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Wheelchair Racing: Jacob Heilveil Coaches Bolder Boulder EXPAND Team

by Misty Fauchoux

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Wheelchair racing participants are going to be up early for Colorado's 2010 [Bolder Boulder](#) 10K race on Memorial Day, May 31st. With about 40,000 racers of all abilities, the Bolder Boulder is one of the largest races in the state and attracts runners and rollers from around the country. This year, wheelchair racers will hear the starting gun at 7 a.m.

EXPAND's Jacob Heilveil

No one knows what that's like better than [Jacob Heilveil](#), three-time Paralympic wheelchair racer and coach for the City of Boulder Parks and Recreation [EXPAND program](#). EXPAND provides support and mentoring opportunities to people with disabilities, who can choose from a wide variety of [wheelchair sports](#). Heilveil has been prepping the six EXPAND wheelchair racers with twice-weekly practices.

Heilveil's main training philosophy is to ensure that his participants are having fun. He wants his athletes to set their own goals and try to reach those goals, whether that means just participating in the Bolder Boulder, or winning the 6.2 mile race.

"They inspire me," said Heilveil. "They motivate me to help them and help them live life to the fullest."

Amputee Denny Gordon Returns to Wheelchair Racing

One of those athletes is Vietnam veteran Denny Gordon. Gordon is an amputee who has recently gotten back into [wheelchair racing](#). He spent two decades on the wheelchair racing circuit, but then took a break a few years ago. The Bolder Boulder will be one of the first wheelchair races that he has done in several years.

"It's a great sport," said Gordon. "Wheelchair racing is pure racing."

Gordon races using an Eagle Sports [racing wheelchair](#) and does upper-body strength training to prepare for the race. He has no pre-race eating regimen since he's "usually so nervous" that he can't eat anything. To prepare for a race like the Bolder Boulder, Gordon emphasized the need to do a "hard workout once or twice a week". If you are planning on doing a 5K marathon, practice doing a 10K to prepare, he recommends.

Gordon's racing philosophy has changed from his early wheelchair racing years.

"I'm going to key on individuals in my class," Gordon says. "I've gotten slow lately."

He's been watching the progress of a young woman in his class while he's been training. So, Gordon just plans on "keeping this young lady in sight and try to hang in there with her." Basically, he wants to "find someone that I can beat and stay with them".

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