



MEDIA RELEASE

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Regional Athlete at 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games

Lethbridge, Alberta: Payden Vair from Cardston, will represent Canada at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games. The 12 day event started on August 24th and runs through September 5th. Payden is one of 128 athletes and 113 coaches representing Canada. In total, the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games will include 4400 athletes from 160 nations competing in 22 sports. Canada will compete in 18 of the 22 sports.

Payden Vair has been a member of the Seated Volleyball team since 2019. She made her debut at the 2019 Parapan Am Games in Lima where the team won a bronze medal just one year after a life-changing lawnmower accident. In February 2020 she helped Canada secure a spot for the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo by winning gold at the World ParaVolley final Paralympic qualification tournament in Halifax.

The pathway of opportunities for athletes with disabilities to compete on a national and world stage is increasing. For the first time, multiple international organizations - the Special Olympics, Invictus Games, the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf, and the International Paralympic Committee - are collaborating for the #WeThe15 movement which aims to end discrimination against people with disabilities and act as a global movement publicly campaigning for disability visibility, inclusion, and accessibility. Lethbridge City Hall will be lit up purple Friday, August 27 in recognition of the global campaign #WeThe15.

"Today is about cheering on Payden Vair as she represents Team Canada and southwestern Alberta in Tokyo. We recognize and celebrate her strength in character and the positive impact that has had on her life," said Susan Eymann, Lethbridge Sport Council. "15% of the world have a disability. As a Sport Council we want to help reduce barriers and increase access to sport and active living opportunities in our region."

Every athlete from joining a community sport program to competing on a world stage has a behind-the-scenes team that rallies for them along the way. As a former Kodiaks soccer player, Payden has felt the support of the Kodiak community. "We strive to create an environment where all of our Kodiaks are like family, and we are always there to support one another," says Todd Caughlin, Kodiaks Manager of Athletics, Lethbridge College. "Once you're a Kodiak, you're always a Kodiak, and Payden is an important part of that culture. I know we'll all be rallying around her again and cheering her on as she competes in Tokyo."

"The personal journeys of Paralympic athletes are remarkable examples of human endeavour. Payden Vair's story of determination to succeed despite her challenges is an inspiration to everyone in southern Alberta. On behalf of Lethbridge City Council, I send our best wishes to Payden for the experience of a lifetime in Tokyo!" said Lethbridge Mayor Chris Spearman.

To find out more about sport and active recreation programs in Lethbridge and area visit the Lethbridge Sport Council's online sport directory <https://lethbridgesportcouncil.ca/sport-directory/wheelchair-adaptive-sports>

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Bio of Payden Vair, athlete competing at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games

Payden has been a member of the Seated Volleyball team since 2019. She made her debut at the 2019 Parapan Am Games in Lima. In February 2020 she helped Canada secure a spot for the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo by winning gold at the World ParaVolley final Paralympic qualification tournament in Halifax.

In her grade 12 year, while playing soccer for Cardston High School, in Cardston, AB, she was recruited by Lethbridge College to play for the Kodiaks women's soccer team. The summer going into her second year of university and playing soccer for the Kodiaks, Payden had her legs run over in a lawnmower accident while cutting the grass at her family home in Cardston.

Payden is currently taking education at the University of Lethbridge with the hopes of teaching elementary school in the future. She's still involved with the Kodiaks women's soccer team and attends their games on occasion.

Women's Sitting Volleyball Schedule at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games

Canada vs Brazil – Friday, August 27 @ 3:30 AM MST (will be live-streamed)

Canada vs Italy – Saturday August 28 @ 11 PM MST (will be live-streamed)

Canada vs Japan – Wednesday, September 1 @ 5:30 AM MST

The bronze medal match will be on Saturday, September 4 @ 1:30 AM MST, and the gold medal match will be on Sunday, September 5 @ 7 PM MST.

Live streaming and on-demand coverage will be available through the [CBC Sports app](#), [CBC Gem](#), and [CBC.ca/tokyo2020](#); the [Radio-Canada Sports app](#) and [Radio-Canada.ca/jeux-paralympiques](#); as well as [paralympic.ca/tokyo-2020](#).