

The American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP)

represents a standardized approach to education-based adapted sports for students with physical disabilities. It's a not-for-profit association dedicated to developing interscholastic adapted team sports in partnership with national, state, and local educational agencies. Extracurricular adapted athletic programs create an atmosphere for student athletes with physical disabilities to achieve lasting friendships, improvements in their physical development, and academic performance, as well as teach students fundamental skills, teamwork, strategy, and concepts of sport participation while having high expectations and clear standards for success, which relate back to the students' performance in the classroom. An adapted team sport is similar to Paralympic style competition.

**Adapted versus adaptive sports**

The terms adapted and adaptive are used interchangeably to refer to sports for individuals with disabilities. These terms, however, have different meanings. Adapted is used in this context as a verb to describe the process of modifying (e.g., AAASP has adapted the rules, equipment, facilities) to afford youth with physical disabilities access to meaningful sport participation. The term adapted is further used in the education setting and consistent with developmental psychology in which adaptation is regarded as a process of change that enables people to meaningfully interact in the most normal and integrated environment. Wheelchair basketball is an example of an adapted sport that has been modified or adapted to provide opportunities for the pursuit of excellence in sport.

Adaptive is an adjective that describes behaviors, skills, and functions such as one's ability to meet standards of maturation, learning, personal independence, and/or social responsibility for example. While recreational sport organizations and governing bodies for sport for persons with disabilities use the terms adaptive sport, disability sport, or para sport synonymously, the delivery of sport services are adapted but the behaviors of individuals are adaptive. Adapted sport both remediates deficits in adaptive behaviors and enhances strengths in adaptive behaviors.

Disability sport terminology has been used as a term encompassing sport related to individuals with disabilities. However, adapted sports terminology is preferred for the following reasons: It is consistent with terminology in adapted physical education and adapted physical activity; it focuses on the modification of sport rather than on disability; it encourages participation in the most normal and integrated environments; it is consistent with normalization theory; it promotes the creation of sport opportunities; and it provides an opportunity for the pursuit of excellence in sport through a full spectrum of settings for participation. (Winnick & Porretta, 2017)

U.S. Paralympics, a division of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee is dedicated to becoming the world leader in the Paralympic Movement and promoting excellence in the lives of people with disabilities, including physical disabilities and visual impairments. U.S. Paralympics supports Paralympic Sport Clubs, a network of community-based organizations that provide programming to athletes at the local level. The organization is also the National Paralympic Committee in the United States, as recognized by the International Paralympic Committee, and is responsible for elite sports programming including sending a U.S. Paralympic Team to the summer and winter Paralympic Games. Adapted sports student athletes who demonstrate advanced skill level in a particular sport may be eligible for the Paralympic games.

Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. This gives them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. Under the Special Olympics eligibility rule, persons, whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral, or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes. Special Olympics Unified Sports is an initiative that brings people with and without intellectual disabilities together on the same team to compete. Adapted sports student athletes have average to above average IQ's and because of this, they are eligible for the AAASP program instead of the Special Olympics-Unified program.

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

