

C4 presenters praise para table tennis

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Presenters from C4's 'That Paralympic Show' praised athletes and organisers at the British Open Para Table Tennis Championships while filming an episode.

The C4 crew spent the day at the English Institute of Sport interviewing the high level parathletes on the final day of the competition for the show, which goes out on Oct 29

Ade, who trained at the English Institute of Sport, Sheffield, regularly when he was being considered for the GB wheelchair Paralympic team in the run up to the 2004 Athens Olympics, said: "This is the first time I have watched major table tennis competition and it's really good to see paralympic world class table tennis here in Sheffield.

"It looks really well run and the athletes look happy, they know what they are doing and where they are going. They seem to have everything they need," he added.

Ade and Iwan Thomas, a sprinter who represented Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the Olympic Games in the 400m turned their hands to table tennis, with C4 presenter Rick Edwards cheering them on.

Iwan said: "It's interesting to watch the different levels of disabilities and categories. It makes this unique and the atmosphere is fantastic."

"I have got so much respect and what I have learnt is that the parathletes and athletes should be treated equally. I've done so many competitions here. The facilities here are superb," praising the facilities in Sheffield, which Iwan considers a 'second home' he believes the event will help raise the profile of parathletes.

"That will be different next year. Channel 4 is trying to put it [paralympics] on an even playing field with our coverage," added Iwan.

Echoing Iwan, Rick said: "On a fundamental level it's more impressive because just look at some of the athletes, some are amputees, some on crutches. And what they do is extraordinary."

"It is a shame the coverage level drops when it comes to the Paralympics. What Channel 4 have done and done very well is to give the Paralympics the same coverage as the Olympics in the run up to the games. We have the same level of commentary and analysis."

"It's true the Olympics has had a lot of media coverage so it's really important that we get paralympics out there. We want to fill the stadiums during the paralympic games. We have so many talented athletes and it's like they are being kept a secret," added Ade.

The British Open took place at the English Institute of Sport, in Sheffield, over four days, Sept 14- 17.

It attracted more than 310 elite para table tennis players from 44 nations across the globe, and gave GB players a rare chance to compete in an international tournament on home soil.

The British Open was supported by UK Sport, the British Table Tennis Association for people with Disabilities, ITTF Para TT, Sheffield City Council, the English Table Tennis Association, Sheffield International Venues, Butterfly, Konica Minolta, MLS and HR Media.

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