

Squamish athlete takes 14th out of 37 in sit-skiing at Paralympics

Alex Cairns clinched the spot in giant slalom

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Photo: FILE

And the results are in — Squamish athlete Alex Cairns made it to 14th place among 37 competitors in the men's giant sit-skiing at the Paralympics in PyeongChang.

It's a big accomplishment for Cairns, who has spina bifida — a condition where there is incomplete closing around the backbone and membranes around the spinal cord.

This has resulted in paralysis at the two lowest vertebra in the lumbar spine — though it hasn't stopped him from competing at the highest level of sit-skiing.

Giant slalom is the faster cousin of slalom. Because the turns are wider and less frequent than slalom, racers go down the slopes at higher speeds.

Each competitor makes two runs down the slope. The times are added up, and whoever has the fastest total time gets the win.

Including Cairns, there were 19 people who completed both runs successfully.

Eleven competitors did not finish the first run. Six didn't finished the second run.

One person was disqualified for failing to pass the gate correctly.

In total, there were 37 competitors.

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