

Athletic Opportunities for the Disabled

Over the years the physically disabled community has made great inclusionary strides into the mainstream of society. One area is in the arena of sports participation. Athletics can give a physically disabled individual a true sense of accomplishment, regardless of the nature or severity of their individual limitations. The following are some athletic opportunities that are available in Nassau County and throughout New York State.

Basketball



Wheelchair basketball got its start in Veterans Affairs Hospitals across America after wounded veterans returned from WWII. These recreational games began to branch out into the disabled communities across the country after veterans began to leave the hospitals and form teams at local gyms. In 1949, the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) was established and became the governing body of the sport. Today, the NWBA governs over 185 teams across the United States. Common disabilities amongst players include spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, and amputations. Also, players are given classifications according to the level of their disability. Players with the greatest amount of mobility are given "Class III" classifications, while players with the least amount are graded as "Class I." Teams are not allowed to have more than 12 classification points on the court at any time. Wheelchair basketball follows the same rules as NCAA basketball. Contact Tony Fitzgerald, coach of Nassau County Kings (516) 488-6284 or Chris Bacon, coach of Long Island Lightning (516) 582-8936 <http://www.nwba.org>

Softball



Wheelchair softball was started in 1975 by a few individuals with spinal cord injuries and lower extremity impairments in the Midwest, who still wanted to enjoy America's greatest pastime. In 1976, the National Wheelchair Softball Association (NWSA) was founded and serves as the governing body for wheelchair softball in the United States. Players compete on hard surfaces, such as a parking lot, instead of a normal baseball field, and use a 16-inch softball, which allows wheelchair players to keep one hand on the wheelchair while catching the softball without a glove. Contact Tony Fitzgerald (516) 488-6284 or Jarrett Dreyer, player for the NY team at jwheelss11504@gmail.com <http://www.wheelchairsoftball.org>

Football



Teams consist of six players and must include one female and one quadriplegic participant. The Field is 60 yards by 22 yards with 8 yards at each end zone. 1st Down marker lines are drawn every 15 yards. Games are played in 2 - 20 minute halves with 10 minutes for halftime. Scoring a Touchdown is 6 points. An Extra Point can either be 1 point for Passing or 2 points for running it in. Play ends when the player with the ball is tackled when they are touched with 1 hand above the waist including the arm and hand. The play is stopped when it touches the ground. There are no fumbles. 1st Down is achieved when 15 yards are reached with 5 downs. All other NFL Rules apply for penalties. Contact Tony Fitzgerald, coach of Nassau County at 516 488-6284, and Dave Deas, coach of Queens league at deas14@yahoo.com

Powerchair Soccer



Power soccer was developed more than 20 years ago, but is only now exploding onto the public scene. The United States, Canada, Denmark, England, France, and Japan currently field teams and tournaments. The National Disability Sports Alliance (NDSA) recently welcomed Power Soccer as a new Official Sport on its roster. Anyone who uses a power wheelchair is eligible to play. Two teams of four power chair users each attack, defend, and maneuver an oversized soccer ball in an attempt to score points on a goal. The ball, which is 18 inches in diameter, is manipulated by plastic formed soccer guards mounted on the front of each player's wheelchair. The sport is co-ed by design with male and female athletes often playing on the same team, as well as on opposing sides. The game is usually played indoors in a gymnasium on a regulation basketball court, but occasionally takes place in outdoor parking lots.

<http://www.powersoccerusa.net/>

Sled Hockey



Sled hockey is an exciting ice sport that allows individuals with disabilities to enjoy the great sport of hockey. It came to the United States back in 1989. Players use the same type of equipment as in "stand-up hockey" with the exception of the skates. They use a sled, which consists of a cushioned seat mounted on a tubular sled that has skate blades and a center pivot underneath. The player sits four inches above the ice and is held into the sled with Velcro® straps. Two shortened hockey sticks are used to handle the puck as well as propel themselves across the ice. The sticks for ice sledge hockey players have a curved blade (similar to regular ice hockey) at one end, and generally six to eight picks at the opposite end of the blade for maneuvering and propulsion. Movement is achieved by using the metal teeth as a means to grip the ice and push one forward. The metal picks cannot be overly pointy and protrude farther than 1cm beyond the stick so it cannot damage the ice or other players. For more information contact Bryan Blomquist (516) 509-2406, Frank Martin (631) 2251426, Anthony Ficarrota (631) 513-8589 or Mitch Mertz (516) 795-7133, chairmen of the Long Island Rough Riders Sled Hockey Team.

www.lisledhockey.org/

Quad Rugby



Quad rugby is a cross between wheelchair basketball, ice hockey, and soccer, and is played on a regulation-size basketball court. For eligibility, quad rugby players must have a combination of upper and lower body extremity impairment. Many have some type of quadriplegia and are classified as to their abilities. Other eligible players have multiple amputations, polio, or neurological disorders such as cerebral palsy, some forms of muscular dystrophy. Each player is given one of seven classification assignments ranging from 0.5 to 3.5, with 0.5 being the players with the greatest impairment. Men and women compete evenly in this sport due to the classification system based on impairment only. A player must pass or dribble the ball every 10 seconds or a turnover is awarded. Contact Christine Blake-Jeremias, coach of the NY Warriors (516) 481-4516 or Jarrett Dreyer, player for the NY Warriors jwheelss11504@gmail.com <http://www.quadrugby.com>



Tennis

The International Wheelchair Tennis Foundation (IWTF) began in 1988, but didn't get noticed until 1991. As the IWTF started to visit new nations, it became apparent very quickly that the biggest barrier to starting a program in most new countries was the lack of equipment. Over the years, many players have donated their old wheelchairs to new and developing countries to help them start a wheelchair tennis program. Wheelchair tennis integrated so easily with the able-bodied game since it can be played on any regular tennis court, with no modification to rackets and balls, with the only rule difference being that the wheelchair player gets two bounces. Contact Joe Mendez, Nassau County coach at s2285@optonline.net or David Deas, coach in Queens at Dave_deas14@yahoo.com <http://www.usta.com> <http://www.itf.org>

Swimming



Swimming has been one of the main Adaptive Sports since World War II. Males and Females of all ages with either a physical disability or blindness/visual impairment compete against each other. Competitors measure their skills in Freestyle, Backstroke, Butterfly, Breaststroke and Medley events. Athletes are classified based on their functional ability to perform each stroke. The international governing body is the International Swimming Federation (FINA). The FINA rules are followed with a few modifications, such as optional platform or in-water starts for some races and the use of signals or 'tappers' for swimmers with blindness/visual impairment. Contact (516)572-0501 <http://www.usaswimming.org/>

Horseback Riding



Adaptive horseback riding provides unique benefits to our students. The goals for each lesson are tailored to make improvements in the most needed areas of your rider's life. Adaptive riding sessions are exceptional for improving: fine and gross motor skills, balance, coordination, sensorimotor skills, language, and social skills. In addition, each one of our adaptive riding instructors excels in their field and continues with training and certification throughout their careers. People can start riding at 2 years old, continuing to well into their 60's. Contact Long Island Riding for the Handicapped Association (LIRHA) (516-783-3059), HorseAbility (516) 333-6151 or Pal O Mine (631) 348-1389

Scuba Diving



Before going in the ocean someone has complete 3 steps, classroom sessions consist of a comprehensive lecture series required to complete your training. Scuba Network® offers an atmosphere of fun and knowledge, which makes your required attendance easy. A DVD is required to supplement those sessions. The pool is fully ADA-compliant with a mechanical chair available to help the student get into and out of the water safely. Once in the water, the student is taught the scuba skills necessary to begin the journey to underwater freedom. Experience the excitement as you learn to breathe underwater in a controlled setting, before going into the ocean. Four open water dives and a snorkeling dive, with an instructor, are required to complete your certification process. Contact (516).997-4864

Sky Diving



Instructors have tens of thousands of skydives between them and are members of the USPA - United States Parachute Association. Our instructors have thousands of jumps to their credit and many are world record holders or world champions in their respective disciplines. They have trained literally thousands of first time students all with a perfect safety record. Contact (516) 759-3483

***All participants must have medical clearance before skydiving**

Skiing



People with disabilities use a device called the bi-ski or sit ski. It is a seat attached on top of two skis where a person is strapped in and uses two short sticks to steer themselves. Contact (518) 734-5070



Handcycling

A handcycle is a type of human powered land vehicle powered by the arms rather than the legs, as on a bicycle. Most handcycles are tricycle in form, with two coasting rear wheels and one steerable powered front wheel. These usually follow a delta design with front wheels driven by standard derailleur gearing powered by hand cranks. Brake levers are usually mounted on the hand holds, which are usually set with no offset rather than the 180° of pedal cranks. The entire crank assembly and the front wheel turn together, allowing the rider to steer and crank simultaneously. Fork steer handcycles represent the majority of handcycles sold. . The lean steer system feels similar to mono skiing, using your whole body to steer the handcycle. Lean steer handcycles can work well for lower-level injuries, although some athletes with high-level disability use them. Contact (516) 505-1200 or Rehab Solutions (516) 378-2000 ext 464

***This equipment is not covered by Medicaid/ other insurance**

Billiards



Pool or pocket billiards (as the sport's governing body calls it) is played on a six pocket table. Modern pool tables generally range in size from 3.5 feet by 7 feet, to 4.5 feet by 9 feet. The balls range from 2.25 inches in diameter to 2.375 inches in diameter. Modern cue sticks are generally 58.5 inches long. Contact (516) 409-9728

Bowling



Bowling can be done by anyone with a disability. There are ramps that are used to push the ball down the lane, and bumpers to help guide the ball down the lane. Contact East Meadow Lanes (516) 794-1111 Garden City Bowl (516) 222-0808 Farmingdale Lanes (516) 249-4300

Marksmanship/Target Shooting



Quad units are designed for individuals with no hand or arm movement. This model can be operated completely with your mouth and chin. It comes standard with a power trigger to fire the weapon. This is operated by a very slight suction on the blue tube in the picture. Windage and elevation are controlled by the joystick that can be operated by your chin. The selectable speed controls on the windage and elevation allow you to set the speed that is most comfortable for you. It can be used to operate all pistols, crossbows, rifles, and shotguns. Many other devices are available for your marksmanship needs

*For all equipment contact 877-595-5634 or 877-846-9997

Contact

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