



Oregon School Activities Association

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To: Athletic Directors and Head Swim Coaches

From: Kris Welch, Assistant Executive Director

Subject: Para-Athlete Inclusion Expectations

Based on a recommendation from the OSAA Inclusion Committee and at the direction of the OSAA Executive Board the Association will be including three scoring para-athlete events this year at the OSAA Swimming State Championships. The 50 Freestyle, 100 Backstroke and 100 freestyle will be contested on Saturday, February 22 during the morning session. Our para-athletes may qualify and compete in up to two of the events at the swimming state championship.

The top nine times statewide from league/conference/district meets combined in the 50 Free and the 100 Free automatically qualifies regardless of gender or disability. Documentation of the disability must be provided to the OSAA prior to competing in the district meet. If more than nine students compete in district meets, the OSAA will explore splitting out the events by gender (creating 50 Free boys, 50 Free for girls, 100 Backstroke for boys, 100 Backstroke for girls, 100 Free for boys and 100 Free for girls).

The para-athlete division will include wheelchair participants and ambulatory participants. Definitions of athletes eligible to compete in this division are as follows:

- Wheelchair - All athletes with a permanent physical disability on file with the school. All athletes in grades 9-12 must meet OSAA eligibility requirements.
- Ambulatory - All athletes shall have a permanent orthopedic, neuromuscular or other physical disability. This would include Visually Impaired, Cerebral Palsy, Dwarf and Amputees. Permanent orthopedic impairment shall be verified by a licensed physician and maintained on permanent file at the school. All athletes in grades 9-12 must meet OSAA eligibility requirements.
- **Cognitively or intellectually disabled students are not defined as Para-Athletes.**

It is an expectation that those para-athletes who wish to attempt to qualify are participating in these events during the regular season and that they establish a qualifying time at the league/conference/district qualifying meet. The qualifying time established at the league/conference/district meet will be used to seed as many heats as necessary to accommodate the qualifying field for both events at the State Championships.

To facilitate training and competition for para-athletes it is recommended that all leagues/conferences/districts should include a para-athlete 50 Free, 100 Back and 100 Free in your event schedules this year. Prior to an event the host school should verify with their invited teams whether or not they have para-athletes who would like to participate in one or both of these events.

If you have any questions, please feel free to direct them to Kris Welch krisw@osaa.org