

**NINA MOINI:** The Winter Paralympic Games in Milano-Cortina are well underway, and Minnesota has the most athletes competing out of any other state. There's another Minnesotan in the spotlight. Fox 9 reporter Courtney Godfrey is co-hosting the games with NBC, and she joins me now to talk all about it. Thanks for being on the show, Courtney.

**COURTNEY GODFREY:** It's so wonderful to talk to you about this, Nina.

**NINA MOINI:** Oh, I'm so happy to have you. We started out reporting here in the Twin Cities around the same time. [LAUGHS] I remember what's been many years now. But for people unfamiliar with your story, you lost your lower leg in a boating accident in 2017. And since then, you've been a member of the US Para snowboard team. At one point, you had a goal of making it to the Paralympics. What was the decision behind shifting away from the sport and doing this other role of reporting and hosting that you're also really great at instead?

**COURTNEY GODFREY:** Well, I appreciate that. You're great at it, too. It's always been a joy to work with you in the field--

**NINA MOINI:** Aw, thank you.

**COURTNEY GODFREY:** --as local reporters. The Paralympics was always the dream. My husband, my kids, myself, my career, we made so many sacrifices to chase that dream. And I just barely didn't make the cut for Beijing. I continued training. I made it onto the US team. I really advanced as a snowboarder and as a competitor. And I was on my way. I believe that I probably would have made the Paralympic team going into Italy. And that was the dream.

So when NBC called me over the summer and said, hey, we're really interested in you for this role, I had to think really long and hard about what I wanted. And the truth is, I have two little kids, one of whom was starting kindergarten and starting his first year of ski racing at Highland Hills.

**NINA MOINI:** Aw. [CHUCKLES]

**COURTNEY GODFREY:** And so I had to take that into consideration. What's better for my kids, for my family, and for my career? Letting go of that dream was hard, but I came to this conclusion that maybe this, being part of this movement and being one of the faces of the game's broadcast was the real dream.

**NINA MOINI:** Hmm. And it's OK, right, for dreams to change and evolve. I think so many people who are lucky in life to have so many different passions start to think or feel identified with one or the other. And I think it's really amazing that dreams can shift and change and that you can do the things you want to do. But as somebody--

**COURTNEY GODFREY:** And the timeline certainly was not what we planned for. So I always hoped that my time on the US team and my time as an athlete would translate into a broadcast job covering the Paralympics. I just never thought it would happen this soon.

**NINA MOINI:** Well, you're amazing. It's no surprise at all. I saw that NBC has a record amount of coverage on the Paralympics this year. What's it like to see that popularity grow and the representation grow for the Paralympic Games?

**COURTNEY** Oh, Nina, it's so incredible. People are discovering our athletes. They're discovering the Paralympic movement.  
**GODFREY:** And they love it. They want more of it. And we're giving it to them at NBC. We are doing over 270 hours of coverage across various NBC platforms. And they just came out today with the numbers saying that we've had record breaking coverage so far. So it was the most--

**NINA MOINI:** Wow.

**COURTNEY** --watched opening ceremony since Salt Lake in 2002. And viewership for the first weekend of competition is up  
**GODFREY:** 27% from the 2022 Beijing Games. So it's really fun to see people discovering this movement. It's obviously a newer movement from the Olympics. We're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Paralympics this year. So it's newer, but people are really latching on to the stories and the athletes that they're seeing on their TV screens. And that is just something that's so special to be a part of.

**NINA MOINI:** I know that as a local reporter, you have become an expert in finding a topic you maybe don't know very much about [LAUGHS] and then learning and studying and becoming like a little mini expert. But I wonder if covering the games and all of these different sports-- it's kind of like a reporting Olympics of its own, in a way. [LAUGHS] I'm wondering, what is your preparation regimen like out there?

**COURTNEY** Well, it truly has been a learning experience. I thought I'd come in, I have all this experience. I know what I'm  
**GODFREY:** doing. It is a totally different ballgame. I've been on the front lines of some of today's biggest headline news there in Minneapolis, and covering sports is very different. News did prepare me, in a sense, that I'm comfortable on camera, and I'm comfortable in unpredictable, ever changing situations.

But I am not used to having to do play-by-play for sports or having to talk about stats. That's not usually what I do. So it has taken a lot of preparation. We are so lucky to have such incredible, talented researchers on our side, and they're in studio with us. So I'm constantly reading over the stats and studying up on the athletes.

But we also have a robust team at NBC that is also committed to delivering the most accurate and amazing coverage of the Paralympics. And so they're always there. They're my right-hand guys. And I just say, hey, what was their last gold medal? When was their last gold medal? When was the last time that they competed in this event? And they know it. And so--

**NINA MOINI:** Wow.

**COURTNEY** --it's really cool to just be a part of a team that is working hard and committed to this.  
**GODFREY:**

**NINA MOINI:** Yeah, I love that you have that support there. You're also supporting your teammates from afar and all the people that you've built relationships with. I saw a video on your social media of you watching [LAUGHS] one of your former teammates compete and your intensity level and your support for them. I'm sure everybody feels like that a little bit when they're watching teammates or other people or people maybe representing their different countries. But I'm wondering, what has been your favorite moment or thing to watch at the games so far?

**COURTNEY** Well, it's been so exciting to watch wheelchair curling. The nation, the world has really glommed on to curling in general. And that's rolled over into wheelchair curling, which is great. Same with sled hockey. The nation is so excited about the women's hockey team and the men's hockey team winning back-to-back gold medals. And I think everybody is sitting on the edge of their seat, waiting to see if sled hockey will do it. It's looking pretty good. They have won five straight gold medals.

**NINA MOINI:** Wow.

**COURTNEY** So they're on their way. I think they face off-- it's likely that they face off against Canada. So it's going to be just like the Olympic Men's Hockey game. And I think people are going to get really excited about it. And we're going to have it on our network, which is also exciting that we're giving it that marquee spot on network TV, saying, hey, we care as much about this as we do hockey, and we think you should, too.

**NINA MOINI:** I feel like you're describing a really fast-paced environment and just like a whirlwind. And I'm wondering how or if you're kind of just taking moments to soak this up, because this is probably-- talk about a direction in life for a plan, and you just never know. But I wonder if 10 or 15 years ago, if you would have seen yourself here, and just if you're taking moments to take that in.

**COURTNEY** Well, 10 or 15 years ago, I had two legs, so I definitely never saw this for myself. I never saw myself being a competitive snowboarder. I kind of fell into that. I snowboarded before I lost my leg. I loved snowboarding. And when I lost my leg, I got back on my snowboard four months after my amputation. And I always knew that I was going back to TV. I went back to reporting six months after losing my leg.

And so I did see this as my path. But as to the part about whether I'm soaking it in, it does move so quickly, and it is so chaotic, and there are so many cooks in the kitchen, it is hard to pause and take it in. And we're already-- we're more than halfway through the games now, and I feel like, oh, my gosh, where has the time gone? So it's a good reminder from you, Nina, that I do need to just stop and take it in.

But I'm hoping that they like me, and that they have me back, and that this won't be my last Paralympic Games. I hope that I get to do LA '28. I hope I get to do France the next Winter Games. So hopefully, this is part of a long-lasting relationship between myself and NBC Sports.

**NINA MOINI:** Well, I know they are lucky to have you. And I hope that if you don't get moments to soak it in right now, you can take a little break after the games and just kind of wind down and soak it in then, Courtney. Thank you so much for coming on *Minnesota Now*. Wishing you and your family all the best, as always.

**COURTNEY** Thanks so much, Nina. Good to talk to you.  
**GODFREY:**

**NINA MOINI:** Courtney Godfrey is a co-host at NBC for the Paralympic Games.