



## **Wheelchair Track Begins Adaptive Sports Program**

Phase 1 of an adaptive sports program approved by the AHSAA Central Board provided competition for wheelchair track and field participants in four events during the 2007 season.

Wheelchair athletes were not allowed to compete against able-bodied runners, because their competition is fundamentally altered by the use of wheelchairs. Participation by athletes in wheelchairs as set out below does not violate any National Federation track and field rules.

These are the guidelines mandated by the Central Board in 2007:

- The AHSAA will determine the events in which the student-athlete with a disability using a wheelchair may compete, adding additional competitions as interest and participation grows.
- All high school students with a permanent, physical disability may be eligible to participate on their school's track and field team beginning immediately. Students currently have the opportunity to compete in the following wheelchair events: 100, 200, 400, 1600 and 3200-meter runs, plus the shot put, javelin and discus. The student-athlete with a disability will be treated as a member of the team just as their peers and receive reasonable accommodations.
- Students will be members of the school's track & field team and will be allowed to compete at all the school's regular season meets (regardless of the number of wheelchair competitors). The athletes must compete in their school's team uniform. Best overall times from their specific competitions will be turned into Mr. Tony Stallworth of the AHSAA at the end of the regular season. He will then report the combined 8 best times from across the state in two divisions for boys (Class 1-3A and Class 4-6A) and two divisions for girls (Class 1-3A and Class 4-6A) to the State Track Meet Coordinators.
- The AHSAA will notify the schools of the top eight (8) qualifiers from the two boys divisions and the top 8 qualifiers from the two girls divisions. At the state track meet a total of 8 boys and 8 girls will compete as wheelchair participants in each of the four events—100, 200, and 400 meter runs and the shot put. The wheelchair athletes will not compete in the section qualifying track meet.
- The AHSAA has two state track sites. If there are 3 or more participants that qualify for each of the Class 1A-3A or 4A-6A meets, they will run at their respective track meets. If there are less than 3, the athletes will compete at the Class 4A-6A meet at Gulf Shores.

- No team points will be scored and there will be no competition against able-bodied athletes during the season or at the State Track Meet. Separate team state champions will be declared for wheelchair and able-bodied athletes. Medals will be awarded to the first three finishers at the State Track Meet in each wheelchair event.
- Coaches of student-athletes with disabilities must be trained in wheelchair track and field and must demonstrate expertise in this area. Coaches must complete a required training course.
- Students competing in wheelchair racing events must compete using proper equipment, including a wheelchair with all safety equipment, racing helmet and gloves.
- Students who participate must meet all AHSAA eligibility requirements.

### **Rules and Standards for the Shot Put**

- All competitors must put the shot from a manual wheelchair or a power (electric) wheelchair.
- In the shot put, the boys will use an 8.81lb./4.0 kg. shot while the girls will use a 6 lb. shot.
- Each athlete must enter the circle on his/her own. Once in the circle, a coach may position the athlete.
- A coach may not assist an athlete entering the circle. If a coach assists the athlete the athlete will be disqualified from competition.
- The field official is the only person who may hand the shot to the athlete. A coach may tell or demonstrate to the field official how to hand the implement to the athlete but can not do so directly. If a coach hands the implement to the athlete he is disqualified.
- One buttock cheek or leg must remain in contact with the seat during the throw. If either buttocks or legs lose contact with the seat during the put, that athlete's put is disqualified.
- During and after the throw, feet, front casters or hands cannot touch the foul line, the top of the stop board, the outside of the circle or the ground. If this happens the athlete is disqualified.
- If the shot lands on or outside a vector line, that put is disqualified.