



# WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

**WHEELCHAIR RUGBY** made its Paralympic debut as a demonstration event in Atlanta in 1996. It became a medal sport in the Paralympic Games Sydney 2000 where the United States won the gold medal. The game was first developed in Canada as a team sport for quadriplegic athletes, and was originally known as "murderball" because of its intense physical nature. After being introduced in the United States, the name was changed to "quad rugby," but it is now formally known as wheelchair rugby.

## BASIC RULES

Wheelchair rugby is a mixed team sport for male and female athletes with a mobility related disability in at least three limbs (tetraplegia). Players compete in teams of four with the objective being for a player to carry a ball across the opponent's goal line in order to score a point. On each possession of the ball, teams have 40 seconds to score. A ball is carried on the player's lap and must be bounced or passed between teammates at least once every 10 seconds during play. The sport is played in four eight-minute stop-time quarters indoors on a regulation basketball court.

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.

All players are classified based on their abilities from 0.5 to 3.5 points. Four players from each team are allowed on the court at a time and the classification value between them cannot exceed eight points.

## EQUIPMENT

It is played with an official International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRFF) game ball (looks much like a soft touch volleyball) on a regulation basketball court with goal lines marked by cones and a lined-off "key" area. Athletes compete in wheelchair rugby chairs.

## GETTING STARTED

We encourage you to start by connecting with a local adaptive sports organization that offers wheelchair rugby or getting involved with a local wheelchair rugby club. To find a list of clubs in your area, please visit <https://uspara.us/findaclub>.

## CLASSIFICATION

Classification determines which athletes are eligible to compete and how athletes are grouped together for competition. If an athlete has a Paralympic eligible impairment, the athlete may be eligible for a classification appointment. Once an athlete is ready to compete regionally or nationally, an athlete should seek national classification.

For more information on wheelchair rugby, please visit <http://usawr.org/>.

## PARALYMPIC ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS

- Ataxia, Athetosis and Hypertonia
- Impaired Muscle Power
- Impaired Passive Range of Movement
- Limb Deficiency

## PARALYMPIC CLASSIFICATION

Wheelchair rugby players are classified on a point system from 0.5 to 3.5.

The higher the sport class number, the less severity of impairment and the lesser impact on sport specific activities.

Each sport class has a distinct profile and athletes in each class often play specific roles on the court, although there can be some overlap in the adjacent sport classes.

All female athletes are reduced an additional 0.5. A woman classed as a 2.0 would play as a 1.5, for example. Maximum points allowed is still 8.0. Female athletes must still class into sport to be eligible ex. 4.0 female player is not eligible to play as a 3.5 because of their disability.

## PARALYMPIC SCORING

The object of the game is to score a goal (one point) by crossing the goal line with possession of the ball while the opposing team is defending that goal. The team with the most points when time runs out wins.