



# Rugby for Disabled People in Scotland

This fact sheet provides an overview of rugby 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 or coach disabled people in rugby.



## Wheelchair Rugby

### Background

"...a full contact, fast and dynamic sport..."

Wheelchair rugby is a team sport for both male and female athletes with a disability and is a Summer Paralympic sport.

A unique sport created by disabled athletes, it combines elements of rugby, basketball and handball. Developed in Winnipeg, Canada in 1976, the sport's original name was murderball. The United States name "quad rugby" is based on the fact that all wheelchair rugby players need to have disabilities that include at least some loss of function in at least three limbs—most are medically classified as quadriplegic. The sport is governed by the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF) which was established in 1993.



### Rules in a Nutshell

Players compete in teams of four to carry the ball across the opposing team's goal line. Contact between wheelchairs is permitted, and is in fact an integral part of the sport as players use their chairs to block and hold opponents.

Wheelchair rugby is mostly played by two teams of up to twelve players. Only four players from each team may be on the court at any time. It is a mixed gender sport, and both male and female athletes play on the same teams and in the same competitions.



### Why play?

As well as the excitement and adrenaline of a fast paced, action filled, full contact sport, there are many other benefits of the sport. Playing wheelchair rugby can help you improve your strength and fitness and this can also carry over into your everyday life making activities like transfers, dressing, and wheelchair skills easier. As well as the physical benefits, wheelchair rugby can help build your confidence and you will get to experience the support that a team sport can bring.



Players - regardless of your level of fitness or ability, whether you just want to get out of the house or aim for Paralympic glory, if you have a disability affecting your arms and legs and can push a manual wheelchair you can become part of this sport.



### How to get involved

Having been inspired by Michael Kerr, the only Scottish player in the GB Wheelchair Rugby Team, Glasgow Wheelchair Rugby Club was established in September 2011.



The club's aim is to get as many people as possible involved with wheelchair rugby in Scotland. Whether you just want to train for the social and health benefits of playing a team sport or want to aim for the elite level of Team GB, the club will support you along the way.

The Caledonian Crushers made their competitive debut at the GBWR National Championships in June 2012 and are currently competing in the BT UK Super Series Division 2. The Caledonian Crushers have players from all over Central Scotland including Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Perth, Alloa, Edinburgh and Galashiels. The club currently trains every Tuesday evening 7-9 at the Commonwealth Arena, or Glasgow Club Gorbals when the Arena is unavailable. Get in touch to check where we are training if you want to come along.

Dundee Dragons wheelchair sports club based at the Lynch Sports Centre in Dundee also offer opportunities to try out wheelchair rugby. Check out their website and the contact details later on in this leaflet if you want more information on what is on offer.

## **The Classifications**

To be eligible to play Wheelchair Rugby, individuals must have some form of disability with a loss of function in both the upper and lower limbs. The majority of wheelchair rugby athletes have spinal cord injuries at the level of their cervical vertebrae with full or partial paralysis of the legs and partial paralysis of the arms.

Other eligible players have multiple amputations, polio, or neurological disorders such as cerebral palsy, some forms of muscular dystrophy, or Guillain-Barré syndrome, among other medical conditions.

Players are assigned a sport classification based on their level of disability; teams must field players with a mix of classification values, allowing players with different functional abilities to compete together.

Players are classified according to their functional level and assigned a point value ranging from 0.5 (the lowest functional level) to 3.5 (the highest). The total classification value of all players on the court for a team at one time cannot exceed eight points.

The classification process begins with an assessment of the athlete's level of disability to determine if the minimum eligibility requirements for wheelchair rugby are met. These require that an athlete have a neurological disability that involves at least three limbs, or a non-neurological disability that involves all four limbs. The athlete then completes a series of muscle tests designed to evaluate the strength and range of motion of the upper limbs and trunks. A classification can then be assigned to the athlete. Classification frequently includes subsequent observation of the athlete in competition to confirm that physical function in game situations reflects what was observed during muscle testing.

Athletes are permitted to appeal their classification if they feel they have not been properly evaluated. Athletes can be granted a permanent classification if they demonstrate a stable level of function over a series of classification tests.

Wheelchair rugby classification is conducted by personnel with medical training, usually physicians, physiotherapists, or occupational therapists. Classifiers must also be trained in muscle testing and in the details of wheelchair rugby classification.

## **Coach Education**

Coaches and officials - even if you don't have any experience we can help you learn the skills to become a coach, referee or table official for wheelchair rugby. Register your interest with GB Wheelchair Rugby and they will provide information on courses and opportunities.



## Helpful Resources

Watch highlights from Caledonian Crushers' first home tournament:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgulZ3T3cml&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgulZ3T3cml&feature=youtu.be)

Find out more about wheelchair rugby:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea0wO34pBQg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea0wO34pBQg)

Find out more about the Caledonian Crushers:

[www.facebook.com/GlasgowWheelchairRugbyClub](http://www.facebook.com/GlasgowWheelchairRugbyClub)

## Some Facts & Figures

There are twenty-five active countries playing wheelchair rugby, divided into three zones.

Australia are the 2014 World Champions, beating Canada in the final.

Wheelchair rugby was featured in the Oscar-nominated 2005 documentary Murderball. It was voted the #1 Top Sport Movie of all time by the movie review website Rotten Tomatoes.

## Leading Performers



Michael Kerr, the only Scottish player in the GB Wheelchair Rugby Team

Ciaran Pryce, member of GB development squad

## Wheelchair Rugby Union 7s

This is based on Rugby Union. Created in 2012, by Frenchman Wally Salvan.

A new club has just started up in Glasgow: **Glasgow Panthers** wheelchair 7s in conjunction with Glasgow East Rugby Club. The club trains on a Wednesday from 6-9pm at The Hub, 49 Wellhouse Crescent,

Wellhouse, Glasgow G33 4LA.

## Rules in a Nutshell

Wheelchair rugby union 7's played on a double basketball court, uses an oval ball, which is passed backwards, scoring a try and then punting a conversion over the H sticks as in the running game.

Played 7 a side

Played 40 minutes per half

A tackle is made when two chairs make contact with one (person with the ball). They then have five seconds to pass the ball backwards.

If there is a knock on or forward pass there is a wheelchair scrum.

A wheelchair scrum is like a reverse tug of war, where three from each team try to push the other team for control of the ball, which the scrum half has placed into the scrum.

If the ball goes out of court, it's a line out, just like the running game.

The points system is also the same.

[westofscotlandwheelchairsportsclub.btck.co.uk/WheelchairRugbySevens/Rules](http://westofscotlandwheelchairsportsclub.btck.co.uk/WheelchairRugbySevens/Rules)

## Facts and Figures

Currently in the world, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, France & Italy play the sport. France won the 6 Nations on home soil with Italy second in 2013.

## Helpful resources

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NzW\\_2TF5Mg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NzW_2TF5Mg)

## Classifications

There is no classification for wheelchair 7's, anyone can play.



## Wheelchair Rugby League

There are currently three teams in Scotland. **Dundee Dragons, Glasgow Panthers** and **The Clan Wheelchair Rugby League** (Ayrshire).

The game is started with five players per side, with at least three players classified as having a physical disability, and is of two 40-minute halves in Super League and two 30-minute halves in Championship League.

Tackles are made by removing opponents' tags which are attached with velcro to the players' shoulders. Or, if they don't have a tag on, by touching their shoulder, or stopping their forward progress whilst reaching for the opponents tags. Heavy contact with the front of the chair is not allowed, you are not allowed to make contact with the back of a chair or impact sideways into an opponent's wheels. These rules enable people of all ages to participate and enjoy the game which is what this game is all about.



All players use standard basketball chairs to play the game in. Wheelchair Tag Rugby League is played indoors and the playing area is set up in the same way the running Rugby League pitch is set up.

The game is refereed by two match officials on each touchline and two in-goal touch judges.

You play the ball to start the game by touching the floor with the ball and passing to a team mate. If through size or disability you cannot reach the floor you may start by touching the wheel of your chair. The same rule applies to try scoring.

The aim of the game is to score a try at the opponents' end of the field. Good chair skills and ball handling are vital in the game. Once a try is scored then a conversion can be

attempted by hitting the ball with a closed hand off a raised kicking tee.

If a player falls out of their chair for any reason the game is stopped so that they can get back into their chair safely.

## Opportunities to Play

**Dundee Dragons** train on a Saturday from 10-12 at the Lynch Sports Centre, Dundee DD2 4SR

**Glasgow Panthers** train on a Wednesday from 6-9pm at The Hub, 49 Wellhouse Crescent, Wellhouse, Glasgow G33 4LA.

**The Clan Wheelchair Rugby League** train on a Monday from 6.30-8.30

There are currently two playing Leagues here in the UK, the Super League for more experienced teams and the Championship which is a development league but ideally suited for younger teams and players. Once teams progress they can then apply to join the Super League.

## Club Development

All Clubs should be coached by a qualified Rugby League Coach who has completed a Wheelchair Tag Rugby League bolt-on course. Each Club should also have a qualified Club Welfare Officer and all Club Staff should have current CRB Checks and have attended the RFL's Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport Course as a minimum.

Wheelchair Rugby League rules:

[www.wheelchairrl.co.uk/downloads](http://www.wheelchairrl.co.uk/downloads)

## Trust Rugby International

Unified Rugby: "The Clan"

Trust Rugby International RFC (TRI) is Scotland's first and only Unified Rugby Club and as of October 2013, we are members of the Scottish Rugby Union. TRI was set up in April 2012 to give people with learning support needs the opportunity to take part in rugby. This started off as touch rugby to develop rugby core skills running, passing etc. The next step in the development of the team was to introduce contact and we have developed our skills in contact safely.

## Rules in a Nutshell

A Unified rugby team is pretty much the same as another rugby union team and follows the same laws set by World Rugby. Our only difference is that we play uncontested scrums. Having passive scrums allows novices to experience the game and control their involvement.

In Unified rugby the team is made up of players with and without a learning disability. We aim to have at least 7 players with a learning disability on the field at any one time, although we have started games with 10 LD players.

As all our games are friendly games and have no restriction on substitutions. Having a big squad works to our advantage as some players may only want to play 10 minutes at a time.

## Ethos

The most frequently asked question about both our Clan teams are about how we play. The Clan will play veteran teams or social teams that play mainstream rugby. It is also important that our opposition realise what we are trying to be achieve.

It is not a matter of winning or losing but of playing in a certain spirit. What is required is that players are tested but not overwhelmed. This may sound difficult to achieve, but if it is pitched at the level of a social game and all players are aware of this, it works well.

Ideally everyone would experience some success and some failures, but the experience should be positive enough to encourage all the players.

## Development

TRI have developed two teams in Scotland. The Ayrshire Clan was the first ever Unified team in Scotland which started in 2012. This squad has developed well and has playing numbers of about 30 with a 15 /15 split of players with and without a learning disability. The Ayrshire Clan has played around 18 games.

The Ayrshire Clan plays and train at Kilmarnock RFC. They train every Monday night 6.30 – 8pm.

TRI then decided to set up a second team in the Edinburgh area. This started in October 2014 and they will play their first game on 15 Feb 2015. The Edinburgh Clan are based at Edinburgh Accies and train on a Wednesday evening 6.30 – 7.30pm.

If you would like to find out more you can contact Stevie Main – 07969739705 or email [stevietrustrugby@gmail.com](mailto:stevietrustrugby@gmail.com) or follow us on Twitter - [@TRI\\_Rugby](https://twitter.com/TRI_Rugby) or on Facebook at Trust Rugby Scotland.

## Scottish Deaf Rugby

“Anything but quiet”

The same passion. The same intensity. The same teamwork, commitment and pride. If you play club rugby regularly and you have a hearing loss, you could represent your country on the international stage.

## Classifications

You have to be Scottish (born in Scotland, have a Scottish parent or grandparent, or have lived in Scotland for three years) and you'll need to be over 18. But being deaf doesn't mean there's no hearing allowed. You can qualify with only a slight hearing loss- with an average loss of 25Db over both ears. If you are not sure whether you qualify, get in touch and a hearing test can be organised.



## Key Contacts for Disability Rugby

Scottish Rugby  
Peter Young  
Outreach and Equality Manager  
[peter.young@sru.org.uk](mailto:peter.young@sru.org.uk)  
077641787941

Caledonian Crushers  
[info@caledoniancrushers.co.uk](mailto:info@caledoniancrushers.co.uk)  
[twitter.com/glasgowwr](https://twitter.com/glasgowwr)

Wheelchair Rugby 7's  
Adam Mould  
[xtr64@msn.com](mailto:xtr64@msn.com)

Dundee Dragons Wheelchair Sports Club  
Kevin Rattray  
[contact@dundeedragons.net](mailto:contact@dundeedragons.net)

Trust Rugby International  
Stevie Main  
[stevietrustrugby@gmail.com](mailto:stevietrustrugby@gmail.com)

Scottish Deaf Rugby  
Neil Houston  
[info@scottishdeafrugby.org.uk](mailto:info@scottishdeafrugby.org.uk)

Clan Wheelchair Rugby League  
John Cairns  
[jcrugby5@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jcrugby5@hotmail.co.uk)

Scottish Wheelchair Rugby League  
Jamie Seery  
[jamie.seery@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jamie.seery@hotmail.co.uk)

## Key Websites

Scottish Rugby  
[www.scottishrugby.org](http://www.scottishrugby.org)

Caledonian Crushers  
[www.facebook.com/GlasgowWheelchairRugbyClub](https://www.facebook.com/GlasgowWheelchairRugbyClub)

Dundee Dragons Wheelchair Sports Club  
[www.dundeedragons.net](http://www.dundeedragons.net)

Glasgow Panthers Wheelchair Sports Club  
[www.facebook.com/pages/Glasgow-Panthers-Wheelchair-Sports-Club/576229192493255](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Glasgow-Panthers-Wheelchair-Sports-Club/576229192493255)

The Clan Wheelchair Rugby League (Ayrshire)  
[www.trustrugby.com/#!rugby-4-all/sitepage\\_4](http://www.trustrugby.com/#!rugby-4-all/sitepage_4)

Trust Rugby International  
[www.trustrugby.com](http://www.trustrugby.com)

Scottish Deaf Rugby  
[www.scottishdeafrugby.org.uk](http://www.scottishdeafrugby.org.uk)

Scottish Disability Sport  
[www.scottishdisabilitysport.com](http://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com)

Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby  
[gbwr.org.uk](http://gbwr.org.uk)

Para-Sport  
[parasport.org.uk](http://parasport.org.uk)

IPC  
[www.paralympic.org](http://www.paralympic.org)

