

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two TeamUP Paralyzed Endurance Triathletes go Head-to-Head for the Win at XTERRA USA Championship

TeamUP members Craig Vogtsberger, XTERRA USA Champion and Darren Smith, Canadian National Champion, won't let their lower-leg paralysis stop them from going for the gold or from inspiring others.

Ogden, UT – September 16, 2015 – Among the sea of participants who have given it their all to qualify for the XTERRA USA Championship Triathlon, on Saturday, September 19, two disabled Paratriathletes Craig Vogtsberger and Darren Smith will both strive, not just for a trophy or the \$80,000 grand prize, but to inspire the thousands of Americans who have foot drop, or lower-leg, ankle or foot paralysis, and are searching for answers.

Both athletes are accomplished in their own right. After picking up the Physically Challenged Division win in the final qualifying triathlon recently, Craig - a National Guard veteran and a 4-time XTERRA USA Champion - will return to Ogden, UT to defend his title.

After his win in the XTERRA Portland, 5-time Canadian Paratriathlon Champion, Darren – a chiropractor and avid triathlete – will also be returning to Ogden, UT to challenge his teammate for the win.

Winning the race in their division is not the only reason both are competing. Most importantly they are teaming up to spread the word and raise awareness about foot drop lower-leg paralysis to an audience who may not be aware that they have a condition that can be diagnosed and managed with a suitable leg brace like the ones they wear made by Allard USA.

During a National Guard Training accident in 2001, Craig's body was crushed between two Humvees, which resulted in massive trauma to his entire body. After, Craig was left with a grim prognosis of spending the rest of his life sitting in a chair taking pain killers, and battling his new reality both mentally and physically. "Among my injuries, I came away with spinal trauma, which led to foot drop paralysis," said Craig.

While Darren has worked hard to regain most of his strength after suffering a stroke during a surgical procedure that left him completely paralyzed in his left leg, he was left with lower leg weakness which includes foot drop paralysis.

Having foot drop makes simple tasks like walking and running a constant challenge. Both athletes struggled to find a solution for their situations. It wasn't until both discovered the freedom and confidence that Allard USA's line of braces brought them, which aided these extraordinary athletes in achieving many of their athletic goals to date. Craig will be racing in his BlueROCKER™ and Darren will be running in his ToeOFF® 2.0 - the dynamic response, carbon fiber orthotic braces – both made by Allard USA. “It is such a tremendous honor to be returning to the XTERRA USA Championship battle,” said Craig. “Especially since there was a time when I had even given up on the thought that I would ever walk again.”

While both friends agree it doesn't matter who wins or loses at the XTERRA USA Championship, one thing is for sure; they both are winning at Getting Back Up and encouraging others to do so as well.

Both Craig and Darren are members of TeamUP, the first national team of inspiring people with lower-leg paralysis who participate in sporting and non-sporting events to spread awareness of their conditions and to encourage others to reclaim their lives. Meet the TeamUP members and learn more about their efforts to help others manage foot drop and Get Back Up by going to www.GetBackUPToday.com.

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