

Paralympic Athlete Bebe Vio Gets a Barbie

Roberta Cutillo (December 03, 2019)



Toy Company Mattel dedicates a Barbie doll to Bebe Vio, the 22-year-old Italian paralympic fencing champion, a role model for young girls worldwide.

In 2018, Barbie launched the [Dream Gap Project](#) [2], a global initiative aimed at giving girls the resources and support they need to continue believing in themselves. In fact, according to the famous doll company, research has found that starting at age 5, many girls develop self-limiting beliefs and begin to think they're not as smart and capable as boys. They called this phenomenon the "dream gap" and have launched initiatives to try and close it.



One of these consists in highlighting empowering female role models from all walks of life. Barbie created dolls in the likeness of inspiring women from all over the world with the belief that by introducing girls to their stories, they will begin to see more opportunities for themselves.

Italian paralympic fencing champion, [Beatrice “Bebe” Vio](#) [3] is among the latest inspiring role models to get her own Barbie doll, joining various figures ranging from renowned mexican artist Frida Kahlo to aviation pioneer Amelia Earheart, principal ballerina Misty Copeland, filmmaker Patty Jenkins, activist and supermodel Adwoah Aboah, tennis player Naomi Osaka, fencing champion Ibtihaj Muhammad, actress model and activist Yara Shahidi, and many more. Other Italian dolls include astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti, singer Elisa, Michelin starred chef Rosanna Marziale, and soccer player Sara Gama.

“Look mom, I’m a Barbie Girl,” the 22-year-old athlete commented on an instagram post featuring her smiling, doll in hand. “This fills my heart and it reminds me of my responsibility to many children,” the post continues. “I hope that I will never betray you and that I will continue to be a source of inspiration.”

Born in Venice the 4th of March 1997, Bebe was affected by severe meningitis at age 11, an illness which lead to the infection and amputation of both her legs from the knee, and both her arms from the forearms. Demonstrating incredible strength and determination, she did not let this stop her from pursuing her passion for fencing, reaching the sport’s highest levels.

At age 15, she joined the Italian wheelchair fencing team and in 2013, she won her first World Cup in Montreal. She became the 2015 and 2017 World champion, and took home the gold medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

A remarkable athlete with an infectiously positive outlook on life, she is certainly one of the greatest role models for girls - and boys - worldwide.

Source URL: <http://iitaly.org/magazine/focus/facts-stories/article/paralympic-athlete-bebe-vio-gets-barbie>

Links

[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/bebeviocoverjpg>

[2] <https://barbie.mattel.com/en-us/about/dream-gap.html>

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrice_Vio