

SITTING VOLLEYBALL GUIDELINES

ABOUT ATHLETICS FOR ALL

History

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education issued a Dear Colleague Letter on January 25, 2013 clarifying elementary, secondary, and postsecondary level schools' responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) to provide extracurricular athletic opportunities for students with disabilities. The guidance clarifies when and how schools should include students with disabilities in mainstream interscholastic athletic programs, defines what true equal treatment of student athletes with disabilities means, and urges schools to create adapted interscholastic athletic programs for students with disabilities.

The OCR Dear Colleague Letter helps clarify the existing regulations and statute under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) to provide interscholastic, club, and intramural athletics for students with disabilities. The Rehab Act protects the rights of students with disabilities from discrimination in educational programs and activities in colleges and universities. The Rehab Act requires that students with disabilities be provided equal opportunity for participation in interscholastic, club, and intramural athletic programs offered by a school.

What the Athletics for All Task Force Offers

Introductory sport guidelines and best practices for adapted sports considered easy to adapt to mainstream interscholastic sports

Facilitation of training for your coaches and officials with adaptive sports experts

Access to hundreds of community based adaptive sports organizations, resources and tools for specific sports

Decades of experience in disability sport training, sport adaptations and adaptive equipment

Sports Are Important for Students with Disabilities

Benefits for students with disabilities who participate in sports are similar to students without disabilities:

- More likely to have better grades, school attendance and lower dropout rate
- Build discipline, self-esteem, confidence, and independence
- Learn team work, skill development and goal setting
- Promote healthy lifestyle
- Can be a predictor of later successes in college, career and community

- Students with disabilities do not receive the same amount of physical activity and athletic opportunities as students without disabilities
- According to the CDC, youth with disabilities are twice as likely to be physically inactive, resulting in obesity rates almost 40% higher than in youth without disabilities creating much higher risks for health-related diseases

Due to the resources available, it is possible to add adapted sports within school athletic programs without creating an undue administrative burden for State High School Associations or requiring the association to change existing rules for the athletes without disabilities.

OVERVIEW

The purpose is to educate and empower coaches in schools on how to start integrated programs that allow youth with physical disabilities to play competitive sitting volleyball in the school environment. If numbers grow, the integrated team may develop into an adapted team. Athletes who may play are included in the glossary. The goal is to develop fair competitive sports opportunities in schools so that youth with disabilities can play.

The sport of sitting volleyball allows a diverse group of athletes to play. For the purpose of development, the teams will be mixed gender until there are enough athletes to have female and male teams.

Court: 10m x 6m (2m attack zone)

Net: 1.15m (men) 1.05m (women)

Service: Service can be blocked and attacked

Speed: Quicker speed due to reduced court size

Position: Players remain seated throughout play

Training for Coaches

Training for coaches is made available through USA Volleyball or local Paralympic sport programs on sitting volleyball. This training will include a general overview of adaptive athlete safety, best practices, risk management (liability, conducting a safe practice session, boundaries with coaches, positive communication), competition, and rules.

Training Adapted Athletes

Training for skill is dependent on the coach to assess and manage group players safely and appropriate according to skill. When you're training athletes with disabilities, educate the athletes to know their body. It is important to check for:

- Dehydration/urine output color

- Skin/pressure sores
- Overheating

EQUIPMENT

State of the art sitting volleyball equipment

- Telescoping volleyball poles
- Competition regulated volleyball netting
- Padding, standards, antennas
- Balls
- Court marking (use approved floor tape to outline a court using the sitting volleyball's smaller sized court dimensions)

Work with what you have

- Flip the net upside down (use existing net)
- Padding, poles, antennas (use basic equipment from school's existing program)
- Balls (from existing stand up program)
- Court marking (use approved floor tape to outline a court using the sitting volleyball's smaller sized court dimensions)

THE STRIKER

The Striker is used for athletes with a Spinal Cord Injury and no trunk control. The design provides both support and independence. It was engineered to be adaptable to different types of physical conditions by providing more or less restriction and support.

KEY RULE MODIFICATIONS

- The position of each player is determined and controlled by the position of their buttocks. This means that the hand(s) and/or leg(s) may lie in the attack or free zone outside the court.
- Touching the opponent's court beyond the centerline with a hand is permitted, if some part of the penetrating hand remains either in contact with or directly above the centerline. To contact the opponent's court with any other part of the body is forbidden. The player may penetrate into the opponent's space under the net, provided there is no interference with the opponent.

- The player is not allowed to lift his/her entire buttocks from the court when executing any type of attack. The back row player may perform any type of attack from any height, if at the time of the hit their buttocks touch or cross over to the attack line.
- The player must have contact with the court with some part of the upper part of the body at all times when playing the ball, except when making a defensive freezone play. In such defensive play, a loss of contact with the court is permitted for a moment.
- The referee's official hand signal of "lifting from the court" is raising the upper hand and forearm positioned parallel to the floor and mirror imaging the lower hand and forearm.
- Referees in sitting volleyball stand behind the poles.

SCORING

- The match is won by the team that wins three sets
- A set is won by the team which first scores 25 points with a minimum lead of two points
- In the case of a 2-2 set tie, the deciding (5th) set is played to 15 points

DETAILED RULES

- Teams aim to hit a ball over a net and land it within the opposition's court.
- Teams have three contacts, to form an attacking play, before the ball has to go over the net.
- Sitting Volleyball requires players to maintain contact between their buttocks and the floor at all times when making a play.
- Each team must have six players on court, including a libero (defensive specialist), who will wear a different colored shirt to the rest of the team, although five reserves are allowed.
- There are competitions for both men's and women's teams.
- The first team to 25 points wins a set, but they must win by two clear points. The first team to win three out of five sets is the winner. A maximum of five sets are played. If a match goes to a deciding fifth set, the first team to 15 points and with a two-point advantage wins.
- Regarding the zone lines, the attack lines are drawn parallel to the centerline and 2m from the middle of the centerline. The service zone is marked with two lines, each 15cm long and placed inside the service zone at the end of each court, 20cm behind and perpendicular to the end line. Both are drawn as an extension of each sideline.

COACHING TIPS

To ensure good programs it requires preparing coaches and volunteers.

- Require background screening for all coaches and adults over the age of 18 who are involved in this program (volunteers included)
- Require training in both Sexual Abuse Prevention and Sexual Harassment Prevention for all coaches and adults over the age of 18 who are involved in this program (volunteers included)
- Require Injury Prevention training (especially concussion management and sports first aid) for all coaches and adults over the age of 18 who are involved in this program (volunteers included)
- Conduct regular facility and equipment safety reviews
- Develop an emergency action plan
- Athletic Training staff should provide medical coverage at matches and practices
- Match athletes according to age and/or skill to avoid the risk of injury
- Keep accurate records: attendance, practice planning, document injuries, and document student athlete/parent meetings

COACH DEVELOPMENT

USA Volleyball: www.usavolleyball.org, IMPACT courses available on site or online. Training specifically designed for beginning coaches or those with little to no prior coaching education (Fees are included)

Positive Coach Alliance: <http://shopping.positivecoach.org/store/courses/double-goal-coach>, Training specifically designed for beginning coaches or those with little to no prior coaching education. It is recommended that you take the Double Goal Coaching Clinic

American Volleyball Coaches Association:

<http://www.sittingvolleyball.org/sittingvolleyballruleswovd.pdf>;

<http://www.sittingvolleyball.org/rules.htm>, Supplemental resources for rules.

USA Webinar: <http://www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/grassroots/free-webinars.aspx>, Sitting volleyball webinar/powerpoint

Paralympic Sport Clubs: Findaclub.usparalympics.org, Attend on site sitting volleyball clinics and work hands on with current players and coaches to learn training techniques

Local college adaptive PE/ Recreation Therapy Resources; Request assistance from local instructors and attend sitting volleyball classroom/gym sessions to learn hands on current training techniques

Keep in Mind...

For some of the coaching programs there are fees involved. We would suggest that we negotiate with USA Volleyball to see if a code can be developed that would enable smaller organizations to have access

to this service without requiring all the pieces to access this such as: membership, background checks, course fees, etc.

EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATED PLAY

- Incorporate your existing volleyball programming into the adaptive sport programming
- Ask your current standing team members to serve as sitting volleyball practice players and to referee matches
- Find out if current high school coaches would be interested in coaching the sitting volleyball team
- For additional players or coaches, contact local college students who are studying physical education or adaptive sports at school
- Ask local junior volleyball club players to volunteer to referee matches in exchange for community service hours (in many regions these players receive training as part of their junior volleyball club experience)
- Tournament play: TBD based on geography, number of teams, number of divisions/levels
- If geography is an issue, consider holding regional meets on the weekends so that several programs can travel to a central location and play
- Note: try not to conflict with the regular standing volleyball season, this way you have a greater chance of having those players and coaches involved in the sitting program during their off season
- Point system to maintain fair playing field. It is the opinion of this group that each team only needs one “athlete with a physical disability who would qualify to play at the Paralympic level” to compete.
- Rules on the use of adapted equipment: if the “striker” is used, the person must have a SCI with no trunk control

ROLE OF ABLE BODIED ATHLETE

- The athlete will be looked at as a team member
- The rules of the game will apply the same
- The able bodied athlete will have a phase in and phase out place. When starting up and developing an athlete with a disability, they will help complete the team. If the situation happens where there are enough athletes with disabilities, then the number of able bodied will decrease to a maximum of 2
- The abled bodied athlete would have the same expectation to follow rules, play as a team, and show up for practices just as their counterpart
- Can have mixed teams with female and males until numbers grow

- Divisions based on skill: Gold (highly skilled), Silver (intermediate), and Bronze (beginner). This can change based on growth of the sport

GROUPINGS

The groupings presented here are suggested ways to create competition classes for athletes with disabilities. In order to not be confused with the national and international classification systems, we use the term groupings for school-based sport.

Role of Athletes Without Disabilities

Programs may wish to consider a policy whereby athletes without disabilities may enter the adapted program temporarily while rehabilitating from an injury, so long as the injury present in such a way that the athlete might otherwise otherwise qualify someone with a permanent disability experiences the same physical limitations. For example, any injury or surgery where the physician has recommended the athlete stay off the limb for a period of time and where that time spans a full season of an adapted sport, the athlete might qualify to participate in adapted sports regularly.

How will a state determine who is eligible? There are several different models to determine eligibility and minimal disability criteria. When possible and appropriate, it is best to stay within the three categories: sit down, stand up, and visually impaired.

Athletes with a disability have impairment (s) that may lead to competitive disadvantage in sport. Classification is the process by which athletes are assessed relative to the impact of impairment on their ability to compete in a specific sport.

Within the classification system, criteria are put in place to ensure that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus, the same factors that account for success in sport for athletes without a disability.

Classification is sport specific. Each sport has established groups, call sport classes, to group athletes for competition based on activity limitation for that sport.

The international classification system for individual sports can be viewed online at: Paralympic.org/classification. Most IPC classification systems are not appropriate (too detailed) for a high school setting. It is suggested to modify to simplified / grouped classes such as sitting (wheelchair athletes), visually impaired, and ambulatory.

Disabilities

At the interscholastic level, these disabilities can be served in sitting volleyball:

- Achondroplasia
- Amputee

- Arthrogyryposis
- Avascular Necrosis
- Birth Defect
- Brachial Plexus Palsy
- Cerebellar Disgenesis
- Cerebral Palsy
- Congenital Hypotonia
- Congenital Limb Loss
- Diplegia
- Dystonia
- Erb's Palsy
- Femoral Focal Deficiency
- Femoral Hypoplasia
- FMD
- Full Joint Ankylosis or Replacement
- Hearing Impaired
- Larsen's Syndrome
- Leigh's Disease
- Lower Limb Paralysis
- McCune Albright Syndrome
- Mitochondrial Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Osteogenesis Imperfecta
- PFFD (Proximal)

- Progressive Neurological Disorder
- Severe Amblyopia
- Severe Scoliosis
- Spastic Diplegia
- Spastic Paralysis
- Spina Bifida
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Spinal Muscular Atrophy
- Stroke
- Transverse Myelitis
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Vertigo/Balance Issues
- Visual Motor Integration Impairment
- Visually Impaired
- Type 1 Diabetes
- Any other medical doctor diagnosed permanent lower body disability that prevents a player from competing in mainstream sports

SAFETY

Student athletes with disabilities do not represent a higher level of liability risk or risk management concern than student athletes without disabilities. With proper planning and contingencies, student athletes with disabilities can seamlessly integrate into the dynamics of an interscholastic team. Individualized assessments can help assess or identify any potential safety concerns.

Ensuring athlete safety is a priority. Through education, resources, and training, members of the sport community can recognize, reduce, and respond to misconduct in sport. Please refer to the following resources for more information.

What is SafeSport?: <http://safesport.org/what-is-safesport/>

Coaches Toolkit: <http://safesport.org/toolkit/coaches/>

SafeSport Trainings: <http://safesport.org/take-the-training/>

GLOSSARY

- **Adapted Sports** - To make (something) suitable for a new use or purpose; modify. Adapted Sports are modifying a sport making them suitable for persons with disabilities to develop skills enabling fair competition.
- **Amputee** – AKA above the knee amputee, BKA below the knee amputee, AEA above the elbow amputee, BEA below the elbow amputee, digit amputee missing fingers and toes
- **Spina Bifida** – Birth defect of the spine. May be ambulatory, may use walker, may use wheelchair
- **SCI** – Spinal Cord Injury (Using ‘The Striker’, adapted equipment developed by Bridge II Sports, Triangle Volleyball Club and Duke University Engineering)
- **Cerebral Palsy** – has the flexibility to sit independently , has trunk control, arm strength
- **Stroke** - has the flexibility to sit independently , has trunk control, arm strength
- **Brain Injury** - has the flexibility to sit independently , has trunk control, arm strength
- **Hearing Impaired** – has limited or no hearing
- **Autism** - appears in the first 3 years of life, and affects the brain's normal development of social and communication skills.
- **Other** – Diseases that affect the motor movement
- **Able Bodied**- individuals, who can work independently, follow verbal instruction, which can manage their personal care independently and have the capacity or the ability to develop skills to handle intense competitions.
- **Intellectual Disability** - individuals who have an intellectual disability. This can include, but not limited to Down syndrome, Autism, LD. These athletes must play independently without a buddy.
- **Developmental Disability** – Means the disability was from birth or diagnosed by 2 years old. A variety of disabilities can be developmental; this includes physical, intellectual and sensory.
- **Incurred Disability** – This is a disability that is caused by injury. The disability may also be caused by debilitating medical condition that now does not allow all the body to function as it once did.
- **Integrated** (mainstream/inclusive): Individuals with disabilities participate in sports alongside able-bodied athletes
- **Modified/Unified:** Sports designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities and can included individuals with physical abilities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can you play in a wheelchair?

Technically, no, but what happens if inexperienced person comes to play? Maybe the response to the situation is come and try.

Can I get hurt?

Yes, it is possible. As with all sports, things can happen. Best practices is to follow rules and create a safe environment for play.

Can I get contact sores or burns?

Yes, it is possible. Using preventative measures can help by wearing long pants, socks, and knee and elbow pads.

What do I play in?

Compression shorts, socks, yoga pants, t-shirts, sleeve for stump if desired.

Can I play with my prosthetic limb?

It depends, if wearing a prosthetic arm, the answer is yes. You can use it to pass, serve, and block. A prosthetic leg is very hard and has immovable parts. If an athlete or teammate falls on it, it could cause injury to them or damage the prosthetic.

What if I have never coached or played volleyball before?

Your primary role is to be a strong leader and to help strengthen and develop character; technical and tactical knowledge comes with time. Take advantage of on court learning opportunities.

What if I've coached standing volleyball but never sitting volleyball?

The rule differences are very minimal, if you are able to coach the standing game, you will have no trouble at all coaching sitting volleyball.

Should I still offer a sitting volleyball program if no athletes are interested?

Yes! Your school could provide a much needed competition for other schools that do have adaptive sport athletes on their sitting volleyball team. You are also helping to spread the word about adaptive sports and raise awareness. Last, remember, anyone can play sitting volleyball.

RESOURCES

Jenna Hinton: hinton@trianglevolleyball.org, Assistant Director, Sitting Volleyball Coordinator, Triangle Volleyball Club, North Carolina

Ashley Thomas: Ashley@bridge2sports.org, Founder and Executive Director Bridge II Sports, North Carolina

Elliot Blake: jblake@uco.edu, Sitting Volleyball and Athlete Recruitment Coordinator, USA Volleyball/University of Central Oklahoma

John Kessel: John.kessel@usav.org, USA Volleyball

Teaching and Coaching Volleyball for the Disabled: rajko.vute@guest.arnes.si, http://www.pef.uni-lj.si/fileadmin/Datoteke/Zalozba/pdf/Vute_WOVD_Handbook.pdf

MISSION

The mission of the Athletics for All Task Force is to inform and provide the tools and guidelines by which coaches, athletic directors and school administrators can include students with physical disabilities in interscholastic sports.

VISION

It is the vision of the Athletics for All Task Force that students with disabilities will have access to athletic opportunities throughout the United States in an equal manner as students without disabilities. The Task Force envisions an educational system that provides equal opportunities for student-athletes to derive the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of interscholastic sports, enabling each to develop into healthy, well-adjusted, contributing members of their respective communities.

ATHLETICS FOR ALL TASK FORCE

Active Policy Solutions

<http://www.activepolicysolutions.com/>

American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AASP)

<http://www.adaptedsports.org/>

Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP)

<http://www.borp.org/>

BlazeSports America

<http://www.blazesports.org/>

Bridge II Sports

<http://www.bridge2sports.org/>

Competitive Edge Management

Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA)

<http://www.disabledsportsusa.org>

Great Lakes Adapted Sports Association (GLASA)

<http://glasa.org/>

Lakeshore Foundation

<http://www.lakeshore.org/>

Louisiana Games Uniting Mind and Body (GUMBO)

<https://sites.google.com/site/louisianagumboinc/home>

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD)

<http://www.nchpad.org/>

Special Olympics

<http://www.specialolympics.org/>

United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA)

<http://www.usaba.org/>

Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA (WASUSA)

<http://wasusa.org/>