

UNIVERSITY SPORT SOUTH AFRICA



DISABILITY POLICY

2022

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Foreword by the USSA NEC

Over the years, the government of the Republic of South Africa has remained committed to making our country a better place for all its people. Founded on the Bill of Rights, numerous policy directives and initiatives are aimed at empowering people with disabilities through education, training, skills development and employment; ensuring accessibility to training facilities; providing equipment such as wheelchairs and hearing aids and protecting and promoting the rights of people with disabilities.

USSA fully supports the view of the South African government to condemn the segregation of persons with disabilities from the mainstream of society and emphasizes the need for including these persons in the workplace, social environment, political sphere and sports arena.

USSA will endeavor to support the South African government through its sports structures to remain committed in support of the targets set in the National Development Plan – Vision 2030 and to the attainment of the two percent (2%) target of people with disabilities having the right skill sets and obtaining relevant qualifications in order to be employed within or outside of the sport fraternity in SA.

USSA will progressively engage with all relevant role-players/stakeholders within the sporting fraternity in SA to ensure that people with disabilities obtain access to post- school training opportunities; sport infrastructure and services are being upgraded to ensure appropriate accessibility; sports athletes with disabilities get the support they need to pursue their sport of choice and to ensure compliance with equity targets.

USSA further commits to the objectives of the NSRP as per Strategic objective 23 on TRANSFORMATION which states that equal opportunities must exist for all South Africans to participate and excel in sport and recreation through the adoption of deliberate transformation initiatives. To have a real and lasting impact on our nation we cannot compete with the exclusion of certain parts of our population. Therefore, within the sport fraternity in SA, the following groups must receive priority when programmes are designed and funded to promote inclusivity: women, **persons with a disability**, youth, aged and rural communities.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Africa's Constitution enshrines the rights of people with disabilities. The former Office on the Status of Disabled People produced the Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) in 1998 to give meaning to the Constitutional provisions. However, the process of addressing the inequalities faced by people with disabilities in society is ongoing.
- 1.2 Sport, recreation and leisure, as important components of society and contributors to health, mental and physical wellbeing, continue to address the status of people with disabilities. The Lancet Journal on Diabetes and Endocrinology revealed in 2017 that in 2015, the economic burden of diabetes for all in Sub-Saharan Africa was US\$19.45 billion and would likely increase from US\$35.33 billion to US\$59.32 billion by 2030.¹
- 1.3 The Census 2016 establishes that about 7,7%² of South African society is disabled and this should act as a measure against which Sport SA assesses progress. However, the World Bank estimates that 15% of the world's population is likely to experience some form of disability.³
- 1.4 Persons with disabilities face barriers in their everyday lives from homes which are not adapted to their needs; an unpredictable and inaccessible public transport system; navigating inaccessible and inflexible workplaces, sport, recreation and education facilities; limited choice and additional expense for goods and services; exclusion from leisure and socializing opportunities; reliance on rather than independence from other people. Disability can happen to anyone at any time.
- 1.5 Socializing and participation in sports, art, culture and nature boosts health and wellbeing.⁴ However, persons with disabilities are likely to be far less active, a situation exacerbated by COVID-19.
- 1.6 The success of the SA Paralympic teams has increased the visibility of athletes with disabilities, but this has not translated into full integration into sports society.
- 1.7 USSA is committed to lead the inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly those facing the additional barriers of previous and current disadvantage, as its contribution to the process of

¹ <https://www.gbchealth.org/the-heavy-burden-of-obesity-in-africa/>

² <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/03-19-05/03-19-052019.pdf>

³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disability>

⁴ White M.P., Pahl S., Wheeler B.W., Depledge M.H., Fleming L.E. (2017). Natural environments and subjective wellbeing: Different types of exposure are associated with different aspects of wellbeing. *Health Place* 45: 77–84; A Review of Nature-Based Interventions for Mental Health Care 2016; What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and wellbeing? A scoping review 2019 (WHO); Rosenbaum S., Tiedemann A., Sherrington C., Curtis J., Ward P.B. (2014). Physical activity interventions for people with mental illness: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Clin Psychiatry* 75(9):964-74.

integration in society. Some national university sports associations (NUSAs) have already taken on the governance of persons with disabilities within their sport.

- 1.8 For too long, athletes with disabilities have been an “after-thought” and felt treated as second class citizens. Through reducing physical and attitudinal barriers, an irreversible process of levelling the playing field for persons with disabilities as participants, volunteers and spectators is achievable.
- 1.9 Therefore, through a process of equity and inclusion, key areas can be addressed to achieve equality of opportunity, equal treatment and ultimately integration and meaningful belonging.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To carry through/implement the policy objective for sport and recreation outlined in the INDS which is “to develop and extend sporting activities for people with disabilities in both mainstream and special facilities so that people with disabilities can participate in sport for both recreational and competitive purposes.”
- 2.2 To provide guidelines on how USSA shall support people with disabilities in sport.
- 2.3 To define concepts in relation to disability.
- 2.4 Thus, the end result should be the integration of people with disabilities into mainstream sporting society contributing to inclusion and belonging in society as a whole.

3. Definitions and abbreviations

In this policy, the following shall have the meanings assigned to them:

<p><i>3.1 Classification:</i></p>	<p>in Para sport, groups athletes into Sport Classes according to the extent their impairment affects fundamental activities in each specific sport or discipline such that a fair and level playing field is ensured. It therefore is a system to minimize the impact of impairments on sport performance and ensure the success of an athlete is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus. It is often equated to weight divisions in various sports.</p>
<p><i>3.2 Disability:</i></p>	<p>the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers.</p>
<p><i>3.3 Disability sports federation</i></p>	<p>are the three (3) sports organizations catering specifically for athletes with disabilities viz. the SA Deaf Sports Federation, the SA Sports Association for Intellectually Impaired and the SA Sports Association for Physically Disabled. Currently Special Olympics SA, also catering for athletes with an</p>

	intellectual impairment, is represented at Sport SA meetings with SASA-II as part of Sports for the Intellectually Disabled SA.
<i>3.4 Eligibility:</i>	an athlete must have at least one (1) of the 11 impairments in order to be considered for classification or evaluation. These may differ from sport to sport.
<i>3.5 Equality:</i>	means ensuring that each person has the same opportunities and receives the same treatment and support regardless of need.
<i>3.6 Equity:</i>	means working to achieve equality by recognizing that some people require more assistance based on need and lived experience, which is proportionate to their own circumstances, in order to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities.
<i>3.7 Evaluation:</i>	is the process of classification for Para sports and for Deaf sports.
<i>3.8 Impairment:</i>	an injury, illness, or congenital condition that causes or is likely to cause a loss or difference of physiological or psychological function. In Para sport, there are 10 eligible impairments ⁵ including intellectual impairment and in Deaf sport, one impairment.
<i>3.9 Inclusion:</i>	is the process of adapting attitudes, systems and the built environment resulting in each person being able to achieve their full potential. It can also be described as belonging.
<i>3.10 Integration:</i>	is the process of involving persons with disabilities in activities while recognizing and addressing their individual needs in order to achieve inclusion.
<i>3.11 Member:</i>	means a member of USSA family
<i>3.12 NUSAs</i>	National University Sports Associations
<i>3.13 PECs</i>	Provincial Executive Committees
<i>3.14 Ring-fenced funding</i>	is funding allocated for and spent on a specific purpose.

4 Oversight

The Disability Sport and Classification Commission, supported by the proposed inclusion officer, will oversee the implementation of this policy working closely with USSA, NUSAs and Members.

⁵ https://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/2020_06%20Explanatory%20Guide%20to%20Classification_Summer%20Sports.pdf

5 Scope

This policy covers:

- 5.1 USSA NEC and its subcommittees;
- 5.2 USSA employees and volunteers
- 5.3 National University Sports Associations, Provincial Executive Committees, and USSA members.

6 Types of disability

- 6.1 Under the umbrella of USSA and its disability sports and NUSAs, there are seven (7) main types of disability in sport:
 - 6.1.1 amputee;
 - 6.1.2 cerebral palsy;
 - 6.1.3 paraplegia (including quadriplegia, spinal cord injury, polio);
 - 6.1.4 visual impairment;
 - 6.1.5 intellectual impairment;
 - 6.1.6 Deaf; and
 - 6.1.7 “les autres”.
- 6.2 The causes of disability in general cannot be controlled by the individual and include disability at birth, poor post-natal care, disease and trauma (motor vehicle and pedestrian accidents, water and sports related and other unrelated accidents and war).
- 6.3 A key aspect of disability sport is “classification” which determines which athletes are eligible to compete in a sport and how athletes are grouped together for competition. This, to a certain extent, is similar to grouping athletes by age, gender or weight.
 - 6.3.1 In Para sports, athletes are grouped by the degree of activity limitation resulting from the impairment evaluated through a medical report, bench tests and evaluation in competition;
 - 6.3.2 In Deaf sports, athletes undertake an audiogram to evaluate hearing loss of at least 55dB pure tone average (PTA) in the better ear;
 - 6.3.3 In Virtus sports, athletes are grouped according to the results attained from a primary eligibility process (an intelligence quotient assessment with the impairment taking place age 18 or less and an IQ of 75 or less) and cognitive tests (computer assessments and evaluation in competition).

7 Integration leading to inclusion

- 7.1 USSA will implement the following in relation to inclusive practice within its operations to ensure equality with able-bodied athletes and coordinate with its membership:
- 7.1.1 classification support for NUSAs and disability sports federations;
 - 7.1.2 high performance to prepare athletes with disabilities for international competitions with support from the member institutions;
 - 7.1.3 coach training to ensure all coaches are equipped to coach athletes with disabilities;
 - 7.1.4 research through member institutions to improve standards of coaching and training, in assessing the rehabilitative effects of sporting and recreational activity and in improving the results of elite athletes;
 - 7.1.5 communication and marketing incorporating positive and continuous messaging about disability ensuring accessible correspondence and website (especially for those with a visual impairment), marketing tools and sponsorship income;
 - 7.1.6 language to include sign language at USSA meetings for Deaf representatives;
 - 7.1.7 appropriate levels of funding including equal incentives won for medals at major Games; and
 - 7.1.8 recognition and awards for athletes with disabilities.
- 7.2 USSA will coordinate initiatives with the member institution and other relevant stakeholders to address:
- 7.2.1 accessible facilities including competition and training venues;
 - 7.2.2 ring-fenced funding allocated to NUSAs, PECs and their members for athletes with disabilities particularly for development, including national competitions, as well as for high performance;
 - 7.2.3 recognition through awards and incentives;
 - 7.2.4 increasing research into sports for persons with disabilities with member institutions;
 - 7.2.5 inclusive accredited training for coaches, administrators, technical officials;
 - 7.2.6 development of classifiers through higher education institutions, professional medical and para-medical associations;
 - 7.2.7 accessible transport; and
 - 7.2.8 increased employment opportunities.

8 Inclusive sports associations

Relevant NUSAs, as the recognized organization for managing their sport at national level, should cater for the needs of athletes with disabilities at all levels of their operations. These include:

- 8.1 *coaching*: is perhaps the most fundamental component of any NUSA's operations and potentially has the greatest impact on the life of a sportsperson with a disability. Thus, all NUSAs should include a compulsory component in their sport specific coaching courses dealing with aspects of coaching athletes with disabilities. Similarly, all generic coaching courses should include a compulsory component on coaching athletes with disabilities.
- 8.2 *classification*: is an essential aspect of disability sport and as such, all NUSAs should ensure adequate support for the classification process, with support and expertise provided by USSA, Sport SA and the disability sports federations, for athletes under their jurisdiction.
- 8.3 *development, talent identification programmes*: run by NUSAs, PECs and clubs should include people with disabilities in the organisation's area of jurisdiction.
- 8.4 *high performance programmes*: managed by NUSAs and USSA and delivered through member institutions will include athletes with disabilities benefitting from the same support as athletes without disabilities provided that equipment is considered in addition on the basis of an equitable approach.
- 8.5 *course material (including manuals and rule books)*: for any courses offered whether for coaching, classification, administration, technical officials or any other course must include components related to sport for athletes with disabilities.
- 8.6 *Member institutions*: should make provision for the inclusion in their programmes of between 7% and 15% for athletes with disabilities and allocate a budget of between 7% and 15% to support this.
- 8.7 *sports science and medical support*: should similarly cater for the needs of athletes with disabilities.
- 8.8 *technical officials*: courses for training technical officials must include a compulsory component of officiating at events for the disabled to avoid the need to duplicate resources while adding to the pool of qualified personnel.
- 8.9 *competitions*: should include events for athletes with disabilities within the heats and finals programmes wherever possible. Given that a full programme is often lengthy and complex, a minimum of 15% of the programme should cater for events for athletes from all disability groups as it is only through inclusive competitions that an integrated sports society can become visible.
- 8.10 *medical support*: increasingly should incorporate expertise in dealing with athletes with disabilities at an everyday level of participation as well as at an elite level. This will be important

in light of the inclusion of events for athletes with disabilities in CUCSA, FASU and FISU.

- 8.11 *administration:* in order to achieve inclusion in USSA, the following two models should be considered to select the most appropriate.
- 8.11.1 *Model A:* USSA establishes a disability commission as a subcommittee which will then advise USSA and the NUSAs on matters affecting the full participation of athletes with disabilities in that particular sport. In addition, representatives of sport for the disabled should be included in other subcommittees such as the technical, medical, development and officiating subcommittees.
- 8.11.2 *Model B:* USSA and the NUSAs include representatives of sport for the disabled on its subcommittees. In addition, representatives of sport for the disabled should be included in other subcommittees such as the technical, medical, development and officiating subcommittees.
- 8.11.3 USSA should also make provision for representation from sport for the disabled on the NUSAs and PECs.
- 8.12 *funding:* adequate funding and equal incentives should be provided within the USSA's and NUSAs budgets for the activities of the athletes with disabilities in the same way as funding is provided for able-bodied athletes.
- 8.12.1 A guide of at least 15% of the total budget for sports activities should be allocated to disability.
- 8.12.2 exempt from this is the assistance provided for equipment where an additional allocation may be necessary within the overall policy of the NUSA due to the expense of such equipment which enables an athlete's participation in sport.
- 8.13 *communication:* in order to ensure inclusive communication, written publications, documents and websites should cater for those with a visual impairment.
- 8.14 *language:* to promote the inclusion of Deaf representatives, accredited sign language interpreters should be available for meetings and team travel overseas.
- 8.15 *awards:* increasing recognition of the achievements of athletes with disabilities through awards from USSA will raise awareness of disability sport.

9 Facilities

- 9.1 Sport and recreation venues have a duty to provide an environment that is welcoming and inclusive of people with disabilities either as active participants or as spectators.
- 9.2 Thus, all new sporting and recreational facilities should adhere strictly to Part S of the National Building Regulations and the SABS Code of Practice 0246: 1993 in terms of design and planning (including facilities for the Deaf) and these should be certified by the National Environmental Access Programme (NEAP) before construction is approved by the relevant authority.
- 9.3 For outdoor facilities, care must be taken to ensure accessibility for all disability groups and Eco-Access should similarly be involved in the proactive and reactive design and planning and should certify the facility as accessible.
- 9.4 Where facilities already exist, a programme should be undertaken by the owner to ensure accessibility and if it is not accessible, alterations must be made over a reasonable time period and NEAP or Eco-Access, as the case may be, should certify the facility as accessible.

10 Employment

- 10.1 People with disabilities often face economic discrimination and the key to unlocking this disadvantage is increased employment opportunities for the disabled.
- 10.2 Within the parameters of the Employment Equity Act, USSA and all NUSAs must give equal opportunities to employing people with disabilities in administration, coaching, officiating and development work providing reasonable accommodation.

11 Transport

Transport is the single greatest barrier to the full participation of a person with a disability in society and inaccessible transport as well as planning for the location of facilities should take this into account.

12 Amendment of this policy

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years.

14 Key concepts

Me, not my impairment	My values	My life story
Reassure me	Welcome me	Listen to me
Include me	Show me	

Equality

Equity