

# WISCONSIN SWIMMING, INC.

## Policy 29: Inclusion Policy for Swimmers with a Disability

**Effective:**

**Revision:**

**Scope:** This policy delineates the commitment of USA Swimming and Wisconsin Swimming to the inclusion of swimmers with a disability in competitive swimming.

### ***29.1 USA Swimming Standards***

29.1.1 In compliance with USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, Wisconsin Swimming desires to accommodate disabled swimmers. A disability is defined as a permanent physical or cognitive disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

29.1.2 Disabilities may encompass the following major areas:

- A. Hearing impairment
- B. Visual impairment
- C. Cognitive disabilities such as severe learning disorder or autism
- D. Physical disabilities such as amputations, cerebral palsy, dwarfism, spinal injury or other mobility impairments.

### ***29.2 Wisconsin Swimming Recommendations***

29.2.1 Wisconsin Swimming welcomes all athletes with a disability who wish to participate in all LSC sanctioned meets.

29.2.2 Wisconsin Swimming member clubs are encouraged to include swimmers with a disability and are encouraged to make reasonable, common sense, adjustments to their venues to accommodate the needs of athletes with a disability.

### ***29.3 Inclusion of swimmers with a permanent disability (as defined above by USA Swimming) in Wisconsin Swimming sanctioned meets.***

29.3.1 It is the responsibility of the coach, athlete or parent to notify the Meet Director prior to the meet if any facility accommodations are needed.

- A. Examples of facility accommodations: preferred parking, wheelchair seating, use of a service animal, use of a strobe light, etc.
- B. Every attempt to accommodate reasonable facility requests will be made.
- C. Requests made at the meet are less likely to be successfully accommodated.

29.3.2 It is the responsibility of the coach, athlete or parent to notify the Meet Referee prior to the competition of a disability (including description) and to request any accommodation that may affect the actual competition.

- A. Examples of competition accommodations: special seeding, additional time at the start, rule modifications, use of personal assistants, etc.
  - B. Every attempt to accommodate reasonable requests will be made.
  - C. Requests made at the meet are less likely to be successfully accommodated.
- 29.3.3 In all sanctioned non-time standard meets the Meet Referee/Meet Director should work with the coach of the disabled swimmer to ensure that no undue focus is placed on the swimmer during the meet.
- 29.3.4 The Meet Referee shall have the authority to accommodate the swimmer without substantial negative impact on the meet timeline. Examples of such accommodations include:
- A. Allow the disabled swimmer to compete at a shorter distance: a 50-yard distance within a 100-yard event.
  - B. Seed the disabled swimmer by time rather than age: a 13-year-old disabled swimmer seeded in the 11-12 age group of the same event.
  - C. A personal assistant (provided by the athlete) shall be allowed at the discretion of the Meet Referee.
  - D. Other accommodations as recommended by the LSC Disability Swimming Coordinator based upon the specific disability
  - E. Final seeding decisions rest with the Meet Referee.
  - F. Places and awards for disabled swimmers can only be earned in the swimmer's actual event and/or age group. At the discretion of the meet host, special awards may be given to disabled swimmers.
- 29.3.5 The Meet Referee is responsible for deciding whether the requested competition accommodations are appropriate and feasible.
- A. The Meet Referee shall consider fairness for the athlete with a disability and for the other athletes in the competition.
  - B. The Meet Referee shall consider the potential impact on the meet timeline.
  - C. Decisions made shall affect only the current meet, and shall not set precedent for modifications at other competitions.
  - D. The Meet Referee shall communicate decisions made to other Officials and Meet Management personnel as appropriate.
- 29.3.6 In all Wisconsin Swimming Championship meets, disabled swimmers may enter provided the swimmer has achieved a time better than 87% of the listed qualifying time for the U.S. Paralympic National Swimming Championships. The entry may involve permission of the Meet Director and Senior or Age Group Chair.

#### ***29.4 Individual Club Recommendations***

29.4.1 Accommodations during practices should be up to the discretion of the Head Coach.

29.4.2 Examples of such accommodations:

- A. Allow personal assistants as needed.
- B. Include the disabled swimmer in practices by the swimmer's ability rather than age.
- C. Expectations of the swimmer with a disability should be the same as the other swimmers of that group with respect to effort, attendance and other aspects of the work ethic.
- D. The same principles of training/conditioning, biomechanics, and sport psychology apply to the swimmers with a disability as the other athletes.

### ***29.5 Personal Assistants***

29.5.1 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.

29.5.2 Personal Assistants may not coach unless they are registered as Coach Members.

29.5.3 Personal Assistants must not interfere with meet operations.

29.5.4 USA Swimming membership requirements and insurance issues:

- A. USA Swimming membership is not required.
- B. Personal Assistants are protected by USA Swimming general liability insurance
- C. Personal Assistants do not have the benefit of excess accident insurance.
- D. Recommend that long term Personal Assistants become Non-Athlete Members of USA Swimming in order to have general liability insurance and excess accident insurance.