**Adapted Sport**

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**Barriers to Participation in Sports for Individuals With Disabilities**

- Tendency toward sedentary living
- Lack of knowledge of fitness concepts
- Program and facility accessibility
- Heredity factors
- Fear of failure
- Poor nutritional habits

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**Benefits of Sports for Individuals With Disabilities**

- Health and fitness  
  — Secondary conditions can be minimized.
- Psychological value  
  — Often the road to fulfillment begins when people realize that activity can be maintained.
- Societal normalization  
  — Public awareness of capabilities through the medium of sport.
  Integration of athletes with and without disabilities.
- Sports for sports’ sake  
  — Participation for the sake of enjoyment.

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**Sport Integration Continuum**


(continued)
Sport Integration Continuum (continued)

• Level 3
  – Regular and adapted sport setting
  – Partial or full integrated participation
  – Co-act with or compete against athletes without disabilities

• Examples:
  – Wheelchair racer competing against or with runners without disabilities
  – Wheelchair tennis player playing alongside ambulatory teammate

Sport Integration Continuum (continued)

– Special Olympics Unified Sports
– Part-time in regular sport or part-time in adapted sport
– Blind power lifter (regular sport), goal ball (adapted sport)

Origins of Adapted Sport

• 1800s–1940
  – Samuel Gridley Howe, Perkins Institute

• Influence of WWII
  – Stoke Mandeville Hospital: Aylesbury, GB, Dr. Ludwig Guttman
  – National Wheelchair Basketball Association
  – National Wheelchair Athletic Association (NWAA/WSUSA)

• Influence of Vietnam War
  – National Handicapped Sports and Recreation Association (NHSRA/NHS/DS/USA)

• The 1990s and vertical integration with U.S. national governing bodies (NGBs)

Origins of Adapted Sport (continued)

• Influence of legislation
  – PL 93-112 Rehabilitation Act of 1973
  – PL 94-142 IDEA (transition services) 1975
  – PL 95-606 Amateur Sports Act of 1978
  – PL 101-336 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Origins of Adapted Sport (continued)

  "To encourage and provide assistance to amateur athletic programs and competition for amateur athletes with disabilities, including where feasible, the expansion of opportunities for meaningful participation by such amateur athletes in programs of athletic competition for able-bodied athletes." (USOC Constitution, 1998)
Selected Unisport Adapted Sport Organizations

- Achilles Track Club (ATC)
- American Amputee Soccer Association (AASA)
- Handicapped Scuba Association International (HSAI)
- North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA)
- United States Quad Rugby Association (USQRA)
- United States Sled Hockey Association (USSHA)

School and Community-Based Sport Initiatives

- 1992: Metro Association for Adapted Athletics (MAAA) becomes a member of the Minnesota State High School League.
- 1992: The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) develops a partnership with Special Olympics to offer Unified Sports programming. Participation is open to all public and parochial schools.
- 1996: The American Association of Adapted Sports Programs, Inc. (AAASP) begins in Georgia.

School and Community-Based Sport Initiatives (continued)

- 2003: AAASP begins Project ASPIRE to promote adapted sport model throughout the country.

Sport Classification Systems

- The purpose of classification in sport is to allow for a fair and equitable starting point for competition.
- Issues in Adapted Sport Classification
  – Ability should be the deciding factor in competition, not disability.
  – Each disability group has its own classification system.
  – Event-management issues such as too many heats.
  – Public is confused.

Paralympic Games

- Paralympic Games include athletes with the following disabilities:
  – Amputation
  – Cerebral palsy
  – Intellectual disability
  – Spinal cord injuries
  – Visual impairments
  – Les autres (athletes affected by a range of conditions that fall into the categories above).

Figure 24.1

Figure 24.1 U.S. Paralympic athletes in action
Opportunities for Disabled Students: Several organizations offer skill development and competition opportunities for students, as well as disabled adults.

- **BlazeSports**: Provides sports training competitions, summer camps, and recreational opportunities for youth and adults with spinal cord injury, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, muscular dystrophy, amputation, visual impairment or blindness, as well as other physical disabilities. BlazeSports operates in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association.

- **Wheelchair Sports USA's (WSUSA)**: Sports and recreation opportunities for people with physical and visual disabilities by facilitating, advocating, and developing a national community-based outreach program. Program provides resources and education, conducts regional and national competitions, and provides access to international competitions. WSUSA sponsors the following sports: archery, track and field, billiards, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and weightlifting.

- **Disabled Sports/USA (DS/USA)**: Participants include persons with visual impairments, amputations, spinal cord injury, dwarfism, multiple sclerosis, head injury, cerebral palsy, and a range of neuromuscular and orthopedic conditions. DS/USA sponsors the following sports: golf, hiking, hunting and fishing, Nordic skiing, water sports, running, sailing, snowboarding, strength training, surfing, Tai Chi, tennis, waterskiing, and yoga. Sponsor a mentoring program for youths with disabilities.

- **The National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA)**: Founded as a spinal cord injury organization, athletes with a range of physical and orthopedic disabilities are qualified. Athletes become available when the nature of the athlete’s ability, irrespective of diagnosis, is such that it prevents them from meaningful participation in stand-up basketball. Competitions include women’s, men’s, and junior teams.

### Participation: Integrated or Separated?

The Federal Rehabilitation Act, Section 504, applies to public schools and public community-based organizations. The federal regulations require that:

1. students with disabilities cannot be denied opportunities to participate in regular athletic programs based on disability alone and
2. segregated programs may be offered to athletes with disabilities only when lack of ability to safely and successfully participate in a regular sports program, or a legitimately disqualifying medical condition, not simply disability alone, disqualifies them from integration into the regular program.

### Sport Classification Systems (continued)

- **Medical**
  - Verifies minimum disability
  - Not concerned with the functional ability of the athlete
  - Provides a medically related equal starting point for competition.

- **Examples**:
  - Level of visual acuity for a blind athlete
  - Level of spinal cord injury
  - Location of an amputation

### Additional Organizations

- **University of Illinois**: Founders of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association, the university offers summer sports camps in track and field, and basketball for youths using wheelchairs who want to fine tune their fundamental and advanced wheelchair basketball skills. Additionally, “elite” athletic camps are offered on an invitation only basis

- **Special Olympics**: While this is not the oldest sport organization for persons with disabilities, it is the most widely known. Today, there are more than 2.5 million athletes from more than 180 countries. The Special Olympics currently offers participation opportunities in 34 different sports.

- **Courage Center**: This organization provides sport development opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities. (Figure 24.3) Offers year round sport development camps including recreational sports, power soccer camp, and Paralympics sport sessions. Activities include Alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, archery, basketball, curling, dog sled dog, fitness training, ice fishing, martial arts, quad rugby, sled hockey, skiing, mono-ski camp, tennis, archery, golf, biking, hand cycling, horseback riding, kayaking, rock climbing, sailing, scuba, softball, swim team, tennis, track and field, and waterskiing.

- **United States Association for Blind Athletes (USABA)**: As a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, the association has reached more than 100,000 blind individuals through its services including: track and field, cycling, goalball, judo, powerlifting, snowboarding, skiing, swimming, bowling, wrestling, and 5-side football.
- National Beep Basketball Association (NBBA): Played by athletes who are blind. Games last six innings and include two bases that buzz. Object of the game is for the batter to run and contact the buzzing base before an opposing team fielder can cleanly field the beeping ball.


- Dwarf Athletic Association of America (DAAA): Dwarfism is a general descriptor for a range of conditions that result in dwarfed stature. Events are offered in four divisions beginning with "Future" to "Master." Events include: track and field, swimming, boccia, soccer, basketball, volleyball, table tennis, and powerlifting.

- Athlete Classification Systems
  - Functional classifications systems focus not on the medical condition, but rather observe what functional abilities athletes have in their specific sport. Focus on the individual’s ability to focus on the task at hand. (Table 24.2) Can be used both for single disability and cross-disability competitions.
  - Two distinct benefits of functional classification:
    1. within any given disability category, same disability category athletes can be grouped by available physical function.
    2. individual participants who present with different or multiple disabilities, provided their sport-specific ability and skill level is closely matched, can compete equitable irrespective of disability type.

- Sport Classification Systems (continued)
  - Functional
    - Identifies how an athlete performs specific sport skills
    - Combines medical information with performance information
    - Evaluates an athlete's sport-specific skills needed in an athletic event in addition to the medical condition
    - Function primary and medical secondary
  - Example: Athletes with cerebral palsy observed by classifiers performing their sport to determine range of motion and physical capabilities prior to classification

- Sport Classification Systems (continued)
  - Amputees
    - Class A1 Double Above Knee (AK)
    - Class A2 Single Above Knee (AK)
    - Class A3 Double Below Knee (BK)
    - Class A4 Single Below Knee (BK)
    - Class A5 Double Above Elbow (AE)
    - Class A6 Single Above Elbow (AE)
    - Class A7 Double Below Elbow (BE)
    - Class A8 Single Below Elbow (BE)
    - Class A9 Combined upper and lower

- Sport Classification Systems (continued)
  - Blind and visually impaired
    - Class B1: From no light perception at all in either eye up to and including the ability to perceive light, with the inability to recognize objects or contours in any direction and at any distance.
    - Class B2: Ability to recognize objects or contours up to a distance of 2 meters that a person with normal vision can see at 60 meters (i.e., below 2/60 vision) or field of vision less than 5 degrees.
    - Class B3: Can recognize objects or contours between 2 and 6 meters away that a person with normal vision can see at 60 meters (i.e., 2/60 to 6/60 vision) or field of vision between 5 and 20 degrees.

- Sport Classification Systems (continued)
  - Cerebral palsy
    - Eight sport classes based on functional ability
      - Class 1–4: Wheelchair users
      - Class 5–8: Ambulatory
Sport Classification Systems (continued)

• Cerebral palsy
  • Class 5 A and B: Uses assistive device (walker or crutch) to ambulate during competition
  • Class 6: Ambulates without aids (balance problems); athletes are ambulatory with all four limbs affected.
  • Class 7: Marked asymmetrical action (hemiplegia). Achilles tendon shortened; athletes are ambulatory with the arm and leg on the same side affected.
  • Class 8: Highest functioning level of CP. Athletes have minimal disability. Typically, the athlete will have good balance and only slight coordination problems; the disability is more obvious during exertion.

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Sport Classification Systems (continued)

Cerebral palsy
  • Class 1: Power wheelchair users. Athletes experience movement difficulties that affect the entire body. Typically the athlete cannot propel a manual wheelchair and often has difficulty altering sitting position.
  • Class 2 (upper/lower): Propels wheelchair unassisted on level surface (may use legs).
  • Class 3: Propels wheelchair independently. Athletes are wheelchair users and have one affected upper limb. Typically the athlete has a limited range of shoulder movement and a marked difference in the function of the arms; can propel a manual wheelchair.
  • Class 4: Highest wheelchair class: Athletes are wheelchair users whose arms are not affected.

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Participation: Integrated or Separated?

Sometimes the issues are not that simple and individual factors need to be considered:
  - Athletes who are deaf may not be able to hear the coach’s instructions.
  - Students with a hard prosthesis may be putting other players at risk.
  - A student with only one kidney should be taken into consideration.
  - An athlete who does not meet the academic performance required to participate in sports, regardless of a disability should be considered.

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Sport Classification Systems (continued)

• Dwarf Athletic Association of America: Under the height of five feet because of medical condition referred to as dwarfism
• USA Deaf Sports Federation: 55 db or greater hearing loss in the better ear
• Special Olympics
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Performance (determined by prescreening)

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Wheelchair basketball

• Wheelchair basketball players are classified according to their level of functional ability (i.e., what muscles they are able to use in performing basketball skills—shooting, passing, rebounding, pushing, and dribbling). Classifiers observe a player’s functional ability while he or she performs the assigned skills and then assign the player a classification or point score based on their observations. The classification or point score is specific to basketball only.

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Sport Classification Systems (continued)

Wheelchair basketball

• Point scores can range from 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5
• Athletes with a low point value are more limited in their ability to perform the required basketball skills than are athletes with a higher point score.
• The point score system ensures that the five (5) players on the court have a variety of different point scores, ranging from low (more severely disabled) to high (minimal disability) so they do not exceed the maximum point score of 14.0.

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Sport Classification Systems (continued)

Wheelchair basketball
- Because of the basketball classification system, it is possible for athletes with different disabilities (e.g., spinal paralyzed versus cerebral palsy) to be assigned the same point score or classification. This is because classifiers look at the athlete’s ability to perform the required skills rather than at his or her disability.

Cross Disability Sport Classification Systems
- Designed to place athletes with different disabilities together for competition (cerebral palsy, spinal cord injured, dwarfism, etc.)
- Criteria developed based on each sport
- Advantages
  - Makes meet management easier.
  - Public may be less confused.
  - Allows for competition in areas where limited disabled athletes reside.
- Disadvantage: Might discriminate against certain disabilities by making disability a factor as opposed to ability.

University of Wisconsin- Whitewater Disabled Athletics Website

Paralympic Sitting Volleyball Videos

sitting volleyball rules

Did you know:??
Sitting Volleyball can be played by people with and without a disability. Either way, you play the same game!