

## Athlete Profile (National)

### Centra Mazyck – Going for the Gold



Like most people, Centra Mazyck does not enjoy having other people stare. She doesn't seem to mind being watched, though, when she's in the throws of competition at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. After all, the onlookers are her fellow veterans and they're all cheering her on to victory.

"I love the Games," said Mazyck, a 31-year-old Army veteran who competes as a paraplegic. "I fit in with everyone and no one is staring at me because of my disability. I've been looking forward to seeing all the friends I haven't seen since last year, playing the sports—and winning gold medals!"

Mazyck is from Columbia, South Carolina, but will travel to Omaha, Nebraska, this July for the Games to participate in weightlifting, softball, javelin, bowling and basketball. Her odds of taking home some medals are good: last year, she earned two golds and two silvers at the Games. This marks Mazyck's fourth year competing.

This spring, she attended the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colorado, with the hope of attaining new skills and making memories. While there, she tackled the slopes of the Rocky Mountains and earned high marks doing it. Mazyck brought home the Disabled American Veterans Freedom Award, given to one veteran each year who makes the most progress during the week of the event. In Colorado, Mazyck displayed both courage and accomplishment through her actions and attitude, thus earning her this special award.

"Participating in the Winter Sports Clinic has increased my confidence and determination, and provided me lots of good memories," Mazyck said. "Staying active is the best thing you can do for your body. God has given us another opportunity to shine, so we should make that happen."

Come July, Centra Mazyck will be ready to go for the gold once again. As she wheels in front of the crowd of onlookers at the 2008 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, she'll have no cause to worry. She knows they are her comrades and they are her biggest fans.