

Research from Cypriot participants of the youth exchange KA152YOU: "Sport and Mental Health: Don't bury your emotions; let it flow." (SPORTY MENTAL)

Summary of Research in Mental Health, inclusion and Sports in Cyprus

The group research carried out by the Cypriot participants of the project focused on three main areas related to inclusive sports:

- 1. Inclusive Sports Teams in Cyprus:** This section looked at sports teams in Cyprus that offer versions of their sports where people with certain disabilities can take part just like able-bodied athletes. These teams make sure that disabled athletes can play in the same way, promoting fairness and inclusion in sports.
- 2. Important People in Disability and Mental Health Sports:** The study also focused on key people who have made a big impact on sports for individuals with disabilities and mental health challenges in Cyprus. These people, whether athletes, coaches, or advocates, have worked hard to make sports more inclusive and accessible to everyone.
- 3. Federation of Inclusive Sports in Cyprus:** The final area looked at the achievements of the federation responsible for promoting inclusive sports in Cyprus. The study likely reviewed the federation's programs and efforts to make sports accessible for all, celebrating its successes and contributions to inclusive sports both nationally and internationally.

This research highlights the progress being made in playing sports in Cyprus more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

What's Happening in Cyprus in Wheelchair Basketball?

In Cyprus, wheelchair basketball is emerging as a powerful tool for social inclusion and the empowerment of individuals with disabilities. Organizations such as Active Planet and initiatives supported by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism are spearheading efforts to promote the sport through comprehensive camps and tournaments, emphasizing physical rehabilitation, psychological support, and community integration. The involvement of educational institutions like the University of Nicosia and corporate entities such as 3on3 Cyprus LTD further underscores Cyprus's commitment to advancing wheelchair basketball. Exhibition games, corporate tournaments, and educational initiatives serve as platforms for raising awareness, fostering community engagement, and breaking down barriers to inclusion. Public figures and institutions, including the Education Minister, have actively participated in wheelchair basketball events, signaling a collective commitment to promoting awareness and acceptance of individuals with disabilities. These efforts reflect Cyprus's growing momentum in wheelchair basketball and underscore the importance of continued investment and support for the sport's sustainable growth. In conclusion, Cyprus has demonstrated commendable progress in embracing wheelchair basketball as a catalyst for social change and inclusivity. To build upon this momentum and propel the sport to new heights, concerted efforts are needed

in grassroots development, public awareness campaigns, facility expansion, and inclusive programming. With steadfast support from both the public and private sectors, coupled with collaborations with educational institutions, Cyprus can ensure the sustained growth and widespread impact of wheelchair basketball, enriching the lives of participants and fostering a more inclusive society.

APOLLON SPORTS CLUB Apollon Limassol FC (Greek: Απόλλων Λεμεσού, Apollon Lemesou) is a Cypriot sports club, based in Limassol. It has football, basketball and volleyball teams. Founded in 1954, Apollon FC currently plays in the Cypriot First Division and has won the championship title four times, the cup nine times and the Super Cup four times. Last 15 years started to work with paraolympic teams with people with disabilities. webpage : <https://apollonclub.com.cy>

Keravnos Strovolou Wheelchair Basketball Team



Keravnos Strovolou, is a team made in 1926, however, it currently also has a wheelchair Basketball team in Cyprus. Keravnos Strovolou Wheelchair Basketball Team is one of the key sports teams in Cyprus dedicated to promoting inclusivity through wheelchair basketball. Based in Strovolos, a suburb of Nicosia, the team is part of the larger sports club, Keravnos Strovolou, which is known for its active involvement in a variety of sports.

The wheelchair basketball team provides an opportunity for individuals with physical disabilities to engage in competitive sports while fostering teamwork, skill development, and social integration. The team plays an important role in Cyprus's efforts to promote adaptive sports and encourage equal participation in sports for people with disabilities.

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As part of the Cyprus Basketball Federation, Keravnos Strovolou competes in local leagues and national tournaments. The team's presence helps raise awareness about the challenges faced by athletes with disabilities and promotes broader acceptance and support for inclusive sports. Through their efforts, they contribute to creating a more inclusive sports culture in Cyprus, offering disabled athletes the chance to excel in a competitive environment.

The team is also part of larger initiatives aimed at developing wheelchair basketball in Cyprus, with support from various local and national sports bodies. (such as the Cypriot Sports Federation with people with disabilities) They serve as a model for how traditional sports clubs can incorporate inclusivity into their programs, offering a platform for athletes with disabilities to train, compete, and inspire others.

Such teams also receive funding and sponsorship. Notably, EAC (the Electrical Authority of Cyprus) in 2022 sponsored the national wheelchair basketball team of Cyprus. During

the event on 9 February 2022 the President of the Cyprus Paraplegics Organisation, Dr. Demetris Lambrianides, thanked EAC for its support of wheelchair basketball and called upon all sports fans to support it in every way they can.

Andis Loppas, Chairman of Alki, the latest club to register a team in the wheelchair basketball championship, stressed that great efforts are being made to ensure that his

team is as prepared as possible within the short time available and he thanked both EAC and the CBF for their support of the sport.



championship.

Sources:

<https://keravnosbc.com/>

<https://www.eac.com.cy/EN/EAC/NewsAndAnnouncements/Pages/iahkdiplasthnkalathosferisi.aspx>

Cyprus Sports Federation for Persons with Disabilities



Games.

The **Cyprus Sports Federation for the Disabled (CSFD)**, known in Greek as **Κυπριακή Ομοσπονδία Ατόμων με Αναπηρίες (KOAA)**, is the main organization in Cyprus that focuses on sports for people with disabilities. Here's a simple overview of what they do:

This organization's goals are -

- **Making Sports Accessible:** They work to ensure that sports facilities and programs are available to athletes with disabilities across Cyprus.
- **Supporting Competition:** They help athletes compete in local and international events, including the **Paralympic**

- **Developing Adaptive Sports:** They promote different sports that can be adapted for people with disabilities, like wheelchair basketball, athletics, swimming, table tennis, and boccia.

The federation organizes various programs, training sessions, and events to encourage participation in sports. They aim to improve athletes' skills and build confidence, fostering a sense of community among participants.

The CSFD also works to raise awareness about the importance of sports for people with disabilities. They advocate for inclusion in sports and promote a positive attitude towards athletes with disabilities in society.

Overall, the Cyprus Sports Federation for the Disabled plays a crucial role in helping individuals with disabilities engage in sports and promoting inclusivity within the community.

Christos Misos – visually impaired archer in Cyprus



Christos Misos is a notable figure in the sports community in Cyprus, recognized for his achievements as a blind archer. He lost his sight at a young age due to a medical condition, but this challenge did not deter him from pursuing his passion for sports. With determination and perseverance, he became one of the first blind archers in Cyprus, demonstrating that individuals with disabilities can excel in competitive environments.

His journey serves as an inspiring example for many who face similar challenges.

Christos has participated in various national archery competitions, earning recognition for his skills and tenacity. His success in these competitions has not only highlighted his talent but also showcased the potential of blind athletes in the sport. Additionally, he has competed in international events, representing Cyprus and demonstrating the capabilities of athletes with disabilities on a global stage. His performances have helped raise awareness about adaptive sports and the importance of inclusivity.



Beyond his accomplishments in archery, Christos is an advocate for disability sports in Cyprus. He actively works to raise awareness about the challenges faced by athletes with disabilities and emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive environments in sports. By sharing his story and experiences, he motivates others to pursue their passions, regardless of physical limitations, and encourages a broader acceptance of adaptive sports in society.



In addition to his advocacy work, Christos engages with the community to promote sports for individuals with disabilities. He participates in events and programs aimed at increasing awareness and participation in adaptive sports, contributing to the development of an inclusive sports culture in Cyprus. His efforts have garnered attention from local media and sports organizations.

Sources:

- Apollon WheelChair Basketball: <https://www.facebook.com/ApollonWBC/>
- Ifaistos Sports Club Wheel Chair Basketball: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Ifestossports-club-100063526855730/>
- NGO ACPELIA: Inclusion of Disalepeople through basketball: <https://incdisbas.webnode.page/outputs/>
- Active Planet: <https://activeplanet.com/en/paralympic-sports/wheelchairbasketball.html> • Cyprus Basketball Federation: <https://www.cbf.basketball/el/page/home>
- OPAP Cyprus: <https://www.opap.org.cy/en/home>
- Cyprus Sports Organisation: <https://cyprussports.org/>
- Hellenic Wheelchair Basketball Federation: <https://oseka.gr/en/federation/history/>
- National Sports Federation of Persons with Disabilities from Greece: <https://www.eaom-amea.gr/portal/omospondia/profil>
- Wheel chair basketball from paralympic games in Greek: <https://www.paralympic.gr/>
- Exercise of people with disabilities in Greece: <https://www.ippokamposamea.gr/askhsh-kai-atlhtismos-se-atoma-me-anaphria/>
- <https://www.worldarchery.sport/profile/23905/misos-christos>
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Christakis Ioannou – leader of Apollon Wheelchair Basketball



Christakis Ioannou is a notable athlete in Cyprus, recognized for his achievements in the sport of wheelchair basketball. After a life-changing accident, he became a wheelchair user, but he did not let this stop him from pursuing his passion for sports. Instead, he embraced the challenge and worked hard to become an accomplished athlete, demonstrating that individuals with disabilities can

excel in competitive sports.

Christakis has played for various wheelchair basketball teams in Cyprus and has represented the country in numerous national and international competitions. His dedication to the sport and his skills on the court have earned him respect among his peers and recognition from the sports community. His journey in wheelchair basketball serves as an inspiration to many, showing that perseverance and determination can lead to success, no matter the obstacles one faces.

In addition to his achievements on the court, Christakis is also an advocate for disability sports in Cyprus. He actively promotes awareness about the importance of inclusivity in sports and works to encourage more people with disabilities to participate in athletic activities. By sharing his story and experiences, he aims to inspire others to pursue their passions and overcome challenges.



Christakis has also taken part in a KA2 project with ACPELIA organization, and was part of "Inclusion of disabled people through basketball". In this project, Christakis and members from ACPELIA and Apollon Wheelchair Basketball team also came to our school Agiou Antoniou to show us the sport.

Sources

<https://inidisbas.webnode.page/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ApollonWBC>