

Para-Athletics

Summary of the WPA Rules and Regulations 2018-2019



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Introduction

This document is a summary of the World Para Athletics Rules and Regulations for athletes and coaches starting out in Para-Athletics. It provides a quick reference to important rules unique to different classifications for track and field events. It does not provide coaching or practice tips as each Para-Athlete requires modifications to fit their specific needs.

This resource provides meet directors with a basic understanding of how to incorporate Para-Events into their Able-Bodied competitions. It is a resource for officials to use when running Para-Events at meets. This document does not outline every rule for track and field events as they are similar to IAAF rules.

Competition- Wheelchair Racing Track

Wheelchair Racing (*Classification T33-34/51-54*)

Helmets must be worn in all track and road racing events. Helmets must be a hard protective shell that meets international safety standards. Athletes are responsible for making sure their chair conforms with the requirements.

Wheelchair and Frame Requirements

Wheelchairs consist of two large rear wheels and one small front wheel. The frame must be made with a material that provides sufficient stability and stiffness for safety. No part of the frame shall extend beyond the hub of the front wheel, nor backwards beyond the rearmost vertical plane^{1,2}. The frame and attachments should not be wider than the incline plane of the pushing rims (see figure below).

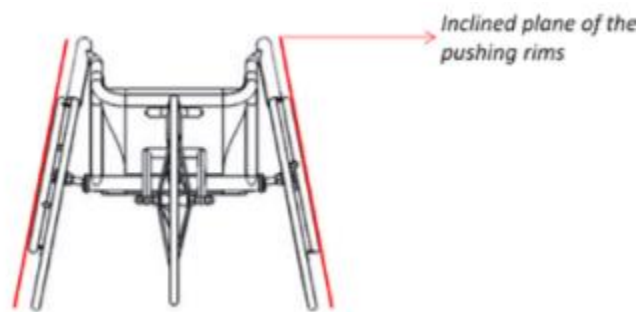


Figure from Amendments to WPA Rules and Regulations 2018-2019, p3

The maximum height from the ground to the bottom of the wheelchair cannot exceed 50 cm. The wheelchair must have a seat. Sideguards may be used to protect the athlete from the wheels as long as they follow Rule 14.2(a). All chairs must have a functional breaking system for athlete safety. The chair must be able to turn the front wheel manually. Only hand operated mechanical steering is allowed.

A wheelchair cannot have mechanical gears or levers that help propel the chair, nor can the chair have any attachments (i.e. fairings) that improve aerodynamics. Use of mirrors is prohibited. Battery cells or energy storing attachments are not allowed. Though heart rate monitors and speed distance monitors are allowed with approval from WPA and the technical delegate, they cannot allow for communication with other people.

Wheel and Push-Rim Requirements

The maximum diameter of large rear wheels including inflated tire cannot exceed 70 cm and the maximum diameter of small front wheel including inflated tire cannot exceed 50cm. Only one plain round push-rim is allowed per wheel. This rule may be modified for athletes requiring a single arm drive wheelchair³. A modification for athletes in classification T33/51/52 is allowed so that a push-

¹ When pushed up against the wall, the back wheels must touch the wall

² Rule 14.2(a) WPA Rules and Regulation 2018-2019, p 85

³ This must be stated on the WPA Classification Form

rim and wheel disk are fused together and incorporated into the wheel. No part of the athlete's body shall be strapped to the push-rim or to the wheel.

Wheelchairs must remain in the competition area after they are measured and inspected in the Call Room. Chairs may be re-examined by the Track Referee or other officials before and after the event.

The Start

The start of the race for distances 400m or less begins with the starter calling "On Your Marks"⁴. At this point the athletes will wheel into position in their lane behind the starting line. On the "Set" command, the athletes assume their final starting position. The front wheel must remain in contact with the track.

In races 800m or longer, the starter may recall the athletes for a restart if a collision occurs in the first 50m.

The Race

During the race, only forward propulsion can be made by the athlete pushing on the wheel or push-rim. Any other form of propulsion will result in the athlete's disqualification from the event.

During a race longer than 400m, if the athlete wished to pass their opponent, they must do so in a way that does not impede the other athlete's performance in the race (see figure below). The athlete doing the overtaking are responsible for making sure they are completely clear of the other athlete before cutting across. The athlete being overtaken is responsible for not obstructing the athlete as they merge into the lane.

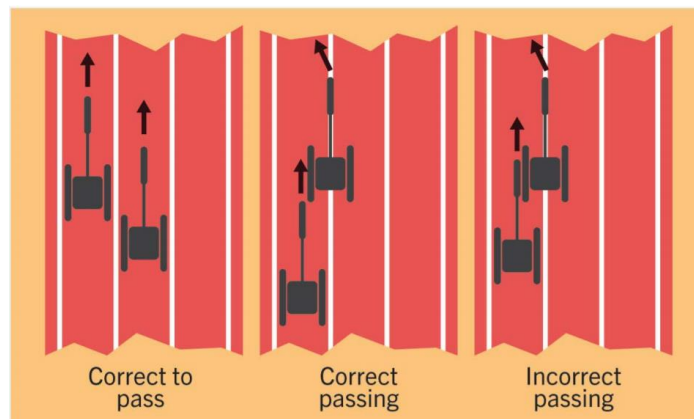


Figure from WPA Rules and Regulations 2018-2019, p102

For races longer than 400m the cut-in line shall be marked by flat markers. Athletes can leave their lanes once both of their back wheels have gone past the cut-in line and the way to cut over is clear.

The Finish

The athlete finishes the race when the centre of the front wheel crosses the finish line.

⁴ For distances 800m or more the command "On Your Marks" indicates that athletes should take their final start positions.

In races longer than 1500m, officials may clear the track after an agreed amount of time has lapsed. Any athletes left on the track when the event concludes will receive the result of DNF (Did Not Finish). The Track Referee then will remove any athlete from the track that has been lapped.

Relay Races

For relays 4X100m and 4X400m the take-over zone shall be 40m in length with the scratch line 30m from the start line. The take-over is done through touching any part the outgoing athlete's body⁵. The touch must be within the take-over zone. Pushing the outgoing athlete will result in the disqualification of the team. Relays must follow the Sports Class clusters and team requirements outlined in the following table:

Sport Class	Relay Team Composition Requirements
T33-34	Must include at least one (1) Sports Class T33 athlete
T51-52	Must include at least one (1) Sports Class T51 athlete
T53-54	Must include at least one (1) Sports Class T53 athlete

Competition- Ambulatory Track

Ambulatory Racing (*Classification T11-13/20/35-38/40-41/42-47/61-64*)

Prostheses

Athletes with classification T45-47, the use of upper limb prostheses is optional. If the athlete chooses to start the competition, they must complete the race with the device. If they do not, they will be disqualified. Since the use is optional, the athlete may choose to compete in subsequent races without the prosthetic device. Athletes with classification T61-64 competing with a prosthetic device is mandatory.

Eye Mask

Athletes in T11 classification must have their eyes covered completely with gauze patches⁶ and must wear approved⁷ opaque glasses or suitable substitute⁸. This must be worn from the time the athlete leaves the Call Room to the end of the event. Failure to wear the eye patches and glasses will result in disqualification of the athlete⁹.

Tether

Athletes in classification T11 and T12 who compete with a guide must be guided through a single tether. The tether cannot contain elastic materials and shall not be able to store energy. A tether consists of two closed holding loops, a middle section and two fixed spherical stoppers at each end (see figure below). The full extension of the tether cannot exceed 30 cm.¹⁰ The middle section of the tether must be a minimum length of 10 cm and must be a distinctive colour that is easily distinguishable at a distance from the rest of the tether.

⁵ Helmets are included as apart of the athlete's body.

⁶ Or equivalent material approved by the technical official

⁷ Can be inspected at any point of the competition.

⁸ Glasses and substitute must completely cover competitor's eyes and must be checked and approved by technical official

⁹ It is not a requirement for the athlete to wear eye patches or glasses for road races

¹⁰ Road races the length of the tether cannot exceed 50 cm.

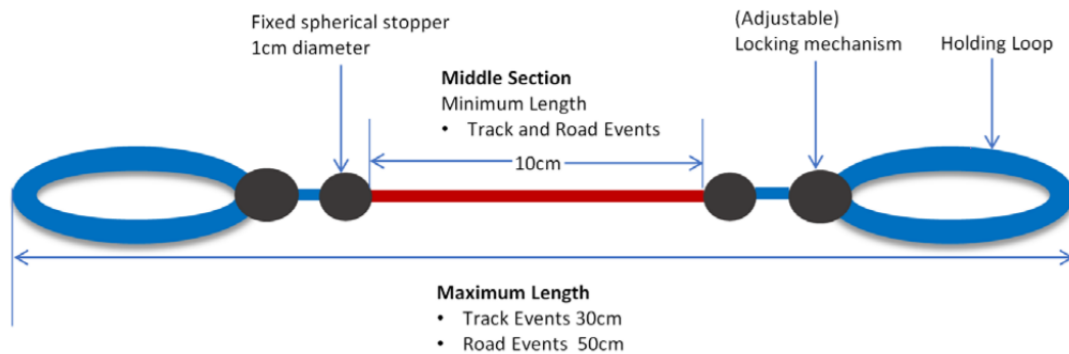


Figure from WPA Rules and Regulations 2018-2019, p70

The holding loops cannot contain a mechanism that allows for them to open, however, they may contain a mechanism that allows for the loops to adjust their size. The fixed stopper is spherical in shape and must be a minimum of 1 cm in diameter.

At no point during the race shall the athlete or guide be allowed to hold the tether in a way that shortens the middle section.

Assistance

Guide Runners

Athletes with classification T11-12 must provide their own guide-runners. The guides will not be considered as assistance or pacers. Athletes in T11 will compete in all track events with their guide-runner. T12 athletes may choose to compete with or without a guide. When at competitions, athletes competing with guide-runners should let the Technical Delegate know they require two lanes to compete.

Assisting the runner is done through the tether and/or verbal communication from the guide. The guide is not allowed to push or pull the athlete in order to gain an advantage. The guide is not allowed to touch the athlete at any point during the race, except if the athlete trips or becomes disoriented.

In races that are 5000m or longer, the athlete is allowed to use two guide-runners. The athlete must provide the specifications of the interchange to the technical official before the race begins to make arrangements. If the interchange does not take place after the arrangements are made, the athlete is disqualified. Exchanges can only be made on the back straight. The outgoing guide is escorted off the field of play by an official or accredited volunteer after the exchange has been made.

Starting Blocks

Athletes in classifications T12/20/35-38/42-47/61-64 may require assistance with setting start blocks. When requested the technical delegate may allow an assistant to accompany the athlete to the starting line to assist with setting the start blocks. The assistant will leave the field of play before the race begins.

For classifications T35-38/42-47/61-64, have the option of using start blocks for all races up to and including 400m. If they choose to use start blocks, athletes in the T35-38/42-44/61-64 classifications are not required to use both foot plates. The use of start blocks is required for classifications T11-13/20 for all races up to and including 400m.

For athletes with upper limb amputations it is acceptable for them to use pads to improve their balance at the start of the race. The pads must be placed behind the starting lane and not interfere with other athletes. They should have a similar colouring of the track¹¹.

The Race

T11 and T12 athletes competing in an event that is entirely or partially run in lanes, each athlete will be allocated two lanes. The starting lanes will be staggered 1, 3, 5, and 7.

If during the race the athlete or their guide-runner is jostled or obstructed in a way that impedes their progress, the Referee has the authority to have the race re-held or allow the athlete to compete in a subsequent round. If the referee deems another athlete or guide-runner at fault for the obstruction, the athlete and guide-runner shall be disqualified from the event.¹²

In events 800m or longer, athletes in classification T12 competing without a guide-runner may have assistance from someone other than officials who can call out the intermediate times from a designated area¹³.

The Finish

For athletes in classification T11/12 who are competing with a guide-runner, the athlete must cross the finish line before their guide. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of the athlete. The guide-runner cannot propel the athlete forward to ensure the finish ahead.

Relay Races

For relays 4X100m and 4X200m each take-over zone shall be 30m in length.

Athletes in the T42-47/61-64 classifications, the takeover is done through touching the outgoing athlete. The touch must be within the take-over zone.

T11-13 athletes competing in relay events, the baton can be carried by either the athlete or their guide-runner. One assistant per take-over zone will be allowed to assist any T12 athlete competing without a guide.

Relays must follow the Sports Class clusters and team requirements outlined in the following table:

Sport Class	Relay Team Composition Requirements
T11-13	Must include a minimum of one (1) Sports Class T11 athlete and can only include a maximum of one (1) Sports Class T13 athlete
T35-38	Can only include a maximum of two (2) Sports Class T38 athletes

¹¹ The pads may also be of a neutral colour.

¹² These rulings can only be made upon the affected athlete's completion of the original race.

¹³ The placement of this area inside the competition area adjacent to the start line is determined by the Technical Delegate

T42-47/T61-64	Can only include a maximum of two (2) Sports Class T46/47 athletes
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Universal Relays 4x100m

For universal relays the take-over zone shall be 30m for the first and second take-over and 40m for the third take-over. The scratch line for the third take-over zone is 30m from the start line. The take-over shall be done by touching any part of the outgoing athlete's body¹⁴. The touch must be within the take-over zone. Pushing of the outgoing athlete will result in the disqualification of the team. Each team must include two male and two female athletes. A maximum of two athletes must be selected from classifications T13, T46/47, T38 and T54. The other two athletes must be selected from any other sport classification as outline in the table below. The running order must follow the below table:

Running Order	Eligible Classes
First Leg	T11-13
Second Leg	T42-47, T61-64
Third Leg	T35-38
Fourth Leg	T33-34, T51-54

For T11-13 Relays and Universal relays, each team will be assigned two lanes. Athletes may use either of the two lanes to compete. Exchanges will take place in lanes 1, 3, 5 and 7 as assigned.

Competition- Jumps

Vertical Jumps (*Classifications T11-13/20/38/42/44-47/63-64*)

High jump is the only vertical jump available for Para-Athletes to compete in. The athletes compete in the same competition format as Able-Bodied athletes. The timing for competition follows the timing set by the IAAF (Rule 180.17).

Visually Impaired Athletes (*T11-13*)

In competition, if combining classifications to create an event, T11 and T13 athletes should not be grouped together.

¹⁴ Helmets are included as apart of the athlete's body.

For athletes in classification T11 and T12 the timing for the trial begins once the athlete is oriented on the runway. Verbal confirmation of the starting of the timing clock can be requested by the athlete. If the athlete loses orientation and requires to be re-oriented, the clock shall be stopped to allow for orientation. The clock restarts once orientation is completed¹⁵.

During the orientation athletes in the T11 classification may touch the bar. If the bar falls during the orientation, it will not count as a failure. Athletes in T12 and T13 classifications may place an appropriate visual aid¹⁶ on the bar during their attempt.

Athletes in T11 classification must have their eyes covered completely with gauze patches¹⁷ and must wear approved¹⁸ opaque glasses or suitable substitute¹⁹. This must be worn from the time the athlete leaves the Call Room to the end of the event. Failure to wear the eye patches and glasses will result in disqualification of the athlete. If the athlete wishes to remove their eye patches or glasses between trials, they must receive permission to do so. If the athlete does remove the eye patches or glasses, the judges and referee must observe that they are replaced correctly by the athlete or assistance before their next attempt.

Ambulatory Athletes (Classifications 20/38/42/44-47/63-64)

Athletes who use a prosthetic device, but wish to compete without, may use the hopping technique to approach their jump.

When competing with a prosthetic device, if during the run-up to the bar, the athlete's prosthetic device is lost, the athlete can either continue the attempt without the prosthesis or fix the prosthetic device and continue the attempt if still within the time allowed for the trial.

If the prosthetic device is lost during the jumping process and the device does not clear the bar, the trial will be counted as a failure.

Horizontal Jumps (Classifications T11-13/20/T35-38/40-47/61-64)

General

For both Long Jump and Triple Jump, the rules for jumps outlined by the IAAF apply, except for T11 and T12 classifications where there are adaptations to the set-up and jumping.

Take-off Area

For athletes in T11 and T12 classification, the jump is done from a take-off area that is 1.00m x 1.22m ± 0.01m (see figure below). The take-off area must be made using a light powder that allows for the athlete to leave a footprint with the take-off foot but does not promote slipping of the athlete. The edge closest to the landing area will be the scratch line. All other classification will use a take-off board and follow the same rules outlined by the IAAF (Rule 184.8 and 184.9).

¹⁵ No additional time is permitted. The clock is paused during the re-orientation.

¹⁶ The Referee will deem the aid appropriate using WPA Rule 2.13 and Rule 24.

¹⁷ Or equivalent material approved by the technical official

¹⁸ Can be inspected at any point of the competition.

¹⁹ Glasses and substitute must completely cover competitor's eyes and must be checked and approved by technical official

Recommended minimum width of the landing area is 3.50m.

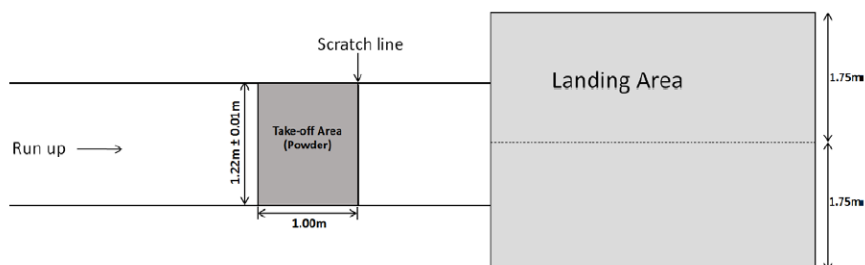


Figure 7 – Take-off Area for athletes in Sport Classes T11 and T12

Figure from WPA Rules and Regulations 2018-2019, p. 157

Landing Area

The landing area for classes T11 and T12 should be a minimum of 3.5m wide instead of the 3m maximum. For safety, the landing area should be positioned so the minimum distance between the axis of the runway and the sides of the landing area is 1.75m.

Distance Measurements

Athletes with T11 and T12 classifications, their jumps will be measured from the nearest break in the landing area to the nearest impression left by the take-off foot (see figure below). If an athlete jumps before the take-off area, the measurement is taken from the edge of the take-off area furthest from the landing area (see figure below).

Horizontal Jump T11-12

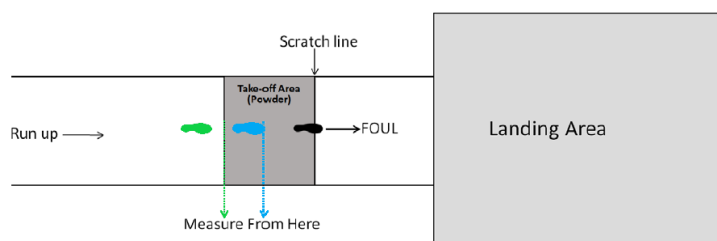


Figure 9 – Measurement of the distance in horizontal jumps for Class T11 and T12

Figure from WPA Rules and Regulations 2018-2019, p. 159

For athletes who compete with prosthetics devices, if the device is lost during the run-up, the athlete can continue without it, or fix the prosthetic device and continue the attempt if still within the time allowed for the trial.

Assistance

For athletes with classification T11 can be accompanied on the field of play by two assistants. Athletes with classification T12 can be accompanied by one. The assistants help the athlete with orientation before the trial and acoustic assistance as the athlete attempts their jump. For athletes in classification T11 and T12 the timing for the trial begins once the athlete is oriented on the runway. Verbal confirmation of the starting of the timing clock can be requested by the athlete. If the athlete loses orientation and requires to be re-oriented, the clock shall be stopped to allow for orientation. The clock restarts once orientation is completed²⁰.

The assistant is allowed to provide acoustic aid can be along the runway or behind the landing area. They may also be in front or behind the take-off area. At no point in the competition can the assistants be inside the landing area or take-off area, nor can they be in a position that blocks the view of the officials.

After orientation of the athlete, the assistant cannot physically touch or provide physical aid to the athlete during the attempt. The attempt is considered complete once the athlete has left the landing area and the judge has raised the flag²¹.

Rule Specific for Triple Jump (Classifications T11-13/20/38/45-47)

For athletes with classification T45-47 the take-off line will be set 11m away from the near end of the landing area for men and 9m for women. Athletes with classification T11 the minimum distance for the scratch line is 9m. Athletes with classification T12 and T13 the minimum distance is 11m.

Faulting

For Classification T11 if the mask falls off during the trial, the trial is considered a failure.

It is considered a fault if the assistant physically touches the athlete after orientation has been complete and before the Chief Judge has deemed the attempt valid or not²².

Classification T45-46 and T61-64, use of the prosthetic device is optional. The athlete must indicate whether or not they will compete with the prosthetic device before the start of the competition. If the athlete decided to compete with the prosthetic device, they must do so throughout the entire competition. If the athlete does not use the prosthetic device during a trial, the trial is considered a failure.

If the prosthetic device is lost during the process of jumping and lands closer to the take-off board than the athlete, the measurement is taken from where the device lands. If the device lands outside of the landing area, the trial will be counted as a failure.

²⁰ No additional time is permitted. The clock is paused during the re-orientation.

²¹ Assistants must wait for the flag to be raised before they can touch the athlete.

²² After orientation, assistants do not physically touch your athlete before the judge raises the flag.

Competition- Throws

Standing Throws (*Classifications F11-13/20/35-38/40-47/61-64*)

Standard structure of competition is similar to able-bodied throwers. Athletes must throw implements that comply with IAAF and WPA specifications and the marshalling, warm up procedures, and delivery of competition is the same.

Seated Throws (*Classifications F32-34/51-57*)

Athletes can compete from either their day chair²³ or a throws chair/throwing frame. The seat of the chair being used must not exceed 75cm in height²⁴, this includes any cushions being used. The minimum side length must be 30cm and the seat must be square or rectangular in shape. The chair may include a back, side or front rest for stability, however the rest must be a rigid and apart of the chair frame. The back rest cannot block the officials view of judging a lift fault. Foot plates are for support and stability only. The pole, if used, must be circular or square in shape. The pole must be rigid and cannot visibly flex or bend during an attempt²⁵. Strapping used to hold the athlete in place during an attempt shall not be elastic in nature. Common acceptable strappings include weightlifting belts and snowboard bindings.

When positioning the chair in the throw circle, it should be placed in a way that no part of the chair crosses over the rim of the throwing circle. No part of the chair/ frame shall move while an attempt is made, any movement can be considered an unfair advantage resulting in a fault.²⁶

Competition

All athletes must compete wearing clothes that are close fitting so that they do not obstruct the view of the judges²⁷.

Athletes in F11 classification must have their eyes covered completely with gauze patches²⁸ and must wear approved²⁹ opaque glasses or suitable substitute³⁰. This must be worn from the time the athlete leaves the Call Room to the end of the event. Failure to wear the eye patches and glasses will result in disqualification of the athlete. If the athlete wishes to remove their eye patches or glasses between trials, they must receive permission to do so. If the athlete does remove the eye patches or glasses, the judges and referee must observe that they are replaced correctly by the athlete or assistance before their next attempt.

Depending on level of competition, multiple classes can be combined to create an event (ex. F42/43/44 event instead of separate F42, F43 and F44 events). When classes are combined in an event, it is important for the athlete to ensure they are throwing the correct implement weight based on their individual classification. This table can be found on the Athletics Ontario [website](#).

²³ Athletes may use their day chairs to compete so long as they meet the competition regulations.

²⁴ Height regulations as of 2018. Annual checking of the current regulations is needed.

²⁵ Since all materials will flex to a certain degree, a fault will be called if the bending of the pole clearly aids in the forward propulsion of the body during the attempt.

²⁶ If the chair itself moves, the straps securing the chair to the circle should be checked for safety.

²⁷ Officials may ask the athlete to adjust their clothing to make it easier to observe form.

²⁸ Or equivalent material approved by the technical official

²⁹ Can be inspected at any point of the competition.

³⁰ Glasses and substitute must completely cover competitor's eyes and must be checked and approved by technical official

When classes are combined, a points system is used to determine the winner. The use of a points system, such as the RAZA Points Table, enables the athletes to be compared based on their performance relative to their classification. A link to the current RAZA scoring can be found on the Athletics Ontario [website](#).

Assistance

Visually impaired athletes in the F11 and F12 classifications are allowed an assistant on the field to assist with orientation in the throws area. The assistant must leave the throwing circle or javelin run before each attempt is made. Assistants may provide acoustic orientation before, during and after each attempt from a safe location³¹. Athletes may only be escorted from the throwing circle or javelin run after the officials have determined if the attempt was valid.

Athletes with classification F31-33 and F51-54 may have an assistant accompany them into the call room and field of play. This assistant can help the athlete transfer from their day chair to the throws chair and securing the strappings. The assistant is to remain on the field of play for the duration of the competition. The assistant cannot provide coaching to the athlete during the competition.

F31-33 and F51-53 athletes may use strapping or a glove on their non-throwing hand, securing it to any part of the throwing frame within the vertical plane of the throwing circle.

Timing

For ambulatory athletes, each athlete has 30 seconds to start their attempt³². The time starts when the official calls the athlete to compete. For visually impaired athletes, the time allowed begins once the athlete has been oriented in the throwing circle or javelin run. Verbal confirmation of the starting of the timing clock can be requested by the athlete. If the athlete loses orientation and requires to be re-oriented, the clock is paused to allow for orientation. The clock continues once orientation is completed.³³

For athletes competing in a throws chair, once the chair has been oriented and placed, the athlete then has a set time to secure themselves in the chair and complete as many warm up throws they can.

Athletes with F32-34 and F54-57 classifications have 4 minutes.³⁴

Athletes with F31 and F51-53 classifications have 5 minutes.³⁵

The athlete may choose to start their competition before their warm-up time runs out. Each athlete will have six consecutive throws with a one-minute rest after the first three attempts. The athlete has 30 seconds to complete each attempt. The timer starts when the implement is handed to the athlete.

Faulting

For Classification T11 if the mask falls off during the trial, the trial is considered a failure.

³¹ The lead official determines if the area the assistants providing acoustic assistance from is safe.

³² WPA Rule 24.17

³³ No additional time is permitted.

³⁴ If the event is held in two (2) pools, the time to secure their chair is 2 minutes and there is no warm up.

³⁵ If the event is held in two (2) pools, the time to secure their chair is 3 minutes and there is no warm up.

Classification F45-46 and F61-64, use of the prosthetic device is optional. The athlete must indicate whether or not they will compete with the prosthetic device before the start of the competition. If the athlete decides to compete with the prosthetic device, they must do so throughout the entire competition. If the athlete does not use the prosthetic device during a trial, the trial is considered a failure.

Athletes must sit in the throws chair so the back of their knees are in contact with the chair. Athletes must remain seated for the duration of the attempt³⁶. A lifting fault is called when the athlete's buttocks (Ischial tuberosities, see figure below) lifts off the seat during the attempt³⁷. If during the attempt the athlete's knee slide forward or loses contact with the chair the attempt will be considered a failure. An athlete wishing to purposely fault a throw can do so by touching the straps securing the chair to the circle before the attempt is measured. The athlete should also verbally indicate they wish to fault as the straps may be out of reach or their faulting action may be missed by the officials.

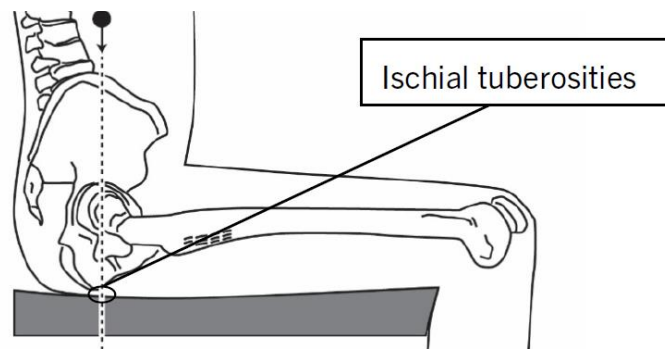


Figure from WPA Rules and Regulations 2018-2019, p 201

It is not considered a fault if during an attempt the straps securing the chair to the circle breaks. If the athlete does not fail their attempt, they are given the option of retaking the trial or counting the attempt. If the athlete fails their attempt, they are allowed to retake the trial³⁸.

For classification F32, it is not considered a fault if during the putting action the shot moves laterally away from the chin or neck as long as the putting action remains in a straight forward motion and hand does not drop below the chin.

³⁶ The duration of an attempt is from the time the official hands the athlete the implement until the implement has landed.

³⁷ During attempts an athlete will have some lift off the seat. This rule refers to the part of the buttocks that remains on the seat when the athlete bends forward (chest to knees) while seated.

³⁸ This rule does not apply to straps securing the athlete to the chair as this is considered personal equipment

References

Hall, K. M. (2018). *Para Throws Coaching Manual: A Technical Guide for Coaching Athletes with a Disability in Para Throws*. BC Wheelchair Sports Association.

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