

## IOWA INTERSCHOLASTIC PARA-SWIMMING PROGRAM

### A. Purpose.

The Para-Swimming program is designed to allow individuals who require unique adaptations for participation in athletic activities the opportunity to become involved in interscholastic sports.

### B. Classification.

In an effort to better help coaches and administrators identify potential athletes for the Para-Swimming Division, the IHSAA has adopted the guidelines and athlete classifications from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

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).
Leg length difference	Bone shortening in one leg from birth or trauma.
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.
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.
Ataxia	Lack of coordination of muscle movements due to a neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy, brain injury or multiple sclerosis.
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.
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).
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.
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..

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 an accommodation will not be allowed to use one if he is injured and unable to participate in their usual manner.

### C. Events.

1. The Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) will offer competition in the 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard freestyle, 200-yard freestyle, 100-backstroke 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. Backstroke

a. Competitors are required to follow the stroke requirements found under Rule 8-2-1 of the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rule Book.

#### 3. 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.

#### 4. 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.