

**IOWA INTERSCHOLASTIC ADAPTIVE TRACK AND FIELD  
PROGRAM**

**DEVELOPED BY**

**IOWA JUNIOR WHEELCHAIR SPORTS ASSOCIATION,  
WORLD PARA ATHLETICS,  
IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION,  
IOWA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC UNION,  
& ADAPTIVE SPORTS IOWA**

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A. Purpose.

The Adaptive Division track and field program is designed to allow individuals who require unique adaptations for participation in athletic activities the opportunity to become involved in interscholastic sports.

## IHSAA/IGHSAU - Adapted Division for Track & Field

In an effort to better help coaches and administrators identify potential athletes for the Adapted Division – Track and Field, the IHSAA/IGHSAU have adopted the guidelines and athlete classifications from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and Adaptive Track & Field USA (ATFUSA).

**The Paralympic Ambulatory Division** offers sporting opportunities for athletes with physical, visual and/or intellectual impairments that have at least one of the following 8 eligible impairments:

IMPAIRMENT	EXPLANATION
Limb deficiency	Total or partial absence of bones or joints, from birth or as a consequence of trauma (e.g. car accident or amputation) or illness (e.g. bone cancer). <i>Athletes in this classification are not required to use blocks – they may crouch, stand or utilize a 3-point stance with or without blocks. If a prosthesis is used, it must be used while in competition. Athletes are not allowed to hop.</i>  <i>Prosthetics are not required in field events. Athlete may adjust his/her prosthetic during competition but must finish the attempt in the allowed time.</i>
Leg length difference	Bone shortening in one leg from birth or trauma.  <i>Athletes in this classification are not required to use blocks – they may crouch, stand or utilize a 3-point stance with or without blocks. If a prosthesis is used, it must be used while in competition. Athletes are not allowed to hop.</i>
Short stature	Reduced standing height due to abnormal dimensions of bones of upper and lower limbs or trunk, for example due to achondroplasia or growth hormone dysfunction. <i>Athletes in this classification are not required to use blocks – they may crouch, stand or utilize a 3-point stance with or without blocks.</i>
Hypertonia	Abnormal increase in muscle tension and a reduced ability of a muscle to stretch, which can result from injury, illness or a health condition such as cerebral palsy. <i>This impairment typically affects the ability to control legs, trunk, arms and/or hand function. Some athletes affected by this impairment may complete in the Wheelchair division. Athletes in this classification are not required to use blocks – they may crouch, stand or utilize a 3-point stance with or without blocks.</i>
Ataxia	Lack of coordination of muscle movements due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis. <i>This impairment typically affects the ability to control legs, trunk, arms and/or hand function. Some athletes affected by this impairment may complete in the Wheelchair</i>

	<i>division. Athletes in this classification are not required to use blocks – they may crouch, stand or utilize a 3-point stance with or without blocks.</i>
Athetosis	Generally characterized by unbalanced, uncontrolled movements and a difficulty in maintaining a symmetrical posture, due to cerebral palsy, brain injury, multiple sclerosis or other condition. <i>This impairment typically affects the ability to control legs, trunk, arms and/or hand function. Some athletes affected by this impairment may compete in the Wheelchair division. Athletes in this classification are not required to use blocks – they may crouch, stand or utilize a 3-point stance with or without blocks.</i>
Visual Impairment	Vision is impacted by either an impairment of the eye structure, optical nerve/pathways or the part of the brain controlling vision (visual cortex). <i>To ensure a fair competition, athletes in this class may be required to wear eyeshades. Athletes in this classification may be allowed to utilize a guide based on the severity of their limitation.</i>  <i>Athlete may utilize one guide for throwing events. Guide may utilize voice, clapping or both to direct athlete and orient the athlete on the runway or in the ring. Guide may escort athlete away after the judge determines the attempt was valid. Athlete <b>must</b> exit circle or runway before guide can physically assist – verbal assistance in exiting is OK.</i>
Intellectual Impairment	A limitation in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills, which originates before the age of 18. IQ of 75 or less. <i>Athletes in this classification typically have difficulties with regards to pattern recognition, sequencing, and memory, or having a slower reaction time, which impacts sport performance in general.</i>  <i>Athletes in this classification <b>MUST</b> use starting blocks and 4-point stance in races of 400M or less.</i>

**The Paralympic Wheelchair Division** offers sporting opportunities for athletes with physical impairments that have at least one of the following 3 eligible impairments:

<b>IMPAIRMENT</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>
Limb deficiency	Total or partial absence of bones or joints, from birth or as a consequence of trauma (e.g. car accident or amputation) or illness (e.g. bone cancer). <i>Athletes will utilize a competition-throwing platform (chair) – athlete must remain seated with both legs in contact with seat from the back of the knee to the back of the buttocks.</i>
Impaired muscle power	Reduced force generated by muscles or muscle groups, may occur in one limb or the lower half of the body, as caused, for example, by spinal cord injuries, Spina Bifida or Poliomyelitis. <i>Athletes will utilize a competition-throwing platform (chair) – athlete must remain seated with both legs in contact with seat from the back of the knee to the back of the buttocks.</i>

Impaired passive range of movement	Range of movement in one or more joints is reduced permanently. Joints that can move beyond the average range of motion, joint instability, and acute conditions, such as arthritis, are not considered eligible impairments. <i>Athletes will utilize a competition-throwing platform (chair) – athlete must remain seated with both legs in contact with seat from the back of the knee to the back of the buttocks.</i>
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#### B. Classification

- a. Due to the relatively small number of competitors all athletes will compete in one class. This class will be referred to as ‘Paralympic Division’.
- b. This class will include a wheelchair division as well as an ambulatory division.
- c. Team points will be distributed within this division.
- d. Competitors in the Paralympic Division will score to 8 places (10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1).

#### C. Events

- a. The Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA)/ Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU) will offer competition in the 100 meter, 200 meter, 400 meter, 800 meter races, and the shot put.
  - i. All athletes shall compete in the state qualifying meet in order to qualify for the state meet. At each meet during the season an athlete may compete in a maximum of 4 events.
  - ii. Ambulatory participants can compete in their own division throughout the season.
    1. If safe ambulatory participants may compete along side able-body participants throughout the regular season.
  - iii. All ambulatory athletes shall compete in the district meet to qualify for the state meet in the Wheelchair/Ambulatory Division.
  - iv. Athletes who are able to run without a wheelchair are eligible to qualify for state in the Able-Body Division however they can’t qualify in both the Able-Body and Wheelchair/Ambulatory Division simultaneously.
  - v. It is suggested to leave lane 1 open in wheelchair events. Depending on the space outside of lane 8, you may also consider leaving lane 8 open as well.

#### D. Equipment.

- a. Specifications for Track Events Wheelchair
  - i. For racing events, only manual wheelchairs will be allowed. These may be standard chairs, lightweight chairs, or specialized racing chairs.
  - ii. It is the responsibility of the athlete and his/her family to provide the wheelchair and other equipment which the athlete will use for competition.
  - iii. The repair and replacement of the chair is the responsibility of the athlete and his/her family.
  - iv. Specifications of wheelchairs used for track events.
    1. Wheelchairs shall have at least two large wheels and one small wheel.

2. The diameter of the larger wheels, including the inflated tire, shall not exceed 70 centimeters. Other wheels shall not exceed 50 centimeters in diameter including the inflated tire.
  3. Only 1 plain, round push rim shall be attached to each of the larger wheels.
- v. The chair and athlete in the race ready position may be any length the athlete desires. However, nothing may protrude which may endanger other racers.
  - vi. Any device or design element that exists for the purpose of reducing air resistance will be permitted provided that said device or design is limited to the area between the rear wheels and must not extend beyond the lateral edges of the large wheels or the fenders or extend in front or behind the edges of the tires.
  - vii. If strapping is used, it must be of a non-elastic material.
- b. Specifications of Field Events Wheelchair.
- i. The chair or seating system need not have wheels.
  - ii. The maximum height of the seat, including the cushion, shall not exceed 75 centimeters.
  - iii. Footrests may be placed in any position which the athlete desires but may not rest on top of the stopboard.
  - iv. Each athlete will be required to use gloves to propel his/her wheelchair during the racing events, including practice sessions.
  - v. Each athlete will be required to wear a protective helmet during the racing events, including practice sessions.
  - vi. Athletes will not be required to wear shoes during their events.
  - vii. Chair tie downs may be used for field events to secure the field chair in the throwing circle.
  - viii. Field implements.
    1. The IHSAA will use a 4 kilogram shot put.
    2. The IGHS AU will use a 3 kilogram shot put.
- c. Specifications of Track and Field Events Ambulatory.
- i. Devices that contain materials that store, generate or deliver energy designed to provide an athlete with an overall competitive advantage will not be allowed.
  - ii. Guide runners must wear school colored uniforms that are unadorned.
  - iii. For athletes with lower limb impairment orthotic devices are optional.
  - iv. Athletes with eye impairments may utilize a tether which shall be supplied by the athlete.
    1. The tether shall be made from non-elastic material and shall not store energy and or offer a performance gain to an athlete. It shall consist of two closed holding loops and a middle section with two fixed spherical stoppers at each end.
    2. The maximum length between the two furthest points of the holding loop at the full extension of the tether shall no exceed

30cm. the minimum length between the two furthest points of the holding loop at the full extension of the tether is 10cm.

3. The holding loops shall not incorporate any mechanism that allows the loops to open. There may be a device that locks the loops.

E. Rules of Competition for Track Events Wheelchair.

- a. Propulsion and direct steering of the wheelchair shall be made by the hands and arms only.
- b. No gears, levers, chains or other mechanical devices may be used in propelling the wheelchair.
- c. All individuals who engage in or encourage unsafe or unsportsmanlike conduct are subject to disqualification by the race official.
- d. The front axle of the wheelchair must be completely behind the vertical plane of the starting line.
- e. Once the athlete is positioned in his/her chair and on the track they will not be allowed to receive coaching or tactical assistance from their coach.
  - i. In the event of a mechanical failure or other unsafe situation the athlete may summon assistance of an attendant. The attendant may be any person designated as such by the athlete's school.
- f. In laned races, each competitor shall keep the front wheel of the chair in the assigned lane from start to finish.
  - i. If the front wheel leaves the lane, the athlete shall be disqualified.
  - ii. The rear wheels may drift out of the lane as long as they do not interfere with another competitor. If interference does occur, the competitor shall be disqualified.
  - iii. If any part of the chair shall drift over the inside edge of the lane, the competitor shall be disqualified.
- g. If a competitor is pushed or forced by another person to wheel outside his/her lane the competitor will not be disqualified.
- h. Competitors shall be placed at the finish in the order in which the outside point of the front axle breaks the vertical plane at the finish line.
- i. At the conclusion of an event competitors will stay in their assigned lanes until released by the official.
- j. If an accident should occur during a race, a competitor may be assisted back into his/her chair by a bystander in order to continue.
  - i. The competitor may not receive a push during the race.
- k. If, during a race, there is an infringement of the rules of the race official may disqualify a competitor from the race.

F. Rules of Competition for Field Events Wheelchair.

- a. The field event chair must be stationary during the competition.
  - i. If wheelchair tie downs are not used, a competitor may have a qualified individual hold his/her chair and/or use their wheelchair brakes to prevent excessive movement.
- b. Only the footrest or the push rim may be outside the vertical plane of the inner circumference of the circle.

- i. Any part of the chair used for propulsion must remain inside the circle including push rims and footrests.
      - ii. If tie downs are used to secure the chair, competitors may not use these same tie downs to assist in stabilizing any part of the body.. If any part of the competitors body comes in contact with the tie downs used to stabilize the chair during a trial it will be considered a fault and will not be considered in the results of the competition.
      - iii. No part of the chair may rest on top the stopboard.
    - c. The feet may be in contact with the ground.
    - d. The use of gloves is not allowed.
    - e. To obtain a better grip, athletes are permitted to use a suitable substance on their hands only.
    - f. To protect the spine from injury, an athlete may wear a belt of leather or other suitable material.
    - g. A competitor may leave the throwing circle from the front half without penalty.
    - h. A competitor may interrupt a trial once started, may lay the implement down inside the circle, and may leave the circle before returning to a stationary position and beginning a fresh trial.
    - i. If the number of competitors in an event is six or less the competitors will be allowed to take all preliminary and final throws consecutively.
      - i. If there are seven or more competitors in an event each competitor will have three preliminary trials. Three event final throws will then be completed by the eight highest qualifying competitors in the reverse order of qualifying.
    - j. The competitor is required to sit on the seat of the chair during the preliminary movements and delivery of the implement. At least one part of either the athlete's upper legs or buttocks must remain in contact with the chair until the implement is released.
      - i. In order to allow the judges better visibility, athletes may not wear baggy or loose fitting clothing which may hide any infringement of this rule.
    - k. The shot shall be put from the shoulder with one hand only. At the time the competitor commences to put, the shot shall touch or be in close proximity to the chin and the hand shall not be dropped below this position during the action of putting. The shot must not be brought behind the line of the shoulders. From start to finish, the movement shall be a straight, continuous putting action.
    - l. The competitor or their chair shall not touch the ground on or outside the ring once the trial has begun.
    - m. If, in the opinion of the field judge, there is an infringement of the rules during a trial, that trial will be considered a fault and will not be considered in the results of competition.
      - i. After the infringement has occurred and the fault recorded the judge may inform the athlete of the nature of the infringement so that the athlete may make corrections before the next trial.
- G. Rules of Competition for Track and Field Ambulatory.



- a. Competitors are required to follow all IGHSAA/IHSAA and NFHS rules in track and field with the following adaptations.
  - b. Guide runners may be used by athletes who are vision impaired.
  - c. Blades may be used by amputee athletes.
  - d. Other adaptations may be added if deemed appropriate by the IHSAA/IGHSAA
  - e. Eyewear that is prescribed to the student will be permissible.
  - f. All other requirements and rules regarding the competitor's uniform, conduct, etc... Found in the IHSAA Track and Field and NFHS rules will be followed.
- H. Safety.
- a. It is strongly recommended that each athlete actively participate in a pre-season conditioning program with their school's team in order to prevent injuries.
  - b. Athletes must ensure that no part of their lower limbs can fall to the ground during an event.
  - c. An athlete's wheelchair and/or field chair must be structurally sound.
  - d. An athlete must be securely seated in the wheelchair and remain so while racing.
  - e. There should be nothing stretched across the finish line of a racing event.
  - f. It shall be the sole responsibility of the official to rule on the safety of the chair and the athlete.
    - i. The official may, at his/her discretion, rule that an athlete or their equipment is not safe and may prohibit an athlete from participating in an event until compliance with standard safety measures are met.
- I. Health Concerns.
- a. Some individuals who have spinal cord lesions do not perspire below the level of their lesion. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the athlete is receiving enough fluids and has ample time to rest between events and during practice sessions.
  - b. There are certain medications common to individuals with spinal cord involvement which can lead to heat exhaustion. It is the responsibility of the coaching staff, the medical staff, the athlete and the family to identify and monitor these medications and the athlete's response during physical activity while using these medications.
  - c. Due to circulatory and spasticity problems of this group of athletes it is recommended that weather conditions be monitored closely and appropriate clothing be added or subtracted. Special care should be taken to ensure the feet and distal ends of stumps be covered with extra layers of clothing during colder temperatures.
  - d. It is strongly recommended that each athlete actively participate in a pre-season conditioning program with their school's team to prevent injuries.
  - e. If the athlete requires a para-educator during the school day, it is strongly encouraged to continue that support in their extra-curricular activities.
- J. Records and Recognition.
- a. It is strongly recommended that any athlete who participates in adaptive interscholastic sports be rewarded equally with the other athletes. This would include but not be limited to:
    - i. Ribbons, medals, etc. awarded at the meets in which the athlete participates and places in the final standings.

- ii. The opportunity to earn a school letter by meeting the individual school standards which are set for all athletes of that school.
  - b. Records should be kept and updated for each event in which para-athletes compete.
- K. Responsibilities of the Governing Organizations.
  - a. IHSAA and IGHSAU.
    - i. Dissemination of information regarding the program including but not limited to its rules, meetings, and training sessions.
    - ii. Provide one or more officials at the state meet who are knowledgeable in the rules of the program.
      - 1. This official will be empowered to oversee the meet events and to rule on the results of the competition as well as any infringement of the rules.
  - b. Adaptive Sports Iowa
    - i. Accumulate and disseminate information about wheelchair sports and the appropriate procedures.
    - ii. Provide training to the athlete, his/her family, coaches and team support staff to include:
      - 1. Proper operation and training techniques of the equipment
      - 2. Wheelchair transfers
      - 3. Maintenance and repair of equipment.
      - 4. Instruct appropriate measures to be taken to assure the health and safety of the athlete.
    - iii. Act as the Paralympic sports organization for rules clarifications and questions.
    - iv. Provide an official knowledgeable in the rules of the program for the state meet in the event that the IHSAA and IGHSAU cannot provide a qualified official to oversee the adaptive events.
- L. Responsibilities of the Athlete and Family.
  - a. To prevent injuries and to keep within the spirit of competition it is strongly recommended that the athlete become involved in the program at the beginning of the season including a pre-season conditioning program.
  - b. Acquire the equipment necessary to participate safely and keep the equipment in good repair.
  - c. Seek the advice of their doctor or other health professional concerning any health related matters such as exercise, medications, and prevention of hypothermia and hyperthermia.
  - d. Utilize the training program outlined by the coaching staff.
  - e. Follow all rules and regulations of the school, the governing body and the program.
  - f. Demonstrate good sportsmanship during all athletic events.
  - g. Be prepared to compete alone at most meets. Strive to improve the season best time or distance for state meet participation.
- M. Responsibilities of the Athlete's School.

- a. Expect the wheelchair athlete to begin participation at the same time and under the same requirements as all other athletes of the school.
  - b. Encourage those athletes that want to join the team to become involved in year round activities to enhance their training.
  - c. Provide the same level of training for the wheelchair athlete that is provided the other athletes including pre-season, in-season, and off-season training programs.
  - d. Provide transportation with the team to all team functions.
  - e. Provide the same rewards and recognition to the wheelchair athlete for his/her accomplishments as is given the other athletes.
- N. Responsibilities of an Events Host School.
- a. Provide events for the adaptive athlete even if there is only one competitor. Do not expect head-to-head competition due to the volume of adaptive athletes in the smaller districts.
  - b. Provide the same level of awards as with all athletes.
- O. Contact Information
- a. Iowa High School Athletic Association – (515) 432-2011
  - b. Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union – (515) 288-9741
  - c. Adaptive Sports Iowa – (888) 777-8881 Ext:115 or [info@adaptivesportsiowa.org](mailto:info@adaptivesportsiowa.org)