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PARALYMPICS

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Paralympians go for the gold in

Record 161 athletes to represent Canada

Oleg Lokmic
The Ottawa Citizen

Kirby Kranabetter's goal is to end his career on the Canadian wheelch gold at the 11th Summer Paralympic Games in Sydney, Australia Oct.

"I would love to be able to bring home a gold medal to my two-year-old year-old Kranabetter, one of a record 161 athletes who will represent (Paralympics ever held.

Canada's team, formally announced yesterday at a news conference as part of a Games that will feature 4,000 athletes from 130 countries. The Paralympics are expected to draw more than one million spectators and a television audience of 50 million. The total budget is \$110 million U.S.

Kranabetter, who has been on the national team since 1995, already has succeeded in his sport. He was a member of the silver medal-winning team at the 1994 Winter Olympic Games four years ago, won silver at the first world championships, in 1996, and captured a bronze at the 1998 worlds in Toronto.

"I was injured in a diving accident in 1984," Kranabetter said. "'I hit the broke my spinal cord.

His legs are paralysed, and he partly use hands and arms.

"I started to play wheelchair rugby as a part of my rehabilitation. And I sport.

"It's a lot like a hockey. It's pretty fast, it has a lot of hard hitting, a lot of just kept playing more and more competitively, and I made it to the national

Paralympics and world champion United States has to be considered the favorite to win the Games, but Kranabetter thinks Canada will also have a lot of other medal contenders.

"In Sydney, teams are all getting very, very close to being equal," he says. "You can be first, second or third place. It just depends on how you perform at the C

"We have a very veteran team, so we have a lot of experience. We've got Hickling, who is one of the top players in the world. Also, we've been playing together for a long time. We've got together five times -- it's much more than we have had a chance to play together before."

we should do very well."

Canada ranked seventh overall at the Atlanta Games with 71 medals, Canada's athletes are considered world leaders in sports such as swim basketball.

The Canadians, who will depart for Sydney on Oct.9, will compete in 1 make up the Games.

Area athletes

The athletes participating in the 11th Paralympic Games from the Otta

Chantal Benoit, Orleans, basketball;

Jeff Christy, Ottawa, goalball;

Rob Christy, Ottawa, goalball;

Kirby Kranabetter, Ottawa, rugby;

Linda Kutrowski, Ottawa, basketball;

Jason Lachance, Gloucester, athletics;

Martin Larocque, Ottawa, rugby;

Joseph Radmore, Kemptville, athletics;

Caitlin Renneson, Gloucester, athletics;

Jacques Bouchard, Gatineau, athletics;

Alec Denys, Aylmer, archery;

Mirane Lanoix-Boyer, Hull, boccia;

Martin Pelletier, Gatineau, table tennis;

Dominique Tremblay, Hull, athletics.

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