

Paralympians hope for games ticket scramble

By **Paul Keogh**

SOME of the world's top disabled athletes were in London yesterday to give the capital a taste of what to expect in next year's Paralympics.

'Blade runner' Oscar Pistorius and swimmer Ellie Simmonds were among those taking part in the International Paralympic Day, with organisers hoping they prompt a rush for tickets when they go on sale today.

Prime minister David Cameron and London mayor Boris Johnson got in on the action, taking to the court alongside wheelchair tennis stars.

Judo, rugby and sitting volleyball players showed off their prowess in front of thousands of visitors to the Trafalgar Square event.

There was also a penalty shoot-out between the British blind football team and former professionals Paul Merson, Ray Wilkins and Chris Kamara.

'It's sport – blood, sweat and tears are shed daily'

'I have no doubt the Paralympic tickets will get snapped up just as quickly as the Olympic tickets did,' said double-amputee Pistorius, who is likely to compete in both sets of Games.

'This is sport, it's dedication. Blood, sweat and tears are shed on a daily basis. People are going to witness that for the first time next year.'

International Paralympic Committee president Sir Philip Craven added: 'The foundations for what could be the best Paralympic Games ever have been laid here in London.'

'Something special is going to happen at the 2012 Paralympic Games. We're going to put on a show that will captivate billions, inspire millions and show the world that anything is possible.'

The games follow the Olympics and run from August 29 until September 9.



Decked: Paralympic judo players take part in a demonstration in Trafalgar Square yesterday Pictures: Getty/EPA/Action



Game on: Volleyball players show off their skills, while Oscar Pistorius unveils a sculpture of his torso

> Noble dream comes full circle

By **Lord Coe**

Today is a significant day on our journey to London 2012 as tickets for the Paralympic Games go on sale and I'm urging Metro readers to get behind the Paralympic Games. It could be said that the Paralympics are 'coming home' next summer, as its origins can be traced back to Britain. In 1948, as London hosted the Olympic Games, a visionary surgeon called Ludwig Guttmann organised a sporting competition for people with spinal cord injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire. Since then, the Paralympic movement has grown to include 4,200 athletes and 20 different sports. I experienced my first Paralympic sport in Athens in 2004 and was, quite simply, blown away by what I saw. For Metro readers who are maybe unsure, I can guarantee it truly is sport like never before. London 2012 doesn't finish when the flame is extinguished at the Olympic Games closing ceremony.

■ PARALYMPICS tickets go on sale at 9am today until 6pm on September 26. Half of the 2million tickets will be under £10 and there will be concessions for wheelchair users. Seats for popular sessions will be allocated via a ballot. Applications can be made by visiting www.tickets.london2012.com. Forms are also in branches of Lloyds TSB and the Bank of Scotland, north of the border only.



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