



## Arab participation and achievements for men in the Summer Paralympics for the period (2004–2012)

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### Abstract

This research addresses the necessity due to the scarcity of historical studies in the field of sports, especially those indicating the activities and achievements of Arab countries in the Paralympic movement. This study aims to document the participation of Arab countries in the Paralympic Games, explore the prominent sports in which Arab athletes with disabilities participated, and analyze their achievements during the Paralympic Games from 2004 to 2012. The research methodology adopted an analytical, historical approach, collecting and analyzing data objectively through the official website of the International Paralympic Committee, in addition to scientific and historical sources from research papers, journals, and websites.

The key findings indicate that Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt are among the leading countries whose athletes won medals during the studied Paralympic games. The majority of medals were achieved in individual sports. The main recommendations emphasize the need to increase attention to disability sports in Arab countries by providing financial and structural support and improving infrastructure to achieve greater future accomplishments. Furthermore, there is a necessity to focus on historical studies in the field of disability sports as they preserve the rights of



disabled athletes and reflect a positive image of Paralympic sports in Arab countries.

**Keywords:** Paralympic history, Arab countries, sports heritage, Paralympic Games .

## 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that historical studies in the field of sports can teach us lessons about social changes and the nature of sports itself. Sports participation contributes to the development of basic human skills, and these studies help to place sports in a broader and deeper human context by shedding light on various sports, their development, and achievements. Hence, sports can be considered the collective memory of nations. Without the history of sports memory loss and sports legacy, life is a complex phenomenon.

To create a thoughtful initiative for the growth of sports in our society, it is necessary to revisit the past and understand the reasons behind the misconceptions that some individuals have regarding sports. In the past, sports were often seen as recreational activities that individuals could enjoy anytime they wanted. However, in modern times, sports have become an essential part of public education, which helps individuals develop physically, mentally, socially, and psychologically [1].

Every society endeavors to enhance the general well-being of its members; this goal is universally relevant, incorporating all societal sectors and with particular consideration for individuals with disabilities. Due to the challenges posed by their disabilities, these individuals might encounter emotions such as isolation, dread, inferiority, and mistrust. In order to confront these sentiments, they necessitate



support, care, and social engagement with their peers [2]. Monotheistic religions not only advocate for the successful integration of individuals with disabilities into society but also recognize their intrinsic value and emphasize their active and productive contributions to that regard [3]. They are considered the silent wealth of nations, deserving acknowledgment and empowerment [4]. Participating in athletic activities can serve as a pivotal means for people with disabilities to foster personal growth and improve their conduct, ultimately culminating in remarkable achievements on an international scale. Engaging in athletic competitions, such as the Paralympic Games, serves to deconstruct the barriers that disabilities erect, thus showcasing the athletes' determination and perseverance .

Held every four years, The Paralympic Games provide athletes with disabilities the chance to showcase their prowess and garner global recognition while concurrently guaranteeing fair and equal opportunities for participation and competition. Qualification and participation in the Paralympic Games are highly esteemed by athletes and serve as a means to enhance the reputation of their respective nations [5].

Although athletes in these Arab countries face additional challenges in obtaining support and adequate preparation to participate in the Paralympic Games, they have proven through their achievements that they are able to face the challenges of physical limitations and overcome barriers and societal stereotypes to appear with the best sports performance at the global level. According to the studies conducted by Muhammad Miqdad (2018), the achievements made in the field of Paralympic sports have added new dimensions to human progress that knows no borders, and Paralympic sport has become a privileged position due to its



repeated successes in world championships, as well as the medals obtained by its players and coaches that adorn their chests [6].

This study aims to provide insight into the Arab male athletes' involvement and accomplishments in the Paralympic Games during the period of 2004–2012. Such research is essential due to the scarcity of historical studies in the sports field that document the activities of Arab nations and their successes in the realm of Paralympic sports. The research may yield scientific benefits and establish research avenues for specialists and researchers in the field .

## 2. Research problem

After reviewing the scientific and historical literature in this field, it was found that academic libraries lacked a study that dealt with the Arab participation of men and the achievements made in the Paralympic Games for the period (2004–2012) and from this point of view, following research questions are formulated :

1. Who are the Arab countries participating in the men's teams in the Paralympic Games for the period (2004–2012)?
2. What are the Paralympic sports in which the Arab countries participated in the Paralympic Games for the period (2004–2012)?
3. What are the achievements of the athletes of the Arab countries participating in the Paralympic Games for the period (2004–2012)?

## 3. Research objectives

1. Documenting the participation of Arab countries in the Paralympic Games (2004–2012).
2. Exploring the most prominent sports in which Arab athletes with disabilities participated in the Paralympic Games for the period (2004–2012).



3. Documenting and analyzing the achievements of Arab athletes with disabilities in the Paralympic Games for the period (2004–2012).

#### 4. Methodology

The research was conducted utilizing a systematic historical analytical approach to gather and evaluate data impartially, with the aim of offering a full report on the involvement of disabled athletes from Arab countries in the Paralympic Games and determining the magnitude of their accomplishments. According to Najah and Abdul ameer (2023), the analytical historical method emphasizes the meticulous examination and progression of public events, as history serves as a comprehensive record of all past events [7]. This study conducted a thorough analysis of the achievements of male athletes from Arab countries who participated in the Paralympic Games between 2004 and 2012, creating a comprehensive record of their involvement. The current analysis utilized data acquired from a variety of scholarly and historical sources, including the official website of the International Paralympic Committee, publications, research articles, academic journals, and official websites.

#### 5. Results–Arab participation of men in the Paralympic Games from 2004 to 2012

##### 5.1 Arab men's participation in the Athens 2004 Paralympics

The twelfth edition of the Summer Paralympic Games took place in Athens, Greece, from September 23rd to October 4th, 2004. The event attracted 850 spectators and was televised to approximately 1.85 billion viewers across 25 countries. A total of 3,808 athletes, including 2,643 male and 1,165 female athletes from 135 countries, competed in 20 sports. Notably, judo and rowing were introduced for the first time in this edition [8]. Sixteen Arab countries



(Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Kuwait, UAE, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Bahrain, Libya, Sultanate of Oman, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Qatar) participated in the Games, with athletes from these nations achieving success across various sports, as detailed in Tables 1, 2, and 3 [9].

**Table 1:** Ranking of Arab countries participating and the number of players and medals at the Athens 2004 Paralympics

T	Participati ng Arab States	Number of players	Medals			
			Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Tunisia	14	5	5	1	11
2	Egypt	36	4	6	5	15
3	Algeria	14	4	2	5	11
4	Morocco	7	2	3	0	5
5	UAE	9	1	1	2	4
6	Kuwait	13	1	2	1	4
7	Iraq	7	1	0	1	2
8	Palestine	2	0	1	1	2
9	Jordan	5	0	1	0	1
10	Bahrain	5	0	1	0	1
11	Libya	1	0	0	0	0
12	Oman	2	0	0	0	0
13	Syria	3	0	0	0	0
14	Saudi Arabia	6	0	0	0	0
15	Sudan	1	0	0	0	0
16	Qatar	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	16	127	18	22	16	56



**Table 2:** Number of sports in which Arab countries participated in the Athens 2004 Paralympics

T	Participating Arab States	Number of sports	Individual sports	Team sports
1	Tunisia	1	Athletics	–
2	Egypt	4	Athletics Weight lifting Table tennis	Volleyball sitting
3	Algeria	2	Athletics Judo	–
4	Morocco	2	Athletics Weight lifting	–
5	Kuwait	3	Athletics Weight lifting Fencing on chairs	–
6	UAE	2	Athletics Weight lifting	–
7	Iraq	3	Athletics Weight lifting Fencing on chairs	–
8	Palestine	1	Athletics	–
9	Jordan	3	Athletics Weight lifting Table tennis	–
10	Bahrain	1	Athletics	–



				Weight lifting	
11	Libya	1	Weight lifting	-	
12	Oman	1	Weight lifting	-	
13	Syria	1	Weight lifting	-	
14	Saudi Arabia	2	Athletics	-	
				Weight lifting	
15	Sudan	1	Athletics	-	
16	Qatar	2	Athletics	-	
				Weight lifting	

**Table 3:** Ranking of sports by medal at the Athens 2004 Paralympics

T	Sports	Medals			Total
		Gold	Silver	Bronze	
1	Athletics	13	19	15	47
2	Weightlifting	4	3	0	7
3	Judo	1	0	0	1
4	Volleyball sitting	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	4	18	22	16	56

The analysis of Tables 1, 2, and 3 highlights Tunisia's standout performance, with 14 athletes securing 11 medals in athletics. Egypt, the leading nation in terms of athlete representation with 36 individuals, achieved 15 medals in weightlifting, seated volleyball, and athletics. Algeria also achieved medal success in athletics and judo, accumulating eleven. Particular sports disciplines, such as judo, powerlifting, and athletics, produced the most medals. Arab athletes



demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity, thereby emphasizing their aptitude and advocating for equitable opportunities to prevail in Arab societies .

### 5.2 Arab men's participation in the Beijing 2008 Paralympics

The 13th edition of the Summer Paralympic Games took place in Beijing, China, from September 6th to the 17th, 2008. This event marked the debut of the newly redesigned Paralympic emblem, which was put into use after the 2004 Summer Paralympic Games. Additional 62.1 million tickets were distributed to philanthropic, educational, and community organizations, demonstrating record ticket sales [10]. In 20 sports, 3,951 disabled athletes (1383 female, 2568 male) from 146 countries competed. Football, cycling, archery, athletics, and futsal were played. The sport of rowing debuted in this particular edition of Paralympics Games. Tunisia stood out and won the most gold medals among the sixteen Arab nations. Algeria followed closely with 11 medals, excelling in strength sports and judo, while Egypt earned 6 medals across various disciplines [11]. (Tables 4, 5, 6)

**Table 4:** Ranking of Arab countries participating and number of men's medals at the Beijing 2008 Paralympics

T	Participati ng Arab States	Number of players	Medals			
			Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Tunisia	13	6	4	2	12
2	Algeria	21	4	2	5	11
3	Egypt	27	2	2	2	6
4	Morocco	12	1	1	0	2
5	Jordan	6	0	2	1	3
6	Saudi	3	0	1	1	2



Arabia						
7	Iraq	15	0	1	1	2
8	UAE	6	0	1	0	1
9	Lebanon	1	0	0	2	2
10	Bahrain	2	0	0	0	0
11	Palestine	1	0	0	0	0
12	Libya	2	0	0	0	0
13	Oman	1	0	0	0	0
14	Syria	3	0	0	0	0
15	Kuwait	7	0	0	0	0
16	Qatar	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	16	122	13	14	14	41

**Table 5:** Sports in which Arab countries participated in the Beijing 2008 Paralympics

T	Arab Countries	Number of sports	Individual sports	Team sports
1	Tunisia	1	Athletics	-
2	Algeria	2	Athletics Judo	-
3	Egypt	4	Athletics Weight lifting Table tennis	Volleyball sitting
4	Morocco	2	Athletics Weight lifting	-
5	Jordan	2	Athletics Weight lifting	-
6	Saudi Arabia	2	Athletics	-



				Weight lifting	
7	Iraq	3	Athletics	Volleyball sitting	
				Weight lifting	
8	UAE	3	Athletics	-	
				Weight lifting	
				Rifle shooting	
9	Lebanon	1	cycling	-	
10	Bahrain	2	Athletics	-	
				Weight lifting	
11	Palestine	1	Athletics	-	
12	Libya	1	Table tennis	-	
13	Oman	1	Weight lifting	-	
14	Syria	2	Athletics	-	
				Weight lifting	
15	Kuwait	3	Athletics	-	
				Weight lifting	
				Fencing on a stationary chair	
16	Qatar	2	Athletics	-	
				Weight lifting	

**Table 6:** Ranking of sports by medal at the Beijing 2008 Paralympics

T	Sports	Medals			Total
		Gold	Silver	Bronze	
1	Athletics	10	10	9	29
2	Weightlifting	1	4	3	8
3	Judo	2	0	0	2



4	cycling	0	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	4	13	14	14	41

The examination of Tables 4, 5, and 6 The results show a difference in the performance of the players and teams from the Arab countries participating in this tournament, as Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt achieved distinguished achievements and won several medals, while the other countries did not achieve any significant results. The researcher believes that this may be due to differences in sports infrastructure. The allocations provided by Arab countries, and the absence of sufficient support for athletes with disabilities in some Arab countries, results in challenges facing athletes with disabilities, which may relate to financing, providing appropriate stadiums and tools for training, or the effectiveness of training. The shortcomings of disability sports organizations, as highlighted by Al-Shaar, [12], encompass insufficient facilities and a lack of coaching expertise. Notwithstanding these obstacles, athletes displayed a wide array of abilities in specialized sports such as cycling, athletics, powerlifting, table tennis, judo, and rifle shooting. Their achievement serves as a testament to their perseverance and resolve, emphasizing their quest for excellence in the face of challenges .

We also notice a diversity in participation in individual sports, as sports included athletics, weightlifting, table tennis, judo, cycling, and rifle shooting. This is an indication of the diversity of abilities and interests of athletes with disabilities. We also notice the brilliance of athletes in most individual sports by winning gold, silver, and bronze medals, and this is evidence of their will. Their strength and individual excellence to achieve the highest achievement.

### 5.3 Arab men's participation in the London 2012 Paralympic Games

The 2012 Paralympic Games, held from August 29th to September 9th, saw unprecedented participation, with 4237 athletes representing 164 nations competing for 503 medals. Athletes with limb deficiency, spinal cord injury, visual impairment, cerebral palsy, and additional neuropsychiatric and musculoskeletal disorders comprised the diverse field [13]. The Games were a tremendous success, garnering coverage in more than 100 countries and selling 7.2 million tickets. Notable accomplishments included the breaking of 314 Paralympic records and 251 global records. Twenty sports disciplines were represented in the extensive schedule, spanning from wheelchair tennis to archery [14]. A total of 19 Arab nations, comprising Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia, engaged in both individual and team athletic competitions, attaining significant triumphs and a multitude of medals (Tables 7, 8, 9) [15].

**Table 7:** Ranking of Arab countries and the number of participating players and medals at the London 2012 Paralympics

T	Participati ng Arab States	Number of players	Medals			
			Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Tunisia	18	6	2	3	11
2	Algeria	26	3	3	8	14
3	Egypt	29	3	2	7	12
4	Morocco	16	2	0	2	4
5	UAE	11	1	1	1	3
6	Iraq	16	0	2	1	3
7	Saudi Arabia	4	0	1	0	1
8	Palestine	2	0	0	0	0

9	Lebanon	1	0	0	0	0
10	Bahrain	1	0	0	0	0
11	Jordan	4	0	0	0	0
12	Libya	2	0	0	0	0
13	Oman	2	0	0	0	0
14	Syria	3	0	0	0	0
15	Kuwait	7	0	0	0	0
16	Djibouti	1	0	0	0	0
17	Mauritania	1	0	0	0	0
18	Qatar	1	0	0	0	0
19	Comoros	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	19	146	15	11	22	48

**Table 8:** Sports in which Arab countries participated at the London 2012 Paralympics

T	Arab Countries	Number of sports	Individual sports	Team sports
1	Tunisia	1	Athletics	-
2	Algeria	4	Athletics Weight lifting Judo	Goal ball
3	Egypt	4	Athletics Weight lifting Table tennis	Volleyball sitting
4	Morocco	3	Athletics Wheelchair tennis	Volleyball sitting
5	Kuwait	2	Athletics Fencing on the	-



			chair	
6	UAE	3	Athletics Weight lifting Rifle shooting	-
7	Iraq	6	Athletics Weight lifting Table tennis Wheelchair tennis Fencing on the chair Swimming	-
8	Palestine	1	Athletics	-
9	Jordan	2	Athletics Weight lifting	-
10	Bahrain	1	Athletics	-
11	Libya	2	Athletics Weight lifting	-
12	Oman	2	Athletics Weight lifting	-
13	Syria	2	Athletics Weight lifting	-
14	Saudi Arabia	2	Athletics Weight lifting	-
15	Lebanon	1	cycling	-
16	Qatar	1	Athletics	-
17	Djibouti	1	Athletics	
18	Mauritania	1	Athletics	
19	Comoros	1	Swimming	

**Table 9:** Ranking of sports by medal at the London 2012 Paralympics

T	Sports	Medals			Total
		Gold	Silver	Bronze	
1	Athletics	11	9	15	35
2	Weightlifting	3	2	3	8
3	Judo	0	0	2	2
4	Table tennis	0	0	1	1
5	Rifle shooting	1	0	0	1
6	Volleyball sitting	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	6	15	11	22	48

Tables 7 and 8 and 9 present significant data regarding the increased involvement of Arab nations in the session, as evidenced by the participation of 19 countries. This upward trend suggests a heightened focus on sports for individuals with disabilities. Algeria closely followed Tunisia in the rankings with three gold medals, three silver medals, and eight bronze medals, which collectively demonstrate the determination of disabled athletes to achieve international excellence. Algeria had amassed six gold medals. Egypt exhibited a commendable level of proficiency in both individual and team competitions, as evidenced by its eleven medals won across a diverse range of sports. Additionally, Morocco secured four medals, demonstrating progress from prior editions. These advancements are consistent with the findings of Radhi and Kadhim (2022) regarding the improving performance levels of disabled athletes in technologically developed countries [16]. This data indicated that there have been improvements in their physical, technical, and cognitive capabilities. Despite this,



Morocco continues to face obstacles, specifically in regard to the provision of infrastructure support for people with disabilities, which underscores discrepancies in comparison to countries in Europe [17].

## 6 .Discussion

After reviewing the Arab participation of players with disabilities and their achievements in the Paralympic Games for the period (2004–2012), this study came out with the results of the ranking of Arab countries and the classification of sports according to the number of medals obtained as shown in Tables 10 and 11.

**Table 10:** Ranking of countries' achievements by medals in the Paralympics (2004–2012)

Order	Country	Medals			Total
		Gold	Silver	Bronze	
1	Algeria	11	7	18	36
2	Tunisia	17	11	6	34
3	Egypt	9	10	14	33
4	Morocco	5	4	2	11
5	UAE	2	3	3	8
6	Iraq	1	3	3	7
7	Jordan	0	3	1	4
8	Kuwait	1	2	1	3
9	Saudi Arabia	0	2	1	3
10	Palestine	0	1	1	2
11	Lebanon	0	0	2	2
12	Bahrain	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	12	46	47	52	145

During the research period, Table 10 showcases the exceptional accomplishments of Algeria and Tunisia in the Paralympic Games. While Algeria secured the highest number of medals with 36, closely followed by Tunisia with 34 medals, the narrow gap between them underscores the similar levels of achievement among athletes from both countries. Egypt's third-place ranking, with 33 medals, further demonstrates the prowess of its disabled athletes. This exemplifies the unwavering resolve and tenacity of individuals with disabilities, who endeavor to demonstrate their aptitude to themselves, their families, and society. The competitive sports arena helps them excel and gain confidence in overcoming their disabilities, supporting Khalid's findings that adapted sports activities improve people with disabilities' social and psychological well-being [18]. Due to its athletes' success, Algeria's disabled sports have moved from rehabilitative to competitive. Despite its low medal count, Morocco's gold medals demonstrate its skill. The UAE and Iraq also excel in disability sports. Jordan and Saudi Arabia won silver and bronze medals, which is impressive. Palestine and Lebanon's gains, despite minimal involvement, show their potential. Bahrain's one medal is encouraging. As Al-Gharbi study showed, impaired athletes in various Arab nations have overcome hurdles such as inadequate resources and facilities to win medals [19]. Despite these challenges, impaired athletes excel locally, continentally, and globally.

**Table 11:** Ranking of sports by medal at the Paralympics (2004–2012)

Order	Sports	Medals			Total
		Golden	Silver	Bronze	
1	Athletics	34	38	39	111
2	Weightlifting	8	9	6	23



3	Judo	3	0	2	5
4	cycling	0	0	2	2
5	Volleyball sitting	0	0	2	2
6	Table tennis	0	0	1	1
7	Rifle shooting	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	7	46	47	52	145

It is evident from Table 11 that the majority of medals won by Arab players with disabilities in the Paralympic Games during the period 2012–2004 were in individual sports. Volleyball, on the other hand, was the only team sport in which teams representing people with disabilities secured bronze medals. Athletics, with its players having won the most medals across its numerous events, occupied the top spot. The pinnacle of athletics is a notable occasion, as international interest in it has surged due to the ability to engage a greater number of competitors, thereby increasing the likelihood of attaining medals and accomplishing greater feats [20]. Weightlifting secured the second position, followed by judo with its superior number of medals. This study revealed that it is frequently the case that individual sports surpass team sports in terms of excellence. The determination of success or failure is solely in the hands of the individual player; thus, he holds an internal control position. However, according to Mahin, in team sports, the team bears the external control position, which entails that the players bear the loss on one another, hold the referee, the public, or another individual accountable for the team's deficiency [21].

## 7. Conclusions



An analysis of the Paralympic involvement of Arab male athletes spanning the years 2004 to 2012 unveils a multitude of significant findings. It is important to highlight that Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt are among the nations whose athletes amassed a considerable quantity of medals throughout the entirety of the research period. The similar performance standards observed in Algeria and Tunisia underscore the competitive atmosphere and the remarkable accomplishments of athletes with disabilities representing both countries. This exemplifies the significant influence that sports can exert in fostering self-confidence and surmounting obstacles through the demonstration of perseverance and commitment by individuals with disabilities. Despite the participation of numerous Arab nations in the Paralympics, a discrepancy in performance remains due to the unequal distribution of medals among these countries. Furthermore, the considerable quantity of medals won by Arab athletes in individual sports indicates that they possess exceptional prowess in these areas. Positively, some Arab countries, including Algeria, have taken steps toward recognizing the global athletic potential of athletes with disabilities, elevating the significance of sports for those with disabilities, and adopting a more professional approach. Collectively, the aforementioned outcomes underscore the criticality of promoting inclusiveness and offering assistance to athletes with disabilities across the Arab world. This requires creating a constructive atmosphere that fosters skill development and recognizes accomplishments .

## 8. Recommendations

From the conclusions drawn, a number of recommendations were formulated as follows:



1. There is a need to increase attention to sports for people with disabilities in Arab countries by providing financial and structural support and improving infrastructure, which will contribute to achieving greater achievements in the future.
2. Activating and accelerating the role of media by raising awareness about the importance of sports for people with disabilities and encouraging people with disabilities to practice competitive sports.
3. Providing adequate support and attention to the training process for team sports and trying to develop them and stimulate competition in them.
4. Historical studies in the field of sports for people with disabilities are necessary, as sports heritage preserves the rights of athletes with disabilities and reflects an honorable image of the reality of Paralympic sports in Arab countries.

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