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ORIGINAL STUDY

Fencing in the Summer Paralympic Games: A Historical-Analytical Study of the Achievements of the Countries of the Participating Teams for the Period (1960–2024)

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Abstract

The Paralympic Games are one of the most important sporting events today, as they represent the other side of disability in the world, as "they are an embodiment of the human will and its ability to overcome challenges, and go beyond being just a sports competition to become a global platform that contributes to changing societal attitudes towards disability The purpose of the research is to conduct a historical and documentary analysis of the achievements of the national teams participating in the Paralympic fencing within the Summer Paralympic Games in the period from 1960 to 2024, the researchers used the descriptive-analytical approach to analyze the development of the participation of national teams and achievements. Historical data and medals are reviewed statistically.The researchers concluded that the sport of Paralympic fencing witnessed a clear shift in the balance of power, with European countries dominating the podiums in the early periods of the Paralympic Games, while new Asian powers (such as China and Hong Kong) were born to top the medal table in subsequent editions. 2- There is a strong relationship between countries to participate in the sequence in order to gain competitive experience and raise the technical level to reach achievement. The countries that achieved the highest medal rates were mostly the ones that participated with the largest number of players over the course of the tournaments, but the most important recommendations are: 1- Countries seeking to improve their technical skills should use comprehensive and sustainable strategies that include increasing government support, developing talent discovery programs, providing specialized training facilities, and benefiting from training models that Currently followed by the winning countries in the competitions.

Keywords: Analysis, Paralympic fencing, Achievements

1. Introduction

The Paralympic Games are one of the most important sporting events today, as they represent the other side of disability in the world, as they are "an embodiment of the human will and its ability to overcome challenges, and go beyond being a mere sporting competition to become a global platform that contributes to changing societal attitudes towards disability (Gold & Gold, 2007).

Paralympic sports organizers differ from their counterparts in the field of healthy athletes in that their competitions focus on the altruistic goal of enhancing the social status of people with disabilities.

Wheelchair fencing is a Paralympic sport and appeared at the first Paralympic Games in 1960 in Rome.

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However, it developed rapidly in the 1990s, thanks to the addition of Asian teams to the competition, as well as players from Europe. Wheelchair fencing is currently practiced in Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas; athletes with disabilities compete alongside healthy fencers (Kosmol et al., 2006).

It is one of the individual games that needs great accuracy and high motor and physical abilities to face the opponent, and the use of the lower body has a great role in progress and defense in repelling the attack, this is for the healthy players, while the Paralympic fencing player does not need the lower part because of his use of the wheelchair and fixing it on it well, which determines some of his motor, physical and skill abilities.

Borysiuk et al., (2025, p. 2) quoted by Witkowski et al. (2018) pointed out that wheelchair fencing is similar to fencing for healthy athletes in terms of techniques, strategies and scoring systems. While the rules of judging, scoring and competition are similar, wheelchair fencers face unique challenges due to their stability in the chair, requiring a greater focus on upper-body coordination and torso stability. In fencing for healthy people, the legs play an important role in movement, and the research problem stands out until.

Despite the growing interest in Paralympic sports in recent years, there is still an urgent need for analytical studies that address the historical aspects of the achievements of countries and teams in specific sports, especially Paralympic fencing. The literature available to date lacks a comprehensive and comparative view of how national teams' participation in the sport has evolved over time, and what factors have influenced their success trajectory. Addressing this research gap can give us a deeper understanding of sporting performance on the international stage, and help in Uncover the elements that make some countries maintain their superiority while the achievements of others fluctuate.

The importance of the research is highlighted in preserving and documenting the history of the sport of Paralympic fencing, and providing analytical bases that can be used by coaches, sports federations, as well as researchers interested in Paralympic sports. This study also provides an opportunity for the development of sports in the future.

1.1. Research objective

It is to conduct a historical and documentary analysis of the achievements of the national teams participating in Paralympic fencing within the Summer Paralympic Games from 1960 to 2024.

1.2. Study questions

1. How the participation of national teams in the sport of Paralympic fencing within the Summer Paralympics developed between 1960 and 2024.
2. Which countries have made continuous achievements in Paralympic fencing, and what factors have contributed to this?

2. Methodology

The researchers used a descriptive-analytical approach to analyze the evolution of national team participation and achievements, and to review historical data and medals statistically.

Research Sample

All national teams participating in Paralympic fencing from 1960 to 2024.

Data Collection Tools:

IPC Archives
Paralympic Games Reports
Global Sports Achievement Databases
Specialized Academic Books and Articles
Personal Interviews

Main Research Variables:

National teams participating in Paralympic fencing from 1960 to 2024.

Main variables: Number of participations, number of medals, geographical continent, year of participation, final ranking.

2.1. Paralympic fencing

Sir Ludwig Gutmann, the founder of the Paralympic Movement, was an avid fencer and soon realised the possibility of playing the sport from a wheelchair. It was no surprise, then, that wheelchair fencing was included in the 1954 Stoke Mandeville International Games, the preceding Gutmann's Paralympic Games. During that event, the wheelchair fencing show was limited to a show between a paraplegic fencer and his healthy trainer. But the following year, a sword fencing competition was added to the program. In 1956, a fencing competition was held. The following year, fencing competitions were added. Today, wheelchair fencing is held with all three types of swords. "(International Paralympic Committee).

Boguszewski and Torzewska, (2011, p. 2) According to Nowicki J Szermierka na wózkach, wheelchair fencing is one of the first sports practiced by people with disabilities. Its origins date back to 1948, i.e.

in the period after World War II, when the sport of wheelchair fencing was introduced at the Stoke Mandeville Rehabilitation Center founded by Dr. Ludwig Gutmann, and was considered a technique and form of rehabilitation. Dueling was very popular among patients, both veterans and ex-soldiers. The competitions and fencing held at the hospital had many advantages, helping patients to get rid of their emotions, overcome the stress caused by the disability itself, and improve their self-confidence. It also developed the skills of former soldiers and boosted their self-confidence. Last but not least, fencing has provided people with disabilities with the opportunity to improve their physical fitness.

Wheelchair fencing, as a Paralympic sport, offers unique values, enabling athletes with disabilities to integrate into society, especially non-disabled Olympic athletes. In the first phase of training, this sport also plays an important psychological and social role, as it helps young people to regain their physical activity after acute psychological trauma, by enabling them to participate in community activities, including participation in sports competitions at various levels. As in the duel with non-disabled people, the competition is held with three weapons: the sword, the sword of the Ebbe, and the sword of the saber (Borysiuk et al., 2020, p. 20).

In competitions, wheelchairs are mounted on a track mounting system. Athletes cannot get up from their seats during a fight, and the athlete with the shortest arm determines the distance between the two fencers.

"In wheelchair fencing, we categorize fencers into three categories: A, B, and C. Class A includes fencers with relatively minimal disability, such as post-amputation fencers or athletes with limited paralysis of the lower limbs who are able to move their torso and arms freely. Category B includes fencers who have suffered a spinal cord injury and paralysis of the legs and arms (paraplegia), while category C includes athletes with quadriplegia and quadriplegia (Molik, 2005).

Wheelchair duelists have a disability in their lower limbs and compete in either Class A or B.

1. Class A fencers have good balance while sitting and have disabilities that affect their lower limbs.
2. Class B fencers have a disability that affects their balance while sitting or on the fencing arm.

Fights are so fast that an electronic scoring system scores when the touch is successful. Singles matches consist of three rounds of three minutes each, in which the first to score 15 touches or the highest score wins.

In team matches, the team that scores first with 45 touches, or the team with the highest score when time runs out, wins. If the scores are equal, the fencers enter an extra minute in the "Sudden Death" round.

Statistical Analysis Methods:

Researchers used frequencies and percentages – tables and graphs.

3. Results

Table 1. Shows the three winners, the number of competitions and the number of participating countries with male and female players for the 1960–1992 games.

Country	Rome	Tokyo	–	Heidelberg	Toronto	Arnhem	New York	Seoul	Barcelona
year	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992
First	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	France	France	France	France	France
Second	Italy	France	France	Britain	Britain	Italy	Italy	Germany	Hong Kong
Third	Italy	Britain	–	–	Germany	Germany	Germany	Italy	Germany
Competitions	3	7	10	11	14	17	15	14	14
States	1	6	9	9	10	7	8	11	12
Men	6	18	43	38	38	31	23	50	47
women	3	9	22	14	16	14	10	21	15

Table 2. Shows the three winners, the number of competitions and the number of participating countries with male and female players for the 1996–2024 games.

Country	Atlanta	Sydney	Athens	Beijing	London	Rio	Tokyo	Paris
year	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	2020	2024
First	France	Poland	Hong Kong	China	China	China	China	China
Second	Hong Kong	France	France	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Ukraine	Russia	Thailand
Third	Hungary	Hong Kong	Poland	France	Poland	France	Britain	Britain
Competitions	15	15	15	10	12	14	16	16
States	13	18	20	19	24	18	20	22
Men	48	68	56	60	69	51	48	49
women	22	25	32	24	36	38	48	48

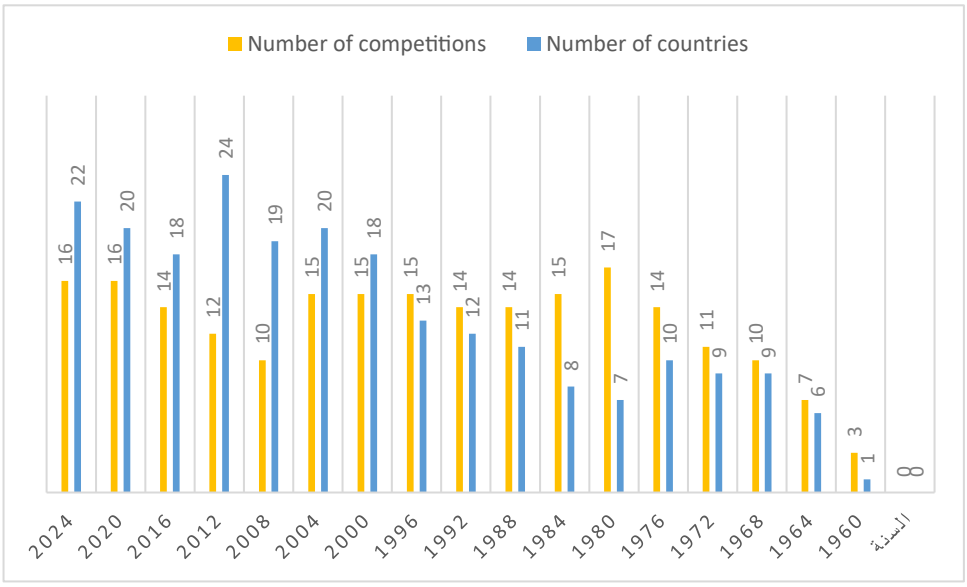

Fig. 1. The chart shows the number of participating countries and the number of competitions from the first edition of 1960 to the last edition of 2024.

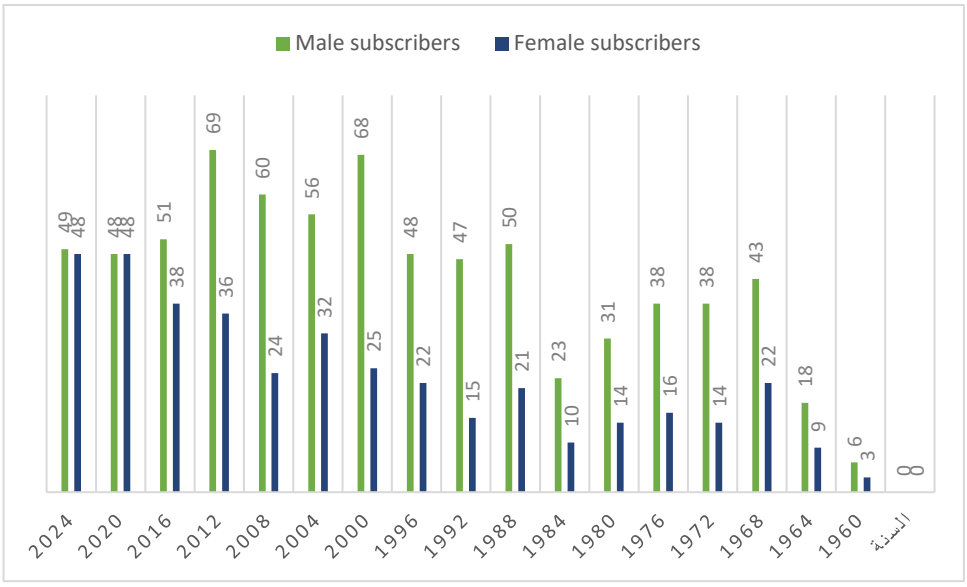

Fig. 2. The chart shows the number of men and women participating in the competitions from the first edition of 1960 to the last edition of 2024.

4. Discussion

Through Table 1, which shows the results of the Paralympic Games from 1960 to 1992.

The clear results of the progress of the European countries (the European continent) in the competitions and the three winning results during the eight editions from 1960 to 1988, especially the Italian team retaining the first place for the first four editions in a row, and this superiority did not come out of thin air, as Yang (2022) indicates that Italian fencing experts in all European countries were involved in spreading the principles of fencing that were developed in the peninsula starting from the fifteenth century, and after the era of human enlightenment that led Italy to become a global center For art and philosophy, fencing has adopted this orientation and earned the title of a humanistic discipline. The first seminal treatise on Italian fencing was the 1409 manuscript of the Flos Duilatorum, written by the master Fiore di Liberi da Primariacco, published only five hundred years later in 1902. The significance of this message, presented as a code of conduct for men, is that it catalyzed the transition, which was later defined by subsequent messages, from combat fencing to fencing, and finally to a sporting discipline. Looking at Table 3, it is noted

Table 3. Shows the total entries for each country and the number of players participating in them.

Country	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96	00	04	08	12	16	20	24	player	sum
Argentina								1		1	1	1		1			1	6	6
Australia		4	7	1				2	1		2							17	6
Austria														1				1	1
Belarus													2	5	5	2		14	4
Belgium			5	5	7	2	1		1									21	6
Brazil										1	1	1		1	8	4	7	23	7
Canada											2		1	2	2	4	3	14	6
China												3	9	9	12	11	12	56	6
France		3	9	9	10	12	10	10	10	13	10	11	9	11	9	4	7	147	16
Georgia															1	3	2	6	3
Germany									9	10	9	7	1	1	2	2	1	42	9
Britain		6	11	10	13	5	4	9	7	6	5	1	1	7	3	4	4	96	16
Greece					1							2	3	4	4	2		16	6
Hong Kong				2	1		1	7	5	7	6	11	6	8	7	3	4	68	13
Hungary									1	2	8	6	7	8	6	7	6	51	9
Iraq									3			1		1	2	3	3	13	6
Israel			8	5	5	5	4	4			1							32	6
Italy	9	8	15	12	9	15	9	13	11	11	9	7	7	5	8	8	10	166	17
Japan		3			1						1	2	1			6	4	18	7
Kuwait							1	5	3	3	5	3	4	1				25	8
Latvia															1			1	1
Macau														1				1	1
Malaysia												1		1				2	2
Mexico				1	1													2	2
Netherlands						2												2	1
New Zealand			2															2	1
Oman								1										1	1
Poland										2	9	12	7	10	9	7	7	63	8
Russia													5	12		12	1	30	4
South Korea								5	5	2	1	1	1	1			3	19	8
Spain									6	4	4	6	6	1			1	28	7
Thailand												1	2	1	1	1	4	10	6
Ukraine											1	3	7	7	7	9	9	43	7
United States		3	4							8	9	8	5	6	2	3	6	54	10
Turkey																1	1	2	2
Venezuela																	1	1	1
w Germany			4	7	6	4	3	9								2		35	7
Countries	1	6	9	9	10	7	8	11	12	13	18	20	19	24	18	20	22	37	
Competitors	9	27	65	52	54	45	33	71	62	70	84	88	84	105	89	69	97	1128	

that the Italian team is the only team that participated in all Paralympic competitions from 1960 to 2024 and for all tournaments, and it is the only team that participated in the largest group of athletes, as shown in the 1980 edition, where it participated with fifteen players out of a total of 45 players from seven countries, while as for the total participation of players in all tournaments from 1960 to 2024, the number of athletes from all participating countries reached the last participation in 2024 is 1128 The participation rate of the Italian team was 14.71%.

As for the second European team that was mentioned in the results of the three winning teams, the French team that climbed the podiums in 12 out of 17 editions, of which it achieved the first place in six editions, four for the second place, and two for the third place, and looking at the Table 3, it is noted that the French team comes after the Italian team in the number of Paralympic participations and the number of athletes participating, the total participation of its players reached 13.03%.

In each tournament, the other team that was included in the medal list is the British team, which is considered the third European team and the owner of the participation from the second session to the last Paralympic Tournament, and during this period, it did not get the first place, but came second for two sessions, and came third, and the participation rate of female players reached 8.51% of the total number of players.

The fourth European team whose name appeared on the podiums was the German team, which won four bronze medals and one silver medal.

Referring to Table 2 and looking at the list of decorations for the period from 1996 to 2024, we see that Asia entered the list of competitions through the Hong Kong team, which competed with European teams and fought to get the first place in 2004, and

then declined with the entry of an Asian team and strongly after its first participation in 2004 with three players, which is the Chinese team, and in 2008, the Chinese team participated with nine players and won the first place, and in 2012, China participated with the same number and advanced over the teams participating in the position. The first states (Xiaohua, 1994) that in 1994, Beijing hosted the Far East and South Pacific Games for the first time. Special needs (known as the FESPIC Games) – a regional version of the Paralympic Games for South and East Asian countries. The Games have been praised by the Chinese government and press as a resounding success. The wide media coverage, good organization, strong participation by athletes from other countries in the region, and the large number of medals won by Chinese athletes,

Stone, (2001, p. 64) notes that the emergence of athletes with disabilities on the Chinese scene since the 1980s, and the extensive media coverage that has accompanied sporting successes at the national and international levels, is welcome, but not without reservations. At best, publicity has contributed to raising public awareness of disability in China, and has challenged certain assumptions about what people with disabilities can and cannot do.

But Stein (2010) He points out that China's economic launch and steady social progress coincided with the United Nations Decade for Persons with Disabilities (1983–1992), in which the government actively sought to emulate the experiences of Western countries to promote the development of services for persons with disabilities (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 1993). Highlights in advocating for the rights of persons with Disability During this period, the establishment of the Chinese Paragovernmental Federation of Persons with Disabilities in 1988, the first inclusion of persons with disabilities in the five-year plans (i.e., China's comprehensive plans for national economic and social development) in 1991, and the promulgation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities in 1991 (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2019). Behind these early achievements, Deng Bufang, son of Deng Xiaoping, one of China's top leaders, is believed to have leveraged his strong political ties to facilitate measures to empower people with disabilities that were out of reach in China.

There are necessary things in achieving victory, as the Chinese entry in this field is behind great facilities from the state for the team's training and equipping it with the simplest sports equipment for people with disabilities and difficult equipment, as well as by facilitating the daily needs from the simplest things to the largest ones, and looking at Table 3, we note that the largest number of participants in the 2024 Paralympic fencing game is the Chinese delegation with 12 players and won the first place, the Thai team with four players and got the second place, and the British team with four players and got for third place.

Through the Table 1 and Table 2, it can be seen that the competition for the first three ranks was from 1960 to 1992 a competition between European teams only, and from 1996 to 2024, it is a Eurasian competition, and the Asian teams beat the European teams deservedly.

Referring to Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, which are related to the number of competitions, countries, and participation of women and men, it is noted that the number of competitions in the first edition of 1960 is 3 competitions, and in the last edition of 2024, it became 16 competitions, because the number of participating countries increased from one country to 22 countries in 2024, which is a direct proportion, the more countries the more competitions in 1960, the competitions are (Saber Individual Men, Al-Saif Team for Men, Singles Ladies in the sport of Sheesh) and 2024 The competitions are: (Fencing Fencing Individual Men's Class A-Fencing Fencing Singles Men's Class B-Men 's Fencing Sword Team-Men's Individual Fencing Category-Men 's Individual Fencing Category-Men's Individual Fencing Category-Men's Individual Fencing Team-Men's Individual Sword Category A-Class B Men's Individual Sword-Class A Women's Singles Fencing Weapon-Women's Singles Fencing Team-Women's Fencing Team -Women's Fencing Team -Women's Singles Fencing Category-Women's Individual Fencing Category-Women's Singles Fencing Team-Women's Single-Shot B-Women's Fencing Team - Class A for women's individual sword - Class B in women's individual sword) The highest number of competitions recorded was in 1980 and it was 17 competitions.

As for the participation of men and women, which is shown in Fig. 2, the graphs show that the International Paralympic Committee is directed towards equality in the number of participants, and this is what happened in the last two competitions in 2020 and 2024, which is equal in numbers and opening opportunities for the largest number of disabled people and integrating them into society of both sexes, men and women.

Also, one of the most important increases in the number of competitors is the development of technology, which has been reflected in the wheelchair industry, as he points out.

Gammon et al., (2017, p. 57) Especially with regard to the design of wheelchairs and prosthetics have

developed tremendously over the years. At the beginning of the Paralympic Games, athletes' options were relatively limited in terms of equipment. For example, there was only one type of wheelchair to perform all sports. Now, each chair is not only designed specifically for the specific sport, but also, in many cases, for the person who will use it.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The researchers concluded from the current study the two most important conclusions.

1. The sport of Paralympic fencing has witnessed a clear shift in the balance of power, with European countries dominating the podiums in the early stages of the Paralympic Games, while new Asian powers (such as China and Hong Kong) were born to top the medal table in the subsequent editions.
2. There is a strong relationship between countries and successive participation, in order to gain competitive experience and raise the technical level to reach achievement. The countries with the highest medal rates were mostly the ones with the highest number of players over the course of the tournaments.

As for the most important recommendations

1. Countries seeking to improve their technical skills should use comprehensive and sustainable strategies that include increasing government support, developing talent discovery programs, providing specialized training facilities, and taking advantage of the training models currently followed by the winning countries in the competitions.
2. Conducting future studies based on the qualitative method, such as conducting intensive interviews with coaches, as well as athletes and administrators from different countries, to find out the hidden factors that cannot be extracted from quantitative data alone.

Conflicts of interest

None.

We confirm that all tables and figures in this article are ours and written by the researchers themselves.

Author's contributions

All contributions of this study were done by the researchers (Jamal Sakran Hamza and Saja Khaled Jassim Mohammed and Mohammed Ramadan Najm) who get the main idea and work on writing and concluding also with number of experts, . . . Jamal Sakran Hamza in Statistics, Reviewed by Dr. Ansam Yarib Khayoun / University of Baghdad . . .in translating.

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Data availability

The authors confirm that the data supporting the finndings of this study are available within the article [and/or] its supplementary materials.

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المبارزة في الألعاب البارالمبية الصيفية: دراسة تاريخية تحليلية لإنجازات دول المنتخبات المشاركة للفترة (1960-2024)

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[3] *جامعة الموصل، كلية التربية الرياضية وعلوم الرياضة*

المستخلص

تعد الألعاب البارالمبية من أهم الأحداث الرياضية اليوم، حيث تمثل الوجه الآخر للإعاقة في العالم، حيث "هي تجسيد للإرادة الإنسانية وقدرتها على تجاوز التحديات، وتتجاوز كونها مجرد مسابقة رياضية لتصبح منصة عالمية تساهم في تغيير المواقف المجتمعية تجاه الإعاقة. الهدف من البحث هو إجراء تحليل تاريخي ووثائقي لإنجازات المنتخبات الوطنية المشاركة في المبارزة البارالمبية ضمن دورة الألعاب البارالمبية الصيفية في الفترة من 1960 إلى 2024 ، استخدم الباحثون المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لتحليل تطور مشاركة المنتخبات الوطنية والإنجازات. تم مراجعة البيانات والميداليات التاريخية إحصائيا. واستنتج الباحثون إلى أن رياضة المبارزة البارالمبية شهدت تحولا واضحا في ميزان القوى ، حيث سيطرت الدول الأوروبية على منصات التتويج في الفترات الأولى من الألعاب البارالمبية ، بينما ولدت قوى آسيوية جديدة (مثل الصين وهونغ كونغ) لتتصدر جدول الميداليات في الدورات اللاحقة.2- هناك علاقة قوية بين الدول للمشاركة في التسلسل من أجل اكتساب الخبرة التنافسية ورفع المستوى الفني للوصول إلى الإنجاز. كانت الدول التي حققت أعلى معدلات الميداليات هي في الغالب تلك التي شاركت بأكبر عدد من اللاعبين على مدار البطولات، اهم التوصيات هي: 1- يجب على الدول التي تسعى إلى تحسين مهاراتها الفنية استخدام استراتيجيات شاملة ومستدامة تشمل زيادة الدعم الحكومي، وتطوير برامج اكتشاف المواهب، وتوفير مرافق تدريبية متخصصة. والاستفادة من نماذج التدريب التي تتبعها حاليا الدول الفائزة في المسابقات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل، المبارزة البارالمبية، الإنجازات