



HIGH SCHOOL ADAPTIVE SPORTS

PRESENTED BY KENNETH WHALEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS

FOR HIGH SCHOOL ADAPTIVE
TRACK & FIELD ATHLETES



GENERAL INFORMATION

When considering the possibility of joining your high school track & field team, keep in mind that each state has different options with adaptive-specific events / disciplines. To learn more about what is offered in your state, contact your High School State Association. For example, the state of California, track & field events specific to adaptive student athletes include the following:

- ▶ 100m, 200m, 400m Ambulatory Sprints (Physical Impairment / PI Entries)
- ▶ 100m, 200m, 400m Ambulatory Sprints (Visual Impairment / VI Entries)
- ▶ 100m, 200m, 400m Wheelchair Racing (Physical Impairment / PI Wheelchair Entries)
- ▶ Ambulatory Shot Put
- ▶ Wheelchair / Seated Shot Put

NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

It is recommended that all athletes, parents, and coaches (in the State of California) review and understand the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Best Practices for Adaptive Track and Field ([CLICK HERE](#)* for document). This document will explain who is eligible, what events are offered, competition rules, and competition modal options.

BEFORE THE MEET

All high school track & field coaches are required to submit all performers / athletes to the Meet Director by a deadline prior to the track & field meet taking place. Often times, the deadline is Tuesday at midnight if the meet is held on a Friday – but deadlines can vary. Coaches often use online performance submission websites to submit athlete participants. However, most of these submission websites do not include an adaptive athlete option. **It is strongly recommended that the Head Coach contact the Meet Director personally to explain that there will be one (or more) physically and / or visually impaired athlete(s) competing.**

To improve the experience for adaptive athletes, ensure that the track & field site is accessible. Consider safe entry and exit routes and accessible bathrooms and ramps. Alternate routes around the venue are recommended if there are uneven surfaces like gravel, mud, or grass. Those surfaces can be difficult for some athletes to navigate with wheelchairs, crutches, or prosthetics.

Ideally, schools should provide transportation options for athletes who use a wheelchair. If your school does not provide that option, athletes must be prepared to transport themselves or have a parent / guardian do so. For adaptive athletes requiring large pieces of equipment, including throwing chairs, platforms, and racing wheelchairs, coaches must consider how to transport equipment to and from meets. Often times, busses are full, and the equipment must be transported in a separate vehicle.

AMBULATORY SPRINTS

It is expected that the Meet Director include all ambulatory sprinters in a heat with other non-disabled competitors.

Physical Impairment / PI Entries

An ambulatory sprinter with a physical impairment can be seamlessly included in the Performance Schedule. Reasonable accommodations to uniforms are allowed for the comfort of the athlete, but still must comply with the color scheme of their High School colors.

Some examples include:

- ▶ A leg amputee may wear a suspension sleeve to hold the prosthetic in place, but must comply with school colors in all other aspects of their uniform.
- ▶ A CP athlete can wear sunglasses to help with tremors caused by direct sunlight, but the logo of the sunglasses must be covered.

Ensure that the athlete is identified as an “ambulatory” runner on the Performance Results.

Visual Impairment / VI Entries

Athletes with a visual impairment have the option of running with or without a guide depending on level of impairment. If the athlete does not require a guide, they are to be entered into the Performance Schedule as any non-disabled competitor. If the athlete requires a guide, an extra lane for their guide runner must be made available, thus, each VI entry with a guide runner requires two lanes. The guide runner can be either gender and must be identified by wearing a bib or vest with “guide” printed clearly on the front. The athlete and the guide must be tethered at the wrist and the athlete must cross the finish line before the guide. It is preferred that the guide runner is faster than the athlete and they understand the rules of being a guide. Ensure that the athlete is identified as an “ambulatory” runner on the Performance Results.

WHEELCHAIR RACING

Only a racing or sports wheelchair, not a daily use or electric-powered wheelchair, may be used for athletes competing in wheelchair racing. The wheelchair racer may compete with the non-disabled sprinters in the last lane during the regular season. At state championships, all wheelchair racers will be in a heat together. Ensure that the athlete is identified as a “wheelchair racing” competitor on the Performance Results.

AMBULATORY SHOT PUT

An adaptive ambulatory shot put athlete will throw with the non-disabled athletes in a normal flight and performance order. Ensure that the athlete is identified as an “ambulatory” thrower on the Performance Results.

SEATED SHOT PUT

For seated shot put athletes, it is important to consider the complexity and time commitment of the seated throwing chair. Seated throwing chairs require a platform or stakes for safety and compliance reasons. To learn how to stake a chair down or use a platform, please [CLICK HERE](#)*

At the meet, please be mindful that staking a chair down or using a platform takes time to set-up and break-down. Practically speaking, the seated thrower should go either first or last, but never inside a flight rotation, due to time constraints. The use of a throwing platform is ideal as it is easy to use and can be lifted and placed on any flat surface. A platform can be constructed from materials purchased at a home improvement store and will provide a stable surface on which to secure a throwing chair.

If stakes are to be used, you must ensure that the throws circle has dirt or grass that a stake can penetrate. Under no circumstances can a stake be driven into turf. The athlete’s coach and Meet Director should discuss solutions PRIOR to the meet if there are complications with staking down the throwing chair (due to turf, uneven ground, etc.). Ensure that the athlete is identified as a “wheelchair shot put” competitor on the performance results.

USEFUL LINKS

- ▶ California Interscholastic Federation Best Practices Adaptive Track & Field: https://cifstate.org/inclusive/para-athlete_sports/BEST_PRACTICES_for_PARA_TRACK_and_FIELD-111813docx.pdf
- ▶ Challenged Athletes Foundation – High School Adaptive Sports Program: <https://www.challengedathletes.org/hsadaptivesports/>
- ▶ Challenged Athletes Foundation – Adaptive Track & Field Video Library: <https://www.challengedathletes.org/track-field-videos/>
- ▶ How to stake down a throwing chair / use a platform: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skM_FT75YrM&feature=emb_title