



## **Athlete Profile (National)**

### **Brian Anderson – Ready to Roll!**

Brian Anderson has had to adjust to a life missing his legs and his left arm. The 25-year-old Army veteran from Rolling Meadows, Illinois, was driving a Humvee in Iraq when an improvised explosive device turned him into one of only four triple amputees to survive combat wounds in Iraq. However, from his room at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Anderson is far more dauntless than devastated.

“It was pretty basic,” Anderson said. “One minute I was driving down the road. A bomb blows up. The next thing I know I’m lying on the ground.”

However, Anderson didn’t stay lying down very long at all. Less than five months after he was wounded, Anderson had rehabbed enough to go skiing and climb rock walls at the 2006 National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, where he skied the Rocky Mountains using a mono-ski and tried out other adaptive activities.

Now, Anderson will join more than 500 other veterans with disabilities to compete in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games July 3 - 8 in Anchorage, Alaska. With only seven months of rehabilitation, Brian is ready to tackle the challenge of being one of the youngest veterans at the Games and having the least experience in his wheelchair.

“I think I will do O.K.,” Anderson said. “I haven’t really had any time to practice. I’ll just see what happens. The only thing I’m sure of is that I will have fun.”

Anderson is signed up to compete in archery, handcycling and table tennis, a sport in which he excelled before his injuries. He is however, entering the Games with only one true expectation. He is ready to have a little fun.

“I’ve always been involved with sports and I played everything,” Anderson said. “Even if I come in last place in every event, I know I am going to have a great time.”

Anderson will also have the benefit of bringing his own cheering section to the Games, as his best friend and former Army roommate, Steven Crenshaw, will travel from Texas to see Anderson compete. Of course, Anderson knows he will also be able to count on the cheers and encouragement of his fellow wheelchair competitors.

“That’s what I like most about these Games. They are all about having a good time and everyone is in the spirit,” Anderson said. “The people at these events aren’t moping or standing out. They are cheering and pulling each other along. Everybody is there to have a good time – and we do.”