## Paralympic Sport Club Excellence Program
### GOLD LEVEL

The following is a quick overview of benchmarks for the gold level. To attain this level the PSC must **complete all 12 listed** benchmarks.

Following the checklist are one page overviews and directions for each benchmark for completion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strategic planning</td>
<td>Strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment.</td>
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<td>2. Ongoing Paralympic sport programming</td>
<td>Ongoing programs and services are crucial to the growth of the Paralympic Movement at local, national, and international levels. To enhance the experience for athletes, they must have access to continued – not one-time – opportunities in sport that put them on a part of skill development.</td>
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<td>3. Provide regional or national competition opportunities</td>
<td>Competition also aids the Paralympic athlete pipeline by identifying talent that could become an emerging athlete striving toward national and international competition. Providing regional or national competition opportunities opens the door for a developing athlete to pursue a career in sport and maximize potential for future elite athletes.</td>
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<td>4. Track emerging athlete sport statistics</td>
<td>When an athlete shows an increase in skill, it is helpful to compile athletic statistics on him, which helps track his progress towards his goals. That information can be shared with high performance coaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Implement a sport-specific talent ID day in collaboration with NGBs/HPMOs</td>
<td>A PSC can help host and implement a talent identification clinic in one or more chosen sports. A talent identification clinic can help identify potential athletes and also move existing athletes towards the sport pipeline.</td>
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<td>6. Coach and program leader professional development</td>
<td>To achieve this benchmark, coaches and volunteer coaches should participate in training opportunities for coaches/volunteer coaches pertaining to sports facilitated by your organization. Training could be done by your organization or sought out by trainings offered by sport-certifying organizations such as a National Governing Body.</td>
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<td>7. Advanced coaching certification</td>
<td>Staff/volunteer coaches should attain a level of certification in a selected sport. To achieve this benchmark, program may recruit coaches who have the necessary qualifications.</td>
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<td>8. Develop and implement a coach mentor program</td>
<td>Retention and recruitment of quality coaches can be cultivated through the development and implementation of a coach mentor program.</td>
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<td>9. Develop and implement a high performance team</td>
<td>PSCs with a high performance focus can achieve this benchmark by implementing a dedicated high performance team as a part of the daily operation. With a high performance team focused on developing athletes, athletes have the best opportunity to succeed at the local, national and international levels.</td>
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<td>10. Athlete self-advocate training resources</td>
<td>Athletes power the Paralympic Movement. Empower the athletes in your PSC to be their own agent. With instruction, athletes can engage in fundraising, grant writing and sponsorship outreach that will enable them to fuel their training and competition.</td>
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<td>11. Review of sport lesson plans for programming</td>
<td>A sport lesson plan outlines a set of skills that will be taught and trained during an ongoing sport program. The lesson plan will have one skill of focus for a certain activity date.</td>
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<td>12. Program athlete qualifies for national development team/U.S. national team/U.S. Paralympic Team</td>
<td>Many of the most successful U.S. Paralympics athletes have moved from a PSC to an elite level. To achieve this benchmark, have an athlete from your PSC compete on a U.S. national team or the U.S. Paralympic Team.</td>
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Strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. It is a disciplined effort that produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, who it serves, what it does, and why it does it - with a focus on the future.

**OVERVIEW**

Develop a multi-year strategic plan for your organization to include PSC operational strategies. Plan will include goals and actions taken to reach those goals. On the application for completion, submit an example or samples of the organization's strategic plan.

**SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE**

- Deloitte Technical Assistance training modules on PSC Resource Site
Benchmark No. 2 – Gold Level
Ongoing Paralympic sport programming

OVERVIEW

Ongoing programs and services are crucial to the growth of the Paralympic Movement at the local, national and international levels. To enhance the experience for athletes, they must have access to continued – not one-time – opportunities in sport that put them on a path to skill development. Ongoing means that multiple opportunities, including practices, camps and clinics, are offered weekly and monthly, giving athletes a sufficient opportunity to develop their skills.

ACTION TO COMPLETE

A minimum of 100 days per calendar year, conduct programs in one or more Paralympic sports for athletes with a physical disability or visual impairment. This is an increase of 25 program dates from the silver level. On the application of completion, submit the number of days offered and what sports and submit a program brochure if available.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE

- Consult your U.S. Paralympics manager for suggested practices.
- Refer to the PSC handbook on the PSC Resource site.
Competition helps athletes develop their sport skills as well as other talents, including critical thinking and decision-making. PSCs should help athletes build their skills through practice. When athletes move from practice to competition, they are enabled to further engage in their sport. Competition also aids the Paralympic athlete pipeline by identifying talent that could become an emerging athlete striving toward national and international competition. Providing regional or national competition opportunities opens the door for a developing athlete to pursue a career in sport and maximize potential for future elite athletes. Most regional and national competitions also provide classification opportunities for the athlete to begin the pathway to higher competition and training for his respective class of competition.

At the club level provide opportunities in regional or national competitions per calendar year for your PSC athletes. Facilitation could include the hosting of a regional or national competition or providing the athlete the opportunity to attend one. It is acknowledged that some organizations are not able to host a regional or national competition and can meet the benchmark by supporting the attendance of a program athlete to an existing regional or national competition. On the application for completion provide what regional or national competition was provided or attended, dates and sports and what program athletes attended. Please be specific in submitted information.

See competition and programming in PSC Handbook on the PSC Resource site.
The Paralympic Sport Coaching Guide provides information on each sport and the NGB that oversees that sport.
Find a schedule of competitions in the sports section of usparalympics.org or Wheelchair and Ambulatory Sports USA.

Integrate a program athlete into a traditional sport competition (e.g. 5K/10K run or marathon; local triathlon; school sports team).
Collaborate with local traditional sport club to integrate program athlete into competition schedule (e.g. USA Swim Club).
Collaborate with another PSC or sport organization to host area competition at regional or national level.
When your athletes are showing an increase in skill, it is helpful to compile athletic statistics on those athletes, which helps track their progress towards goals. Information can be shared with high performance coaches, U.S. Paralympics and NGBs/HPMOs. Tracking athletes’ competitive performances in a database will assist in identifying athletes who could potentially take their talents to the next level.

Program will track athlete’s competitive marks/times in chosen sport to help athlete move towards the sport pipeline. Program will communicate potential athlete’s marks/times to sport NGB/HPMO. On the application for completion submit an example of the database being used to track program athletes and their competitive performances.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE

- Sport standards from U.S. Paralympics
- Paralympic Sport Coaching Guide
- Paralympic Identified Athlete Questionnaire

SUGGESTED BEST PRACTICES

- Programs can utilize databases or even Excel to formally track developing and emerging athletes and their competitive marks.
- Host talent identification clinics or skill development camps in chosen sports.
- Integrate program athletes into traditional competitions and track their performances.
OVERVIEW

The talent ID clinic can help identify potential athletes. It can also move existing athletes toward the sport pipeline. Implementing a talent ID clinic in collaboration with an NGB or HPMO helps pool resources and facilitates the connection of the athlete back to the organization. NGBs and HPMOs have talent ID protocol that can be used for the clinic to provide an objective measure to the athlete’s skills and performance.

ACTION TO COMPLETE

Program will implement a talent ID clinic on a selected date, in a selected sport, in collaboration with a NGB/HPMO. PSC and NGB/HPMO will develop the relationship to offer these opportunities. On the application for completion submit the date, sport and NGB/HPMO worked with along with attendance and results.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE

- Engage a NGB/HPMO to build an opportunity to hold camps or events to identify potential athletes
- To find NGB’s/HPMOs for each sport consult the Paralympic Sport Coaching Guide
Help coaches/program leaders find and engage in training opportunities pertaining to sports facilitated by your organization. Training opportunities should be sought out by programs offered by sport-certifying organizations such as an NGB. Conferences should be related to sport. Ways to find training may include:

- Online course
- Webinars
- Curriculum
- Equipment
- Training modules
- Conference attendance

Program will participate in one sport-specific training opportunity for a head coach or a program leader. The focus of the training will be on sport skills and not on general business or administrative skills. The participating staff or coach should seek sport training from an NGB/HPMO or other professional sport organizations. On the application for completion, provide the specific training, date and professional organization that is providing the training. Please submit a certificate of completion.

Utilize or search out one of the following opportunities according to the needs of your organization:

- Online course through educational or professional organizations
- Webinars through NGBs/HPMOs or other sport organizations
- Curriculum from a college course
- Training modules
- Professional sport conference attendance

- Paralympic Sport Coaching Guide
Benchmark No. 7 – Gold Level
Advanced Coaching Certification

OVERVIEW

Coaches and/or program staff should attain a level of certification in selected sports. To achieve this benchmark, program may recruit coaches who have the necessary qualifications and certification. For the gold level a strong preference should be coaches who have or will receive a higher level of certification (e.g. level 2 or 3 track and field coach). The advanced certifications will vary and depend on the sophistication of the chosen sport so be sure to consult the chosen sport closely for your options.

ACTION TO COMPLETE

To complete this benchmark program will do one of the following:

- Program will have two or more coaches certified through NBG training programs
- Recruitment of an additional NGB certified coach into program
- One NGB certified coach obtaining a higher certification level (e.g. level 2 or 3 track and field coach)

On the application for completion, please submit the certificates of completion and names of coaches, what level, date of certification and what certifying body.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE

- NGB certification programs and trainings; NGBs for each sport can be found in the Paralympic Sport Coaching Guide
- National Federation of State High School Associations
- Paralympic Sport Coaching Guide
- Coach Education grants and scholarships
Retention and recruitment of good coaches for your program can be cultivated through the development and implementation of a coach mentor program. A current coach of your program has a network of coaches and can assist with recruiting them to Paralympic sport. If your coach is a NGB/HPMO certified coach, he can help mentor other volunteer coaches who are not certified but want to help. This helps cultivate quality within your services of sport.

Program will develop and implement a plan to have NGB/HPMO certified coaches within their program to mentor assistant coaches and volunteer coaches, help with recruitment of coaches, retain young coaches and retain veteran coaches. The program should be a formal, written plan included in the organization’s policies and procedures or coaches handbook. On the application for completion, submit an example of the coach mentor program.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES TO COMPLETE

- USA Coaching web page
- Consult your U.S. Paralympics manager for suggested practices

SUGGESTED BEST PRACTICES

- Organize and host an annual coach’s conference or gathering to train and recognize program coaches.
Benchmark No. 9 – Gold Level
Develop and implement a high performance team

OVERVIEW

PSCs with a high performance focus can achieve this benchmark by implementing a dedicated high performance team as a part of the daily operation. With a high performance team focused on developing athletes, athletes have the best opportunity to succeed at the local, national and international levels. A high performance team should aim at furthering an athlete’s skills and cultivating his desire to compete. High performance team members provide focused training to the athletes who are performing, or could potentially perform, at the highest levels of Paralympic sport. High performance teams are focused on one sport so an organization may have multiple high performance teams. It is intended that the program’s high performance team in a chosen sport develop and have a relationship with the sport’s NGB/HPMO so that there is continual communication and submission of competitive results on potential athletes.

ACTION TO COMPLETE

Program will develop and implement a high performance team in a chosen sport. A high performance team may include:

- A certified coach within the chosen sport
- Training plans for participating athletes
- Competitive opportunities/calendar of competitions for athletes
- Reporting on athletes competitive marks/times to NGB/HPMO
- Discussions around nutrition, sport psychology, strength and conditioning

On the application for completion provide overview of high performance team, which sport, the names of the coaches who are running the team, roster of athletes participating, and the nature of relationship with the respective sport’s NGB. Please be specific in submitted information.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE

- Development of a plan for high performance is left to the program according to needs, sport and design
- Consult your U.S. Paralympics manager for suggested practices
- Consult a NGB/HPMO in a chosen sport on how to support their high performance program
- Paralympic Sport Coaching Guide
Benchmark No. 10 - Gold Level
Athlete self-advocate training resources

OVERVIEW
Athletes power the Paralympic Movement. Empower the athletes in your PSC to be their own agent. With instruction, athletes can engage in fundraising, grant writing and sponsorship outreach that will enable them to fuel their training and competition. A program may assist an athlete with educating them of such practices and pointing them to the right resources. If there is a Paralympian affiliated with your PSC, it is suggested to match them up with your programs emerging athletes to potentially mentor on these skills, if applicable.

ACTION TO COMPLETE
Program will assist potential athletes with educating them on how to access potential sponsorships and support to assist with their training. On the application for completion provide an overview of the resources and practices your program implements to assist emerging athletes to connect with sponsorships and scholarships to help them pay for their competitive opportunities.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE
- Paralympic Ambassador Program webinars
  - Webinar #1 = http://askinginc.com/usoc-web1-video/
  - Webinar #2 = http://askinginc.com/usoc-web2-video/
  - Webinar #3 = http://askinginc.com/usoc-web3-video/
- Consult your U.S. Paralympics manager for suggested practices

SUGGESTED BEST PRACTICES
- Challenged Athletes Foundation grant/sponsor opportunities
- Engagement of local businesses to sponsor an emerging athlete
- Annual training gathering for your emerging athletes to educate them on these resources, how to access and engage and how to best use those resources once they are given
- Fundraiser practices focused on support of an emerging athlete
- National sponsors
Benchmark No. II – Gold Level
Review of Sport lesson plans for programming

OVERVIEW

A sport lesson plan outlines a set of skills that will be taught and trained during an ongoing sport program. The lesson plan will have one skill of focus for a certain activity date. For example, an archery program can offer a 12 sessions, with each session focused on a specific skill or technique, including sizing up a bow, release and hand-eye coordination.

ACTION TO COMPLETE

Program will plan and implement a training plan focused on specific skills within implemented sport. Each session will have a progression of activities that will develop skills within the selected sport. On the application for completion submit examples of sport lesson plans.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE

- Team USA Mobile Coach App
- General physical education programs and lesson plans may give an example of how a succession of skills can be planned out
- Coach certification training may offer information on how to plan skill development
- USA Coaching web page
- Good examples: USA Hockey Practice Plans
- Good examples: US Lacrosse Practice Plans Archive
Benchmark No. 12 – Gold Level
Program athlete qualifies for national development team/U.S. national team/U.S. Paralympic Team

OVERVIEW

Many of the most successful U.S. Paralympic athletes have moved from a PSC to an elite level. To achieve this benchmark, have an athlete from your PSC compete on a U.S. national team or the U.S. Paralympic Team. The selection should be related to the work of your high performance team with that emerging athlete selected to the team. The athlete can be named to a national development team, national team or the U.S. Paralympic Team of the chosen sport. Development camps do not count towards the criteria of this benchmark.

ACTION TO COMPLETE

Program will have an athlete from the high performance team pursue a selection camp of chosen sport and is selected as a member of the national development team, U.S. national team or U.S. Paralympic Team (Games team). On the application for completion submit the name of the athlete chosen to a national development team, U.S. national team or U.S. Paralympic Team and in which sport. This nomination to the team must have happened in the past two years from your organization’s participation in the PSC Excellence Program. Please be specific in submitted information.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE TO COMPLETE

- U.S. Paralympics athlete pipeline model and sport information
- Paralympic Sport Coaching Guide