



---

## UNH Athletes Go For Paralympic Gold In Vancouver

Media Contact: [Beth Potier](#)  
603-862-1566  
UNH Media Relations

Mar 1, 2010

**Reporters and editors: To request interviews with Paralympic athletes, contact Beth Bourgeois, communications manager for the U.S. Paralympics: [Beth.Bourgeois@usoc.org](mailto:Beth.Bourgeois@usoc.org) or (719) 866-2039.**

---

DURHAM, N.H. – Olympic fever continues through March, as three University of New Hampshire athletes compete in the Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver, March 12 – 21, 2010. The athletes, who trained with UNH's Northeast Passage, are senior Taylor Chace of Hampton Falls, a sled hockey player, and mono-skiers Tyler Walker '08, of Franconia, and Laurie Stephens '07, of Wenham, Mass.

With the addition of sled hockey player Joe Howard of Kingston, Mass., a non-student who trains and competes with the Northeast Passage Wildcats sled hockey team, Northeast Passage claims four of the 50 athletes the U.S. will send to the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. "We're almost our own country," says Tom Carr, director of athlete development at Northeast Passage, a UNH program that delivers recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

Northeast Passage is the only collegiate program in the nation that recruits and develops winter-sports student athletes with disabilities. Like most Northeast Passage participants, Chace, Walker and Stephens began pursuing recreational activities through the organization. "They're now at the pinnacle of their performance," says Carr. "They are the representation of how far you can take this if you choose to."

Chace, who studies kinesiology at UNH, led the U.S. Paralympic sled hockey team to a bronze medal in the 2006 Paralympic Winter Games in Torino, Italy and helped Team USA secure gold medals in the 2009 IPC World Championships in the Czech Republic and the 2010 Japan Para Ice Sledge Hockey Championships. Chace had committed to play hockey for the UNH Wildcats when, while playing for the New Hampshire Junior Monarchs in 2002, he broke his back and sustained an incomplete spinal cord injury. He translated his hockey skills and knowledge to sled hockey with the Northeast Passage/UNH Wildcats, and he was named to the U.S. Paralympics Sled Hockey National Team in 2005.

Mono-skier Laurie Stephens is a veteran of the Torino Games, where she won gold medals in downhill, Super G and giant slalom. A member of the U.S. Adaptive Alpine Skiing Team for seven years, she had seven podium finishes in the 2008 World Cup and in 2005 swept the overall, Super G, giant slalom and slalom titles in World Cup standings. Born with spina bifida, Stephens started skiing at age 12 and competed at Loon Mountain with the

New England Disabled Ski Team before joining the U.S. Adaptive Team in 2004. At UNH, she studied therapeutic recreation.

Tyler Walker, also a mono-skier, won gold medals in the mono-skier cross event in the X Games in 2010 and 2009. He captured his first World Cup win in giant slalom in 2004 and was victorious in 2005 and 2006 World Cups. From Franconia, N.H., Walker began skiing in adaptive programs at Waterville Valley and Loon Mountain, eventually joining the New England Disabled Ski Team at Loon. A spinal birth defect led to the amputation of both legs above the knee when Walker was four years old. At UNH, Walker studied geography and international relations.

"Growing up in Franconia, 10 minutes from Cannon Mountain, skiing was always part of my consciousness. It never occurred to me that I couldn't ski, and fortunately, my parents were willing to see things my way," Walker says in an interview here:

[http://www.unh.edu/unhreport/2007\\_2008/superstars/walker.html](http://www.unh.edu/unhreport/2007_2008/superstars/walker.html)

In addition, UNH sophomore Marlon Shepard, of North Yarmouth, Maine, will attend the Paralympic Winter Games as one of 13 student athletes with a physical disability selected to attend the 2010 Paralympic Experience Vancouver. Shepard, a Nordic skier, has his sights on participating in the 2014 Paralympics Games. The Paralympic Experience offers a very select group of student athletes, a group of six coaches, program leaders and teachers to experience the Paralympic Winter Games firsthand. Participants have the opportunity to meet U.S. Paralympic Team members in addition to attending Opening Ceremonies and competition, gaining an insider's perspective on the Games. .

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

-30-

**Photographs available to download:**

Tyler Walker: [http://www.unh.edu/news/cj\\_nr/2010/feb/bp16para\\_03.jpg](http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2010/feb/bp16para_03.jpg)

Taylor Chace: [http://www.unh.edu/news/cj\\_nr/2010/feb/bp16para\\_02.jpg](http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2010/feb/bp16para_02.jpg)

Laurie Stephens: [http://www.unh.edu/news/cj\\_nr/2010/feb/bp16para\\_01.jpg](http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2010/feb/bp16para_01.jpg)

**Credit: All photographs by Ken Watson.**

**Watch video:**

Taylor Chace: <http://www.vimeo.com/9677221>

Tyler Walker: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLE0s\\_GrI7E&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLE0s_GrI7E&feature=player_embedded)

**Read about UNH's Paralympic athletes and Northeast Passage in UNH Magazine:**

[http://unhmagazine.unh.edu/w10/high\\_hopes.html](http://unhmagazine.unh.edu/w10/high_hopes.html)