**Policy & Procedures Manual**

**Wisconsin Swimming, Inc.**

# Policy 28: Swimmers with a Disability

Effective Date: *January 22, 2019*

***Scope:*** *This policy provides direction to LSC Members for all elements relating to meet entry inclusion and accommodation of swimmers with a disability. Where conflicts between USA Swimming and LSC policy appear, USA Swimming shall prevail.*

1. **General Statement**
	* 1. Swimmers with a disability are highly encouraged to participate in any WI sanctioned or approved meets. "Disability" is defined as a permanent physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. It is not necessary to have an International Paralympic Committee or any other classification. For more information, see Article 105 of the USA Swimming Rulebook and the disability swimming section of the USA Swimming website.
		2. Wisconsin Swimming recognizes the ability of swimmers to determine which of the following three general Para-groups are applicable based on their disabilities, as established by USA Swimming:
			1. P1 - non-ambulatory (wheelchair bound): limited use of all four extremities.
			2. P2 - dwarfism, multiple limb deficiencies, ambulatory with assistance, can be wheelchair bound with high functioning upper body.
			3. P3 - single limb deficiencies, visual impairments, and intellectual impairments, ambulatory without significant assistance.
2. **Entry Procedures**
	* 1. The coach or UNAT swimmer should contact the meet host at the time of the entry if any disability accommodations are needed. Between the time of entry and the start of the meet, the coach, meet host and meet referee should discuss and decide any special accommodations and seeding arrangement. An example of an accommodation would be extra time or assistance getting up on the block, personal assistant, in water start etc.
		2. For other than LSC Championship Meets, entry and seeding arrangements must not have an unreasonable impact on any session timeline and must not adversely affect the opportunity for all swimmers to fairly compete. Appropriate seeding arrangements include but are not limited to:
			1. swimming out of event by completing an intermediate distance of a longer race in the swimmer's actual age group, or
			2. swimming out of age group with swimmers of a different age who are achieving comparable times, or
			3. special lane assignments for a deaf swimmer near a strobe light, or
			4. a swimmer needing to enter and exit the pool from the side.
3. **Entry into Regular Season Meets with No Time Standards**
	1. Swimmers with a disability may enter any LSC sanctioned meet for which there are no time standards. The swimmer's coach is responsible for determining readiness for a particular event and the swimmer is seeded appropriately in a way that does not adversely affect the meet timeline.
4. **Entry into State Championship Meets**
	* 1. Swimmers with a disability shall compete in the appropriate meet for their actual age group.
		2. Wisconsin Swimming shall accept the “USA Swimming Para Swim APPROVED Motivational Time Standards” for qualification of para-athletes seeking to compete in Wisconsin Swimming LSC championship meets.
		3. Separate divisions shall be established for certain designated events at these meets for para-athletes giving them the opportunity to compete in finals, score team points and receive awards.
5. **Personal Assistants**
	* 1. Swimmers with a disability may need help from personal assistant who can assist with meet routines, tapping, starts, safety provisions, personal care etc.
		2. Personal assistants should be regarded as disability accommodations.
		3. Personal Assistants shall be provided by the athlete and allowed on deck with the approval of the Meet Referee. Service dogs should be allowed on deck if requested.
		4. Personal Assistants may not coach unless they are registered as Coach Members. Personal Assistants must not interfere with meet operations.
		5. USA Swimming membership requirements and insurance issues:
			1. USA Swimming membership is not required.
			2. Personal Assistants are protected by USA Swimming general liability insurance
			3. Personal Assistants do not have the benefit of excess accident insurance.
			4. Recommend that long term Personal Assistants become Non-Athlete Members of USA Swimming in order to have general liability insurance and excess accident insurance.
6. **Places and awards**
	* 1. For other than LSC Championship Meets, places and awards for swimmers with a disability can only be earned in the swimmer's actual event and/or age group. At the discretion of the meet host, an award mechanism specifically designed for swimmers with a disability may be implemented.
7. **Proof of Time**
	1. Swimmers with a disability are subject to the same proof of time requirement as any other swimmer as stated in the meet announcement, or as these policy rules are applied.
8. **Entry into Central Zone Meets**
	1. Please consult the meet announcement and appropriate websites/manuals for current rules concerning entry into the Zone Meets. Swimmers with a disability who have question about competing on the WI Zone Team should contact the WI LSC Swimming Disability Chairperson. at least two months prior to the zone meet entry deadline for information.

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| Date of Revision | Policy Section(s) | Changes Made |
| 1/22/2019 | 28.1; 28.2; 28.4; 28.6 28.8 | Revise to implement USA Swimming recommendations for Para-Groups at LSC Championship Meets |