

Eurostar becomes the official carrier of the French Paralympic team

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Eurostar, the official international rail provider of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, has announced details of a new partnership with the French National Paralympic Committee, which will see the high-speed rail operator proudly carry the French Paralympic team to the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

Over the summer, Eurostar will carry the majority of the French Paralympians including the blind football, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair basketball teams to London on a specially chartered service on the 25 August and then again on their celebratory, homecoming journey to Paris on the 10 September. Eurostar recently announced a similar partnership with the Belgium National Paralympic Committee, and will carry the Belgian Paralympic team to London on another specially adapted train on the 26 August and back to Brussels on the 10 September.

Central to this is a project being carried out by Eurostar's fleet engineering team at its depot in Stratford, next to the Olympic Park in East London. After consultation with the Paralympic committees and following their feedback and advice, two Eurostar trains will undergo a series of unique modifications designed to accommodate the requirements of the teams. Once completed, the modifications will for the first time allow the trains to carry up to 18 wheelchair users and other Paralympic athletes many with special travel needs.

Nicolas Petrovic, Chief Executive of Eurostar, said: "It was an honour for us to announce bringing Belgian Paralympians to London this summer and now to be able to carry the French team as well is incredibly exciting. Working closely with Paralympic Committees in both countries we appreciate how important it is for the individual Paralympians to travel together as one team, which is why every area of our business has played a part turning this project into a reality.

"The London 2012 Paralympic Games are set to be the most successful and inspiring to date. This represents a once in a lifetime opportunity for sports fans from across Europe to share in the excitement and we are proud to play a role bringing many of them as well as the French and Belgian teams to London this summer."

Utilising the specially adapted train, the cross-Channel high-speed passenger rail operator will bring to London over 170 French Paralympic athletes, competing in a total of 16 different sports, along with the National Committee officials and other members of the team delegation. In addition, some team members will travel to London on other services in order to accommodate their training and Games time schedules.

Gérard Masson, President of the French National Paralympic Committee said commented: "We are delighted to establish this partnership with Eurostar, which will undoubtedly help our Paralympic team achieve their sporting ambitions. This special adapted Eurostar train will invaluablely allow our team to travel to London together, quickly and comfortably."

Eurostar is the Official International Rail Service Provider for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Over the summer, Eurostar services will carry hundreds of thousands of Olympic fans from the continent to London to enjoy the atmosphere of the London 2012 Games.

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About Eurostar:

Eurostar is the high-speed train service linking St Pancras International, Ebbsfleet International, Ashford International, Paris, Brussels, Lille, Calais, Disneyland Resort Paris, Avignon and the French Alps, offering trouble-free travel to those wishing to enjoy Paris city breaks (http://www.eurostar.com/UK/uk/leisure/city_breaks/paris_city_breaks.jsp) or city breaks in Amsterdam (http://www.eurostar.com/UK/uk/leisure/city_breaks/amsterdam_city_breaks.jsp), as well as offering a train from London to Brussels (http://www.eurostar.com/static/micro_site/eurostar_london_to_brussels.htm) and a London to Amsterdam (http://www.eurostar.com/UK/uk/leisure/eurostar_deals/london_amsterdam.jsp) train.

The current Eurostar train was first introduced into service in 1994 carrying 750 passengers and operating at speeds of up to 300kph. Since then, the fleet of 28 trains has carried more than 115 million passengers between London and the Continent via the Channel tunnel (<http://www.eurostar.com/>).

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