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ELEVATION OUTDOORS MAGAZINE » ACTIVISM » IT'S NOT OVER

It's Not Over

by CAROLINE TREADWAY on JULY 4, 2011



Above It All: Paradox's Chad Butrick keeps his prosthetic attached to his harness just in case it falls off. Photo: Caroline Treadway.

Bob Kimbro carries his feet to the crag. They are toy-sized, electric blue climbing shoes almost small enough to fit on a keychain. Kimbro screws the shoes into metal posts where his ankles used to be, ties into the rope and scrambles up a limestone pillar at Shelf Road, a climbing area near Canon City, Colorado. It's a typical day at the crag with Paradox [Sports](#). Ropes spill out of backpacks, climbers work on problems and puppies curl up in the dirt amid random body parts—legs and feet—strewn around the crag.

Half-way up the climb, Kimbro skates off a polished edge.

“You climb like a guy with no legs!” Someone yells from the ground. Kimbro laughs and everyone joins in, even another party of climbers nearby. The voice belongs to Craig Demartino, a spry, tan Coloradoan who lost his right leg in a climbing accident nine years ago and still climbs solid 5.12/13. Demartino says that his tension-easing humor dissolves the ‘don’t ask don’t tell’ attitude towards people with disabilities.

Kimbro lost both his legs in 2005 to a vicious Strep A infection. “I went to the hospital with a bad case of the flu and woke up two-and-a-half weeks later with no legs.” Kimbro still does most of the activities he enjoyed before becoming a “double, above the knee” amputee, including climbing, hiking and surfing,

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though at a slightly lower level. Thanks to [Paradox Sports](#), he has company.

Living the Paradox

Founded by D.J. Skelton and Timmy O’Neill in 2007, Paradox Sports strives to keep people active outside, even if they’re missing body parts. The Boulder, Colorado-based non-profit offers a range of adventure sports—climbing, kayaking, skiing and surfing—adapted for people with disabilities. But that’s just the beginning.

Perhaps most importantly, the organization also creates a community of athletes, friends and families, who can help each other overcome a variety of injuries. On weekends like this one, not only are people climbing and camping together, they share info, swapping beta on the best prosthetic hiking foot or the pros and cons of flexible versus rigid climbing feet. Paradox Sports also holds several annual [events](#) one of which is Gimps on Ice, a weekend of ice climbing in Ouray, Colorado. The name, Paradox, reflects the organization’s mission: “to provide inspiration, opportunities, and adaptive equipment to the disabled community, empowering their pursuit of a life of excellence through human-powered outdoor sports.”

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ANDY December 17, 2010 at 10:06 pm

I agree that Roans are the best location to cross country ski in south. Last year with 7-8 feet of snow there it was excellent. I spent a few weekends there last winter and hope to do the same this year too.

I would like to mention that it is really nice that this place is not commercialized like ski resorts. I would hate to see new parking lots and people rushing to get there. Please leave Roans alone for everyone to enjoy and do not promote commercial growth on the mountains.

Thank you for the article.

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