

Team Toyota's Ezra Frech on Believing in Mobility for All

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While U.S. Paralympian Ezra Frech may be the newest member of Team Toyota, he's long been a champion of mobility for all. Born with congenital limb differences, Frech has been a disability advocate since he was four years old.

"I truly believe mobility is a human right," Frech says. "What I think is so cool about the idea of mobility is how it presents itself in each person in such a different way, particularly in the Paralympic community."

Frech, who competed in the Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, typically competes in high jump, long jump and sprinting events. Together with his family, the young Paralympian has spent his athletic career working to normalize disability.

"Growing up, I didn't have someone with a disability I could look to in the mainstream media, so I want to be a figure like that for the next generation," he says.

The Los Angeles native co-founded Angel City Sports and the Angel City Games, an annual, multi-sport competition with events in more than 11 adaptive sports, open to athletes across the nation. Angel City Sports provides free year-round adaptive sports opportunities for kids, adults and veterans who have physical disabilities or visual impairments.

"Mobility is important because for me personally, without modern technology, I would be on crutches, hopping around on one foot," he says. "I'd have no way to move in the way I do now. It's because of the technological advancements made over the years that I'm even able to compete for the U.S. Paralympic Team."

Starting His Impossible

Frech was born missing his left knee and fibula as well as the fingers on his left hand. The U.S. Paralympian received his first prosthetic leg as soon as he started pulling himself up to stand, before having surgery as a toddler to remove the lower leg. After receiving his first running leg at four, he jumped right into the world of sports.

Frech grew up playing soccer, basketball and flag football, before committing to track and field. He's always felt that the things he set out to accomplish were against the odds: At 11, he told everyone who would listen that he was going to compete in the Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

"The chances of that happening were unbelievably low," Frech says. "But I put it out there. I worked and sacrificed and put all my resources in place to try to make that happen. And it occurred because I started my own impossible."

Frech went on to qualify for the Tokyo Games, finishing fifth in the high jump and eighth in the long jump. The young athlete believes in setting high goals, and then doing everything in his power to make them happen — in athletics and beyond.

"I truly believe there is something beautiful about going after a dream that is so unrealistic and so unlikely and making it happen," he says. "I believe the way to accomplish that is literally by starting your impossible, starting that journey, and taking the first step in that direction."

Paralympic Movement

And that ambition extends beyond his personal athletic career. Frech says he has big ideas for the Paralympic Games as a whole, and he sees a lot of potential as a part of Team Toyota to build disability awareness and understanding around the Paralympic Games.

“This idea of growing the Paralympic movement, expanding awareness, normalizing disability on a national and international scale is something that’s so aligned with the Toyota vision,” he says. “When I look for a partner, it’s a company that in the long term believes in the Paralympic Games, believes in the stories, believes in the sport and the community — the way Toyota does.”

For now, Frech is focused on training. After finishing high school this year, the 17-year-old plans to take a gap year. With there being so many major competitions on the horizon, including the World Championships next spring and Paralympic Games Paris 2024, his family made the decision to delay admission so he can train without cutting into his college experience.

In addition, Frech has been working through an Achilles injury that cut his season short and impacted his college recruiting process. Throughout his recovery, he’s turned to fellow Team Toyota athlete Jarryd Wallace, who has dealt with similar injuries. While track and field can be a bit of a solo sport, the structure of Team Toyota provides support and mentorship for younger athletes like Frech.

“I’ve always been a team sport guy,” he says. “I love that camaraderie of being able to relate to others who are in the same position. One of the blessings of being on a team is this continuous push of motivation and inspiring your teammates to work harder and do more.”