

To make your dreams come true – wake up first!

**Two stories from Pula:
sportswomen passionately toward their goals**

Mikela Ristoski

Mikela Ristoski, a 26-year-old athlete from Pula, won a gold medal in Rio 2016 Paralympic Games in long jump discipline. The result that brought her the medal was also her new personal record. Previously, at the age of only 22, she was the bronze medallist in London 2012 Paralympics in the same discipline, last year she won gold medal and also set the world record in triple jump (Doha 2015 IPC Athletics World Championship), four months later she beat herself and set a brand new triple jump world record...



What makes Mikela important for our *Someone did it* stories? Well, she is competing in T20 – sports class of athletes with intellectual impairment, the second most severe of Paralympics classes. Mikela obviously has talent for athletics - but all the successes are possible because of her effort and dedication. Her commitment and the support she acquired along the road enabled her amazing accomplishments – and she has just started! 😊

[Read more about Mikela's latest success](#) (Croatian)

The text was produced by Volunteer centre Istria, to be uploaded to Knowledge Exchange Base (pytbul.org), a part of the project PYTBUL – Empowering Youth in the Region. PYTBUL is a strategic partnership project of Zavod Bob (Slovenia), Impact Hub Belgrade (Serbia) and Volunteer centre Istria (Croatia), financed by Erasmus+ programme.

Jelena Vuković

Although not young (by age criterion!), another Puležanka¹, Jelena Vuković, inspires many, youth and older-than-30 equally.

Jelena is a very successful sportswoman who was, since early childhood, overcoming heaps of health and social obstacles, mostly connected with her physical disability. This accomplished athlete broke a world record in athletics for the first time at the age of 21. When she was 25, she participated in her first Paralympic Games (Sydney, 2000) and at age 29 became bronze medallist in discus throw discipline (Athens 2004 Paralympics).



Jelena Vuković upon return from Athens

Her sports career is filled with other successes, such as breaking world records several times in different athletic disciplines, participating in two other Paralympic Games (Beijing 2008 and London 2012),

and winning almost uncountable medals in other important European and world championships throughout her whole career.

Besides being an accomplished athlete who travels around the world through sports, she has also studied in several universities, worked at different jobs and coached young people (including Mikela from the first story, in her first contacts with athletics). Today Jelena trains for new championships, plays guitar, volunteers, coaches regional boccia² club... Always aware of and thankful for life and great people in it, she, boldly and with an ever-present smile, faces new challenges.

Her existing physical disability got worse after an accident in 2013, causing her to use wheelchair. And what did Jelena do? Won some new medals and, again, broke some records in athletics! (O.K., it wasn't that simple, but you get the point.)

¹ Local expression for female from Pula, Croatia

² For more information about the sport see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boccia>



The latest Jelena's medals come from July 2016, when she participated in Berlin Open Grand Prix and, in the competition of athletes from over 50 countries, won three medals in three different disciplines (shot put, discus throw and javelin throw).

Being an inspiration to many, Jelena inspires herself by this quote: "The best way to make your dreams come true is to wake up".

How awake are you?

[Read more about Jelena](#) (Croatian)

[Watch TEDx talk Jelena gave in 2015 in Pula](#) (Croatian)

[Jelena's 2016 challenge \(text and video\)](#) (Croatian)

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