

# A Wheelchair is Not a Handicap

Featuring Eugene Reimer

Athlete Article

**“A wheelchair is not a handicap but rather an opportunity for athletic achievement”.**



International wheelchair games are some of the most intensely competitive events in the world of sport. B.C. athlete Eugene Reimer dominated this field for over a decade. In the late 1960's, when wheelchair sports were in their infancy, Gene took up sport with a passion, for the first time in his life. With only minimal use of his legs since polio had left him a paraplegic at an early age, he soon became one of the province's top all round athletes in the 1970's. Not content with perfecting a single sport, Eugene excelled in a diverse selection: weight-lifting, archery, swimming, basketball, volleyball, and all of the track and field events. Even acrobatics was given a shot.!

From 1968 to his retirement from sports in 1980, Eugene brought home a prolific number of gold, silver, and bronze medals from such prestigious world events as the International Paralympics (held jointly with the Olympic Games every four years) and the Pan Am Wheelchair Games. In addition, he was a perennial winner at the B.C. wheelchair Games and the Canadian National Wheelchair Games. During his twelve year athletic career he amassed over 50 national and 9 international gold medals. Male Athlete of the Year". This was

the first time such a level of recognition had been awarded to an athlete with a disability.

In 1974, Eugene was awarded the Order of Canada medal for his "inspiring example to the disabled" and for the first time in four years, the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame and Museum presented the W.A.C. Bennett in special recognition of his contribution. In 2002, Eugene was inducted in the Terry Fox Hall of Fame. Later that same year the Eugene Reimer Award was established. This award is presented annually and recognizes a British Columbian, who makes an outstanding contribution in the field of sport, recreation, or physical education for persons with disabilities.

On May 2, 2002, Eugene was inducted into the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame. An inspiration to thousands of disabled individuals, Eugene Reimer has proven that a wheelchair is not a handicap, but rather an opportunity for athletic achievement.

