

Athletics for Disabled People in Scotland



This fact sheet provides an overview of athletics for disabled people in Scotland. It also provides useful contact details to signpost you to your local club to develop your skills and start to play, volunteer or coach disabled people in athletics.

The Development of Disability Athletics

Athletics is a sport that provides an exciting range of opportunities for disabled people. It provides a mixture of events and sports classes for everyone to enjoy, develop and learn new skills, whether participating, volunteering or coaching.



Often considered the showcase of the Paralympic Games, people are drawn to athletics to witness the speed of the sprinter, the strength of the thrower and the endurance of the distance athlete.

Athletics has been part of the Paralympics since the inaugural Games in 1960 and since then has grown enormously, becoming the biggest Paralympic sport. In Scotland there is a Disability Athletics Development Officer who supports the National Squad and talent identification programme, and who engages with branch and local authority partners to create opportunities for all levels of athlete to get involved.

There has been an increase in the number of new and young athletes who have been identified throughout the pathway. [scottishathletics](#) also appointed a Para Athletics Event Lead Officer in the build-up to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and looking beyond. The role focusses on [International Paralympic Committee](#) (IPC) classifications and events and supporting performance para athletes.

Athletics activity is happening in the majority of Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) branches with a mixture of mainstream and discrete* provision. There are regional squads established with a co-ordinated support programme in place.

The National Squad currently has over 20 athletes, a number of which have come through and/or been supported by the regional pathway structures. Through the pathway, **scottishathletics** now boasts a group of exciting and talented athletes with a physical disability, ensuring a healthy National Squad over the next few years.



Scotland has been successful in having athletes on the UK Athletics World Class Podium Programme and also on the World Class Podium Potential Programme, clearly showing that the development programme in Scottish disability athletics is creating and supporting talent right from the outset.

There is a robust network of inclusive clubs throughout Scotland for anyone to join as athletes, coaches and volunteers. It is truly a sport for all and provides opportunities and exciting challenges for anyone who wishes to get involved.

**Discrete – sports participation, training or competition that is unique to disability sport, but developmental, meaningful and appropriate to the aspirations of participants.*

The Classifications

Classification is an integral part of disability athletics to ensure fair competitions.

Within athletics these are the classification groups. Each group is subdivided into classes depending on the level of impairment. There are strict criteria attached to each class and the following is a basic guide to the classes included. These groups are currently included in the Paralympic pathway:

- T: track and jumps, e.g. 100m, 400m, long jump, etc.
- F: field, e.g. discus, shot, etc.
- T/F 11-13: athletes with a visual impairment
- T/F 20: athletes with an intellectual disability (limited events)
- T/F 31-34: athletes with cerebral palsy (wheelchair)
- T/F 35-38: athletes with cerebral palsy (ambulant)
- T/F 40/41: athletes with achondroplasia (short stature)
- T/F 42-44: athletes with leg amputations and les autres
- T/F 44-47: athletes with arm amputations and les autres
- T 51-54: wheelchair racers
- F 51-57: seated field athletes
- Athletes with a physical impairment – International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification

UK Athletics works with a small team of experienced and dedicated IPC classifiers to offer national classification for athletes with physical impairments. For new athletes who aspire to compete at the Paralympic Games, one of the most important steps is to ascertain their eligibility.

The classification process identifies the athlete's functional ability in relation to the event group in which they are competing. The athlete undergoes a series of mobility tests and is seen in the competition by IPC qualified classifiers.

Athletes with a Visual Impairment

Athletes with a visual impairment are not subject to the functional classification process in the same way as athletes with physical impairments. Classification for athletes with a visual impairment involves an eye test that must be carried out by an ophthalmologist / optometrist. The athlete will receive an official classification and must bring this information to competitions.



Only athletes who receive a classification of B1-B3 through this system will be eligible for IPC competition. The form which must be completed by an ophthalmologist / optometrist can be found here:

www.britishblindsport.org.uk/sightform.doc.

Athletes with a Learning Disability

Athletes with a learning disability in the UK are classified by either UK Sports Association (UKSA) or International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID). Classification is required before athletes can compete in international events and some competitions in the UK.

For athletes with a learning disability there are two stages. Firstly an athlete is identified as an athlete with an IQ of 75% or below. This first stage is organised through SDS Regional Managers. Secondly an athlete must meet the sport specific criteria, which will be implemented by the international bodies responsible for the relevant Paralympic sport. More detailed information can be found on the UKSA website: www.uksportsassociation.org

This process is purely to enable fair competition and if an athlete is not eligible for the Paralympic pathway there are other options to ensure the athlete can continue to enjoy the sport. For more information contact the National Disability Athletics Development Officer, Shona Malcolm, on 07731 832 567 or shonamalcolm@scottishathletics.org.uk.

Coach Education

scottishathletics, in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport's leading coaches, have developed courses which will assist, train and support all volunteers and coaches in how to adapt and develop training sessions to enable all athletes to participate in an integrated manner.

Coach education for disability athletics is embedded in the British Athletics qualifications Coaching Assistant and Coach awards (equivalent to UKCC Levels 1 and 2).



Inclusive Athletics

This is a 3-hour workshop on how to integrate athletes with a disability into coaching sessions. The course will be delivered with a mixture of practical and classroom sessions, and will show by changing the space, equipment or speed of an activity, how easily adapted athletics can be for everyone.



Coaching Athletes with a Disability

This course is for UK Athletics level coaches who are already working with, or are interested in working with, athletes with a disability. It allows for a better understanding of classification, helps identify the different disability categories and helps select the event most suitable for individual athletes. It further explains the basic technical aspects of wheelchair racing, guide running and seated throws. It also presents an understanding of the athlete pathway from beginner to Paralympic level.

Coaching Wheelchair Racing

This workshop is for coaches working with, or interested in working with, wheelchair athletes. It will help in the identifying of potential athletes, in the selection of specific equipment, chair set-up, pushing technique, training and loadings and programme planning. The workshop is delivered in practical and classroom session.

Adapted Sportshall

This workshop is for volunteers, Active Schools co-ordinators, teachers, leaders and coaching assistants. This is specifically for young people to try athletics in an enjoyable

and safe environment, using specialised indoor equipment. This workshop will demonstrate how to adapt equipment to include children with a disability into various sessions/classes.

Other courses available on request:

- Elevating Athletics with Disability Adaptations
- Race Running
- Guided Running
- Seated Throws
- Coach Mentoring

Courses can be booked through **scottishathletics**.

By and large the knowledge that coaches already have is sufficient to work with most athletes with adaptations depending on the athlete's ability which is much the same as working with any athlete.

Some areas require more technical knowledge, for example wheelchair racing, seated throwing and guided running, however there is advice available to coaches who find themselves working in these areas.

scottishathletics passionately believe that athletes require the best coaching support possible and that coaches are equipped to deliver. The workshops/courses above are available to coaches as well as mentoring opportunities.



Helpful Resources

UK Athletics – 365 Coaches & Athletes pack ucoach.com/resources/athletics-365/whatis365

Athletics 365 is a multi-event, young people development programme, which introduces people to the fundamental skills of athletics (vital to every sport). It is aimed predominantly at 8-15 year olds, but the resources can easily be adapted for use with younger athletes as well as those with a disability.

Facts & Figures

- 164 countries competed at London 2012 in athletics
- There were 17 medal events across all disability sports at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014, with six of these being athletics events
- Disability athletes have cleared 2m 10cm in the high jump and over 7m 50cm in the long jump

Leading Performers

Libby Clegg – T12 (visually impaired): 100m Paralympic and World silver medallist 2012. Won Scotland's only gold medal on the track at Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Libby was reclassified to a T11 prior to the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games and broke the world record in the 200m at the Anniversary Games in London in July 2012.

Stef Reid – F44 (amputee): long jump Paralympic silver medallist in London 2012. USA National Paralympic Championships gold medallist.

Maria Lyle – T35 (CP sprints): selected GB team that competed at the IPC European and World Championships in 2015 and 2016, amassing four golds and two silvers in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay events.

Samantha Kinghorn – T53 (wheelchair racer): selected for Scotland's Commonwealth Games team for Glasgow 2014. Won three golds in 2014 IPC European Athletics Championships 100m, 400m and 800m. Won 200m bronze at the IPC World Championships in 2015.

Jo Butterfield – F52 (seated throws): selected for GB team for IPC World and European Championships in 2015 and 2016. She won gold in the club throw and bronze in the discus at the Worlds.

Paul Davidson – T20 (intellectual disability): selected for GB team for the INAs European Championships in 2016 where he delivered gold in the 200m and bronze in the 400m.

Gavin Drysdale – Race Running: represented Scotland at the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports (IWAS) Senior World Championships, winning eight gold medals, two silver medals and two bronze medals with six world records achieved. A member of the Scotland team which competed at the CPISRA World Games in Nottingham in 2015.

Competitions

Scottish Disability Sport currently holds the following athletics national events:

- Junior Track & Field Championships
- Senior Track & Field Championships
- Sportshall and National Cross Country Championships

There are currently regional branch events in a number of areas across Scotland and **scottishathletics** also have a Parallel Success event fully included within their National Senior Championships. There are also five “open” events staged throughout the season that cover a range of events and disabilities.

Key Contacts

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Key Website

UK Athletics
www.uka.org.uk

Scottish Disability Sport
www.scottishdisabilitysport.com

British Paralympic Association
www.paralympics.org.uk

IPC
www.paralympic.org

British Wheelchair Racing
www.bwra.co.uk

British Deaf Association
www.bda.org.uk



scottishathletics are dedicated to providing opportunities for all those with a disability at all levels to participate in athletics across Scotland