

LAST RUN



John Davis

This Santa Cruz, Calif., native, who now lives in Vail, is a favorite to strike gold at February's Winter Paralympics in Nagano, Japan. Davis is also the star of "The Chariot Races," an award-winning documentary by filmmaker Christian Schneider, which features stunning footage of Davis racing in Austria at speeds of up to 60 mph, skiing deep powder in the Canadian Rockies and soaring over 30-foot gap jumps.

Born January 8, 1971 (age 27)

Early Days "I grew up skiing with my family at Alpine Meadows, Calif., and taking my dad off jumps he didn't want to go off. I also surfed all day, every day during the summer when I was a teenager."

The Accident "In October of 1989, I was driving back from a surfing trip in Baja, Mexico. My pickup rolled over and my 12th thoracic vertebra was crushed. I was paralyzed from my belly button down."

The Road Back "My roommate in the hospital was a cowboy who had been paralyzed in a riding accident. But he had the best attitude. We both realized early on that we were still the same people inside and that we had to be positive."

His Chariot "While I was still in the hospital, I contacted John Castellano, who was making a special off-road wheelchair with oversized tires and heavy-duty suspension. A year later, my brother persuaded me to race against able-bodied mountain bikers in a downhill mountain-bike race. Since then, I've competed in dozens of mountain-bike races, including two World Championships. I was the first, but now there are other disabled athletes racing in off-road wheelchairs, which is exciting."

His Chariot Part II "Monoskiing is like riding a lounge chair on top of a ski. I started ski racing in 1992 and made the U.S. Disabled Ski Team a year later. In 1994, I won the gold medal in the monoskiing GS at the Winter Paralympics in Lillehammer, Norway."

Going For It "I'll ski 100 days this year—in powder, bumps, the trees. I love it all."

Ability Matters "I don't want people to say, 'Hey, that guy's a great disabled skier.' I want them to say, 'Hey, that guy's a great skier.'"
—Reade Bailey

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIAN SCHNEIDER

"The Chariot Races" is available on video; call (800)359-5437.