

NCO Looks to Claim More Gold Medals at Warrior Games

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Some men are born to be famous. Some are born to be businessmen; some scientists, some engineers, astronauts or even rock stars. Sgt. Delvin Maston says he was born to be an athlete, and plans on showcasing his world-class athletic skills during the 2013 Warrior Games this week in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Each year over the course of a week, the games showcase the resilient spirit of close to 200 wounded, ill or injured service members and veterans from all branches of the military. After having overcome significant physical and behavioral health injuries, these men and women come together to demonstrate the power of abilities over disabilities.

Maston has competed in the games during the past two years and has made an impressive showing, claiming three gold medals and one bronze. This year, he has his sights set on adding more gold to his growing trophy case.

“I am here to win a gold medal in every event I’m competing in,” said the Birmingham, Ala., native. “I love winning. A lot of people say it’s not about the medals, but I would be lying if I said that.”

Maston is scheduled to compete in three of the seven events at the games — sitting volleyball, swimming and



Sgt. Delvin Maston, a former infantryman and current adaptive sports representative for the Warrior Transition Command at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, reaches up to set the volleyball for his team during sitting volleyball practice at Iron Horse Gym at Fort Carson, Colo., May 9, 2013. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Brent C. Powell)

wheelchair basketball. In 2011 and 2012, he claimed gold medals in wheelchair basketball and last year, snagged gold in sitting volleyball. He hopes to repeat those victories and add one more during this year’s swimming competition.

His athletic abilities surfaced at a young age, he said. “I have been playing competitive basketball since I was 5 years old,” he said. “Five of the guys that I played with in high school went on to play professionally.”

After high school, his basketball skills continued to grow. He attended Miles College in Birmingham, where he played point guard for their basketball team. After graduating college, he decided to join the Army as an infantryman in 2003.

The war in Iraq had just begun, and it wasn’t long before Maston had his boots on the ground with the 2nd

Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. Over the course of the next several years, Maston spent 47 months on the ground in Iraq in combat operations.

When he wasn't deployed, he continued to pursue his passion of basketball, and he spent a few years playing on the All-Army Basketball Team.

In June of 2009, Maston's life took an unexpected and tragic turn when a vehicle accident claimed his right leg. Though the accident took a part of him away, it did not take his competitive spirit. Approximately 90 days after the accident, he was back in the game.

"It was Labor Day 2009," he recalls. "A friend of mine who I played high school ball with pushed my wheelchair out onto a basketball court and told me to shoot the ball. I missed the whole basket, but he told me to keep shooting. And I have been shooting baskets ever since."

Although basketball is his passion, he seems to excel at every sport he plays. He has played for the Parasport San Antonio Wheelchair Spurs and joined the USA Vol-

leyball high-performance sitting volleyball team as team captain. He also claimed a bronze medal at last year's Warrior Games for his skill in shot put.

Competing in adaptive sports seems to be Maston's calling, and he says it has really helped his healing process.

"This is the best medicine you can get," he said. "It's the biggest stress release you can receive in the best social gathering you can get."

Maston hopes his desire to win will inspire others.

"Hopefully our competitive spirit will rub off on people, not just in competitive sports, but in life," he said. "I want more people to get involved in adaptive sports, and I hope that the Warrior Games helps get the word out to all injured service members."

This will be Maston's last year at the Warrior Games. He says he is ready to let someone else take his place, but he says he's not leaving empty handed.

"I guarantee I'm going home this year with at least two medals." ■



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