

Paralympics athletes



Kari Miller

Kari Miller was serving in active military duty, getting ready for officer training school, when a drunk driver smashed into the car she was traveling in. The driver of her car was killed. **Kari** survived, but lost both her legs in the crash, one amputated above the knee, one below.

As she recovered, **Miller** first competed in wheelchair basketball, then discovering sitting volleyball. It was an intense experience: the first ball came at her "like it had smoke and fire shooting from it. I just screamed and dove out of the way," she says. "My coach immediately informed me that there is no screaming in volleyball!"



Life time achievements

- **Miller** joined the U.S. Paralympics Women's Sitting Volleyball National Team in 2006, and two years later helped the team earn a silver medal in the Beijing Games.
- The awards have continued since: **Miller** served as a starter for Team USA when they took the silver medal at the 2010 Sitting Volleyball World Championships, and that year she was ranked No. 1 libero in the world.

"You can see the hope come back," **Miller** said. "It's easy for a doctor to say it, but for someone to actually see it in someone like me, it makes a difference."





Rudy Garcia Tolson

- **Garcia-Tolson**, now 23, was born with Pterygium Syndrome, a condition that produces disabilities in the legs, hands, and face. At the age of five, when more than a dozen surgeries could not correct the problems with his legs, he and his family decided on amputations. Rudy says, "I always had kids and other people telling me that I couldn't do things. For me, that's what motivates me, fuels me. I want to go out and prove them wrong."



Life time achievements

- The result has been more than twenty medals in both swimming and track, including two golds and a bronze at the Paralympics in 2004 and 2008; a gold and a bronze at the IPC swimming World Championships in 2010; and a gold, two silvers, and a bronze at the 2011 Pan Pacific Championships.
- Swimming is his focus, now. "Only the craziest of the craziest decide to be swimmers," **Garcia-Tolson** has said. "You wake up 5 a.m. and put in three to four miles in the pool even before the sun comes up; then you put in the time in the weight room and do it all over again the next day. The mental toughness and preparation it takes to become a world-class swimmer is something that only a handful of people have in this world."

One video...

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgRrHkCJZmE>
- Everything is possible as long as you believe in it...
- Konstantina Machaira