

INCLUDING DISABILITY ATHLETES in Local Meets

**And How To Do It
April 2025**



WHY Include Disability Athletes

USA Swimming's age group development is an **essential** and **strategic** pathway for young swimmers with disabilities, before pursuing **U.S. Paralympics Swimming classification** around ages **12-14**.

- Embracing Abilities
- Stroke Development
- Competitive Foundations
- Team Cohesiveness
 - Building Bonds
- Growing Together



WHY Include Disability Athletes

- All Swimmers gain a deeper Appreciation for focusing on Abilities rather than Limitations.
- Teammates recognize their Shared Passions, Goals, and Dedication, fostering Unity and Mutual Respect.
- New Friendships and Shared Experiences enrich every team member's journey.
- Even for athletes not interested in pursuing a career in U.S Paralympic Swimming, inclusivity still plays an important role. People with disabilities are generally the most physically unhealthy at all stages of life, and providing young people an opportunity to be involved in swimming can help reverse that trend.



WHY Include Disability Athletes

- Disabled athletes learn the same life lessons and sometimes more life lessons than able bodied peers.
- Disabled athletes will be exposed to prelims/finals meets before there first Paralympic competition.
- Having disabled athletes in higher meets allows them to spread awareness of disability and educate more people about it.
- Able bodied swimmers see that the disabled are still capable and are not helpless which can reduce stereotypes and prejudice.
- Beginning the process of including disability athletes could help other sports organizations do the same.



How to Include Disability Athletes

Pre-Meet Considerations

- **Parallel Time Standards:** Identify if meets with qualifying standards have corresponding parallel time standards.
- **Event Integration:** Decide if disability athletes compete with or separately from other swimmers in prelims and finals.
- **Finals Eligibility:** Determine if disability athletes qualify for finals.
- **Advancement Criteria:** Establish how disability athletes progress to finals.
- **Scoring System:** Define the method for scoring disability athletes.



How to Include Disability Athletes

Pre-Meet Considerations

- **B/C Meets:** Used to set an entry limit, ensuring disability athletes do not exceed a **B time**.
- **LSC Championships:** Allows for a **corresponding parallel entry time** when a qualifying time or faster is required.
- **Zone Sectional Championships:** Helps establish **entry times set halfway between AAA and AAAA standards** using the same calculation method.



How to Include Disability Athletes

LSC or Host Team need to include the following in Meet Information

- 1. Statement of how Disability Athletes will be integrated and, if applicable, Finals eligibility**
- 2. How Disability Athletes will be scored**
 - a. Timed Finals**
 - b. Prelims/Finals**
- 3. Athlete Necessary Accommodation Form and Due Date**
- 4. Any determined parallel time standards if the meet has qualifying entry times**
- 5. Local Disability Contact for questions**



How to Include Disability Athletes

LSC or Host Team need to include the following in Meet Information

Establish a way for disability athletes to earn/qualify final swim

Ex: swim faster than their seed time, swim maximum qualifying standard for the meet

Idea For Races at Finals

Swimmers who qualify for finals will be placed in one of three mixed Disability heats at Finals to be swum at the beginning of the session, after the 2nd event, and after the last individual event. Think of it as running time trials and then pull times.

How will your Disability Athletes Score?

- Must be specified in Meet Announcement
- Determined by number of athletes in an event
- Same scoring as regular events
- Convert all swims to a numeric score then rank (SZ Form on Disability Page)



How to Include Disability Athletes

LSC or Host Team need to include the following in Meet Information

Regular Season Meets – No Qualifying Entry Time Standards

DISABILITY ATHLETES:

Coaches entering Disability Athletes who require any accommodations or modifications, including the need for personal assistants and/or registered service animals, must provide advance notice in writing, accompanying their meet entry file, to the meet referee by the entry deadline. Failure to provide advance notice may limit the host's ability to accommodate all requests.

Recommended best practice: Coaches submit the Athlete Necessary Accommodation Form along with the meet entries for each competition



How to Include Disability Athletes

LSC or Host Team need to include the following in Meet Information

DISABILITY ATHLETES:

Meets with Qualifying Entry Time Standards

All Disability Athletes must meet the Parallel Time Standards according to their performance group (P1, P2, P3) and age group in every event they wish to participate in the meet. Coaches entering swimmers with disabilities who require any accommodations or modifications, including the need for personal assistants and/or registered service animals, must provide advance notice in writing, accompanying their meet entry file, to the meet referee by the entry deadline. Failure to provide advance notice may limit the host's ability to accommodate all requests.

Recommended best practice: Coaches submit the Athlete Necessary Accommodation Form along with the meet entries for each competition



How to Include Disability Athletes

LSC or Host Team need to include the following in Meet Information

Meets with Scoring

DISABILITY ATHLETES:

Swimmers with disabilities who successfully compete in a prelim event can qualify in the same manner as an able-bodied swimmer or can qualify for an added heat in finals for disabled athletes. This finals heat can be combined by age and/or genders of other swimmers with disabilities but will be scored separately depending on the number of disability swimmers per event.



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Seeding and Run Operations

Seeding Guidelines – First Steps for Seeding If Bonus Events Are Not Allowed:

- Seed with same age group
- Likely placed in slowest heat based on entry time
- If Significantly slower than the field, consider seeding down an age group
- Manual evaluation of entry times is needed
- **Requires approval from Swimmer's Coach and Meet Referee*

If Bonus Events Are Allowed:

- Mark Disability Athlete's events as bonus:
 - Ensures seeding in slowest heat
 - Prevents seeing in faster heats using the event as a bonus



HyTek

Seeding and Run Operations

Seeding Guidelines – Before Publishing

- Re-Review accommodation forms
- Apply and communicate specific accommodations
 - Outside lane request – manually adjust heat/lane
 - Strobe or equipment needs
- Coaches are responsible for confirming qualifying times
- **NO** Notification – swimmer treated as able-bodied
 - May result in loss of accommodation or race disadvantage
- Early Coordination with Meet Referee, Meet Director, Coach, Scoring Operator is paramount



HyTek

Athletes

Layout Add Edit Delete Contact Comp# Multi-Class# ScratchAll View Find Reports Export to HTML Events Relays T

Gender: ☒ Both ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age Range: [] - []

Team: UN-GA

Entries: ☐ Eligible Only ☒ All Events ☐ Entries Only

☐ Show Relays ☐ Show Swim-ups ☐ Show Results

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Last Name	First Name	MI	Gen	Age	ABBR	Team Name	USS Number	Birth Date	Preferred			
Swimmer	John	T	M	12	UN-GA	Unattached georgia	123456789ABCDE	1/1/2013	John			

Evt #	Eligible Events	Sel	Stat	Entry Time	Heat/Lane	SCR	Alt	Exh	Bonus	Special	Event Age	Conv Time
7	Girls 10&U 200 Free	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
8	Boys 10&U 200 Free	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
9	Girls 11-12 200 Free	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
10	Boys 11-12 200 Free	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
11	Girls 13-14 200 Free	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
12	Boys 13-14 200 Free	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
13	Girls 200 Free	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
14	Boys 200 Free	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
15	Girls 10&U 100 Breast	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
16	Boys 10&U 100 Breast	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
17	Girls 11-12 100 Breast	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			
18	Boys 11-12 100 Breast	☒	Scored	1:44.14L	1/5	☐	☐	☐	☐			1:31.98Y
19	Girls 13-14 100 Breast	☐	Scored			☐	☐	☐	☐			

How to “Swim Down” an Age Group:

- Athlete Menu – double-click on Disability Athlete
- Select “All Events”
- In this example – Check “Boys 10&U Breast” and enter seed time from Boys 11-12 100 Breast
- Remove check from 11-12 Breast
- Seed 10&U Breast to assure swimmer is seeded



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Seeding and Run Operations

Finals Qualification

Event Edit - Boys 50 Butterfly SWAD

Event #: 896

Individual / Relay

Individual

Relay

Gender

Alt Gender

Girls Boys

Women Men

Mixed

Division

Stroke

Freestyle

Backstroke

Breaststroke

Butterfly

Medley

1 mtr Diving

3 mtr Diving

Platform Diving

Dives

Custom # Relay Legs (2-8)

Note: SWAD

Suppress Stroke Name

Rounds

Timed Finals

Prelims / Semis / Finals

Heats in Semis

Lanes in Semis (1-12)

- Create new event in finals
- Use “Notes” field to mark as Disability Athlete
 - Deaf – needs strobe
 - Exit to ladder
 - In-water start
 - Tapper
- Note prints on heat sheet for easy reminders
- Assign lanes using standard or accommodation-based seeding



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Seeding and Run Operations

Insert Disability Events into Finals Session

SESSION SCHEDULE - (Double Click Evt # to Delete)							
Evt #	Rpt H/P	P/S/F	Event Name	Order	Alt	Alt Heats	Event Interval
696	H	F	Boys 50 Butterfly SWAD	1			0
87	H	F	Girls 11-12 200 IM	2			0
88	H	F	Boys 11-12 200 IM	3			0
89	H	F	Girls 13-14 200 IM	4			0
90	H	F	Boys 13-14 200 IM	5			0
91	H	F	Girls 200 IM	6			0
92	H	F	Boys 200 IM	7			0
95	H	F	Girls 11-12 50 Butterfly	8			0
98	H	F	Boys 11-12 50 Butterfly	9			0
706	H	F	Boys 50 Breaststroke SWAD	10			0
99	H	F	Girls 13-14 200 Backstroke	11			0
100	H	F	Boys 13-14 200 Backstroke	12			0



HyTek

Seeding and Run Operations

Best Practices

- If eligible:
 - Use **JD (Judges Decision)** in Run menu
 - Enter points in **JD Points** column

Judges Decision / Tie Breaker										
RESULTS										
JD PL	Place	H/L #	JD Heat PL	Heat PL	Athlete Name	ABBR	Time	Points	JD Points	
	1	1/4		1	Swimmer, John T	UN-GA	1:05.32	24	16	



Competitive Inclusion COACHES and OFFICIALS

Best Practices to Consider

- **Assign an Admin Official** to manage disability logistics and assist HyTek operator
- Critical for:
 - Reminding Officials and Venue Staff of Disability Heats/Lanes
 - Finals Qualifiers
 - Points allocation
- **Plan in advance for smoothest workflow – Communicate Early**
 - Southern Zone website DEI/Disability page for helpful forms
 - Link to SZ website on last page of this presentation



Competitive Inclusion COACHES and OFFICIALS

Start with the Rules

- Accommodations and modifications must align with existing rules.

Individualized Approach

- Adjustments should be tailored to the specific swimmer and meet.

Lead with Respect & Grace

- Support and empower swimmers, ensuring no penalties arise from lack of awareness about accommodations or rule modifications.

Focus on Learning

- Every meet is an opportunity for officials, coaches, and athletes to grow in understanding and inclusivity.



Competitive Inclusion COACHES and OFFICIALS

- Communication begins before the meet starts – at time of entry submittal utilizing the Athlete Necessary Accommodation Form

Necessary Accommodation Form - Athlete

Swimmer's Name: _____ P1__ P2__ P3__ Meet: _____ Date: _____

Parallel Time Standard Used: _____

Club ____ LSC ____ Coach: _____ Cell # (at meet) _____

Accommodations needed; please describe.

Modifications needed; please describe.

Session	Event	Heat	Lane	Modification(s) Per Article 105



ACCOMMODATIONS

Proper accommodations are essential to ensure swimmers can access the facility and navigate to the starting block safely. This includes barrier-free entry, sufficient deck space for movement, and any necessary support for a seamless transition to the starting position.

- **Access to the venue**
- **Seating needs for wheelchair, walker, or crutch users**
- **Family bathroom for assistance**
- **Extra time to get to the blocks**
- **Assistance entering or exiting the pool**
- **Assistant for balance support when starting from the blocks**
- **Access to an outside lane**
- **Towel on the blocks**
- **Deck start**
- **In the water start**



TECHNICAL RULE MODIFICATIONS

Disability Athletes are not able to perform portions of a stroke for a variety of reasons. USA Swimming does not require any documentation of a permanent disability. A swimmer's disability should not be relevant to a referee's discussion to allow necessary accommodations and or rule modifications.

****Use Common Sense. Swimmers are unique and all have different situations that need modifying.***



TECHNICAL RULE MODIFICATIONS

Freestyle

No Rule Modifications



TECHNICAL RULE MODIFICATIONS

Backstroke

Question: Can swimmer grip the starting grips or gutter with both hands?

- If **YES**, proceed as per the rules.
- If **NO**, they may request a one-hand start modification.



TECHNICAL RULE MODIFICATIONS

Breaststroke

Question: Can swimmer perform a simultaneous arm movement?

- If **YES**, proceed as per the rules.
- If **NO**, they may request non-simultaneous arm movement.
- **Important:** The arm pull, except for the simultaneous part, must follow rules

Question: Can swimmer perform a 2-hand simultaneous touch?

- **YES**, proceed as per the rules.
- **NO**, determine if:
 - One-hand touch is needed. Specify Right vs Left hand
 - Non-simultaneous touch is needed.
- **IMPORTANT:** USA Swimming does not recognize intent



TECHNICAL RULE MODIFICATIONS

Breaststroke

Question: Can swimmer perform a simultaneous leg movement?

- If **YES**, proceed as per the rules.
- If **NO**, they may request
 - Non-simultaneous leg movement.
 - No Leg Kick (USA Swimming does not recognize intent)
 - **Important:** No flutter, scissor, or butterfly kick unless allowed

• **Question:** Can both feet turn out?

- If **YES**, proceed as per the rules.
- If **NO**, for both or either foot, they may request a modification
 - Feet or, Right foot or Left foot does not turn out



TECHNICAL RULE MODIFICATIONS

Butterfly

Question: Can swimmer perform a simultaneous arm movement?

- If **YES**, proceed as per the rules.
- If **NO**, they may request non-simultaneous arm movement.
- **Important:** Arms must recover over the water, no alternating arm movements allowed

Question: can swimmer perform a 2-hand simultaneous touch?

- **YES**, proceed as per the rules.
- **NO**, determine if:
 - One-hand touch is needed. Specify Right vs Left hand
 - Non-simultaneous touch is needed.
- **IMPORTANT:** USA Swimming does not recognize intent



TECHNICAL RULE MODIFICATIONS

Butterfly

Question: Can swimmer perform a simultaneous leg movement?

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- If **NO**, they may request
- Non-simultaneous leg movement.
- No Leg Kick (USA Swimming does not recognize intent)
- **Important:** No flutter, scissor, or breaststroke kick allowed



TECHNICAL RULE MODIFICATIONS

DQ SLIPS

 **DISQUALIFICATION REPORT**

EVENT# _____ HEAT _____ LANE _____

SWIMMER _____ TEAM _____

BUTTERFLY START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____

KICK: ALTERNATING(1A) _____ BREAST(1B) _____ SCISSORS(1C) _____

ARMS: NON-SIMULTANEOUS(1E) _____ UNDERWATER RECOVERY(1F) _____

TOUCH: ONE HANDED(1J) _____ NOT SEPARATED(1K) _____

NON-SIMULTANEOUS(1L) _____ NO TOUCH(1M) _____

NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL(1N) _____

HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m(1P) _____ RE-SUBMERGED(1R) _____

OTHER(1T): _____

BACKSTROKE START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____

NO TOUCH AT TURN(2A) _____

PAST VERTICAL AT TURN: _____

DELAY INITIATION ARM PULL(2B) _____ DELAY INITIATING TURN(2C) _____

MULTIPLE STROKES(2D) _____

TOES OVER LIP OF GUTTER AFTER THE START(2E) _____

HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m(2F) _____ RE-SUBMERGED(2G) _____

NOT ON BACK OFF WALL(2H) _____

SHOULDERS PAST VERTICAL TOWARDS THE BREAST(2L) _____

OTHER(2T): _____

BREASTSTROKE START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____

KICK: ALTERNATING(3A) _____ BUTTERFLY(3B) _____ SCISSORS(3C) _____

ARMS: PAST HIP LINE(3D) _____ NON-SIMULTANEOUS(3E) _____

ELBOWS RECOVERED OVER WATER(3H) _____

TOUCH: ONE HANDED(3J) _____ NOT SEPARATED(3K) _____

NON-SIMULTANEOUS(3L) _____ NO TOUCH(3M) _____

NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL(3N) _____

CYCLE: DOUBLE PULLS/KICKS(3P) _____ KICK BEFORE PULL(3P) _____

HEAD NOT UP BEFORE HANDS TURN INWARD(3R) _____

OTHER(3T): _____

FREESTYLE

NO TOUCH AT TURN(4A) _____

HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m(4B) _____ RE-SUBMERGED(4C) _____

MIXED MEDLEY

STROKE INFRACTIONS(5A) _____ OUT OF SEQUENCE(5B) _____

FOURTH DISTANCE SWIM IN STYLE OF PREVIOUS STROKE _____

ARTICLE 105

RELAYS

STROKE INFRACTIONS: (5A-D) _____ SWIMMER # _____

ENTERED OFF SWIMMER(5F-H) # _____

CHANGED ORDER OF SWIMMERS(5I) _____

OTHER(5T): _____

MISCELLANEOUS

FALSE START(7A) _____ DECLARED FALSE START(7B) _____

DID NOT FINISH(7C) _____ DELAY OF MEET(7D) _____

OTHER(7T): _____

JUDGE: _____ (print name clearly) C.J. _____ (initials)

REFEREE: _____ (print name clearly)

NOTIFIED: _____ SWIMMER _____ COACH

rev. 1/04 DESK/REFEREE

- **Key Rule: Article 105** modifications **do not exempt** officials from observing and reporting infractions **outside the rule modification.**

- **Deck Referee:** Can mark DQ slip indicating **Article 105** was applied for a specific rule modification

- **AO Consideration:** Be aware that some infractions may be DQ'd (e.g., **multiple butterfly kicks**).

- **Process:**

- DQ slip sent with event paperwork

- **Article 105 NOT** entered into HyTek

- **Non-Article 105 infractions ARE ENTERED**



RESOURCES

- All information referred to in this presentation can be found on the Southern Zone website: [Southern Zone Swimming - Disability Meet Information Guidelines](#)
- Utilize LSC Disability/DEI Coordinators and put their contact in the Meet Information Letter
- SZ Disability Coordinator: Rayleen Soderstrom
soderstromrayleen@gmail.com
- Disability HyTek Information: Cheryl Loprinzo
cheryl.loprinzo@comcast.net
- USA Swimming Disability Committee Chair: Susan Mechler
susan.Mechler@gmail.com



Thank You!

