

The following information describes the way GHSA has incorporated wheelchair team sports as well as individual adapted sport participation in track and field.

In 2001, executives from the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP) met with then Executive Director, Ralph Swearngin to discuss ways the two organizations could work together to get more students with physical disabilities involved in school sports and athletics. As a result, the GHSA/AAASP alliance was formed and GHSA incorporated all adapted wheelchair team sports and the adapted track & field events through the alliance.

Under the alliance, AAASP governs and sanctions the adapted team sports for the schools. AAASP provides GHSA with standardized seasons, published competition rules for each adapted wheelchair team sport and provides guidance, technical assistance, best practices, recommendations and resources including policies and procedures, adapted sports administrative manuals and specific sports training unique to wheelchair sports for coaches and officials and has established equipment kits for each sport in partnership with Flaghouse.

In addition, under the AAASP structure, there is an Adapted Sports State Coordinator who oversees all the adapted wheelchair team sports in the state and who works directly with the schools and their teams.

### Unique Aspects of Adapted Team Sports-Wheelchair

- A. Under AAASP's policies students enrolled at all grade levels may be eligible to participate. Special Education students who are over the age of 18 yet still enrolled in 12th grade under IDEA may be eligible. The policy considers that special education students often have physical impairments such as muscular dystrophy or cerebral palsy who because of their disability, are not developing in the same way as able-bodied student athletes. This is reasonable and in no way affects the rule for able-bodied teams.
- B. Best practices and appropriate accommodations include forming wheelchair sports teams by allowing students from schools across the district or districts to play on the same team. Also, by allowing the teams to include boys and girls of different ages and types of physical disabilities. Students must meet certain requirements to participate. In addition, all students take part using a wheelchair, rather they use one for daily mobility or not. This helps to level the playing field and engages more students in an adapted team sport.
- C. The AAASP Advisory Committee considers effective ways to get more students involved and advises the AAASP Board of Directors in this regard.
- D. The AAASP/GHSA alliance team reviews requests that fall outside the parameters of established rules to address requests and to formulate appropriate responses and evaluate any action.

For more information about Adapted Sports, please visit our website at <http://adaptedsports.org>.

