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Braedon’s love of sport sees the NDIS participant represent Australia for the second time in the Invictus Games in The Hague, Netherlands this month.

The 25-year-old – who is a right transfemoral amputee after a car accident six years go – will be competing in wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby and sitting volleyball in the international sporting event for wounded, injured and ill military personnel, both serving and veterans from April 16-22.

More than 500 participants from 20 countries participate in 10 adaptive sports, with Australia fielding a team of 32 for the Games; Braedon is one of two Queensland NDIS participants taking part.

The former Royal Australian Navy Able Seaman was encouraged to give Invictus Games a go shortly after his accident as he learnt to adjust to his new life.

“I guess you could say I was in a bit of a deep hole, when I first lost my leg and didn't really want to be doing much of anything,” Braedon said.

“I came out to their trial camps and went through the testing to try out the sports, then they have a selection camp, then you get put into a team for those sports and you go from there.”

Though he is playing in three sports, Braedon is a particular fan of rugby.

“It’s a lot more straightforward of a game; you pretty much just smash everybody as hard as you can and get the ball across the line,” he said.

“Last time we were completely undefeated throughout the entire competition. We had a really good scrap against the UK and it was such an exciting game, right through the gold medal matches was amazing.”

When Braedon played in his first Invictus Games in 2018, team training camps were held every month; however this time, due to COVID and the recent flood events, he had only had two training sessions in almost three years.

“I’m the only member that's played rugby before on the team, as everybody else is brand new,” Braedon said.

“For basketball, we've got a couple of retainers. And then for volleyball, that will be our strongest team because we've had a couple of people, about half, play before.

“A couple of people have been getting involved in local sport, whenever that's been able to be played. So it's certainly been challenging to get everybody training and participating together.”

Braedon is heavily involved in local sports, playing in Brisbane and Sunshine Coast rugby sides, seniors basketball, rugby league and coaching a junior Sporting Wheelies basketball team in Carina.

“It's very much grassroots. We have everybody coming out from the age of four, up to like, 70 plus,” he said.

“(We can teach) anything from strength and mobility, to actually push a wheelchair to catching and throwing, playing as a team, strategy, positioning, stuff like that.

“I’m not doing this for any other reason than to give these kids the opportunities to play sport.”

Invictus Games competitors can only compete in two Games, but Braedon is hopeful he can still play a part and become its rugby coach in years to come.

Braedon received assistance to implement his NDIS funding from Carers Queensland’s NDIS Local Area Coordination Partner in the Community Program for the Brisbane region.

“Having the NDIS has been really good; having those supports… takes a bit of weight off my partner’s shoulders and makes me feel a little bit like I'm doing my fair share,” he said.

Braedon said he is looking forward to finding out more about how to best utilise his NDIS plan in the future, including self-managing his plan.

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