

# **IOWA INTERSCHOLASTIC TRACK AND FIELD PROGRAM**

**DEVELOPED BY**

**IOWA JUNIOR WHEELCHAIR SPORTS ASSOCIATION  
IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
IOWA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC UNION  
ADAPTIVE SPORTS IOWA**

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#### A. Purpose.

The wheelchair track and field program is designed to allow individuals who require the use of a wheelchair for participation in athletic activities the opportunity to become involved in interscholastic sports.

The benefits derived from inclusion on one's high school team include goal setting and becoming more disciplined in reaching goals, the camaraderie of fellow students which develops from the integration into activities, learning the concept of team work, and the health benefits which come from physical activity.

#### B. Classification.

1. Due to the relatively small number of competitors all athletes will compete in one class.
2. An athlete who does not ordinarily participate in sports using a wheelchair will not be allowed to use one if he/she is injured and unable to participate in their usual manner.
3. Athletes who do not generally use a wheelchair for mobility but requires a chair to participate in competitive athletics will be allowed to participate.

#### C. Events.

1. The Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) will offer competition in the 100 meter, 200 meter, and 400 meter races as well the shot put.
  - a. All athletes shall compete in the state qualifying meet in order to qualify for the state meet.
2. The Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU) will offer competition in the 100 meter, 200 meter, 400 meter races as well as the shot put.
  - a. Athletes do not need to participate in the state qualifying meet in order to participate in the state meet.
3. At each meet during the season an athlete may compete in a maximum of 3 racing events and 1 field event.
4. Wheelchair participants will compete in their own division throughout the season, and no team points will be awarded for competition.

#### D. Equipment.

1. For racing events only manual wheelchairs will be allowed. These may be standard chairs, lightweight chairs, or specialized racing chairs.
2. 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.
3. The repair and replacement of the chair is the responsibility of the athlete and his/her family.
4. Specifications of wheelchairs used for track events.
  - a. Wheelchairs shall have at least two large wheels and one small wheel.
  - b. 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.
  - c. Only 1 plain, round push rim shall be attached to each of the larger wheels.

- d. 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.
  - e. 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.
  - f. If strapping is used, it must be of a non-elastic material.
5. Specifications of chairs used for field events.
- a. The chair or seating system need not have wheels.
  - b. The maximum height of the seat, including the cushion, shall not exceed 75 centimeters.
  - c. Footrests may be placed in any position which the athlete desires but may not rest on top of the stopboard.
6. Each athlete will be required to use gloves to propel his/her wheelchair during the racing events, including practice sessions.
7. Each athlete will be required to wear a protective helmet during the racing events, including practice sessions.
8. Athletes will not be required to wear shoes during their events.
9. Chair tiedowns may be used for field events to secure the field chair in the throwing circle.
10. Field implements.
- a. The IHSAA will use a 4 kilogram shot put.
  - b. The IHSGAU will use a 3 kilogram shot put.

#### E. Rules of Competition for Track Events.

- 1. Propulsion and direct steering of the wheelchair shall be made by the hands and arms only.
- 2. No gears, levers, chains or other mechanical devices may be used in propelling the wheelchair.
- 3. All individuals who engage in or encourage unsafe or unsportsmanlike conduct are subject to disqualification by the race official.
- 4. The front axle of the wheelchair must be completely behind the vertical plane of the starting line.
- 5. 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.
  - a. 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.
- 7. In races run in lanes each competitor shall keep the front wheel of the chair in the assigned lane from start to finish.
  - a. If the front wheel leaves the lane, the athlete shall be disqualified.
  - b. 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.

8. In races run in lanes around a turn, each competitor shall keep the front wheel of the chair in the assigned lane from start to finish.
  - a. If the front wheel leaves the lane, the athlete shall be disqualified.
  - b. 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.
  - c. If any part of the chair shall drift over the inside edge of the lane, the competitor shall be disqualified.
9. If a competitor is pushed or forced by another person to wheel outside his/her lane the competitor will not be disqualified.
10. 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.
11. At the conclusion of an event competitors will stay in their assigned lanes until released by the official.
12. 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.
  - a. The competitor may not receive a push or other assistance during the race.
13. If, during a race, there is an infringement of the rules the race official may disqualify a competitor from the race.

#### F. Rules of Competition for Field Events.

1. The field event chair must be stationary during the competition.
  - a. If wheelchair tiedowns are not used, a competitor may have a qualified individual hold his/her chair and/or use their wheelchair brakes to prevent excessive movement.
2. Only the footrests or the pushrim may be outside the vertical plane of the inner circumference of the circle.
  - a. Any part of the chair used for propulsion must remain inside the circle including push rims and footrests.
  - b. If tiedowns are used to secure the chair, competitors may not use these same tiedowns to assist in stabilizing any part of the body. If any part of the competitors body comes in contact with the tiesdowns 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.
  - c. No part of the chair may rest on top the stopboard.
3. The feet may be in contact with the ground.
4. Taping of the fingers, hand, wrist or any part of the arm is not allowed.
5. The use of gloves is not allowed.
6. To obtain a better grip, athletes are permitted to use a suitable substance on their hands only.
7. To protect the spine from injury, an athlete may wear a belt of leather or other suitable material.
8. A competitor may leave the throwing circle from the front half without penalty.
9. 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.

10. 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.
  - a. 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.
11. 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.
  - a. 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.
12. 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.
13. The competitor or their chair shall not touch the ground on or outside the ring once the trial has begun.
14. Once the competitor has begun their preliminary and final trials they will not be allowed to receive assistance from their coach.
  - a. Each athlete will be allowed to have one attendant to assist in the preparation and participation in the event. The attendant may be any person designated as such by the athlete's school.
15. 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.
  - a. 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. Safety.

1. 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.
2. Athlete's must insure that no part of their lower limbs can fall to the ground during an event.
3. An athlete's wheelchair and/or field chair must be structurally sound.
4. An athlete must be securely seated in the wheelchair and remain so while racing.
5. There should be nothing stretched across the finish line of a racing event.
6. It shall be the sole responsibility of the official to rule on the safety of the chair and the athlete.
  - a. 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.

#### H. Health Concerns.

1. 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.

2. 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 athletes response during physical activity while using these medications.

3. 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.

#### I. Records and Recognition.

1. It is strongly recommended that any athlete who participates in wheelchair interscholastic sports be rewarded equally with the athlete who does not use a wheelchair. This would include but not be limited to:

- a. Ribbons, medals, etc. awarded at the meets in which the athlete participates and places in the final standings.
- b. The opportunity to earn a school letter by meeting the individual school standards which are set for all athletes of that school.

2. Records should be kept and updated for each event in which wheelchair athletes compete.

#### J. Responsibilities of the Governing Organizations.

##### 1. IHSAA and IGHSAU.

- a. Dissemination of information regarding the program including but not limited to its rules, meetings, and training sessions.
- b. 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.

##### 2. Adaptive Sports Iowa

- a. Accumulate and disseminate information about wheelchair sports and the appropriate procedures.
- b. 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.
- c. Act as the Paralympic sports organization for rules clarifications and questions.
- d. 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 wheelchair events.

K. Responsibilities of the Athlete and Family.

1. 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.
2. Acquire the equipment necessary to participate safely and keep the equipment in good repair.
3. 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.
4. Utilize the training program outlined by the coaching staff.
5. Follow all rules and regulations of the school, the governing body and the program.
6. Demonstrate good sportsmanship during all athletic events.
7. Be prepared to compete alone at most meets. Strive to improve the season best time or distance for state meet participation.

L. Responsibilities of the Athlete's School.

1. Expect the wheelchair athlete to begin participation at the same time and under the same requirements as all other athletes of the school.
2. Encourage those athletes that want to join the team to become involved in year round activities to enhance their training.
3. 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.
4. Provide transportation with the team to all team functions.
5. Provide the same rewards and recognition to the wheelchair athlete for his/her accomplishments as is given the other athletes.

M. Responsibilities of an Events Host School.

1. Provide events for the wheelchair athlete even if there is only one competitor. Do not expect head-to-head competition due to the volume of wheelchair athletes in the smaller districts.
2. Provide the same level of awards as with all athletes.

N. Contact Information

1. Iowa High School Athletic Association – (515) 432-2011
2. Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union – (515) 288-9741
3. Adaptive Sports Iowa – (888) 777-8881 Ext:115 or [info@adaptivesportsiowa.org](mailto:info@adaptivesportsiowa.org)