

TATYANA MCFADDEN

KNOW YOU CAN AND YOU WILL

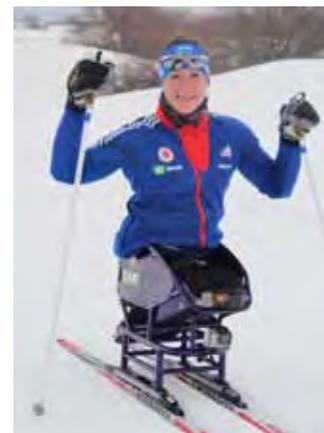
Tatyana McFadden

Tatyana McFadden is one of the fastest woman in the world, with 17 Paralympic medals (including seven gold medals), 15 marathon wins including four consecutive Grand Slams (first place in Boston, Chicago, NYC and London marathons in the same year) and has broken five world records in track and field. In addition to her athletic achievements, her accomplishments include:



- **“30 Under 30” Class Of 2017** by *Forbes* magazine.
- **Best Female Athlete of the 2016 Paralympic Games**, United States Olympic Committee
- **Whang Youn Dai Achievement Award**, 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro for athlete who has performed at an outstanding level and overcome adversity
 - **ESPY Best Female Athlete with a Disability**, 2016.
 - **Female Paralympic Athlete of the Year**, United States Olympic Committee, 2015
 - **Wilma Rudolph Courage Award**, Women’s Sports Foundation, 2015.
- **Juan Antonio Samaranch Disabled Athlete Award**, International Olympic Committee, 2015.
- **Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability**, Laureus Foundation, 2015
- **Female Athlete of the Month**, November 2013, March 2014, November 2014 and April 2015, United States Olympic Committee
- **Para-Athlete of the Year**, USA Track and Field, 2014

There are very few athletes in history who have achieved so much under such unique circumstances. Born with *spina bifida*, Tatyana McFadden spent the first six years of her life in a Russian orphanage with virtually nothing, not even a wheelchair. Paralyzed from the waist down, and with no other way to move, she learned to walk on her hands simply to keep up with the other children. Little did she know that the powerful arms and hands she began to develop as a small child would someday carry her around the globe as one of the world’s greatest athletes.



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In 1994, Deborah McFadden, then Commissioner of Disabilities for the U.S. Department of Health, came upon Tatyana while visiting her orphanage on an otherwise routine business trip. She felt a connection, that they were meant to be together. Deborah adopted Tatyana, brought her to the United States and gave her both a wheelchair and a new start on life.

Adjusting to her new home was not easy. Her lack of nutrition and proper healthcare in the orphanage made her weak and sickly. She enrolled in various sports groups in hopes that it would build her strength. Tatyana tried every sport she could find; wheelchair basketball, swimming, ice hockey, and even scuba diving. From the start she fell in love with wheelchair racing—a sport in which her powerful arms immediately brought success. And so it began, Tatyana's extraordinary life as an athlete.

In 2004, at the age of 15, Tatyana made her Paralympic debut in Athens. She was the youngest member of Team USA. She returned from Greece with her first two medals and a hunger to become the best. Two years later she won gold at the World Championships and set a new World Record in the 100-meter event.

At the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, at the age of 19, and still in the infancy of her athletic career, she earned four more medals. In London, in 2012, she added another four medals including three gold. One year later, at the 2013 World Championships, she became the first athlete in history to win six gold medals at the same competition. In 2014, at the Sochi Winter Paralympics, she won a silver in her debut in nordic skiing. In 2016, at the Rio Paralympics, Tatyana continued her dominance in wheelchair racing by winning four gold and two silver medals. Currently, she holds 17 Paralympic medals (seven gold, seven silver, and three bronze, and 14 World Track and Field Championship medals (twelve gold, once silver, and one bronze).

Tatyana challenged herself with the professional marathon circuit in 2009, coming in first place in the Chicago Marathon. In 2013 she became the first man or woman, able-bodied or disabled, to win the Grand Slam (four World Major Marathons in the same year). In 2014, 2015 and 2016 she repeated her wins of all four major marathons for an unprecedented four years in a row.

Tatyana is now pursuing her graduate degree in Education at University of Illinois, having finished her undergraduate degree in Human Development and Family Studies there. When she isn't racing or studying, she works encouraging all youth as a national advocate for healthy lifestyle through sports and nutrition, is a lifetime member of the Girl Scouts, and is on the board of the Spina Bifida Association of Illinois.

She is actively involved in advancing the rights of people with disabilities. McFadden's efforts are credited for the passage of the Maryland Fitness and Athletics Equity for Students with Disabilities Act, requiring schools to give students with disabilities the oppor-

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tunity to compete in interscholastic athletics, as well as federal legislation that ensures students with disabilities across the USA have equal access.

Tatyana regularly speaks about her experiences as a person with a disability, an orphan and being an elite athlete. She has appeared on national and international television and radio often including *The Ellen Show*, *The Today Show*, *Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel*, and *Piers Morgan*.

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