

# National Veterans Wheelchair Games



## Athlete Profile (National)

### Jonathan “Chase” Gean – Try Anything and Everything!

Army veteran Jonathan “Chase” Gean, a 27-year-old veteran from Highlands Ranch, Colorado, served his country for a total of eight years, including duty in South Korea, Germany and 18 months in Iraq. He also served in Afghanistan, where Gean was on patrol in the mountains when his unit was ambushed. During the attack, he was struck in the spine just below his body armor and right elbow. His best friend dragged him to cover and they continued to fight. Gean’s injuries left him paralyzed from the waist down.

“It takes a while to get used to being injured,” Gean said. “I have a pretty good attitude, am 100 percent independent and have my own house.” His positive outlook shines through when he speaks. Gean has always enjoyed history. His goal is to get a degree in secondary education and become a history teacher. Now, he plans to start college in order to reach his goal. “If you know about the past, it helps you prepare for the future,” he said.

This is Gean’s second year competing in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. “I first heard about the Games while I was in the hospital, when someone about my age told me about them,” Gean said.

At the 28<sup>th</sup> Games this year in Omaha, Nebraska, July 25-29, he will be joining more than 500 fellow veterans when he competes in nine-ball, slalom, softball, archery and handcycling. “Last year, the handcycling course was a challenge and I felt good when I finished very well in the event. Since I have been involved in the Games, it has made my life so much better. When I participate, I completely forget about my injury. It is so much fun to hang around with other veterans in wheelchairs, and I wish it was longer than just five days.”

Gean has always enjoyed being active and doing things. “My biggest surprise in participating in the Games was just seeing the number of people in wheelchairs. I have never seen so many people in wheelchairs in one place,” he said.

Chase Gean knows what he would tell newly injured veterans about participating in the Games: “Don’t sit at home and mope around. Get out and do it, because you won’t regret it. My advice to athletes competing for the first time is to try anything and everything you can – it is all a lot of fun.”

