



**Event/Discipline:** Paracanoe Sprint Kayak 200m

**Height:** 6'4"

**School:** University of Maryland Eastern Shore

**Club:** Athletes with Disabilities Canoe Kayak Club

**USOC:** Alternate Athlete Advisory Council

**USOC:** Kellogg USOC Leadership Program

**Website** [www.brandonholiday.com](http://www.brandonholiday.com)

### **Recent Results: 9-time Sprint National Champion**

- 2018 ACA Sprint National Champion Men's Gold Paracanoe KL3 500m
- 2018 ACA Sprint National Championship Men's Silver Paracanoe KL3 200m
- 2018 ACA Sprint National Champion Men's Gold Paracanoe KL3 500m
- 2018 ACA Sprint National Championship Men's Silver Paracanoe KL3 200m
- 2018 ACA Sprint National Championships Master Men's B 500m Ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in US
- 2018 ACA Sprint National Championships Master Men's B 200m Ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in US
- 2017 US Sprint National Championship Mens' Paracanoe Gold KL3 200m and 500m
- 2016 US National Paracanoe Sprint Team Member, (Team Trials) Team USA
- 2015 Sprint National Champion Men's KL3 Gold Paracanoe 200m and 500m Sprints
- 2014 Sprint National Champion Men's KL3 Gold Paracanoe 200m, 500m and
- 2014 Sprint National Champion Men's Masters Gold 200m age 35-44

### **Career Highlights:**

- 2017 US National Team Trials- 2<sup>nd</sup> Silver, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place KL3 Men's Paracanoe 200m
- 2017 US Sprint National Championship Mens' Paracanoe KL3 200m and 500m
- 2016- USTA Adaptive Athlete of the Year
- 2017- Champion B division Men's Doubles Princeton Classic
- 2016 Regional Champion USTA Amputee Tennis Tournament
- 2016 US National Men's Paracanoe Sprint Team Member ( Team USA)
- 2015 World Championship Team Trials-1<sup>st</sup> Place 200m
- 2011-Silver Medal Extremity Games Kayak event



## Personal:

- **Nickname:** "Lawdog"
- **Job:** Police officer-Court appointed Investigator and Exec Dir. Athletes with Disabilities Network Northeast
- **Hobbies:** Tennis, Shooting, Amputee Peer Mentor
- **How'd you get started? O&P** Extremity Games- 2011 Recreational Kayaking
- **Trivia-** Decorated Police Officer Salisbury City MD Police Department, competed in Ranger Challenges, Fort AP Hill, 1990-1992

## About

When **Brandon Holiday** was a boy, doctors told him and his family that he would never be able to play sports or even walk comfortably due to undiagnosed health. He has been proving them wrong ever since.

Holiday, once in college, pursued his dream but had further health issues, heart attacks, and other medical complications, which ended his pursuit of becoming an officer in the US ARMY. He was dropped from the ROTC program once doctors discovered his diagnosis of Systemic Lupus. He was about to enter his senior year and now was unable to receive his commission as a second lieutenant. Holiday would continue to persist in his life- get knocked down and back up again- determined to serve and represent his country in whatever ways possible including as a National Team Paralympic athlete.

Who would have ever thought a man would face so many challenges like the loss of his leg, multiple heart attacks, and other health issues and turn all the adversity into a purpose-driven life? His struggles were not easy and he never thought he would make the United States National Para-Canoe Sprint Kayak Team and represent the United States at Paralympic Qualifiers or hold 9 US National Spring Canoe Kayak titles as a para-athlete in Sprint Kayaking.

While serving as an officer with Salisbury City Police Department, he received several commendations however he was injured in the line of duty. His injury led to complications and eventually the amputation of his left leg below the knee in 2006. His world was shattered. He knew his career would be forever changed, if not over entirely. He found himself lying in a hospital bed wondering "What am I supposed to do now? How is an officer with no leg supposed to continue to help the community and nation he loves?"

Challenged Athletes Foundation grants made it possible for him to attend the 2007 O&P Extremity Games to compete in rock climbing and martial arts. Without CAF's help, Brandon would have never been exposed to what was possible. After several years of recovery and facing challenges, while seeking new meaning and purpose in life, Officer Holiday got his first service dog, Dyson. Dyson helped to change his outlook and then his life forever. Brandon's service dog Dyson allowed him to see there was still hope for him to continue doing the work he was always honored to do. Help and serve others!

Since Dyson and Brandon were partnered, he has won nine United States national titles in 200-meter and 500-meter sprint kayaking, 14 medals in total in both martial arts and sprint kayaking (Paracanoe). He has made and been honored to represent the United States as a Member of the US National Team and Paracanoe Para-pan team.

Competing at the event and meeting other amputee athletes with similar injuries made him realize certain things; at that moment he realized the importance of mentors and that he no longer had to "go it alone." In addition, He has started a non-profit called Athlete with disAbilities Network Northeast in 2012 gaining independent non-profit status in 2017. This organization helps disabled veterans,

adults, and youth with physical and mental challenges through mentoring and outreach, and adaptive sports programs.

As executive director of the Athletes with Disabilities Network (ADN) North East Chapter, Holiday works to improve himself through training and spreading the lessons he has learned to others. He has assisted with helping to train other service dogs for veterans with the Camden County Prison behind bars program through Team Foster.

With Dyson's inspiration, in 2020 he created an organization called Red, White & Blue K9 Services which employs disabled veterans and first responders, training with their K9 partners to go on to work as K9 detector teams. The program helps disabled first responders and veterans like Holiday have the ability to work and continue to serve after being injured. To Holiday, Dyson is more than just a service dog, but a second chance at life as well as a companion and best friend. Dyson will be retiring in the spring of 2020 but is ending his career on a high note. Dyson was nominated and selected by the American Kennel Club recipient of the AKC Hero Canine for Excellence award which is given to only 5 dogs in the country in five categories. Dyson won the service dog award which is a true honor for his service.

Even though he has had many struggles he has continued to move forward. In total, he has suffered ten heart attacks, mini pulmonary emboli, fatigue, infections, medicine-induced Cushing's with diabetes, 4 cardiac stents, and other lupus-related issues.

Part of his belief is due to his experiences. He found his path, life work that gives him a sense of purpose, where he controls his outcomes, even if it is small positive steps in his life. This belief has saved his life. Understanding that fear and failure is ok and a part of becoming a better person by working through fears and using failure as a tool to learn. Working with other injured first responders, veterans, K9's and serving the community is a dream come true



***"I will always be in the fight and take what you perceive as a limitation and change it to limitless possibilities by adapting."***