BOCCIA GUIDELINES

ABOUT ATHLETICS FOR ALL

History

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education issued a Dear Colleague Letter on January 25, 2013 clarifying elementary, secondary, and postsecondary level schools’ responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) to provide extracurricular athletic opportunities for students with disabilities. The guidance clarifies when and how schools should include students with disabilities in mainstream interscholastic athletic programs, defines what true equal treatment of student athletes with disabilities means, and urges schools to create adapted interscholastic athletic programs for students with disabilities.

The OCR Dear Colleague Letter helps clarify the existing regulations and statute under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) to provide interscholastic, club, and intramural athletics for students with disabilities. The Rehab Act protects the rights of students with disabilities from discrimination in educational programs and activities in colleges and universities. The Rehab Act requires that students with disabilities be provided equal opportunity for participation in interscholastic, club, and intramural athletic programs offered by a school.

What the Athletics for All Task Force Offers

Introductory sport guidelines and best practices for adapted sports considered easy to adapt to mainstream interscholastic sports

Facilitation of training for your coaches and officials with adaptive sports experts

Access to hundreds of community based adaptive sports organizations, resources and tools for specific sports

Decades of experience in disability sport training, sport adaptations and adaptive equipment

Sports Are Important for Students with Disabilities

Benefits for students with disabilities who participate in sports are similar to students without disabilities:

· More likely to have better grades, school attendance and lower dropout rate

· Build discipline, self-esteem, confidence, and independence

· Learn team work, skill development and goal setting

· Promote healthy lifestyle

· Can be a predictor of later successes in college, career and community
Students with disabilities do not receive the same amount of physical activity and athletic opportunities as students without disabilities.

According to the CDC, youth with disabilities are twice as likely to be physically inactive, resulting in obesity rates almost 40% higher than in youth without disabilities creating much higher risks for health-related diseases.

Due to the resources available, it is possible to add adapted sports within school athletic programs without creating an undue administrative burden for State High School Associations or requiring the association to change existing rules for the athletes without disabilities.

OVERVIEW

The object of the game is to throw or roll balls so they land as close as possible to a target ball called the jack.

- Court Dimensions: 6m (19.6ft) X 12.5m (41ft) with playing boxes of 2.5m (8.2ft) X 1m (3.28ft) on one end
- Primary Equipment: Boccia Balls - 6 red, 6 blue, 1 white (jack)
- Athlete Eligibility: Easiest way to classify is to split athletes into two groups—those who throw the ball independently and those who require additional assistance.

TRAINING & EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT

- Boccia Balls: 6 red, 6 blue, 1 white (jack)
- Measuring device
- Timing equipment
- Scoreboard
- Dead ball container
- Red/blue color indicator (similar to a table tennis paddle, so teams can see who is to play)
- Chutes (optional)/Ramps (optional)
- Assistive head stick (optional)
- Mouth aids (optional)

TRAINING DRILLS
Training for the sport of boccia can be as easy as just playing the game or as complex as having players practice specific game scenarios. Training for the sport of boccia can be modified for a particular student athlete based on their current fitness level. Student athletes who have not participated in any type of recent throwing activity should limit their initial training sessions until throwing endurance can be developed.

Coaches should concentrate practices on a small playing field until the concept and strategies of boccia are learned and throwing endurance has been developed. Once that has been achieved training sessions should concentrate on the student/athlete being able to cover the entire court, playing both a short and long game.

**COURT DIMENSIONS**

6 meters by 12.5 meters (19.6ft x 41ft) with playing boxes of 2.5 meters by 1 meter (8.2ft x 3.2ft) on one end; played on a gymnasium floor

**COMPETITION & RULES**

**RULES**

- A game will consist of four “ends” for individual play and six “ends” for team play
- In individual play, each player will have six balls. In pairs, each will have three balls, and in teams, each player will have two balls
- The red team throws the jack (white) ball first, and then follows with the same player’s colored ball
- The opponent throws next and continues to play until he or she puts a ball closer to the jack
- This continues until all balls are thrown
- After all balls are thrown, the end is scored
- The player must remain in his or her playing box when throwing or rolling the ball
- If the player using the ramp is playing with a sport assistant, the sport assistant may not look at the court
- When a ball is released, the player must have at least one buttock in contact with the seat of the chair
- If the jack ball is knocked out of the court, it is repositioned on the “Replaced Jack Cross”

**SCORING**

- The referee will score the end after all balls have been thrown by both sides
- The side with the ball closest to the jack ball will score one point for each ball closer to the jack than the opponent’s closest ball
If two or more balls of different colors are equidistant from the jack and no other balls are closer, each side will receive one point per ball.

At the completion of the ends, the points scored in each are added together and the side with the higher total score is the winner.

In the event of a tie, one additional tie-breaker end is played.

GROUPINGS

The groupings presented here are suggested ways to create competition classes for athletes with disabilities. In order to not be confused with the national and international classification systems, we use the term groupings for school-based sport.

Role of Athletes Without Disabilities

Programs may wish to consider a policy whereby athletes without disabilities may enter the adapted program temporarily while rehabilitating from an injury, so long as the injury present in such a way that the athlete might otherwise otherwise qualify someone with a permanent disability experiences the same physical limitations. For example, any injury or surgery where the physician has recommended the athlete stay off the limb for a period of time and where that time spans a full season of an adapted sport, the athlete might qualify to participate in adapted sports regularly.

How will a state determine who is eligible? There are several different models to determine eligibility and minimal disability criteria. When possible and appropriate, it is best to stay within the three categories: sitting (athletes who use wheelchairs), ambulatory, and visually impaired.

Athletes with a disability have an impairment that may lead to competitive disadvantage in sport. Classification is the process by which athletes are assessed relative to the impact of impairment on their ability to compete in a specific sport.

Within the classification system, criteria are put in place to ensure that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus, the same factors that account for success in sport for athletes without a disability.

Classification is sport specific. Each sport has established groups, called sport classes, to group athletes for competition based on activity limitation for that sport.

The International Paralympic Committee’s (IPC) classification system for individual sports can be viewed online at: Paralympic.org/classification. Most IPC classification systems are not appropriate (too detailed) for a high school setting. It is suggested to modify to simplified / grouped classes such as sitting (athletes who use wheelchairs), visually impaired, and ambulatory.

Disabilities

At the interscholastic level, these disabilities can be served in boccia:
· Achondroplasia
· Amputee
· Arthrogryposis
· Avascular Necrosis
· Birth Defect
· Brachial Plexus Palsy
· Cerebellar Disgenesis
· Cerebral Palsy
· Congenital Hypotonia
· Congenital Limb Loss
· Diplegia
· Dystonia
· Erb’s Palsy
· Femoral Focal Deficiency
· Femoral Hypoplasia
· Fibro Muscular Dysplasia (FMD)
· Full Joint Anklosis or Replacement
· Hearing Impaired
· Larsen’s Syndrome
· Leigh’s Disease
· Lower Limb Paralysis
· McCunne Albright Syndrome
· Mitochondrial Disease
· Multiple Sclerosis
· Muscular Dystrophy
Osteogenesis Imperfecta
- Proximal Femoral Focal Deficiency (PFFD)
- Progressive Neurological Disorder
- Severe Amblyopia
- Severe Scoliosis
- Spastic Diplegia
- Spastic Paralysis
- Spina Bifida
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Spinal Muscular Atrophy
- Stroke
- Transverse Myelitis
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Vertigo/Balance Issues
- Visual Motor Integration Impairment
- Visually Impaired
- Type 1 Diabetes
- Any other medical doctor diagnosed permanent lower body disability that prevents a player from competing in mainstream sports

SAFETY

Student athletes with disabilities do not represent a higher level of liability risk or risk management concern than student athletes without disabilities. With proper planning and contingencies, student athletes with disabilities can seamlessly integrate into the dynamics of an interscholastic team. Individualized assessments can help assess or identify any potential safety concerns.

Ensuring athlete safety is a priority. Through education, resources, and training, members of the sport community can create a safe environment. Please refer to the following resources for more information.
What is SafeSport?:  http://safesport.org/what-is-safesport/

Coaches Toolkit:  http://safesport.org/toolkit/coaches/

SafeSport Trainings:  http://safesport.org/take-the-training/

GLOSSARY

- **Assistive Device**: is an aid used by athletes with more severe disabilities to play the game. Examples include a ramp or chute.

- **Ball**: one of the red or blue balls

- **Court**: the playing area as enclosed by the boundary. This includes the throwing boxes

- **End**: is one section of a match when the jack and all the balls have been played by two sides

- **Jack**: the white target ball

- **Side**: in individual boccia, a side is defined as one (1) single competitor. In team and pairs boccia, a side is defined as three (3) and two (2) members, respectively, of the team as a single unit

- **Match**: a competition between two sides when a specified number of ends are played

- **Violation**: is any action assumed by an athlete, side, and substitute, sport assistant, or coach which is against the rules of the game

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is there sport technical assistance if our school system is interested in starting a Boccia program?

Yes, organizations like BlazeSports has a Boccia Sport Technical Committee and access to a number of experienced coaches and officials that could be available to provide Boccia in-service trainings. BlazeSports can also offer a boccia webinar for teachers and coaches.

Do we have to follow the national/international classification system if we want to start a boccia program in our school?

No, boccia is a great sport to offer to students with or without disabilities.

Are there competition opportunities outside of school programs?

Yes, there are an increasing number of regional boccia competitions throughout the U.S. and an annual National Boccia Championship sanctioned by USA Boccia.

RESOURCES


International Paralympic Committee- Resources: http://www.paralympic.org/boccia

Flag House- Supplier: http://www.flaghouse.com

USA Handi Life Sport- Supplier: http://www.handilife.com

Gopher- Supplier: http://gophersport.com

US Paralympics- Boccia video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9-PAmsc-cm

MISSION

The mission of the Athletics for All Task Force is to inform and provide the tools and guidelines by which coaches, athletic directors and school administrators can include students with physical disabilities in interscholastic sports.

VISION

It is the vision of the Athletics for All Task Force that students with disabilities will have access to athletic opportunities throughout the United States in an equal manner as students without disabilities. The Task Force envisions an educational system that provides equal opportunities for student-athletes to derive the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of interscholastic sports, enabling each to develop into healthy, well-adjusted, contributing members of their respective communities.

ATHLETICS FOR ALL TASK FORCE

Active Policy Solutions

http://www.activepolicysolutions.com/

American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AASP)

http://www.adaptedsports.org/

Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP)

http://www.borp.org/
BlazeSports America
http://www.blazesports.org/

Bridge II Sports
http://www.bridge2sports.org/

Competitive Edge Management

Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA)
http://www.disabledsportsusa.org

Great Lakes Adapted Sports Association (GLASA)
http://glasa.org/

Lakeshore Foundation
http://www.lakeshore.org/

Louisiana Games Uniting Mind and Body (GUMBO)
https://sites.google.com/site/louisianagumboinc/home

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD)
http://www.nchpad.org/

Special Olympics
http://www.specialolympics.org/

United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA)
http://www.usaba.org/

Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA (WASUSA)
http://wasusa.org/