

IOWA INTERSCHOLASTIC PARA-SWIMMING PROGRAM

A. Purpose.

The para-swimming 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 teamwork, 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 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 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard freestyle, 200-yard freestyle and the 100-yard breaststroke.
2. These events will precede the same events as their non-disabled classmates.
3. At each meet during the season an athlete may compete in a maximum of 2 events.
4. Para-participants will compete in their own division throughout the season where separate team scores are calculated.
5. All athletes shall compete in the district meet in order to qualify for the state meet.

D. Rules of Competition

1. Freestyle

a. Competitors are required to follow the stroke requirements found under Rule 8-2-4 of the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rule Book.

2. Breaststroke

a. Competitors are required to follow the stroke requirements found under Rule 8-2-2 of the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rule Book with the following exceptions:

1. A turn only requires a simultaneous intent to touch the end wall
2. A turn and finish only requires the competitor to touch the end wall

with one hand

3. The competitor's feet are not required to turn outward during the propulsive part of the kick.

4. A competitor may let his leg drag during the stroke.

5. A competitor may preform a butterfly kick at any time during the race.

3. General Rules

a. All other requirements and rules regarding the competitor's suit, conduct, etc. found in the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rule Book will be followed.

E. Records and Recognition.

1. It is strongly recommended that any athlete who participates in para-swimming events be rewarded equally with the other athletes.

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.

F. Health Concerns.

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. 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.

3. 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.

G. Responsibilities of the Governing Organizations.

1. IHSAA

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.

i 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.

H. 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. 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.

3. Utilize the training program outlined by the coaching staff.

4. Follow all rules and regulations of the school, the governing body and the program.
5. Demonstrate good sportsmanship during all athletic events.
6. Be prepared to compete alone at most meets. Strive to improve the season best time or distance for state meet participation.

I. Responsibilities of the Athlete's School.

1. Expect the para-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 para-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 para-athlete for his accomplishments as is given the other athletes.

J. Responsibilities of an Events Host School.

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