

**Kurt Fearnley**

Hi, I'm Kurt Fearnley, former Paralympian broadcasting from Awabakal Country.

**Georgie Tunny**

And I'm Georgie Tunny . And I'm in denial once again another Paralympic Games has come to an end I'm broadcasting from Gadigal country

**Kurt Fearnley**

Don't put the tears at the front of the show we can save the tears for the end.

**Georgie Tunny**

We love that we've just got to embrace them. We're gonna get through it. We could get through this episode we can I know we can.

**Kurt Fearnley**

Well, on today's show, you get to meet our favourite sports administrator of all time.

Georgie Tunny

That sounds so boring. So boring. Kate is far more than a sports administrator. Come on.

**Kurt Fearnley**

She's the person that makes everything happen behind the scenes for our Australian Paralympic team and has for nearly a decade.

**Georgie Tunny**

Way more exciting. Yes.

**Kurt Fearnley**

And we get to speak to the person who's carrying the Australian flag out to the closing ceremony.

**Ben Tudhope**

Oh, it's a huge honour. I couldn't think of anything better to finish off such an incredible games here in Beijing.

**Kurt Fearnley**

Georgie, I cannot believe that it's the last time we get to sit down and talk about a winter Paralympians and find out what was the day's You Little Ripper moment, but here we go, who was yours?

**Georgie Tunny**

Right throughout the week, a lot of focus has been paid to one team in particular. And it just so happens it's not even our team Kurtin Australia. And that is why I have to give my You Little Ripper moment in this final episode of our season two team Ukraine, they won another Gold medal on the last day of competition in the open relay and we all know what is happening away from the slopes with their home country. So this team has just showed absolute chutzpah and guts and courage and emotion and I'm not sure quite frankly how they've done it but they have finished with 29 Medals overall 11 Gold 10 Silver 8 Bronze to

finish second on the medal tally, which is just mind boggling. China is up in number one with 61 medals, which is mind boggling in itself. They won so many what a haul for them the host nation but I just I just can't go past Ukraine. I can't go past Ukraine. They get me in the feels every time.

### **Kurt Fearnley**

My You Little Ripper moment is Josh Hanlon. Today he got 6th in the seat and slalom, but he got third in his second attempt at this thing. This is a kid who is so close to cracking on onto that podium. And again friend of the pod we saw he's so new to the movement. He's so new to the sport itself that he has a monster a monster future of him so I've got to finish my last You Little Ripper moment with Josh Hanlon and a Winter Paralympics because I reckon it's the first You Little Ripper moment at the next

### **Kurt Fearnley**

My best of the rest is Pat Jensen again. Pat had an eighth overall today. But his conversation after he completed was just phenomenal. He referred to the his enjoyment level of skiing. He said he's had the most fun he's ever had skiing for years. And he also recognized that this is one of the last races that he will partake of, or when allows Paralympic to partake with vision So he's prediction is that a lot of people have disability that remain static, some people have disability that may come in and out. Others have a disability that is degenerative and in in the the impairment will increase over his life. Pat lands in the latter boat. So he recognizes that he's been ease degenerating. And that the next time potentially, that he's heading down a slope like that, he could be a B1, which is our classification for somebody who is completely blind. So it's it's almost, you know, hearing him speak about that, but also speak that he's, he's still going to compete, he's going to be there and, and I think he's another one of those athletes that the Paralympic movement is in his soul.

### **Georgie Tunny**

Oh, it certainly is. And it's just one of those moments, I think it just adds yet another layer of complexity to what is going on for these athletes, just to get to their events and compete and also be focusing, you know, let alone achieve what they have achieved so far, knowing that that is his final, potentially his final Paralympic event with his current stage of vision and yet he's able to you know, complete both runs finished eighth overall wonderful, wonderful for Pat and his guide. That was so so wonderful. My best of the rest Kurt it has to go to a sport that you and I potentially potentially may try out.

### **Kurt Fearnley**

No, no, no, we're not talking potentially take that to the bank.

### **Georgie Tunny**

Yes, it has to go to the sledge hockey because this was an enthralling matchup the Gold Medal Match Team USA up against Team Canada, it does not get much more out rivals than that. And it came down to not really the wire at all Team USA, were very very good too strong for Team Canada who've been so great throughout the whole Paralympics. But Team USA would too good, they won relatively easy, I don't think the sport is easy. So I'm going to say relatively easy in the end, five nil to be gold medalist. So that's my best of the rest.

Because as we know, we start watching these games Kurt and we just like put our heads in our hands and say how, how do people get through them?

**Kurt Fearnley**

I think that's a great best of the rest. So I'm just gonna throw it out there here on your little rip at first, the warning shot will be fired. The ice Roos are coming for USA. They are coming, and we probably won't be in it. But they are coming for you. It is been a huge week for us here at You Little Ripper. It's been great watching. But today we get to have the the insight the pine machines talk about the entire movement. But also, we get to talk with the flag bearer. And the Chef de Mission speak to Kate McLoughlin who's the Chef de Mission, Ben Tudhope, obviously, who's the who's the flag bearer. But we get to speak to Kate about why she chooses Ben. Kate McLoughlin. Ben Tudhope, welcome to You Little Ripper

**Ben Tudhope**

Thank you for having me off.

**Kate McLoughlin**

Thank you

**Kurt Fearnley**

Mate, you're pretty much hosting You Little Ripper at the moment. You've been here it's your 3 attendance in the games period. But we had to get you back because you've been named as the flag bearer. What does that mean to you?

**Ben Tudhope**

Oh, it's a huge honour. I couldn't think of anything better to finish off such an incredible Games here in Beijing. And for Kate to tell me yesterday. Giving me the honour of being the flag bearer , it's enormous and makes you proud to be an Aussie.

**Georgie Tunny**

And, Kate, I want you to talk us through that moment of where you really surprised Ben with letting him know that he was the flag bearer on that gondola who came up with that? How'd you pull it off? And also, how did you decide that Ben was, you know, going to be the perfect flag bearer for us?

**Kate McLoughlin**

We nearly didn't pull it off. The whole idea was that we were supposed to meet Ben down at his car, taking straight onto the gondola. So he didn't have any interaction with anybody else. But car arrived 20 minutes earlier. So I wasn't how do I get the flag? And then he just turned up. And we didn't even say hello. What are you doing here? So we have to kind of quickly usher you before we saw anybody else put him on the gondola and then obviously, yeah, was able to ask him that question. I love a good surprise. I I think we've done it before. Kurt haven't been surprising, I guess, in terms of the your other question around why it was I mean, at some I think Ben you know, it's not just about the amazing performance that he came up with here in Beijing, but you know, he's just such a stand up Australian paralympian stand up young man. And I think he's just the most. He's an amazing role model. He's someone who speaks from his heart. I mean, everyone's probably heard his interviews over here. You know, he doesn't just speak to the performances that he's achieved personally, he

speaks to the team behind him, you know, those that have helped him get to where he is. But also he talks about the past. And those, you know, Trailblazers from the Australian Paralympic family that have, you know, enabled him to have the success he has today. And I just, every time I hear him speak, it just gives me goosebumps, and I think he you know, he couldn't pick a better person to, to carry that flag out and represent our team tonight.

**Kurt Fearnley**

What if you had the ability to speak back to everybody in this country? I don't know some words, what would they be? Well, you're carrying the flag in the Green and Gold.

**Ben Tudhope**

Oh, it would just be I, I'm really just proud is proud to be in Australian and carrying the flag represents so much of Australia as a whole, but also the Paralympics and how everyone on this team has done so well. And that's what's so cool. I think about the closing ceremony is really a celebration of what we have done on the of the past two weeks compared to the opening rates. Yeah, that kind of representing of the Game to start the Game. But I feel like everybody doesn't have fun and a good time at the closing. So yeah, I'll be honoured to represent not only the team, but the whole of Australia, walking into that ceremony, and yeah, just have a great time as well.

**Georgie Tunny**

Well, we can't wait to see it Ben we're so excited for you. Kate from an you know, as we call you here, World Sports greatest sports administrator that ever lived

**Kurt Fearnley**

Of all time

**Georgie Tunny**

worldwide, worldwide world renowned. Yes. From that perspective, for you heading into a closing ceremony, is it just a moment to exhale?

**Kate McLoughlin**

I think I will relax when every single member of our team heats the time I can Australia, safely back home to their families, I think, you know, it's been a incredibly challenging 12 months both for our Summer mob and our Winter mob. They've performed so incredibly, brilliantly on the world stage. But until we get them home safely, I think that's always been our, our mantra, I guess, for the last couple of games, because you know, there's just so many crazy things going on in the world. And I can't wait to deliver these guys back to their families too. Because you know, more than most athletes, they've been on the road for months and months and months. And so it'll be just so lovely for them to go back home and spend time with their family, give them a hug and spend some time at the beach, hopefully, a little bit different to where they've been,

**Ben Tudhope**

Hot weather!

**Kurt Fearnley**

Well, hopefully we can serve that up to your mate when you get home. Okay, you've led the team with this equal mix mix of both care and, and just undeniable hard work. I'm sure the 24 hours in the lead up to these games would have been extremely hard. Can you take us back to the to that 24 hours both the the the first meeting that would have happened it would have been Chef de Mission meeting when it was said that Russia would compete under the white under a neutral banner, can you talk us through how those meetings were and how it affected you.

**Kate McLoughlin**

They were emotional, like incredibly emotional to say the way that different Chef de Missions from different countries were all visibly moved by the situation. I think what it just brought home to us is that whilst you know we come to these games to celebrate sport and come together, and it's just so lovely that we get to spend time together once every two years. The enormity of the situation in Ukraine, when we're all together and all had Yeah, we don't usually share those moments together. And I think that was you know, the world was had come together in one moment and was experiencing all these you know, multitude of emotions. It was it was pretty full on I'll be I'll be honest, and I know that there was a lot of mixed emotions, a lot of people saying what about the athletes from those two countries that were being you know, spoken about Russia, Belarus about whether you know those athletes sorry, the government's views were not those the views of those athletes and sympathy for what those athletes is obviously the Ukrainian athletes were the ones that were forefront of everyone's mind but also those athletes have been impacted by the the actions of their government so it was it was Yeah, incredibly emotional I'll be honest,

**Kurt Fearnley**

it wasn't a tears emotional or was it angry emotional?

**Kate McLoughlin**

A little bit of both. I think that you know, there were people, those Chef de Mission meetings tend to be sometimes quite amusing if they're around operation of very menial operational matters and, and trying to make sure that everything's set up well for the performance environment that we created a games. And that shifted in a very short space of time that those meetings became incredibly serious and sombre. Yes, there was anger. Yes. So there were tears, there were people that were getting choked up trying to speak about the situation about what their I guess the the views of their own country were?

**Georgie Tunny**

How do you bounce back from that? Because obviously, that is one of the more intense lead ins to a Games, how to how do you bounce back? How does the team bounce back? How does the entire event bounce back?

**Kate McLoughlin**

I think to be quite honest, and then Ben you can tell me what you think about our athletes, I feel will was so focused on what they were there to do. And I guess it was my job to make sure that, you know, they didn't probably this is actually the first time I've spoken about that meeting. I've got because when you come out of that meeting, if the athletes are not talking about it, and wanting to know information, or focus on what they're there to do, which is to compete, I'm sure they wouldn't have their own opinions. And there were the odd

conversation about it. But it was very little because they hadn't started competing yet. So it's not something that I would have brought up. And it's probably something I kept to myself, because, you know, there was no point in providing any additional burden on the athletes at that moment in time. But I know that they felt for the Ukrainian athletes, for sure.

### **Kurt Fearnley**

Well, I think the I've seen you do that multiple times for like you have seen you take a pretty heavy moment and make sure that it doesn't impact into that vacuum that we've been benefit beneficiaries of, and being in the team. Now, but then I got to ask, you might and I know I want to have a crack at this one as well. What's been your highlight off the track off the off the racing circuit of the competition field? Is there a moment that you go? This has been a great games...

### **Ben Tudhope**

I feel like it's been a different game for us, because we have been in separate villages. So I'm away from skiing athletes, and they're right for me. And one of the best moments for me was actually coming down and meeting the skiers for the first time in Beijing. And we had a great team meeting. Me and Mel got to speak for the first time as team captains and just to have everyone from Australia together in that moment, was it truly special than it was before the games even began, it was for opening ceremony. It was like, Okay, we're finally we're finally here, ready to go now!

### **Kate McLoughlin**

I think it's gonna be another moment where we were all together. Some of us will virtually though, obviously, everybody knows that, you know, unfortunately, Jonty O'Callaghan wasn't able to compete at those games. And that was, you know, I think that really got to everybody. It was really tough. Because, you know, it's such a close knit group, but to meet one person is really hard. Like Jonty was amazing. We kept in touch with Jonty throughout the entire games. And there was one night where we did a trivia night, completely organized by Jonty. And he did 10 quick questions. And all I think all of us got in there. And Ben was online in Zhangjiakou. We were all in Yanqing the village and Jonty was on the line. And we thought it was gonna be like, you know, general knowledge. And I think everyone's all excited, like it was gonna be a pub quiz. But he did it all on the team. And all on the stats

### **Ben Tudhope**

Yeah, very direct. Like, okay, you have to know, every single little bit of information to get an answer right.

### **Kate McLoughlin**

And you can imagine a room full of incredibly competitive people who would normally be acing it. Oh, it was very funny. Because there were things like how many

### **Ben Tudhope**

competitions had Mel Perrine been in from the start of her career?

### **Kate McLoughlin**

And it was like a multiple choice. And it was, it was it was hilarious, because no one was winning. Because losing, and it was very funny to watch.

**Georgie Tunny**

I gotta ask you, Ben heading into the closing ceremony, how are your nerves? How do you feel?

**Ben Tudhope**

Um, you know, not so nervous this time. Back when I was 14, I think I was more nervous than the actual race. Just don't drop the flag, don't do anything. But this time, I'm just excited. It's been epic games. It's been awesome. It's been a great team camaraderie around us and I'm just excited to get to the Birds Nest which is an amazing building and yeah, enjoy, enjoy what the experience gives me and doing it for the second time I think the nerves are a bit lower!

**Kurt Fearnley**

No doubt mate no doubt you'll do it the way you do everything with the Paralympic movement someone described was it your mum described the best the other day she said the Paralympic movement is in Ben's Soul. I thought that was just the perfect description for you. What's the first thing you're going to do when you get home?

Ben Tudhope

Oh, probably eat a pub schnitzel

**Georgie Tunny**

Yes.

**Kurt Fearnley**

Can you top a chicken schnitzel?

**Kate McLoughlin**

I think I'm going to cuddle my kids.

**Georgie Tunny**

Pretty good. Pretty good.

**Kurt Fearnley**

I don't know

**Kurt Fearnley**

Enjoy tonight we're thinking of you. When you carry on that flag game, Mate, don't just think about the last week you carry and every Paralympian in there from 1960. So congratulations, super proud, honoured that your teammate. And thanks for joining us on You Little Ripper

**Ben Tudhope**

Thank you so much

**Kate McLoughlin**

Thanks guys.

**Georgie Tunny**

Kurt we have been so spoiled with our access that we have got this games and it's been so brilliant to talk to pretty much every single athlete on our team.

**Kurt Fearnley**

I hope that we're going to have these episodes coming out more frequently, there will be less gap between the next episode, this can be the voice of Paralympic sport. And we will be able to get athletes with disabilities on Your Little Ripper and throw a few bonus episodes out there they will catch up. So make sure you keep You Little Ripper in your feed and tell your friends about us. We need this to grow as big as we can because Paralympic stories need to be told. And not just at the Paralympic Games, hopefully we can bring you world championships and everything in between. But for now, we have to kind of say goodbye.

**Georgie Tunny**

I don't want to, but I'll do it. I'll do it for you Kurt Fearnley, I'll say goodbye for now for now, because we are going to come back. But before we do that, we just have to say a huge, huge thank you again to Toyota, our sponsor. Remember here at You Little Ripper, we're trying to make the most accessible podcast that the Australian sports community has ever seen. We have transcripts, we have Auslan translations, you just go to YouTube and search You Little Ripper out all of our episodes there. But we can't do any of this without Toyota. So we thank them very, very much. We also thank all of the Paralympians who have joined us on this series and we thank you listening to us because it just let's get not just banging on about a whole bunch of stuff that we get super emotional about and super, super passionate about.

**Kurt Fearnley**

100% I couldn't have said it better myself. We won't say goodbye. We'll say See you next time. Thanks again to Toyota and

**Georgie Tunny**

You Little Ripper!

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>