

Wheelchair Racing 101

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Basics of Pushing

- It is completely different from a standard day chair push, but very similar to the A's and B's of running
- If the handrim is a clock, the push starts at 1:00-2:00 and continues on around to the bottom of the handrim, releasing at 6:00-7:00.
- The arm extends behind in full extension, then flexes and "punches" the handrim again at 1:00-2:00

Track Chair Basics

- What do we need?
 - Race chair
 - Can be obtained by contacting the adapted sports program on the East or West Side of the state.
 - Gloves
 - Can be obtained by contacting the adapted sports program on the East or West Side of the state or ordered directly from Sportaid.
 - Helmet
 - Can be any standard bike helmet

How is this different from Special Olympics?

- These athletes have a primary diagnosis of a physical disability and would not qualify for Special Olympics.
- Athletes that compete in the Special Olympics have a primary diagnosis of a cognitive disability.
- These athletes strive to compete in the Paralympics (which take place the 2 weeks following the Olympics, in the same location).

Who can compete in a track chair?

- Anyone with a permanent physical disability.
- Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Spinal cord injury
 - Amputee
 - Spina Bifida
 - Cerebral Palsy
 - Muscular Dystrophy
 - Moderate to severe scoliosis
 - Permanent hip, knee, or ankle injury

Is it safe to have runners and race chairs on the track at the same time?

- As with anything new, training for both ambulatory athletes and race chair athletes is recommended.
- Each team should create a system to communicate with one another.
- There are no safety hazards of combining wheelchair athletes and ambulatory athletes on the track at the same time.

How do we recruit?

- First, keep in mind that your future athlete may not use a wheelchair at all. But because of a permanent physical disability is eligible to compete in a race chair.
- You are looking for someone who has not been able to compete in sports because of their disability/permanent injury.
- As with many athletes, sometimes the fear of trying something new is overwhelming and many times these athletes require significant encouragement in the beginning.

Can an athlete with a physical disability be integrated into any other sports?

- Athletes can compete alongside high school teammates in tennis, swimming, archery, or golf.
- No adaptations are needed for swimming or archery.
- Tennis modifications include only that the wheelchair athlete gets 2 bounces.
- Golf modifications may involve a stand-up golf chair.



Do wheelchair athletes compete on the same course in cross country?

- Generally speaking, they should not compete on the same course unless the course is on pavement.
- They should complete the same distance, but modified so a majority of the course is on pavement with very little grass or gravel (less than 150 feet).



Do we need to have more coaching staff?

- For track it is not necessary to have additional coaches.
- For cross country it depends on the location of the school, location of workouts, and general speed of athlete.



What about busing?

- If the athlete can ambulate, then they ride with their teammates and the race chair is strapped down in the back seat of the bus or under the bus in the travel compartment.
- Some schools carry the athlete up the stairs and they ride with their teammates.
- If a wheelchair bus is utilized, make sure many of their teammates are on the bus with them.



What about hotel rooms and accessibility?

- Generally speaking, most athletes do not need a wheelchair accessible hotel room. However, a wheelchair accessible restroom at track and cross country events is recommended.



Can wheelchair athletes be incorporated into relays?

- Yes, in the last leg of the relay, utilizing the next lane over, for the able-bodied runners to step into.
- The athlete can be tagged or the baton can be dropped into an attached container.



Can wheelchair athletes do the same workouts as their teammates?

- Generally speaking, yes but some modifications may be necessary.



How do wheelchair track athletes score points for their team?

- Rules and guidelines are on the WIAA website.
- If there are 2 athletes of the same gender competing in the same race, the athlete that comes in first scores 2 points and the athlete that comes in second scores 1 point.
- If there are 8 athletes, it is standard scoring: 10, 8, 6....
- In order to score they must meet the standard listed on the WIAA website



What specific muscles need to be targeted for strengthening?

- Rotator cuff
- Scapular and upper back muscles
- Pecs – sternal and clavicular
- Lats and lower back muscles (if innervated)



What kind of cross-training/off season training is recommended?

- Swimming
- Handcycling
- Weight Lifting
- Backward pushing in a day chair
- Roller workouts



Why should I integrate wheelchair athletes onto my team?

1. Because every student has the right to play sports and compete.
2. Because it's the right thing to do.
3. It's the LAW!



Who is my Adaptive Sports Contact?

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