

# Disability Guidance for Track and Field Competition Providers

Revised July 2015

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## 1. Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance to Competition Providers to enhance their knowledge and confidence in promoting the inclusion of disabled athletes in their events. It also aims to ensure they are working under the guidance of the England Athletics Inclusion Policy and within the requirements of the Equality Act.

It should be noted that the Equality Act is not just about access to facilities but is intended to promote a change in attitudes and to improve opportunities for disabled people to participate. The reasons disabled people take part in athletics are the same and just as wide ranging as for non-disabled people. With this in mind it should be recognised that disabled athletes will want to participate in events for the same reasons as non-disabled athletes for enjoyment, to improve fitness and to experience the challenge and achievement of competition.

## 2. Legal Responsibilities

### 2.1 Definition of a Disabled Person

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- ◆ Substantial means neither minor nor trivial
- ◆ Long term means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- ◆ Normal day-to-day activities include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

- ◆ A normal day-to-day activity must affect one of the 'capacities' listed in the Act which include mobility, manual dexterity, speech, hearing, seeing and memory

People who have had an impairment in the past that meets this definition are also covered by the scope of the Act. There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions.

## 2.2 The key provisions of the Equality Act

Under the Equality Act it is unlawful:

- ◆ to discriminate against a disabled person because of their disability
- ◆ for any organisation or service provider to treat disabled people unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability, unless such treatment can be justified.

Organisations and service providers must make reasonable adjustments for disabled people such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their service and physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access. This duty to comply applies to all athletics clubs and competition providers, regardless of club or event size, although what is considered reasonable will be relative.

For competition providers the Equality Act relates to the necessary modifications they are required to make to their events to ensure all disabled people have the opportunity to participate. It should be noted that many adjustments can be made very quickly and may not have any financial implications. It is the competition providers responsibility to ensure that they have taken all reasonable steps to consider and implement any reasonable adjustments that could be made, whether to the physical features of the track / facility or to the competition timetable & events generally (for example allowing a disabled athlete to throw with the non disabled athletes using the appropriate implement weight for their impairment)

It should be noted that the law requires that organisations and service providers make adjustments in anticipation that they will have disabled members/participants. As a result, an athletics club or competition provider cannot wait until a disabled athlete makes a request to join the club or enter an event before taking action. They should identify what reasonable adjustments may need to take place to enable disabled people to participate and set out a reasonable timescale for the implementation of those adjustments.

Furthermore, to comply with this legislation, organisations, athletics clubs and competition providers must consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure that their club or event is accessible for disabled people who may wish to participate as coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators as well as athletes.

Therefore competition providers have an obligation to demonstrate that every effort has been made to enable disabled athletes to participate and that inclusion not exclusion has been the priority.

- ◆ If reasonable adjustments are required to make a specific competition accessible then those reasonable adjustments must be made unless they are sufficiently drastic so as to change the nature of the whole event.
- ◆ If reasonable adjustments require additional expense then the additional expense must be provided by the competition provider as long as the additional expense is relative to the resources of the organisation.
- ◆ If a competition provider considers it is necessary to exclude a disabled athlete from participating in the competition or an event they must ensure that they can justify this decision and any justification should be on the basis of fact and supported by evidence such as a valid risk assessment.



## 3 How to make an event inclusive

### 3.1 General principles

- ◆ Provide a welcoming environment. Establishing a positive and welcoming approach is one of the most effective ways of encouraging disabled people to participate. Competition organisers should think positively about how they can include disabled people rather than focusing on potential barriers to participation.
- ◆ Integration is best achieved through the provision of events specifically for disabled athletes within the overall competition programme.
- ◆ Where this is not possible competition providers should allow individual disabled athletes to enter events in accordance with the rules of the competition and should discuss with athlete and coach what reasonable adjustments might be appropriate – e.g. use of appropriate throwing implement weight for their classification and/or age.
- ◆ Include a statement in event publicity or websites etc. such as “The [name of event or organisers] welcome entries from disabled athletes.”
- ◆ Encourage disabled athletes to contact the club or competition provider in advance to discuss their needs and requirements to facilitate inclusion. Ideally a named contact should be provided on the competition entry form and publicity.
- ◆ Ensure that any queries from disabled people are dealt with by club officials or event organisers who have a positive and inclusive attitude.
- ◆ Ensure the track and facilities are fully accessible. Complete a review of the accessibility of facilities including car parking, toilets, changing facilities, removable track edging, access to buildings and other facilities to consider their accessibility for athletes, coaches, officials and spectators.
- ◆ Do not tell disabled athletes that they are not eligible to participate without consideration of what reasonable adjustments would enable them to participate.
- ◆ Ensure any language used to describe disabled athletes is sensitive, appropriate and relevant. Language is continually evolving as awareness and attitudes change. There is no comprehensive terminology that is accepted by all but what really matters is that the language is acceptable to the individual or group concerned. If unsure, ask the athlete how they would prefer to be addressed. For further information please see England Athletics Terminology Guidance at [www.englandathletics.org/disability-athletics/resources](http://www.englandathletics.org/disability-athletics/resources)
- ◆ Try to develop the knowledge and understanding of key club or event officials, coaches and other volunteers of disability, equity and inclusive practice by providing appropriate guidance and training if possible. Qualified officials can access further CPD through disability track and field modules. For more information visit [www.englandathletics.org/england-athletics-officials](http://www.englandathletics.org/england-athletics-officials)

## 4 Removing Barriers to Participation

To enable competition providers to create a welcoming environment for disabled athletes, physical barriers to their participation must be recognised. The table overleaf details some common examples of physical barriers that are often found at competitions and some examples of possible solutions to removing the barriers. Often the simplest way to remove barriers is to speak to the disabled person directly who will be best placed to make suggestions on possible solutions. Removing many of the physical barriers to participation can often be relatively simple and in some case completely expense free. Changes will also improve the experience for all participants not just disabled people. The examples listed are by no means exhaustive.



| Facilities and Organisation   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Parking   | No disabled parking at venue. Wheelchair users will require wide bays to assist with entry/exit from their vehicle    | Ensure there are some wide parking bays available at the race venue for disabled athletes.   |
| Registration/other facilities based on grass                              | Wheelchair users cannot access the area   | Ensure registration tents etc are based in an accessible place and on an appropriate surface.<br>Removable track edgings / railings  |
| Event announcements   | No other methods of communication for athletes who are deaf or hard of hearing or athletes with a learning disability | Provide diagrams/written information for athletes who are deaf or hard of hearing or athletes with a learning disability   |
| Toilet facilities only accessible by signing out key from venue reception | Degrading for disabled athletes to have to ask to go to the toilet  | Ensure accessible toilets are open and no key collection is required   |
| Competition or entry information not displayed                            | Athletes who are deaf or hard of hearing' may not be aware of changes to any information                              | Provide diagrams/written information for athletes who are deaf or hard of hearing or athletes with a learning disability. Timetable and final call to be confirmed at registration.  |
| Results not displayed   | Results not posted as a points scoring system is being used to work out winners and places                            | Ensure that results (distances or times) are posted as soon as possible at a suitable height for wheelchair users. Where a points system is being used to determine winners and placings make it clear that this information will be added on the results card later.                            |
| Printed information (entry forms, programme, etc)                         | Athletes with a learning disability may find information difficult to understand.                                     | Providing an easy-read/accessible version of information will help. Mencap Sport provide a guide to accessible information at <a href="http://www.mencap.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-training/easy-read-services">www.mencap.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-training/easy-read-services</a> |

## 5 Specific rules and considerations

This information is not exhaustive, please see *IPC Rules and Regulations* (link below) for more detailed guidance on rules, equipment and use of technology.

### Visually impaired athletes

- ◆ Athletes with a visual impairment **may** need to be supported by a guide for track events or a caller for field events. Guides and callers should be provided by the athlete, should not have to pay a competition entry fee, and will not be considered to be participating in the competition in their own right. Guides and callers may be of either gender regardless of the restrictions of the race or the gender of the athlete.
- ◆ Two lanes need to be allocated to visually impaired runners who are running with a guide. Guides should be identified in advance to the track referee and should wear a distinctively coloured vest to identify them to officials and other athletes.
- ◆ The method of guidance is the choice of the athlete, either an elbow lead, a tether or to run free. In addition, the athlete may receive verbal instruction from the guide runner. The guide runner is not allowed to use a bicycle or other mechanical means of transport. The guide runner is not allowed to pull or propel athletes in order to gain an advantage. Athletes and their guide runner must not be more than 0.5m apart, except during the last 10m of an event provided interference does not occur.
- ◆ Athletes with a T/F11 (blind) classification must wear approved opaque glasses or an appropriate substitute in all track and/or field events. The opaque glasses



or their substitute must be approved by the responsible technical official. When the athlete is not competing, the opaque glasses or their substitute may be removed.

- ◆ For athletes competing with a guide runner the athlete must cross the finish line in front of the guide runner or the athlete will be disqualified.
- ◆ In field events where athletes receive assistance from callers or guides, the time allowed shall begin from the moment when the official responsible is satisfied that the athlete has completed the process of orientation. Should any athlete request verbal confirmation of the starting of the timing clock; an official shall give such confirmation. If an athlete has to stop his trial within the time allowed because he has become disorientated, the time is stopped and restarted when he is reorientated with the time still remaining.

### **Amputee athletes**

- ◆ In general the only acceptable footwear attire should be running shoes. However, those athletes with leg amputations should be permitted to use a flexfoot or like prosthetic that conforms to IPC rules (i.e. height of prosthesis).
- ◆ In track events athletes with T42-44 classifications must use leg prostheses. Hopping is not allowed in track events.
- ◆ In field events athletes with T42-44 classifications the wearing of prostheses is optional.
- ◆ A four-point stance is not required in sprint starts. It is acceptable for arm amputee athletes or those with short arms to use pads on which to rest stumps at the start or to improve balance. Pads must be completely behind the start line and not interfere with any other athlete.

### **Wheelchair Races**

- ◆ Propulsion can only be by the athlete pushing on the wheels or push-rims.
- ◆ Athletes shall be timed and placed in the order in which the axle of the leading wheel reaches the vertical plane of the nearer edge of the finish line.
- ◆ Racing chairs should conform to IPC rules and have bib numbers displayed.
- ◆ The wearing of a helmet is compulsory for all distances.

### **Seated Throws**

- ◆ Seated throwers can throw from their wheelchair or a throwing frame. Throwing frames are designed around the individual athlete and can be no more than 75cm high
- ◆ For all seated events it must be ensured that the athlete's chair or frame is securely and safely tied down using straps and fixings in the ground. Stakes may be used when throws fixings are not available. Information on this process is available via the Disability Athletic Support Officers (DASO's) and British Wheelchair Athletics Association (See section 6)
- ◆ When positioning and securing the throwing frame inside the competition area all parts of the throwing frame, holding bar and footplates must remain inside the vertical plane of the rim of the circle throughout the trial.
- ◆ It may be decided to stage six throws consecutively.

### **Deaf and hard of hearing athletes**

- ◆ If an athlete is deaf or hard of hearing the starter or their assistant may use a flag or other visual device as well as a pistol to signal the start. In some circumstances, for athletes with both a visual and a hearing impairment, an official may touch an athlete to signal the start.
- ◆ Deaf athletes may also require a visual cue to signal when it is their turn to throw or jump.



## Planning and timetable

- ◆ 15 - 20 minutes should be allowed for seated throwers to include strapping down, two practice throws and six competition throws. This time may be shorter if officials are more experienced with tie downs etc.
- ◆ 10 minutes per heat should be allowed for wheelchair races to include time for athletes to complete an additional warm up lap before the start of the race.
- ◆ Wheelchair racers will also require access to the track for 10 minutes prior to their event in order to set the compensator on the racing chair. This may be done by allocating time before the start of the overall programme or up to an hour before the actual race.
- ◆ Ensure officials are fully briefed and provided with appropriate information. Provide additional support or guidance with tie downs etc. if required
- ◆ Stadium entry fees. All disabled athlete entries should include one assistant / carer / parent / coach / interpreter. This includes personal needs, transfers and carrying / transporting of equipment.
- ◆ Accreditation should only be issued to T11 / T12 (running with a guide), F11 / F12, F31-34 and F51-57. This is strictly one per athlete infield for the duration of their competition only. For field events that is to assist with throwing frames and transfers, or acoustics / guiding. On the track it is only for athletes running with guides. This also includes access to call-rooms.
- ◆ Additional considerations depending on size of event and numbers of disabled athletes competing:
  - ◆ Entry Information should be easily available alongside other competition details.
  - ◆ Announcements should be consistent and relevant to the audience. Announcements should not be made while VI athletes are doing field events.
  - ◆ Consider how winners and awards might be decided. For Parallel Success competitions the Raza scores will indicate the best performance per event, irrespective of time or distance.
  - ◆ Availability of equipment. Ensure the facility has the correct implement weights (See link to IPC rules in section 7 below).
  - ◆ Provision of fluorescent vests for guide runners.
  - ◆ A covered shelter near the track for storage of racing chairs and throwing frames.
  - ◆ A covered shelter near the seated throws for athletes and equipment.
  - ◆ Practical warm up areas. Can a service road or car park be coned off for wheelchair users to warm up?

## 6 Organisation and planning

Competition providers are encouraged to grow existing competitions and offer an inclusive programme of events for disabled athletes. A formal international classification system exists to ensure fair competition within disability athletics (See Section 6)

### 6.1 For disabled athletes without a classification

**The following athlete groupings and events are suggested.**

Competition providers can choose a selection of these as appropriate. However to maximise opportunities for the athletes, there should ideally be a minimum of one ambulant race and one wheelchair race and one ambulant throw and one seated throw, for both male and female athletes.

Winners and positions should be identified in each of the athlete groupings competing in an event on the basis of time or distance.



## Athlete Groupings:

1. Power chair / Electric Wheelchair user
2. Manual Wheelchair User
3. Ambulant – Moderate Impairment
4. Ambulant – Minimal Impairment

| Group | Description                           | Brief description of some athletes and impairments in this group   | Additional information  |
|-------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1     | <b>Power chair user</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete with cerebral palsy – electric wheelchair user – quadriplegic – severe to moderate involvement in all four limbs</li> </ul>   |   |
| 2     | <b>Manual wheelchair user</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete with cerebral palsy</li> <li>• Athlete with a spinal cord injury</li> <li>• Quadraplegic and paraplegic athletes</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All athletes in this group CANNOT run unaided</li> <li>• They MAY be able to stand and walk with support and MIGHT not regularly use a wheelchair</li> </ul> |
| 3     | <b>Ambulant – moderate impairment</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete with cerebral palsy – Ataxic/Athetoid – affected in three or four limbs.</li> <li>• Athlete with cerebral palsy – Diplegic – functionally affected in both legs.</li> <li>• Athlete with a single or double above knee amputation</li> <li>• Dwarf Athletes</li> <li>• Blind and visually impaired athletes running with a guide</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All athletes in this group CAN run unaided EXCEPT for blind and visually impaired athletes who need the support of a guide runner.</li> </ul>                |
| 4     | <b>Ambulant – minimal impairment</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete who is deaf or with a hearing impairment</li> <li>• Athlete with single or double arm amputation or physical impairment allowing similar movement</li> <li>• Athlete with cerebral palsy – Hemiplegic – functionally affected on one side.</li> <li>• Athlete with single or double below knee amputation or physical impairment allowing similar movement</li> <li>• Athlete with a learning disability *<br/>IQ of 75 or less, limited social adaptation in day to day abilities and their learning disability must be evident during 0 – 18 years</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALL athletes in this group can run unaided</li> </ul>  |

## Events and eligible groups

| Events              | Groups eligible | Notes                               |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 100m Ambulant       | 3, 4            |                                     |
| 200m Ambulant       | 3*, 4           | *Not recommended for Dwarf athletes |
| 1500m Ambulant      | 3*, 4           | *Not recommended for Dwarf athletes |
| 200 Wheelchair race | 2               |                                     |
| 400 Wheelchair race | 2               |                                     |
| Long Jump           | 3*,4            | *Not recommended for Dwarf athletes |
| Ambulant Shot Put   | 3, 4            |                                     |
| Ambulant Discus     | 3, 4            |                                     |
| Ambulant Javelin    | 3, 4            |                                     |
| Seated Shot Put     | 2, 1            |                                     |
| Seated Discus       | 2, 1            |                                     |
| Seated Javelin      | 2               |                                     |
| Club Throw          | 1               |                                     |

Please note there is not a paralympic pathway for all impairment groups in all events. However other pathways and competition opportunities may still exist via DSE events and NDSO's. (See information below and England Athletics Athlete Pathway document). Athletes who are deaf or hard of hearing have a separate Deaflympic pathway.

### 6.2 For disabled athletes with a classification

#### Parallel Success Competitions

Competition providers are encouraged to sign up to UKA to host a Parallel Success Competition as part of their existing competition plans. The Parallel Success initiative is about giving disabled athletes the same level of competitive opportunities as non disabled athletes.

Athletes may be grouped together for competition as follows:

- Track: Ambulant athletes and wheelchair athletes
- Field: Ambulant athletes and seated throwers

Throws classifications can be incorporated into an existing field within a competition and therefore will not impact greatly on the timetable.

The Raza Points scoring system can be used to identify winners and positions in each event.

#### IPC Endorsed Competition

UKA will register your competition with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) as an 'Endorsed Event'. This will mean that an athlete's results from your competition will be published on the IPC Athletics World Rankings. This allows GB & NI athletes to make an impact on the world stage and showcases your competition whilst helping to shape the structure of future major Paralympic competitions. In order to fulfil the criteria to be an endorsed competition, as a minimum the competition must provide electronic timing for all track events, wind gauge for the sprints and long jump. Genders should not be mixed in events. Additionally, all results are to be submitted to the IPC after the event in a pre-defined format.





## UKA/Parallel Success Representative

Parallel Success can supply a representative to assist where required on the day, especially if you are running a competition for the first time. This person will be on hand to assist with any technical queries or seeding issues and to help with the Raza points system. Please note, the actual running of events should be incorporated fully in with the organiser's and officials' duty sheets.

## Event Guidance

UKA can provide support and guidance regarding selection of events and classifications eligible. To maximise opportunities for the athletes there should be a minimum of two ambulant sprints, two ambulant throws, two wheelchair races and two seated throws for both male and female athletes. This may be increased with subsequent competitions.

**Further guidance on integrating AVIVA Parallel Success events into your competition including planning, organisation, equipment, timetabling and Raza points scoring system is available via Katie Jones on 07912 070624 or [kjones@britishathletics.org.uk](mailto:kjones@britishathletics.org.uk)**

## 7 The International Paralympic Committee Classification System

UKA have adopted the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification System for disability athletics. This is a comprehensive classification system for disabled athletes who participate in paralympic competition under the rules of the International Paralympic Committee. Classification is an integral part of disability athletics to ensure fair competition within disability athletics and operates in parallel to mainstream athletics.

Each group is subdivided into classes depending on the level of impairment. There are strict criteria attached to each class. The classification process identifies the athletes' functional ability in relation to the event group in which they are competing. The athlete undergoes a series of simple physical tests and is seen in competition by IPC (International Paralympic Committee) qualified classifiers.

The IPC system operates purely to enable fair competition between disabled athletes and if an athlete is not eligible for the Paralympic Pathway they may still compete within mainstream athletics as appropriate.

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>T/F 11 – 13</b> | Athletes with a visual impairment  |
| <b>T/F 20</b>      | Athletes with a learning disability  |
| <b>T/F 31 – 38</b> | Athletes with cerebral palsy (includes ambulant athletes and wheelchair users) |
| <b>T/F 40 – 47</b> | Amputee & les autres (inc. Dwarf athletes)                                     |
| <b>T51 – 54</b>    | Wheelchair Racers  |
| <b>F 51 – 57</b>   | Seated field athletes  |

T = Track and F = Field

Where there is a range of numbers for one impairment group this reflects the level of impairment of the performer. Normally the lower the number the greater the level of impairment.

## 8. Supporting Information and contact details

### IPC Athletics Rules

The official IPC Athletics Rules and Regulations with support documents including age group implement weights for all classes, are available on the IPC Athletics website:

[www.paralympic.org/athletics/rules-and-regulations/rules](http://www.paralympic.org/athletics/rules-and-regulations/rules)

A simplified set of rules related to the UKA rules are also available in the UKA Rule Book 2014/2016.

### England Athletics

Through our integrated approach to delivery all our staff have a role in developing disability athletics. Contacts for your local area can be found at [www.englandathletics.org/yourarea](http://www.englandathletics.org/yourarea)

#### National Disability Manager (Community Participation)

Liz Purbrick

[lpurbrick@englandathletics.org](mailto:lpurbrick@englandathletics.org), 07850 514936

#### Head of Competition

Andy Day [aday@englandathletics.org](mailto:aday@englandathletics.org)

[www.englandathletics.org/disabilityathletics](http://www.englandathletics.org/disabilityathletics)

- ◆ *England Athletics Inclusion Policy*
- ◆ *England Athletics Disability Guidance for Race and Event Organisers Document*
- ◆ *England Athletics Disabled Athlete Pathway Document*

### UKA

#### Futures & Talent Manager

Katie Jones: [kjones@britishathletics.org.uk](mailto:kjones@britishathletics.org.uk)

Parallel Success Information: -

[www.academy.uka.org.uk/parallel-success](http://www.academy.uka.org.uk/parallel-success)

### National Disability Sports Organisations

#### British Blind Sport (BBS)

BBS is the leading voice for people with visual impairments in the world of sport.

**Website:** [www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk)

#### Cerebral Palsy Sport (CP Sport)

CP Sport promotes and seeks to increase opportunities for disabled people, in particular people with Cerebral Palsy, to participate in athletics. It provides sporting opportunities to individuals of all ages and at all levels from recreation through to Paralympic competition.

**Website:** [www.cpsport.org/sports/athletics/](http://www.cpsport.org/sports/athletics/)

#### Dwarf Sports Association (DSAUK)

DSAUK promotes competitive sport for dwarf athletes and provides opportunities for dwarf athletes to train for and compete in the World Dwarf Games and the Paralympic Games.

**Website:** [www.dsauk.org](http://www.dsauk.org)

Visit the website to download a document containing more information on Dwarf conditions.

#### Mencap Sport (England)

Mencap Sport supports people with a learning disability to enjoy sport, compete and excel by working with athletes, families, sports providers and policy makers. We challenge inequality, and we celebrate achievement.

**Website:** [www.mencap.org.uk/sport](http://www.mencap.org.uk/sport)

#### Special Olympics Great Britain

Special Olympics GB provides sports training and competition opportunities to children and adults with intellectual disabilities (IQ below 75). There are currently 150 Special Olympics clubs in Great Britain, run by over 4,000 volunteers, and involving 8,000 athletes of all abilities who benefit from taking part in a wide range of sports, including Athletics. For more information visit the charity website.

**Website:** [www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk](http://www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk)

#### UK Sports Association For People With Learning Disability (UKSA)

UKSA is the national charity which co-ordinates, promotes and develops sport for people with learning disability at UK and International level.

**Website :** [www.uksportsassociation.org](http://www.uksportsassociation.org)

#### UK Deaf Sport

UK Deaf Sport is a registered charity which aims to encourage Deaf people to participate, to enjoy and to excel at sport. They provide information on Deaf sporting opportunities throughout the UK.

**Website:** [www.ukdeafsport.org.uk](http://www.ukdeafsport.org.uk)

#### WheelPower

WheelPower is the national disability sports organisation for wheelchair sport and provides sporting opportunities for men, women and children with physical impairments to take part in a number of sports, including athletics. Based at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, the birthplace of the Paralympic Games, WheelPower organises a number of sports events at junior and adult level to introduce disabled people to sport. These include the annual National Junior Games, Inter Spinal Unit Games and National Championships.

WheelPower supports both the British Wheelchair Athletics Association (BWAA) and British Wheelchair Racing Association (BWRA) through the provision of facilities for training and events at Stoke Mandeville Stadium. WheelPower also provides information on accessing wheelchair sport and signposts both associations and UK Athletics for people interested in taking up athletics and wheelchair racing. WheelPower's Wheel Appeal aims to provide new sports wheelchairs to remove one of the major barriers to participation in wheelchair sport.

**Website:** [www.wheelpower.org.uk](http://www.wheelpower.org.uk)

## Case Study 1

### Somerset County Championships & Parallel Success

#### The Challenge

To include events for disabled athletes at the County Championships. The County Athletics Association was approached to ask them to include events for disabled athletes in the championships. They did not feel they were ready, equipped with enough knowledge or had been given enough time for that year. So the next year disabled athletes from Somerset competed at the Devon County Championships.

#### Addressing the Challenge

During the summer of that year Jen Slade (Somerset Disability Development Manager, Yeovil Olympiads AC club secretary, qualified official & coach) started attending committee meetings and raised the subject of including events for disabled athletes in the next year's competition.

#### Issue:

The County Association was concerned that they didn't have enough experience providing disability events and didn't want to get anything wrong.

#### Solutions:

- Confirmation of support available via a range of local and national partners with knowledge and experience including England Athletics and UK Athletics.
- Confidence of the committee was raised through the members of Yeovil Olympiads Athletic Club (who have been fully inclusive for nearly two years) sitting on the County committee.

#### Issue:

The inclusion of events for disabled athletes would mean extending the competition to two days and this was proving to be a major stumbling block.

#### Solution:

Raising the confidence of the committee led them to agree that the competition could be held over two days with AVIVA Parallel Success events on both days. It was decided that the track events and standing throwing would take place on the Saturday, with endurance track events, hurdles and seated throwing events to be held on the Sunday being a shorter competition day. This would give the officials additional time to be shown the requirements for seated throwing.

#### Issue:

Officials lacking knowledge regarding seated throws and fixing points.

#### Solution:

The South West Officials Conference included a demonstration of how to fix a throwing chair and an explanation of how a seated throwing event is run, this was supported by local officials who already have experience with seated throwing and was attended 12 officials.

#### Facility issues:

Owing to the track refurbishment at Yeovil, Milfield School was hosting the competition in the next year and at the track inspection they were informed they needed to install fixing points in one of the cages.

#### Solution:

Fixing points installed.

#### Progress & Success to date:

Championship now being held over two days with events for disabled athletes attracting athletes from across the South West. In the following year there were 40 performances including three A Standards. Officials now have experience of seated throwing and a general increase in confidence. The Championships are also sanctioned by UKA as an AVIVA Parallel Success Event and are included in their programme of events for disabled athletes.

#### Top tips:

- Request support from England Athletics and UKA – it is available.
- Visit the track to check accessibility and fixing points etc.
- I have printed and laminated the IPC information about the different throwing implements for the different classification groups for officials
- Yeovil Olympiads AC held an open competition in April which included seated throwing to give the athletes and the club officials some practice / experience in a fairly relaxed atmosphere.

*Jen Slade*

**“We are including events for disabled athletes into our Evening Open graded meetings - in many cases the ambulant athletes can be seeded into the graded events, and its easy to put on an additional race if necessary. Wheelchair events need to be separate of course and we are offering a couple of those to see what response we get.”**

Cambridgeshire County Association

## Case Study 2

### Hertfordshire County Championships

#### Who it involved?

- East Region Disability Athletics Forum supported the initial inclusion of events for disabled athletes at the Hertfordshire County Championships with support and advice.
- The Herts Athletics Network have supported and encouraged the inclusion of disability events at the Hertfordshire County Championships.

Hertfordshire County Athletics Association trusted the Herts Network Disability representative to sort competition details and support officials.

#### Issue - officials:

The fear of the unknown and above all experienced athletics organisers and officials not wanting to get it wrong appeared to be the biggest barrier to competition including events for disabled athletes. The main worry of officials appeared to be knowledge of the correct weight of implement being thrown, any altered rules for specific impairments, and communication with the athlete.

#### Solution:

By working alongside the organisers, we were able to reassure, answer questions and ensure that between us a high quality competition was produced

#### The facility – top tips:

Many facilities are now accessible in terms of getting on to the track, however:

- Is there cover for wheelchair athletes who cannot access the stands? Gazebos are a quick fix at many venues.

- Are the correct weight implements available at the track? 500g javelins and 2kg shots often catch organisers out.
- Check that the toilets and changing rooms accessible for wheelchair users?

#### Progress and success to date:

- The officials that volunteered at the competition are more confident in officiating disabled athletes and want to do more.
- The athletes had invaluable experiences of athletics competition prior to their successful trip to East Region Championships. Getting used to the starting gun, accepting and dealing with the disappointment of no throws etc.
- Hertfordshire County Athletics Association have accepted events for disabled athletes as a core part of their track and field championships.
- The first year saw 100m, 200m, shot and discus, with 8 athletes competing. This increased in the next year with long jump added and saw 21 young disabled people competing in the county championships, in preparation for the East Region Championships the following weekend.
- The profile of Hertfordshires talented disabled athletes who compete all over the country, was raised within the mainstream athletics world in Hertfordshire.

#### For further information visit:

East Region Disability Athletics website  
[www.erdaf.org.uk](http://www.erdaf.org.uk)

North Herts Disability Sports Association  
[www.nhdsa.org.uk](http://www.nhdsa.org.uk)

*Ros Cramp*

## Case Study 3

### Middlesex County Athletic Association's involvement in Parallel Success

Middlesex County A.A. have incorporated in to their annual County Championships events for disabled athletes for both track and field in their last 3 championships. The County Championships are over a 2-day weekend and the Disability events have been held on the second day when we hold our championships for the Under 15 and Under 13 age groups. The timetable we have adopted seemed to mix the non disabled events with the disabled events very well.

For two years we held our championships at Perivale, a venue which is used frequently for disabled athletes and so the staff at the stadium are familiar with the requirements, Perivale has all

the necessary implement weights and also the tie downs for the seated throws. Prior to the event we conducted a site visit to satisfy ourselves with the suitability of the venue to cope with events for disabled athletes.

We were aware that in disability events it is not necessarily the first past the post that is the winner and it was of course essential that we had a knowledgeable person familiar with the scoring methods with us as initially we could not have coped on our own. Support from UKA in the initial planning and preparation stages was, therefore, invaluable.

*Roy Stratton*

*(Hon Championships Secretary – Middlesex County A.A.)*