



# RUDY GARCIA-TOLSON

5x Paralympic Medalist  
5x Paralympian

Swimmer, Runner, Triathlete - IRONMAN

2016 Paralympic Silver Medalist – Swimming – 200IM

2013 Silver Medal – Long Jump – IPC Athletic World Championships

2012 Paralympic Silver Medalist – Swimming – 200IM

2008 & 2004 Paralympic Gold Medalist – Swimming – 200IM

World Record Holder – 200 meter IM

10-time American Record Holder

 @rudygarciatolson



# HIS STORY

While Rudy Garcia-Tolson was born with rare, multiple birth defects – a combination of crippling Pterygium Syndrome, a club foot, webbed fingers and a cleft lip and palate - he was also born with an extraordinarily courageous heart and an unbreakable will to endure.

From extremely humble beginnings, Rudy spent his childhood living in a trailer park. At age five, after 15 corrective operations with limited results, he told his parents he wanted to move on; he would rather be a double amputee than continue to put up with what his life had become. Shortly thereafter he had both legs amputated above the knee.

At eight years old, he told all who would listen that he would swim in the Paralympics. Powerbar listened, and signed Rudy to his first of many endorsement deals. At 10, he became the youngest bilateral amputee to complete a triathlon on his own. The same year, he set his first national record in swimming. Sponsors took notice when his story caught national attention on the Oprah Winfrey show. In short order, Rudy became the primary bread winner in the family as a professional athlete.



Remarkably, at just 13 years old, Rudy realized an unusual dream for a child. He bought his first home and moved his family out of the trailer park and into a house.

In 2004 he made good on his Paralympic promise, coming home from Athens with a gold medal and a world record. Four years later in Beijing he did the same; another gold medal and another world record.

Seeking an even greater challenge, in 2009 he became the first ever bilateral above-the-knee amputee to complete an Ironman (2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, 26.2 mile run).

At the London Paralympics in 2012 Rudy brought home a swimming silver medal and competed on the track as well, in both the 100 and 200 meter sprints.

At the Rio Paralympic Games Rudy won a silver medal in the 200m IM, while placing 6th in three other events. At the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo he placed 6th and 7th in two swimming events.

Though only 34, Rudy is already a polished public speaker and regularly shares his inspiring message of: “A Brave Heart is a Powerful Weapon” to groups, corporations and fellow athletes across the country. He has received both the Arte Courage in Sports Award and Nike’s Casey Martin Award, and has helped the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) raise more than \$50 million to help support the athletic dreams of other disabled athletes. Rudy is particularly active with very young children learning to deal with their own physical challenges.



# MOTIVATE

Rudy has twice been featured on Oprah and was named by People Magazine as one of “20 Teens Who Will Change the World”.

When not training/competing, Rudy tours the country as a professional motivational speaker sharing his message: “A Brave Heart is a Powerful Weapon.”





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