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MEDIA ALERT from BRIDGE II SPORTS

Paralympian, Veteran and Inspirational Speaker John Register takes the 'virtual stage' at Bridge II Sports' Virtual Valor Games SE Opening Ceremony May 18

DURHAM, N.C. —

In what would have been the 8th Valor Games Southeast (VGSE) scheduled for May 18 - 21, non-profit organization Bridge II Sports (BIIS) was planning to host 135 Veterans with disabilities from 20 states and every branch of service for 3 days of spirited adapted sports competition. Over four hundred local volunteers were gearing up to join in support as well from several organizations including presenting sponsors MetLife and Cisco.

Due to the realities of COVID-19 this beloved annual event was canceled in early April. Seeing the need to keep Veteran athletes engaged during this time, event organizers from BIIS are celebrating the 'week that would have been' with Virtual Valor Games SE 2020. (www.bridge2sports.org/virtualvgse/)

"When you live with a disability, you are constantly told that you can't do certain things," says Ashley Thomas, Founder and CEO of Bridge II Sports and Developer of Valor Games SE. "The vision of VGSE has always been to challenge that perception and redefine disability through the power of sport, competition and camaraderie. Even though we can't be together this year we are excited to keep the spirit of the games alive and connect to our athletes and the community in the best way we can right now."

With thanks to Cisco and their WebEx platform, Bridge II Sports has scheduled a series of virtual events May 18 – 21 including Opening and Closing Ceremonies, a Resource Fair of webinars with expert panelists on a range of Veteran related topics, evening 'hangouts' and even a virtual challenge for athletes to complete.

A highlight of the week will be Opening Ceremony on May 18th at 6pm featuring: Paralympic Medalist, Gulf War Veteran, and Inspirational Speaker [John Register](#)

An accomplished collegiate track star and Army World Class athlete Mr. Register was destined to compete on the U.S. Olympic team at the 1996 games before a misstep on the hurdles in 1994 altered the course of his life. His injury resulted in a left leg above the knee amputation. After only 18 months of rehabilitation he qualified for the 1996 Paralympic Games in swimming and went on to earn 2 silver medals in track events at the 2000 games.

Mr. Register has been instrumental in the Paralympic movement and advocating for adapted sports especially for Veterans with disabilities. Through TEDx Talks, keynote addresses, and his podcast and video series, Mr. Register has inspired countless people with the messages of overcoming limits and embracing 'The New Normal'. His new book [10 Power Stories to Impact Any Leader: Journal Your Way to Leadership Success](#) will be available on Amazon May 17th.

Valor Games SE is honored to have Mr. Register joining from his home in Colorado Springs to share his story and insights.

Details and registration for all Virtual VGSE2020 events, including the Opening Ceremony, are available at: www.bridge2sports.org/virtualvgse/

All events, except for evening hangouts, are open to the general public and ALL are encouraged to attend.

Event organizers at Bridge II Sports are working in collaboration with presenting sponsors MetLife and Cisco to plan a weekend adapted sports event for Veterans with disabilities in mid-September.

About Valor Games Southeast:

Since 2013, Valor Games Southeast has invited Veterans and members of the Armed Forces from the eastern half of the United States to the Triangle area of North Carolina for 3 days of competition at some of the most iconic sports venues in the country. Entry level and intermediate competitions in a range of adapted sports—including cycling, power-lifting, archery, boccia, indoor rowing, sitting volleyball, air rifle, table tennis, shot-put, wheelchair basketball and kayaking—take place at the Dean Smith Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Cameron Indoor Stadium and K-ville at Duke University and Lake Crabtree County Park.

About Bridge II Sports

Bridge II Sports is a North Carolina non-profit organization dedicated to developing and implementing opportunities for children and adults with physical disabilities to realize their potential through sports participation. Through sports programming, special events, awareness initiatives and team development, Bridge II Sports aims to empower persons with physical disabilities to “Find the Player Within” and challenge perceptions of disability. For more information about Bridge II Sports visit www.bridge2sports.org

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