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# UIPM PARA SPORTS: A YEAR OF HIGHS AND LOWS FOR TEEN TRAILBLAZER BRIAN DOUGLAS (USA)



In July 2019, UIPM News told the story of Brian Douglas, a double amputee who had become a trailblazer for the UIPM Para Sports movement and competed in the US Pentathlon National Championships at Youth A (Under 19) level and also took part in the senior competition.

Twelve months on, we catch up with Brian, now 16 and still fully committed to the unique journey he is undertaking within UIPM Para Sports.

**Q: What kind of training have you been doing since summer 2019?**

A: After the Pentathlon Nationals in the summer of 2019 I went straight back to swimming and progressed a lot in my 200m freestyle (dropped five seconds). I also worked on my endurance for

running by increasing my daily run distance. Most importantly I have worked on my fencing technique a lot with a local pentathlete.

In late November going into December I decided to try something new, so I started wrestling. I was doing pretty well and my overall stamina was increasing exponentially; unfortunately I sustained a season-ending injury that cut into a lot of my summer training as I'm just now recovering and starting to train again.

I tore my deltoid and misplace my labrum in the first match of the district tournament. I've got a ton of ground to make up as far as training goes, but I'm looking forward to getting back to intense training this fall.



**Q: What's worked best and what's been the most challenging?**

A: By far the most challenging thing for me has been trying to get my right shoulder back up to full range of motion and strength. I haven't really been able to fence or shoot anywhere near my best ability but it shouldn't be much longer until my shoulder is fully recovered and I can compete to the best of my ability and practice with high intensity.

The easiest and by far the most enjoyable things have been running and studying prosthetics. Running had allowed me to stay in some kind of shape and prosthetics have allowed me keep my mental shape up. I just got a new, better-fitting socket and I have officially started shadowing for prosthetics so I look forward to much more of that this summer and fall.



**Q: What's it been like working with Genadijus Sokovolas, USA Pentathlon High Performance Director?**

A: Working with G has been awesome to say the least. He has opened my eyes to a world of technique that I had no idea mattered. He's also shown me a plethora of exercises that have helped me progress a lot even through the quarantine and my injury.

Working with G is kind of like working with a walking technique encyclopedia – he's able to spot errors in my technique (in every aspect of Pentathlon) that I wouldn't see even if I spent days watching my film.



**Q: How have you managed to get through the COVID-19 Coronavirus lockdown?**

A: The most important thing for me has been to keep my mind occupied. After my junior year of high school (not to brag but I finished with a 4.8 Grade Point Average and straight As) I found myself with nothing to occupy my mind, so I picked up reading for fun and that's been very fulfilling.

Along with keeping my mind occupied, I had to find something to keep my body occupied as I was injured and I couldn't go to the pool because of the lockdown, so I began running a lot more. I'm averaging four miles a day, which isn't a lot but it's more than what I was doing during swim and wrestling season.

I'm really looking forward to life after this lockdown like getting back to high-intensity training and being able to hang out with my friends.

