

## 2016 Canada Cup Storybank

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1. Wheelchair rugby was invented in Winnipeg in 1977 and is the only Paralympic sport with Canadian Heritage status. 2017 will be its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Duncan Campbell, one of the co-founders of wheelchair rugby, is on the Canada Cup organizing committee.
2. The 2016 Canada Cup international wheelchair rugby tournament is the last stop for teams before the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Canada has never won the Canada Cup, so a victory on home soil before the Paralympic Games would give the team a huge amount of momentum.
3. Team Canada is ranked #1 in the world for the first time in 13 years. The team is on the hunt for its first Paralympic gold medal.
4. Though wheelchair rugby is known as a masculine sport, it's actually co-ed. Team Canada has one female athlete: Miranda Biletski. There are two other women playing at Canada Cup: Coral Batey (Great Britain) and Silvana Hegglin (Switzerland).
5. Canada's Zak Madell is considered to be one of the best wheelchair rugby players in the world. He was named MVP of the 2014 World Championships and 2015 World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge, and was the flagbearer for the Toronto 2015 Closing Ceremonies. Team Canada will rely on his speed and strength.
6. Canada has an historic rivalry against Team USA, which was caught on tape in the 2005 Academy Award-nominated documentary "Murderball." The last time these two teams met, Canada beat the USA to qualify for Rio. Now, they'll go head-to-head on home soil one last time before Rio.
7. Seven of the 12 athletes on the team are from BC or train there. Venues like the Richmond Olympic Oval and PISE in Victoria are crucial to the team's preparation.
8. One stereotype about people with disabilities is that they can't get married and have prestigious jobs. Byron Green is proving them all wrong. In addition

to training full-time as a high-performance athlete, he is married to his wife Alana and works as an engineer.

- 9.** Trevor Hirschfield is considered one of the best players in his class in the world. He has won dozens of All Star and MVP awards and his Team Canada's co-captain. Team Canada will look to him as a leader.
- 10.** In 2005, Team Canada was featured in the Academy Award-nominated documentary "Murderball." A lot has changed in the 11 years since the movie was released, including the fact that the American coach is now coaching Team Canada.
- 11.** Wheelchair rugby has many ties to Canada's national sport: hockey. Not only do the two sports share many rules, but many athletes on Team Canada are also former hockey players; some even sustained their spinal cord injuries playing hockey. Cody Caldwell was the goalie for the Peterborough Petes AAA team and several other players played minor midget AA or Junior C hockey.
- 12.** One of the keys to Canada's success is its strong "low pointers." While athletes like Zak who have the most function get a lot of the attention on the court, the ability of our low-point athletes to check players with much more function gives Canada a huge advantage. In fact, Canada is led by two low-point players: co-captains Trevor Hirschfield and Patrice Dagenais.
- 13.** The USA has won the Canada Cup 4 times. Australia has won it twice. Both of the rivals are looking to snatch victory from Team Canada.
- 14.** Training athletes with a disability is a unique challenge. To play wheelchair rugby, athletes must have impairment in at least 3 limbs. Most athletes are spinal cord injury quadriplegics. Cutting edge sport science and creative strength training techniques helps these athletes to achieve greatness.