



"Let 'Em Play"

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Scott Marshutz sheds light on his first film "Let 'Em Play", an inspiring story of four remarkable para athletes



Scott Marshutz is a debut filmmaker with a passion for storytelling. He pulled together his resources to capture the stories of four para athletes who were given the opportunity to excel in track and field after the state of California adopted rules for disabled high school athletes and then followed the athletes as they advanced into the high-stakes world of international Paralympic competition. "Let 'Em Play" is an informative and touching documentary. Here is my Q and A with the film's producer, Scott Marshutz.

Q & A with Scott Marshutz



Is this your first film? Can you briefly describe your background in filmmaking?

Yes, "Let 'Em Play" is my first film. I started producing short news segments and music videos of local bands about four years ago.

What drew you to the documentary genre?

I became interested in documentary film before entering high school. The films that really inspired me were "Endless Summer," "Gimme Shelter," and "Woodstock." I was a big fan of Bruce Brown, the Maysles brothers and D.A. Pennebaker. I also loved watching how NFL Films did such an incredible job editing their segments with slow motion and interesting camera angles, which turned a seemingly violent football game into athletic artistry.

What inspired you to create this particular film?

In 2016, I was invited to the Angel City Games, which provides a quasi-Paralympic-styled sport competition for adaptive athletes of all ages. When I entered Drake stadium at UCLA my jaw dropped. I saw all the athletes, some as young as four or five having the time of their lives. I started talking to the athletes, their parents and coaches. That's where my inspiration came from and where my research began.

How did you find the para-athletes that you follow in the film?

After we narrowed down which athletes were going to be in the film, we had to get buy-in from their parents since they were all minors. And since I didn't have any major film credits at the time, getting access and media credentials to film the major competitions required a bigger sales effort.

What do you hope viewers will take away from this film?

If viewers happen to have a disabled child who is motivated to play sports, this film does an excellent job at providing what the process entails. Three major things stand out to me as being crucial in the process: family support, resources and coaching.

Can you talk about the importance of the ADA (and other legislation that seeks to support disabled Americans) in relation to this film?

Knowing the 30th anniversary of the ADA legislation was this summer, we timed the release to loosely coincide with it. "Let 'Em Play" also follows "Crip Camp," a very powerful documentary detailing the American disability rights movement starting in the 1970s and ending when President George H.W. Bush signed the ADA legislation. While a lot of progress has been made, there are still a number of states—almost half—that haven't adopted rules allowing student athletes to compete on a level playing field with their abled-bodied peers at the high school level.

Are you working on any other projects?

Yes, we have a couple of projects in development, but unfortunately, it's too early to talk about them. You can learn more about "Let 'Em Play" by visiting marshootzproductions.com.

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