

2024 Wheelchair Safety Guidelines and Best Practices

General Rules

- Wheelchair competitors start with the bottom of the front tire behind the starting line and finish when the front axle crosses the plane of the finish line.
- Wheelchair competitors must keep their front wheel within their lane of the entire race
- Wheelchair competitors should only pass on the right of another competitor with their wheelchair entirely out of the competitor's lane.

Best Practices

- During practices, reserve Lane 1 for wheelchair athletes only.
- Communicate frequently and clearly for team members and staff to be aware of wheelchair athletes when they are in motion. Wheelchairs are nearly silent when not pushing. Be aware!
- Wheelchair athletes look down when pushing their wheels, so they may not always see what is in front of them.
- Wheelchairs can't stop instantly. Please make room for coasting and using the hand brake.
- Contact each meet host prior to entering a wheelchair competitor in their meet so proper accommodations can be made.

Safety Guidelines

- If only one wheelchair competitor is in an event, either create a separate heat or you can mix them in with runners using an outer lane as preference.
- If two or more wheelchair competitors are in an event, create a separate heat. If possible, use a one-lane gap between starting positions. Boys and girls maybe combined to form a heat.
- In mixed ability 800m, 1600m, 3200m events, use out-lane preference for starting position to assist with the break-in.
- Keep the track clear during wheelchair events.
- Prior to the start of the meet, walk all the lanes of the track to clear any debris that could puncture a tire such as bobby pins, track spikes, rocks, sticks, etc.

Meet Hosts & Referees

- When a wheelchair competitor finishes a race, they must coast around the curve of the track using their compensator.
- When the 100m event is run in reverse, wheelchair competitors must stop within their lane using their handbrake.
- Allow track time for wheelchair competitors to warmup and set compensators. After prelims/before finals is a great time for this.
- Check for still at the start as wind and experience level can cause wheelchair competitors to accidentally rock and back forth on the 'set' command.
- Have an assistant coach or head coach at the finish line to direct traffic and avoid collisions in every wheelchair event.
- Top 16 reported times for each gender in the 100m and 400m qualify for the State Meet. The top 16 reported times that meet the following standard qualify for the state meet: Girls 1600m 7:17; Boys 1600m 5:47

