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PARAVAN customers go to the Paralympics in Paris

Boris Nicolai, Anita Raguwaran, Josia Topf and Jana Spiegel have one thing in common: they are top athletes and all have a ticket for the Paralympics in Paris from August 28 to September 8. They are top athletes in their field: Boris Nicolai and Anita Raguwaran in para-boccia, Josia Topf in swimming and Jana Spiegel in table tennis. For two of them, this is not their first Paralympic Games. But for all of them, without independent mobility and the independence that comes with it, such top sporting performances would hardly be possible.



From top left Boris Nicolai, Jana Spiegel, Josia Topf and Anita Raguwaran will take part in the Paralympics in Paris. Mobility plays a key role on the way to Olympic qualification and top sporting performance. Collage: PARAVAN, Photo: Hannes Doessler (Jana Spiegel)

"I think for every athlete, the Olympics or the Paralympics is the goal you work towards. You give it your all," says Anita Raguwaran, para-boccia player and member of the Saarland team for Paris and representative of many others. This is her first time taking part. The radiology assistant qualified via the pair in Portugal at the beginning of 2024. Since 2020, she has been driving a Peugeot Traveller with the Space Drive driving and steering system, with two joysticks for accelerator, brake and steering, allowing her to practice her profession and sport without assistance. It was difficult for the Saarland native to take part in sport when she was young, and boccia opened up the world of sport to her in 2015, first as a hobby and later as a competitive sport. "I want to be a role model and show that anyone can do sport!"

This is the second time Boris Nicolai and Josia Topf have taken part in the Paralympics. "This time, friends and family will be there," says the para-boccia player, who is also competing for Team Saarland. "The atmosphere in Paris will be completely different," he says confidently. Swimmer Josia Topf is also looking forward to it. "The hall in Tokyo was almost empty because of the coronavirus restrictions," he recalls. In Paris, he will be competing in the freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke over various distances. His coaches, swimming colleagues, friends and family will also be accompanying him this time. "That's fantastic."

Before the Paralympics, an intensive preparation and training phase is on the agenda for all participants. "As well as training almost every day, we have lots of training courses," reports Jana Spiegel. The para-table tennis player will be competing in singles, doubles and mixed doubles in Paris and was able to qualify through good placings in international tournaments via the world rankings. She only got into table tennis four years ago

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through an inclusive training day in Stuttgart. "Thanks to my car, I can drive to training and competitions independently. Without it, a lot of things would not be possible or would be difficult," reports the medical technology student. This is because she is currently dependent on assistance due to a progressive illness, as she needs help getting in and out of the car. But a new car is being planned. "If everything works out, I hope to be able to drive to training independently again soon," she reports. After the preparatory course at the national base in Düsseldorf, she will be heading to Paris. "I want to get my maximum performance there and see what's possible.

Josia's current program includes intensive swimming training in preparation. "I train eight times an hour and a half in the water and seven times a week with weights," he reports. "Of course, I also have to prepare mentally for the competitions. The "Sportsman of the Year" has been swimming actively in his home town of Erlangen since he was six years old and has now broken several world records in his starting class. Josia already swam his qualifying times in competition in November 2023. He drives to training in his own customized vehicle. "This allows me to act individually, especially when it comes to my training. I've become a lot more independent," reports the 21-year-old student. Josia is now hoping to stand at the top of the podium in Paris.

The para-boccia players Boris and Anita are at pre-camp in Saarbrücken to prepare. There they will train with a player who has already won gold in Tokyo, which is particularly important for their preparation. Boris had already qualified last year via the world rankings. Self-determined mobility is what makes sport at this level possible, says Boris. "My adapted Ford is extremely important and necessary for my daily training." Also so that he can transport his equipment, competition wheelchair or equipment. Because in everyday life he drives a Paravan PR50. Boris has been driving a car since 2003 and 280,000 kilometers, with Space Drive and two joysticks since 2007. He trains at various sports venues. "I have to be flexible." Anita feels the same way: "My car allows me to be more flexible and get from A to B quickly. With public transport, I wouldn't be able to plan my day at all and I'd have to miss out on a lot," she says. The two have big goals for the Olympics. They want to show their best boccia in Paris. "Reaching the quarter-finals or more would be great," says Boris. Anita is also hoping to make it into the top eight.

However, the four athletes will be traveling to Paris by team bus or public transport. "It's a long journey," says Josia Topf. Especially before important sporting competitions or high physical exertion, he wants to be optimally prepared and not sit for too long. In addition, parking options are limited, so traveling by team bus or public transport is the better solution in this case. The PARAVAN team wishes all participants every success.

Further information about the athletes and the Paralympics can be found at <https://www.teamdeutschland-paralympics.de/>



From top left Anita Raguwaran, Josia Topf, Jana Spiegel and Boris Nicolai will take part in the Paralympics in Paris. Self-determined mobility plays a key role on the way to Olympic qualification and top sporting performance. Collage: PARAVAN



Anita Raguwaran and Boris Nicolai take part in the Para-Boccia competitions in Paria. The PARAVAN customers have been on the road for many years with a Ford Tourneo Connect (Boris) and a Peugeot Traveller. Both drive with the help of the Space Drive driving and steering system and two 2-way joysticks for accelerator, brake and steering. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ad2OX6gdt4/>



Josia Topf is a successful swimmer who has already competed in Tokyo. To manage his everyday life between training and university, he drives a BMW 118d. Thanks to Space Drive, he also steers his vehicle with two 2-way joysticks, Foto: Privat/ PARAVAN <https://www.josia-topf.com/>



Jana Spegel has been an active para-table tennis player for four years and has now taken part in numerous international competitions. She was runner-up in the German championships in 2021 and came 3rd in the European Championships a year later. Competitive sport would not be possible for the student without a car. She is currently waiting for her new vehicle, which will be equipped with Space Drive and joysticks. [Jana Spegel | Team Deutschland Paralympics \(teamdeutschland-paralympics.de\)](https://www.teamdeutschland-paralympics.de), Foto: Hannes Doessler

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About Paravan GmbH:

PARAVAN GmbH is the global market leader in customized vehicle solutions for the disabled people. About 160 employees at the Pfrontstetten Aichelau and Heidelberg sites develop and produce customized vehicle conversions, electric wheelchairs and even specialized driver training. PARAVAN pursues a holistic approach with its "one-stop shop" concept. The technological highlight is Space Drive, an intelligent digital control system based on the drive-by-wire principle. Thanks to the active redundancy of the servo motors, it is completely fail-safe and the first to be approved for road use. This innovation enables severely disabled people, some of whom have no arms or legs, to drive independently and safely. It is not possible for these drivers to simply take control of the steering wheel. Over the past 20 years, Space Drive has been proven on more than one billion kilometers of roads worldwide and is used by numerous industrial customers for test vehicles in the field of autonomous driving. The system is available as a retrofit kit with an open interface for all known vehicle types. www.paravan.com