



YEAR IN REVIEW

2021





River City Slam Photo (c) Brian McWalters

SLAMMING SUCCESS

Sportable made national headlines this summer thanks to the overwhelming success of the first annual River City Slam wheelchair tennis tournament presented by the Abstract Athlete. Players from across the country were eager to get back on the courts to compete and the event exceeded expectations with 56 wheelchair tennis players converging in Richmond in June to play at Collegiate's Williams-Bollettieri Tennis Center.

The River City Slam also kicked off the newly launched USTA Junior Wheelchair Tennis Tournament Series, a group of na-

tionally-ranked tournaments focused on providing level-based play opportunities for junior wheelchair players. Since our tournament, four of the fourteen junior wheelchair tennis players were invited as first-timers to join Team USA to compete in the World Team Cup junior division in Sardinia, including 14-year old Maylee Phelps (pictured above) and number one-ranked Charlie Cooper (13).

During the River City Slam, junior players were also treated to one-of-a-kind Juniors Wheelchair Tennis Camp, led by Paralympian Shelby Baron and presented by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation. With a goal of growing the sport, the three-day camp focused on teamwork and individual skill develop-

ment from beginner to advanced. Several players aspire to play wheelchair tennis in college and even compete in the Paralympics for Team USA. Those goals are not out of reach for these teens—if they continue to have access to the sport.

One of the fastest growing wheelchair sports in the world, wheelchair tennis is played on a standard tennis court in the same way as able-bodied tennis, with the only exception being that a wheelchair tennis player is allowed two bounces of the ball.

The River City Slam is slated to return to the Collegiate School's Robins Campus June 11-12, 2022.



WE RAN, RODE, AND ROLLED

Sportable kicked off a new fiscal year with the first-ever Sportable Stampede 5K presented by Rybec Insurance in May, raising more than \$50,000 to benefit adaptive sports in Richmond.

Over 100 participants completed the 5K "their way" by running, walking, pushing, or rowing a successful 3.1 miles throughout the month of May.

The fundraising campaign, "Let's 5K for \$10K", included a peer-to-peer fundraiser sparked by a \$10,000

matching challenge from Sportable athlete Bill Sweeney and his wife Cynthia Schmitz that empowered supporters to become advocates for individuals with physical disabilities and visual impairments.

Sportable Executive Director Hunter Leemon took his fundraiser a step further by celebrating his birthday with a 60-mile bike ride and donating 14 inches of pandemic hair to Wigs for Kids.

The inaugural Sportable Stampede 5K raised critical funds to support Sportable's mission of making sports accessible in RVA.



JOSH BURCH and the Sportable Possums wheelchair rugby team returned to competition in September after a nearly two-year hiatus.

“What draws me to wheelchair rugby is the adrenaline rush and the camaraderie. Before my injury, I was really active. I was in the Marine Corps for three years. Since I found Sportable, it has improved my quality of life. Having the opportunity to play sports and be good at them is something I greatly appreciate.”

DANICA KING admits she became depressed when she first received her multiple sclerosis diagnosis in 2010. Since then, she has authored a book and plays multiple sports with Sportable.

“Whatever your disability is, Sportable can accommodate you with both their equipment and their awesome volunteers. [With adaptive sports], you find a sense of pride and belonging while expanding your horizons.”



LELIA GRAHAM credits Sportable for giving her opportunities that she did not have as a young lady growing up with a degenerative neuromuscular disease.

“I don’t know where I would be if Sportable didn’t come into my life. Most of my youth was spent doing physical therapy while everyone else was in gym class. Having access now to sports and the camaraderie is something I never had before. It has taught me how to use my body in a way that I’d never thought I would be able to and be more confident.”



In October, **TYLER BERRY**, a Sportable wheelchair basketball player since the age of seven, committed to Southwest Minnesota State University to play collegiate wheelchair basketball. Tyler’s love for all things basketball has resulted in an almost encyclopedic knowledge of NBA history and stats. Being able to play the sport with Sportable has been truly life-changing.

“Sportable has given me the opportunity to play sports and helped me accomplish my dream to play college basketball.”



Photo: Leigh Sewell, Kristin Lessig-Schenerlein, and Amy Wilkinson

10 YEARS OF TAILGATES

Sportable celebrated 10 years of Tailgates with the most successful fundraiser in the organization’s history. Made possible by generous supporters who pledged \$35,000 in matching challenges, as well as 280 individual donors and 19 corporate sponsors, the 10th Anniversary Sportable Tailgate raised over \$180,000. The critical funding ensures that people with disabilities have the same opportunities to participate in the life-changing benefits of sport.

More than a dozen do-it-yourself Tailgate events took place throughout the region from September 17 through October 3. Events included a Sportable Athlete Tailgate presented by Hourigan, an Associate Board Oktoberfest, a cookout for patients and staff at Sheltering Arms Institute, neighborhood block parties, and a pop-up boot camp tailgate, before commemorating the first-ever Tailgate held in 2012 with a celebration at the home of some of Sportable’s long-time supporters.



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BY THE NUMBERS



2564
ATHLETE EXPERIENCES



4692  PROGRAM HOURS

276 
VOLUNTEERS GAVE 2691 HOURS

105  **NEW**
ATHLETES

97%
OF ATHLETES SAY THEY COULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS WITHOUT SPORTABLE



347 
UNIQUE ATHLETES

21 
PROGRAMS

673 
INDIVIDUAL DONORS

96% 
SAID PARTICIPATING IN SPORTABLE PROGRAMS HAD IMPROVED THEIR OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE

100% 
OF SPORTABLE ATHLETES WOULD RECOMMEND THE ORGANIZATION'S ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAMS TO OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

2021 AWARD WINNERS

Athlete of the Year:	Grace Ross
Youth Athlete of the Year:	Jack Ridolphi
Veteran of the Year:	Jessie Oliff
Event of the Year:	River City Slam
Rookie of the Year:	Eleanor Angle
Volunteer of the Year:	Spencer West
Donor of the Year:	Franklin and Jane Berry
Community Partner of the Year:	Chesterfield County Parks & Recreation
Corporate Partner of the Year:	Rybec Insurance
Spirit Award:	Crystal Jordan
Coaches of the Year:	Blaire Chandler and Sarah Nockengost
Collegiate Athlete of the Year:	Jakob Gorton

To support Sportable through mail or online:
1365 Overbrook Rd
Suite 2
Richmond, VA 23220
Sportable.org/donate
For more information, contact Cindy Schmitt at cindy@sportable.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

RIVER CITY CLASSIC

The River City Classic wheelchair basketball tournament returns March 11-12, 2022 at RockIt Sports. Featuring the Sportable Rim Riders and teams from throughout the east coast, the River City Classic is the ideal opportunity to see Sportable's mission in motion.



RVA ADAPTIVE SPORTS FESTIVAL

The RVA Adaptive Sports Festival will be held on March 26, 2022. The one-of-a-kind event is designed to introduce more than a dozen adaptive sports to individuals with physical disabilities and visual impairments.

WAYNE SAMFORD MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 8th Annual Wayne Samford Memorial Golf Tournament will take place May 16, 2022 at Hunting Hawk Golf Club.

JOIN OUR BOOSTER CLUB



Grandparents to Sportable athlete Tyler Berry, Franklin and Jane Berry have been making monthly gifts to the organization for almost 10 years! Their sustaining gifts ensure that adaptive sports remain accessible for individuals like Tyler. The Sportable Booster Club is our new giving club to encourage recurring giving and recognize donors who give monthly.