

**CAM**

## Christopher Minko

I arrived in Cambodia as an Australian Government Technical Advisor with a broad mandate to assist the disabled persons of Cambodia. Being Australian, I knew the power of sport to affect positive change, in particular the power of sport within a physical rehabilitation context, noting also at this point of time (1996) there weren't any sporting opportunities for PWD's in Cambodia. As a result, I established the National Paralympic Committee of Cambodia (in 1997) and we were successful in being granted a wildcard in standing volleyball for Cambodia to participate in the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games. It is also important to note that Volleyball is probably the most popular sport in Cambodia and that Cambodia had in the past been a leading Volleyball nation within the Asian region prior to the tragedy of the Khmer Rouge regime and civil conflict. At the Sydney 2000 Games and to our surprise, Cambodia came 7th out of 8 teams after successfully beating the host nation – as a result of this win, we made a decision and set the objective to become the world No 1 and this was the start of an amazing journey leading to Cambodia reaching no 2 in the world in 2011. We would have continued our efforts until we reached No.1 but were denied the opportunity by the IPC decision in 2000 to remove standing volleyball from the Paralympics.

Within the WOVD circles I would credit Athanasios Papageorgeiou as having the greatest influence on my development and that of the sport. He provided excellent assistance to Cambodia's volleyball development which led to the establishment of excellent cooperation and a partnership between the Cambodian Volleyball Program and the German Government. The result was the provision of excellent German coaches from the Deutsche Hochschule fur Sports (German Sports University) and these advisors played a key role as Cambodia steadily moved up the World rankings until reaching No 2 in 2011. I would also acknowledge Dr York Chow of the Asian Paralympic Committee who provided excellent support and motivation to Cambodia's volleyball program developments.





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Events in which I and the Cambodian team were involved included:

1999 - FESPIC Games – Bangkok, Thailand

2000 – Paralympics – Sydney, Australia

2001 - WOVD World Cup – Puchov, Slovakia

2002 - FESPIC Games - Korea – Gold Medal

2003 - WOVD World Cup – Rhodes, Greece

2005 - WOVD World Cup – Regina, Canada

2007 - World Cup – Phnom Penh - Chef De Mission / Nation Team Manager and Director

2009 World Cup – Phnom Penh Chef De Mission / Nation Team Manager and Director

2011 - World Cup – Phnom Penh Chef De Mission / Nation Team Manager and Director

I finished my involvement with the administration and development of standing volleyball in 2011.

Official posts held: WOVD ASEAN Representative

