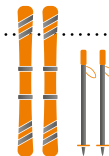




Jason Dodd Photography



Millie Knight

Visually Impaired Ski Champion

What gets reigning World Para Alpine Downhill Ski Champion Millie Knight out of bed every morning? The thought of standing on the podium at the Pyeongchang Winter Paralympics - her dream for the last eight years. The 18-year-old visually impaired skier is at the peak of her career after winning gold at the World Cup in Tarvisio, Italy, in 2017. She's come a long way since competing as the youngest ever British Paralympic athlete, at the age of 15, in Sochi, where she placed 5th in slalom and giant slalom. A little older and wiser, she's ready both physically and psychologically, to prove her awesome ability and determination.

"Ever since I joined the team in 2012, the Paralympic Games in 2018 has been my goal. It's something I train daily for and it's always the first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning. When we're back home, which isn't very often, I'm in the gym training every day. When we're away, we are travelling all over the world trying to find snow, also training really hard - so it's pretty intense but I do enjoy it."

Millie has around 8% vision after losing most of her sight

WINTER PARALYMPICS

NOT GIVING UP

to an infection as a child. She's just able to see guide Brett Wilder's fluorescent vest in front of her as she races downhill at speeds of over 100km/h. Of course she has crashes - last season she spent four months recovering from concussion - but it's not fear of injury that could hold Millie back. She explains: "My biggest hurdles are very much psychological and in knowing I have the belief in myself and the confidence to do what I need to do - which is something I continue to work hard on."



So why does she do it? "Sport gives me confidence that I take into my day to day life," she says. "Skiing allowed me to prove to myself I can do something and I can do it well." She's certainly proved that already and if her goal is a Paralympic medal it won't remain just a dream for long.

millieknight.co.uk



Chris Lloyd

Paralympic Ski Racer

Lying in a hospital bed after a rally car crash left him paralysed from the neck down in 2011, it was the sight of a poster for the Paralympics that gave Chris Lloyd the motivation not just to recover, but to become an athlete.

Now the 43 year old represents Great Britain in the Para Snowsports Giant Slalom, Super Combined, Super G and Downhill. After three World Cup Top 15 finishes in 2016, he feels ready to show the world how far he's come in Pyeongchang.

"The games mean everything to me and my family. Ever since I first

saw a poster for the Paralympics on the hospital wall, it has been my goal to ski for my country at the Winter Paralympics. I almost had the opportunity four years ago in Sochi, but 2014 came around a little too quickly. Now I feel ready and hungry."

Chris is classified LW9-1, for people with upper and lower limb function problems - he has 40% power in his right leg and 50% in his left. He explains: "It takes me 3 or 4 times more energy to be able to ski a course. Once fatigue sets in my legs give up and I struggle to stand. Just to be able to ski again is the thing I'm most proud of. It's been a long and difficult journey to get to this point and everything from here forward is a bonus."

As well as training hard on the slopes and in the gym, Chris uses meditation to relax and achieve a positive mindset - from which he says anything is possible with the body. When you consider that straight after the accident he couldn't feed or wash himself, the fact he was back on skis a year later, and now races for his country, is nothing short of incredible.

So what is it about skiing that inspired him? "Skiing is a real adrenaline rush and it allows me to be out in the mountains and fresh air, which I love. I do it because it makes me feel alive and motivates me to improve and be the best I can be."

chris-lloyd.co.uk



Holmlands