



# Dawna Callahan

Winner Partners welcomes Dawna Callahan as our Adaptive Sport Partner. Throughout her life and professional career, Dawna Callahan has consistently been a trailblazer for people and athletes with disabilities. At age three, Dawna experienced incomplete paralysis from transverse myelitis, a neurological disorder that causes inflammation of the spinal cord. Before federal legislation ensured the right to a free and equal public education for all, Dawna was the first student with a physical disability in her hometown to be mainstreamed into public school when she was five.

Dawna began her professional career in HR in Silicon Valley, focusing on diversity initiatives. Around this time, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted. This, along with her passion for adventure, provided numerous opportunities to regularly hit the ski slopes in Tahoe. It was there that she found a like-minded community and experienced the 'power of sport.' These transformational experiences encouraged her to refocus her career on disability advocacy and adapted sport, creating more access and life-changing opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Dawna is driven by the belief that sport has the power to change all aspects of a person's life from physical and emotional health to employment opportunities and social integration. Her own life has been a testament of its positive impact.

Today, Dawna owns and operates All In Sport Consulting - one of only 77 organizations globally to be recognized as a Business Disability Expert and partner with The Valuable 500, a global organization focused on ending disability exclusion. Her consulting firm has worked with numerous sport-focused clients including the U.S. Center for SafeSport, Augusta Sports Council, Bridge2Sports, Lakeshore Foundation and The World Games Inclusion Initiative, USA Boxing, and USRowing. Her career also includes positions with the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF), the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, Disabled Sports USA, and Adaptive Sports USA. She also conceived of and presented the inaugural Adapted Sport Leadership & Business Symposium (LABS), an annual conference that connects sport leaders that focuses on meaningful conversations that advance the adapted sport movement. As a part of LABS, she established the first-ever economic impact study for the adapted sport industry.

A competitive wheelchair racer, Dawna has completed numerous road races and marathons. She is a keynote speaker, an adjunct professor for Southern Connecticut State University, and is also on the faculty of the Sports & Entertainment Impact Collective.

Dawna notes, "It's time to move beyond inspirational or charity-type narratives about people with disabilities. We are a formidable force - both culturally and economically - and should be a critical part of every organization's DEI strategy."

Her lived experience as a wheelchair user and disabled athlete provides for authentic, insightful, and productive conversations around disability that fuel lasting organizational change.