



Becoming Para Ready: Meet Management

A Meet Director's Guide for Hosting World Para Athletics (WPA) Sanctioned Events

[Athletics Canada's Becoming Para Ready](#) strategy emphasizes building a strong foundation for Para Athletics at the Provincial and Territorial level, creating greater capacity, supporting, and aligning Para Athletics, and promoting integration and inclusion at all levels.

The following document is meant to help support Meet Directors in hosting World Para Athletics (WPA) sanctioned events in an inclusive and integrated way, ensuring a positive experience for all.

What is a WPA Sanctioned meet?

A WPA sanctioned meet is a WPA approved competition which may be international, national endorsed and World Athletics endorsed competitions for the sport of Para Athletics. These approved competitions ensure that the [WPA Rules and Regulation](#) are followed.

1) A WPA sanctioned competition is required for Para Athletes who are internationally classified to ensure their performance results are recognized and listed within the WPA world ranking lists. Unlike able-bodied athletes who compete to improve World Athletics World Ranking, Para-athletes qualify for Athletics Canada's Canadian Athletics Performance Pathway (CAPP) and major championships such as WPA World Championship, Para Pan American Games, and Paralympic Games through the World Para Athletics Rankings. Having access to WPA sanctioned meets that are meaningful (with other Para Athletes and a range of events) becomes vital to their progress along the Para Athletics pathway.

2) WPA Sanctioning Cost

Athletics Canada purchases licenses from World Para Athletics every year and they are made available to Branches and Clubs to apply for at no cost.

3) Process of Applying

In December of each year, Athletics Canada requests its member Branches and Clubs identify which competitions are applying for a WPA Sanctioning.

4) Hosting a Para Ready Meet

Meet Directors can ensure their meet is "Para Ready" by ensuring the following elements are taken into consideration:

a) Para Events

The rules of Para Athletics are almost identical to those of its Olympic counterparts. Allowances are made to accommodate certain impairments (for example, blind and visually impaired runners may compete supported by guide runners attached to them by a tether at the wrist).

Events are available for physical impairments (both seated and standing), athletes with vision impairments, as well as those with intellectual impairments. Events will vary based on an athlete's sport class.

If you are unsure about which events to offer, please contact Athletics Canada (para@athletics.ca) for support.

b) Seeding

For the most part, ambulatory athletes should be integrated within sections of able-bodied athletes and seeded alongside athletes of similar performances (time, distances, heights).

Wheelchair racers and seated throws athletes require their own sections.

If there are a limited number of athletes registered in each sport class, you may seed multiple sport classes in the same event. I.e. Para Athletes of different sport classes (i.e.. T34 & T53) can compete in the same section.

c) Scheduling Para Events

A Para counterpart exists for almost every able-bodied event. If you are unsure which Para event to host, please reach out to Fannie Smith, Para Development Manager at fannie.smith@athletics.ca

The following considerations around scheduling should be taken around wheelchair racing and seated throws.

Seated Throws:

- On average about 12-15 minutes per athlete is required, which includes the time to tie-in each throws chair and complete their round of throws.
- Note that all Seated Throwing Events (Shot Put, Discus Throw, Javelin Throw and Club Throw) should be conducted from a circle with diameter of $2.135\text{m} \pm 0.005\text{m}$ or $2.50\text{m} \pm 0.005\text{m}$, using a 34.92-degree sector. The rim of the circle shall be at least 6mm thick and shall be white. The use of movable platforms meeting these specifications is permissible. ([Rule 34 World Para Athletics Rules and Regulations](#))
- When securing the rails on the throwing circle, ensure that the bolt used to secure the rails on the circle are anchored deep enough to ensure it does not lift when in use
- Additional volunteers may be required to supported seated throws events. See the section on volunteers below

Wheelchair racing:

- For events 200m and greater, time for wheelchair racers to complete at least one full lap prior to the start of their event should be accounted for in your meet schedule. This is required for wheelchair racers to adjust their steering mechanism (the compensator) to the radius of the track for their assigned lane.
- It is recommended that wheelchair racing sections are held at the start of each event. This will enable athletes to set their compensators while officials transition to the start line of the next event.
- It's a good practice to schedule Wheelchair racing events at the beginning of sessions to allow athletes to warm up on the track (same surface as competition)

d) Volunteers

In addition to the regular fleet of volunteers' positions required for track and field meets, Volunteers (approximately 4) are needed to help support the tiedown process for seated throws. Supported training can be arranged and should be considered. Please reach out for more information if you do not have experienced volunteers in this area

e) Accessibility

A "Para Ready" meet takes into consideration accessibility from both a physical and virtual/digital perspective.

i) Physical Accessibility

a. Accessible Facility

Wheelchair users must be able to access the following areas in the venue without obstruction:

- Parking Lot(s)
- Call Room (is the circulation pathway from the call room to all field of play areas accessible via a smooth path (i.e., no grass))
- Field of play
- Throws circles
 - Seated Throws requires rails or a portable platform for chair tie downs (see "Equipment" below)
- Washrooms
- Awards area
- Stands/Spectator area
- Coaches' area
- Warm Up Area
 - Athletes that use a wheelchair require a safe area for warm up. The most optimal being the track itself but it could also be a parking lot, pedestrian walkway, or a dedicated area for warm up on rollers. Be sure to include this information in your Meet Technical Package.

Quick guide to Facility Para Readiness

Among other things, an accessible facility means full access to the track and throws circle for athletes who use a Wheelchair. Review your accessibility by running through some of these questions:

- Are there curbs around your facility that athletes would need to step over to access the field of play? If so, how can this be remedied for wheelchair athletes
- Are your change rooms and bathrooms accessible? Does it have an accessible washroom stall? If not, accessible porta-potties can be rented

b. Accessible Accommodation

If you are providing a meet hotel, please ensure the hotel offers accessible accommodations.

Note that not all wheelchair users need a fully accessible hotel room (wider doors, lower counters, rails in bathrooms). Inquire with the hotel about the width of their standard hotel rooms. Doors that are wider than 26 inches, with the option to remove the door, are large enough to accommodate most wheelchairs.

ii) Inclusive Communication

a) Athlete Eligibility

Inclusion of Para Athletes in your meet should be made explicit in your promotion and registration process. It should state clearly that the meet is open to Para Athletes and be specific as to which events.

Example:

2022 Harry Jerome Track Classic

Participants: Open to all athletes, including Para Athletes.

Events:

- *Men's: 100m, 200m, High Jump, Shot Put*
- *Men's (Para): WC 100, WC 200m, Seated Shot Put, Para ambulatory athletes will be integrated into able bodied events.*
- *Women's: 100m, 400m, Long Jump, Discus*
Women's (Para): WC 100m, WC 400m, Seated Discus, Para ambulatory athletes will be integrated into able bodied events.

b) Marketing & Promotion

DID YOU KNOW? PDFs are often hard not compatible with voice readers? Ensure your digital communications are accessible to visually impaired athletes by adding Alt-Text to your images and making a word version available.

c) Registration Process

When setting up your registration page in Trackie, under Step 2, select “Category Specific Event” and then select the “Paralympic” drop down and tick “Select all”. This will allow athletes, during the registration process, to indicate their [Para Sport Classification](#) and sport classes.

Note: An Athlete’s Para Sport Classification may differ if they compete in both track and field events.

*This additional step supports para-athletes to feel included (visual representation), assists officials and other meet staff to know which athletes are Para, and aides in the results management process.

d) In Stadium Announcements & Broadcasting

Make sure your announcer(s) is provided with information on who the Para Athletes are and some additional profile info if color commentary is provided for your event.

e) Results

Please submit your results to your Provincial or Territorial branch or directly with Athletics Canada within 2 business days of the final event.

f) Awards

Make sure your podium and/or awards area is wheelchair accessible

Consider how awards will be allocated to Para Athletes. Assistance can be provided through Athletics Canada.

g) Officials

For the most part, the competition rules are the same and Para Athletes should be treated with the same respect and attitude as all athletes.

Specific rules are in place for certain sport classes as outlined in the [World Para Athletics Rules](#). Please ensure your officials are up to date on these rules and/or have experience officiating events with Para Athletes.

A webinar series on [Becoming Para Ready for officials](#) is available to provide some basic information on Para Considerations.

After registration is complete, it is recommended to review the sport classes/impairments of the athletes registered and review the specific rules that apply.

An additional best practice includes engaging an experience official to support in-person training of officials before your event.

h) Equipment

Meet directors are responsible for ensuring they have the following equipment for Para Athletes as stated in the [WPA Rules and Regulations](#)

- Tie down capacity for seated throws – i.e drilled holes in the circle to affix a rail to accommodate a seated throws chair, ratchets to strap the chair down (min. 5) – see more details specifications in event section
- A seated throws platform may be used if there are no rails in your throws circle. Please visit the [Para Throws Manual](#) for more information
- All implement weights applicable to Para throws (including lighter weights such as 0.75lbs disc, 2.0kg shot). Please refer the appendix in the WPA Rules and Regulations
- All implements required for Para throws (discus, shot, javelin and [club throw](#)). If you don't have clubs, please reach out for info on where to purchase them or to be connected with a club to borrow them from.
- Guide and Assistant vests for Visually Impaired athletes and guides.

As referenced above, Seated Throws athletes require a throws circle which includes rails for tie downs. If your facility is not currently equipped with these, it is worth raising the issue with your facility manager. Most municipalities have funding or grants available to help improve the accessibility of their facilities.

For more information and assistance on making your meet Para Ready, contact Athletics Canada's Para Development Manager at para@athletics.ca