheelchairsports.com](http://www.bcwheelchairsports.com).

Also in town during the Canada Cup are delegates from around the world attending the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation’s Annual General Assembly.

The 2008 Canada Cup is just a taste of what is in store for sports fans in September, 2010 when the BC Wheelchair Sports Association (BCWSA) and the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (CWSA) host the 2010 World Wheelchair Rugby Championships at the Richmond Olympic Oval in Richmond, BC.

BCWSA is a not-for-profit organization devoted to providing opportunities for athletes with physical disabilities. Since being founded in 1971, the association has worked to provide access to quality programs for athletes with disabilities. This has always been the focus and continues to be what drives the association. In partnership with other Provincial Wheelchair Sports Associations across Canada, BCWSA is dedicated to promoting wheelchair sport and community awareness.

-30-

### **Media Inquiries:**

Jan Mansfield - 604-719-3828; [januscom@shaw.ca](mailto:januscom@shaw.ca)  
Brian Pound - 604-817-6658; [brianpound\\_30@hotmail.com](mailto:brianpound_30@hotmail.com)