

Mark Bathum

Top-Ranked Adaptive Alpine Racer

Mark Bathum was born with retinitis pigmentosa, the second leading cause of blindness, and has been legally blind since his late 30s. Mark embraced this challenge in his late 40's and is currently the top-ranked visually impaired ski racer in the world in the downhill event. He is a three-time Paralympic silver medalist in the 2010 and 2014 games, is the top-ranked adaptive alpine racer in the U.S., has won eight World Cup races despite attending only half the races each year, was nominated for an ESPY, and was named the Paralympian Male Athlete of the Games at the inaugural U.S. Olympic and Paralympic "Best of U.S." Awards ceremony broadcast by NBC in 2014.

Top-Ranked Alpine Racer. After a lifetime of hiding his eye disease from all but family and his closest friends, Bathum embraced his disability and returned to the passion of his youth: ski racing. As a teen, Bathum dreamed of making the U.S. Ski Team; this goal appeared attainable because Mark was a top ten ranked junior ski racer in slalom and giant slalom and top 15 in downhill. Unbeknownst to Mark at the time, he was losing his peripheral vision to an inherited degenerative eye disease. Mark's vision loss eventually inhibited his performance and led to his retirement at age 18. After a 30 year retirement, Bathum resumed racing and joined the Paralympic racing circuit. Despite working full time and only racing on his vacation days, Bathum qualified for the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic games at age 51 and won a silver medal in the downhill, hitting a top speed of 76 mph. Bathum followed this up with two silver medals at the Sochi Paralympic games in 2014 at age 55.

Business Career. Bathum earned his MBA from UCLA in 1986 and has worked in marketing, business development, sales, and contract negotiation. He began his career working in Europe for his family's industrial lifting equipment business and helped develop new markets and establish a network of distributors. After obtaining his MBA, Bathum worked in brand management at Nestle. Bathum and his brother then founded a shoe business that eventually became the Bite golf shoe brand which they sold to Crocs. Bathum worked for several internet startups, one of which he still works for today. In addition to working full time and competing internationally in adaptive racing, Bathum is an active investor in early stage life sciences businesses and owner/operator of six rental properties.