

Athletics throwing seat

Summary

The International Paralympics Council sets the rules for seated athletic events, so to participate in these sports, disabled athletes need well-designed throwing seats that conform to these strict regulations. When athletes from Cheltenham approached Remap Gloucestershire for help, volunteer Peter Vielvoye stepped in.

Peter's design is based on a frame of aluminium tubing with a pole for the athlete to hold onto while throwing. Gareth Picken has experienced tremendous success with the new seat. Representing the South West at the School Games in Manchester, he won gold in two events and was given a most improved athlete award.

The challenge

After the Paralympics of 2012 the International Paralympics Council decided draw up a new set of rules for seated athletic events meaning that all previous seat designs were redundant. Remap Gloucestershire was contacted by two young Cheltenham athletes who were in need of new throwing seats that would conform to the new regulations. They were both wheelchair users but did have full use of their upper bodies and did not require back supports.

At the same time Adam Davis, a student from a local secondary school, was looking for a project for his A level Design and Technology Examination. Happily, Peter Vielvoye, the Remap Gloucestershire volunteer leading on the throwing seat project is an ex Design and Technology teacher and agreed to be Adam's mentor in the project.

The solution



Peter built a wooden prototype seat before finalising the design. It was intended that the basic seat would be adaptable for all athletes, in addition to making seats for specific clients. His final design was based on a rectangular frame of aluminium tube on a square base with the full frame in contact with the ground to minimise sinking into soft ground. A tubular pole for the athlete to hold was attached, its position variable for the different throwing events.

The frame is anchored to the ground by strapping and tyred plastic wheels attached to the back legs make for easy transportation.

Adam completed his final exam project based on the throwing seat for one of the athletes and achieved a grade A in his examination.

The benefits

One of the athletes helped, Gareth Picken has experienced tremendous success and been given a most improved athlete award, thus achieving a boost to his self-esteem, confidence and quality of life. Gareth's father says: *"Over the summer season of 2014, he threw new personal bests in every event adding between 2 meters and 5 meters to his previous bests throwing from his wheelchair. This culminated in his selection to represent the South West at the School Games in Manchester. With help from his throwing stool he achieved 2 Golds from the 2 events he took part in. Gareth is now training hard for next season and looking to achieve event better results."*