

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.





# 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.



- 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



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)



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

#### **Meets with Qualifying Entry Time Standards**

DISABILITY ATHLETES:

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.



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#### **Meets with Scoring**

DISABILITY ATHLETES:

Swimmers with disabilities who successfully compete in a prelim event can qualify in the same manner as an ablebodied 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.



# **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

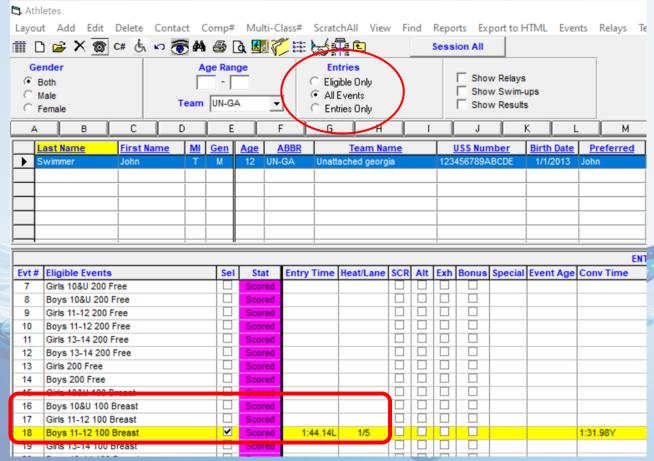
### If Bonus Events Are Allowed:

- 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

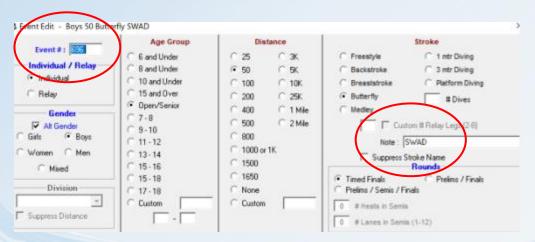
- Re-Review accommodation forms
- Apply and communicate specific accommodations
  - Outside lane request manually adjust heat/lane
  - Strobe or equipment needs
- Coaches are responsible for confirming qualifying times
- NO Notification swimmer treated as able-bodied
  - May result in loss of accommodation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





## 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



### **Finals Qualification**

- 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



### **Insert Disability Events into Finals Session**

Fvt#	Rpt H/P	P/S/F	Event Name	Order	Alt	Alt Heats	Event Interval
696	Н	F	Boys 50 Butterfly SWAD	1			0
87	H	F	Girls 11-12 200 IM	2			0
88	Н	F	Boys 11-12 200 IM	3			0
89	Н	F	Girls 13-14 200 IM	4			0
90	Н	F	Boys 13-14 200 IM	5			0
91	Н	F	Girls 200 IM	6			0
92	Н	F	Boys 200 IM	7			0
95	Н	F	Girls 11-12 50 Butterfly	8			0
96	H	F	Boys 11-12 50 Butterfly	9	_		0
706	Н	F	Boys 50 Breaststroke SWAD	10			0
99	- 11	F	Girls 13-14 200 Backstroke	- 11			0
100	Н	F	Boys 13-14 200 Backstroke	12			0



### **Best Practices**

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

Jud	iges De	cision	/ Tie Breake	r					>
					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.

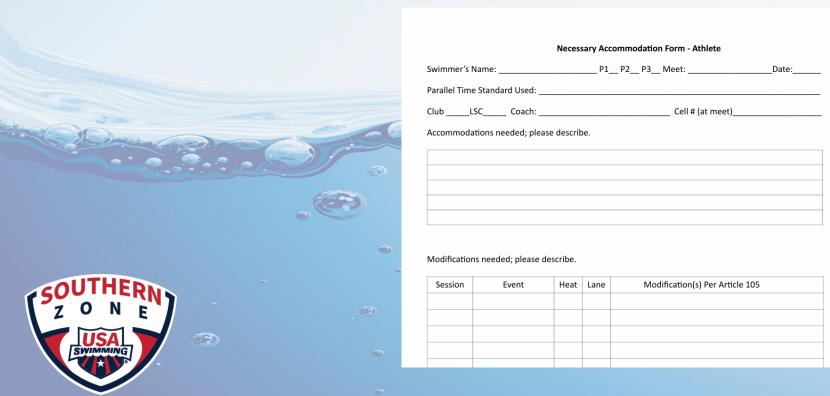
### Focus on Learning

•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



### **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



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.



**Freestyle** 

No 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.



#### **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



#### **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

### **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:
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#### **DQ SLIPS**

EVENT#	HEAT	LANE	
SWIMMER		TEAM	
ARMS: NON-SIN TOUCH: ONE H NON-S NOT TOWARD TO	START	UNDERWATER RECO PARATED(1K) No Touch(1M)	s(1C) VERY(1F)
BACKSTROKE No Touch at Ti Past Vertical, Delay Instati Multiple Str	URN(2A)# AT TURN: ON ARM PULL(2B) OKES(2D)		
HEAD DID NOT B NOT ON BACK O	ST VERTICAL TOWARDS	n(2F) Rt-Sut	WERGED(2G)
ARMS: PAST HI ELBOWS RECO TOUCH: ONE H	ING(3A) BUTTER IPUNE(3D) NON- OVERED OVER WATER() IAND(3J) NOT SI	FLY(3B)SCISE SIMULTANEOUS(3E) _ IH) IPARATED(3K)	IORS(3C)
NOT TOWARD TO CYCLE: DOUBLE	HE BREAST OFF WALL( E PULLS/KICKS(35) NOT UP BEFORE HANDS	KICK BEFORE PL	
PREESTYLE NO TOUCH AT TO HEAD DID NOT E	JRN(4A)#BREAK SURFACE BY 150	n(48) Re-Sui	MERGED(4c)
STROKE INFRAC FOURTH DISTAN	EDLEY TION(S) (SA)#O CE SWUM IN STYLE OF	UT OF SEQUENCE(58 PREVIOUS STOKE	
ARTICLE 105			
RELAYS STROKE INFRAC	TIONS: (6A-D)#(	SWIMMER #	
CHANGED ORDE OTHER(6T):	Miles III	O INONE	
MISCELLANEC FALSE START (7A DID NOT FINISH OTHER (7T):	DEGLAY	ED FALSE START (78 OF MEET (70)	
JUDGE:	(print name clearly)	cu:	infStat)
REFEREE:		me clearly)	

- •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: <u>Southern Zone Swimming - Disability</u> <u>Meet Information Guidelines</u>
- 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



