**April 2022 – Beijing Winter Paralympics Special**

**Rae Anderson**

Welcome back from your second Paralympics! How does it feel to now be a dual Paralympian?

Thank you so much! We were away for four months so to be finally home is just amazing and to have it finally sink in that I’m a dual Summer/Winter Paralympian, seventh in Australia and the second female for Australia is just incredible.

What was your favourite part about the Beijing 2022 Winter Paralympics?

Unlike other games where we got to travel around… because of COVID… we couldn’t leave the village. There were still interesting things in the village; we weren't allowed to mingle too much in the dining hall and the rec room like we would in other games. It’s certainly different to a Summer Games, so being on snow and just experiencing that atmosphere was incredible.

What made you switch sports to skiing after competing in Athletics at the 2016 Summer Games?

I started skiing with my family as soon as I could stand. I always loved it and wanted to compete, but it's quite an expensive sport and we live on the Central Coast. I had a chance meeting with the Australian Para head coach at the time for the Winter Paralympic Alpine team. He watched me and said that I had potential to switch to Winter sports. He got me to come down to Jindabyne to do a talent identification camp, where I was one of two scholarship recipients to transition from athletics to alpine, and I finally committed in 2019.

You also recently came back from the ParaMatildas camp, how are things going with fooball?

The camp was so fun! I love the girls, they’re an incredible bunch of athletes and to finally have an opportunity for them to compete for Australia is incredible. I was invited to come to the training camp because I had trained with them in the past at the NSW CP football training days. I was grateful to join them and see how great of a team they are. They're very supportive of each other and have such a great community, and some incredible skills! To be given that opportunity straight after Beijing was a really good way to keep my fitness up and my love of sports.

What is your next sporting goal now that you’ve come back from Beijing?

I think it's too soon to tell, but I'm already missing the snow. I was home for about a week and saw some of my teammates from other countries already back on snow as they are still in their winter season. I was sad to be missing out and really wanted to get back, but I'm going to have to see what this season looks like. It's an expensive sport, and I need sponsors to be able to do another four years to make the next Games. I don't just want to be a competitor, I want to back up the medals that I had in the Northern American season and hopefully take that a bit further to a World Cup or Paralympics.

What is your proudest sporting moment or achievement?

I think making my first senior competition for the Commonwealth Games was quite special, and being a part of that team with the able-bodied athletes was incredible. But this was a hard two years. I didn't expect winter sports to be as hard as it is. You're away from family most of the year, we spend the Winter in Jindabyne then the Summer in Europe and America. I didn’t think I was going to qualify for these games and especially not finish in the top ten in both my events, seventh in slalom specifically. That is an incredible testament to everyone supporting me, on the Central Coast and my extended families at CPSARA and DSA. Becoming a dual Paralympian is certainly up there with my proudest sporting moments.

What sports have you previously participated in and with which clubs?

In athletics, I used to compete for Mingara athletics and with skiing when I’m not competing for Australia, I compete for the Sydney University Club and do a bit of athletics on the side. My main sports growing up through school were mostly team sports. I played soccer for school and my local club Terrigal-Wamberal football club, as well as basketball, hockey, oztag, anything! And a little bit of sailing on the side to keep me active!

You mentioned you are competing for Sydney Uni, are you currently studying with them?

I am, I took this semester off since we were overseas for such a long time at the Games, so I’ll have this period off and go back to focusing on work and a few other projects, then head back in July/August. I'm studying a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Indonesian and Asian studies, with a focus on looking at getting involved in the Department of Foreign Affairs and becoming an ambassador for Australia to foreign countries in Southeast Asia.

What are your educational or work goals?

I would like to finish University and add a Masters on to that in marketing or politics. I'd also love to have doctor in front of my name, maybe a doctorate in Asian studies to go on to work in Government or non-profit organisations like CPSARA. With work, I’d like to continue what we do with CPSARA and Disability Sports Australia and encourage as many people as possible with disabilities in sport. I didn't realise the opportunities I had in Para sports until a later age, so I'd like to see that age become younger and have sport more available whether that's through marketing or social media. And I think having you on board Tamsin, we’re definitely hitting that social media mark. So hopefully, we can have some more amazing days like we did with the CPSARA connect and see more little kids progressing through maybe even Paralympic pathways.

Do you have any other interesting facts about yourself that you would like to share?

I have a yacht, which I’m planning on living on. Also, my second language is Indonesian.