

Officiating for Disability Athletes

Please Distribute

What is Disability Swimming?

Disability swimming is not just for athletes who have been classified with specific impairments (physical, visual, intellectual) through US Paralympics (USP) Swimming or International Paralympic Committee (IPC). It is also for athletes who have a disability who just want to swim with a team. The athlete who exhibits physical, emotional, or behavioral issues can find and be supported in swimming through the structure, team cohesion, camaraderie and friendships that swimming offers.

The role of the Disability Committee, through partnerships with teams and coaches, is to

- o Identify the disabled swimmer
- o Get the disabled swimmer and their family/support system and structure involved
- o Retain the disabled athlete in the program
- o Coach the disabled swimmer in appropriate ways on appropriate team by considering age and ability as well as the athlete's goals in the sport
- o Allow for competition on an even level based on ability

What Disability Swimming is NOT

- o Diversity and Inclusion – a committee in USA Swimming – culturally oriented, celebrating the rich heritages of different ethnic groups. Includes low income groups, outreach to underserved, minority, Title IX, sex discrimination
- o Special Olympics – an organization for athletic inclusion for children and adults with intellectual disabilities
- o “Watered- Down” swimming/competitions
- o “Feel Sorry for You” Swimming
- o Swimming/competitions for “those” people

Where is USA Swimming -Disability Focus Going?

1. Programs and support for ways to identify and encourage athletes to join USA swim clubs
2. Education and guidance for coaches and clubs on how to effectively include swimmers with a disability
3. Inclusion in meets for swimmers who are not Paralympic-eligible or who do not have a designated sport class
4. Investigating time standards for athletes with disabilities to be included in higher level USA swimming competitions
5. Assisting coaches/athletes to connect with US Paralympics Swimming if they want to continue to advance and start competing in para-competitions

For more information on U.S. Paralympics Swimming

<http://www.teamusa.org/US-Paralympics/Sports/Swimming>