

Disabled Cyclists Prepare for Summer Paralympic Games



AP

Britain's Sarah Storey, front, is a gold medal winning disabled cyclist and swimmer

JUNE SIMMS: Welcome to AMERICAN MOSAIC in VOA Special English.

(MUSIC)

I'm June Simms. On the program today, new music from The Ting Tings...

And we consider some of the advice you have offered on our relationship blog...

But first, a look at some of the people hoping to compete this summer at the Paralympic Games in London.

Paracyclists in Los Angeles

JUNE SIMMS: Disabled bikers from all over the world have been competing in Los Angeles, California. They are seeking a chance to compete at the twenty-two Paralympic Games in London. The games are to open in August after the end of the London Olympics.

Christopher Cruise tells us about the hopeful paracyclists in Los Angeles.

CHRISTOPHER CRUISE: Many of the riders are missing arms or legs. Others are blind, and ride with able-bodied cyclists. American cyclist Jennifer Schuble rides alone. She suffered a traumatic brain injury as a student at the United States Military Academy at West Point. She lost some of the feeling in her feet. Her arm was later damaged in a car accident and she has multiple sclerosis. But, she says cycling has let her return to competitive sports.

JENNIFER SCHUBLE: "I played soccer and I ran indoor and outdoor track. And so being physically fit has always been part of my life, and with cycling, I'm able to clip my feet into the pedals."

Jennifer Schuble won the gold medal in the five-hundred meter event at the Beijing Paralympic Games in two thousand eight.

Craig Griffin is training director for the United States paracycling team. He says most of the riders have moved beyond their disabilities, dealing with daily life just like everyone else.

CRAIG GRIFFIN: "They cope every day with everything we do on a day to day basis and they do very well at it. So they've learned to adapt to opening a bag of potato chips, to hopping into a car, dealing with ill-fitting prosthetics."

More than two hundred athletes from thirty-three countries traveled to Los Angeles for the events. American Sam Kavanagh lost his leg in a skiing accident seven years ago. After recovering, he returned to cycling, something he had enjoyed in college.

Sam Kavanagh says Europeans are leaders in paracycling events. He says the American teams will face fierce competition.

SAM KAVANAGH: "You've got your perennial favorites. When it comes to the track, Great Britain's a pretty hard program to top. The Aussies always come flying. They're super strong. And you've got select athletes from other countries that have obviously upped the fame."

British Paralympic champion Sarah Storey has won gold medals in both cycling and swimming. She competed in her first games in nineteen ninety-two. She also competed in the Commonwealth Games in two thousand ten against non-disabled athletes.

Sarah Storey was born without a working left hand. She says getting ready for the Paralympic Games takes continuous training and deep desire. She knows from experience how to move forward from Los Angeles.

SARAH STOREY: "I think we're just going to continue the qualification period as strongly as we can and then go straight back into training and start building up on the road again, and just trying to make sure that we're fitter and stronger and stay healthy all the way through the hopefully decent British summer and then welcome the whole world to London."

(MUSIC)

Relationship Blog Comments

JUNE SIMMS: Now, we turn to some of the comments that have appeared on our relationship blog. Thank you all for the thoughtful advice.

Many of you offered guidance to the woman in Mongolia who wondered if she was too old to end a relationship with her boyfriend. She wrote that they had been together for six years but did not live together. She also said the two of them still act like a "new couple."

But the woman does not know if she wants him for life or if she loves him. And she worries that at twenty-seven, she is too old to find another man.

Almost everyone who commented wrote that the Mongolian woman should not let age decide who she marries. Axtue in Hong Kong wrote that twenty-seven is not too old. Axtue said *it would be terrible to marry someone that she does not love*. Another writer, Gaadad Girl from Mongolia, agrees. She wrote, *You are young, obviously educated and I'm guessing you live in the capital, Ulan Bator. Don't worry, more and more city women are waiting later to get married and have kids*. But Lan in Vietnam has a different suggestion: *Tell him what you're thinking about and give each other time to think carefully*.

Several people also wrote to advise a man from Brazil who wants to improve his relationship with his big brother. He says every time they see each other they argue. He says he thinks part of the problem is that he has been very successful in a career. His brother is unemployed. But the writer says he has struggled to give his brother advice about work.

Alex from Russia suggested the little brother may need to change his behavior. He wrote, *I suppose you shouldn't give him any advice how to change his life. He considers you as a little brother and, as you noticed, he is not willing to hear you*.

Veronica Ayala from Brazil made a similar comment. *Maybe you shouldn't give him advice just because he didn't ask*. She suggests spending time together doing things they both enjoy -- like watching sports, or playing a game with the older brother's children.

But she says there one thing the advice seeker must do for his older brother. She writes: *Show and tell him that you love him. We need to know that we are beloved! Perhaps he wants to hear it.*

Finally, we spoke this week to licensed clinical social worker Debby Rubinfeld in the Washington area. We asked her about a problem suggested by a young woman in Russia who claims to be "disappointed in love and guys." She wrote that she is still in love and longing for a boyfriend she had in high school. He did not treat her well and yet she can not forget him. She writes of a "big hole in her soul."

Debby Rubinfeld says this writer's pain is understandable. A person's first love experience is powerful.

DEBBY RUBENFELD: "You are a beautiful writer. I'm sure you do feel disappointed in love and guys, because it sounds like this relationship was with a guy who treated you and saw you as a sexual object. It's a terrible, terrible feeling to be used. And to permit ourselves to be used is also a painful thing to come to understand about oneself. And it's important to explore that a little more, to see what was driving that."

Debby Rubinfeld has a lot more advice for our writer from Russia and another young woman in a similar situation in Brazil. We will continue our talk with the psychotherapist on the program next week.

Until then, please visit our relationship blog at voaspecialenglish.com. Feel free to offer advice or add comments.

You can also send us problems to mosaic@voanews.com. Put "relationship" in the subject line. No need to provide your name but please include your sex, age and country.

The Ting Tings "Sounds from Nowheresville"

JUNE SIMMS: Katie White and Jules de Martino are The Ting Tings. The British group just released its second album -- "Sounds from Nowheresville." Shirley Griffith has more.

SHIRLEY GRIFFITH: Katie White told a reporter that "Sounds from Nowheresville" came from The Ting Tings' desire "to make a record that didn't sound like an album." She and Jules de Martino wanted the album to represent the way most people listen to music now. Rarely, do they play albums, the Ting Tings said. Instead, they listen to individual songs on their MP3 players.

The Ting Tings might listen to a song from the dance band Depeche Mode. The next could be singer Nancy Sinatra. Then, one from the metal band AC/DC.

The first single from "Sounds from Nowheresville" is "Hang it Up."

(MUSIC)

Jules De Martino said The Ting Tings had to get out of England and the influence of Manchester, their home town.

The Ting Tings went to Germany and Spain to record the new album. Jules de Martino says the weather in Berlin helped get the work done. He says the extreme cold kept them inside writing and playing.

He also says they heard a lot of Europop electronic music. You can hear the influence in several songs on "Sounds from Nowheresville," including "Silence."

(MUSIC)

The Ting Tings say they were influenced by music from groups like The Spice Girls and Talking Heads. We leave you with a song from "Sounds From Nowheresville" inspired by the all-girl singing group TLC. Here is "Day to Day."

(MUSIC)

JUNE SIMMS: I'm June Simms. This program was written by and produced by Caty Weaver. Mike O'Sullivan provided additional reporting. Join us again next week for music and more on American Mosaic in VOA Special English.