

## **AAASP AND BLAZESPORTS AMERICA ANNOUNCE COLLABORATION**

Atlanta (March 22, 2016) – Two Atlanta-based adaptive sports organizations have announced an exciting new working relationship that will provide more coordinated athletic opportunities for children with physical disabilities in both a school-based and community setting. [BlazeSports America](#) and the [American Association of Adapted Sports Programs \(AAASP\)](#) plan to collaborate on a variety of projects that will serve as a national model of excellence in community and school-based partnerships for adaptive sports.

“BlazeSports America and AAASP are natural partners,” says BlazeSports Executive Director Cynthia Frisina. “Working collaboratively on a variety of best practices and adaptive sports initiatives will provide more life-changing sports opportunities to children with physical disabilities.”

Since USDOE’s Office of Civil Rights clarified school’s responsibilities to insure athletics are inclusive, new and existing program efforts have popped up or expanded across the nation.

“We are truly invested as national leaders in seeing all those efforts succeed,” states Tommie Storms, Co-Founder and Director of Operations for AAASP. “And what better way to continue to develop and share with others the lessons of two decades of BlazeSports community-based programs and AAASP school based programs than working together in local communities to insure opportunities exist at every level for these athletes?”

When like-minded adaptive sports organizations team up, the athletes win.

“Collaborations are key to forming the best possible environment and experiences, both in our nations schools and local communities, for individuals with physical disabilities,” explains Bev Vaughn, Co-Founder and Executive Director, AAASP. “This partnership strengthens our ability to achieve these results and narrow the gap in providing equitable adapted sport opportunities.”

With the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta coming up this summer, the timing could not be better for Paralympic legacy organization BlazeSports America and interscholastic sports association AAASP to get more kids with physical disabilities physically active and participating in adaptive sports.

## About AAASP

The American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP), founded in Atlanta, GA in 1996, represents a membership of schools and state high school associations offering a standardized approach to interscholastic sports programming for students with physical disabilities. Honored many times nationally for their cross-disability model that makes local play possible, AAASP develops resources for teachers, including adaptedSPORTS® Kits and rule books for classroom and sport use and trains school professionals in coaching, officiating and the administration of their adaptedSPORTS®.

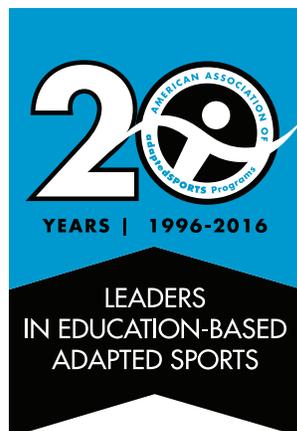
AAASP is a not-for-profit 501 (C) (3) association dedicated to implementing adapted interscholastic sport programs in partnership with national, state, and local educational agencies in order to extend the benefits of sports to America's Sidelined Kids. This cooperative approach represents the most successful model for affording students with physical disabilities access to competitive sport. <http://adaptedsports.org/>

## About BlazeSports America

Based in Atlanta and celebrating 20 years in 2016, BlazeSports America's mission is to change the lives of children and adults with physical disabilities through sport. In addition to its US efforts, BlazeSports America has served individuals and communities in 11 countries and partners with organizations around the world to provide a broad assortment of programs. The interdisciplinary approach includes sport and community programs, leadership programs, competitions, camps and clinics, professional continuing education and certification and sports diplomacy and social impact. BlazeSports America serves children and adults with adaptive sport programs as well as military veterans with physical disabilities.

BlazeSports America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is the legacy organization of the 1996 Paralympic Games held in Atlanta, Ga., offering programs and services that encourage lifelong health, build leadership skills, foster independence and inclusion, and promote an inclusive society. BlazeSports America is a member of United States Olympic Committee - Multi-Sport Organization and the USA Member Organization of Cerebral Palsy International Sport and Recreation Association. [www.blazesports.org](http://www.blazesports.org)

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