



Overview: Wheelchair Racing

Wheelchair Racing events in Special Olympics are available for athletes using manual and motorized wheelchairs.

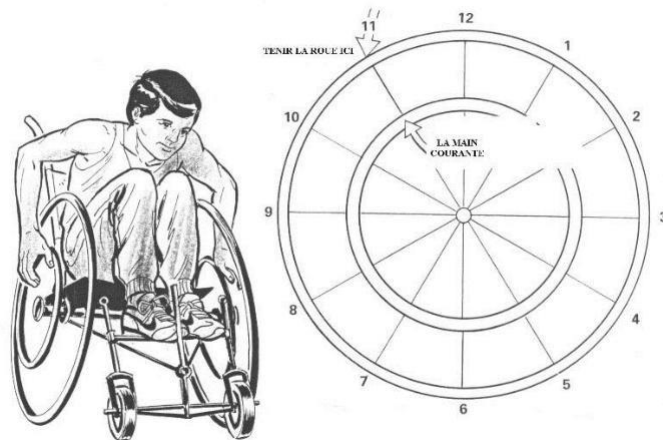
Manual wheelchair and Motorized wheelchairs are not permitted in the same events. Athletes must be able to complete their event independently. This means that coaches may not provide assistance during the race.

COACHING POINTS – WHEELCHAIR RACING (READY-TO-RACE POSITION)

1. Athletes must remain seated on the cushion or seat of the wheelchair.
2. Lean upper body forward so shoulders are ahead of hips.
3. Hold knees and feet together in the center of the chair.
4. Grasp wheels or handrails at 11 o'clock position, i.e. just behind highest point of wheel (12 o'clock position). Thumbs should be inside and fingers outside.
5. Keep head slightly forward and focus several meters ahead.

COACHING POINTS – WHEELCHAIR RACING (FORWARD STROKE AND RECOVERY)

1. Take ready-to-race position. Push the wheels or handrails forward from 11 o'clock to the 4 o'clock position. Release hands from wheels.
2. Keep moving arms and hands in a circular motion. (i.e., past 6 and 9 o'clock positions, and recover to the 11 o'clock position). Repeat
3. Keep body and head still during stroke and recovery.





TOP TIPS FOR COACHING WHEELCHAIR RACING (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Demonstrate the ready position.
2. Prompt athlete to reposition an arm, hand, leg if needed. Do this by touching it, or reposition it in the correct position. Always ask your athlete's permission before you make physical contact.
3. For athletes with balance difficulties, position feet upward against chair. Raise knees to the chest.
4. Explain the stroke by showing a wheel and clock positions for hands.
5. Remind the athlete to:
 - Keep body, trunk and head still.
 - Move only the arms and hands.
 - Upper body movement slows the chair's momentum. (e.g. bouncing/rocking back and forth)
6. Explain that the strongest part of a stroke should be from the 12 o'clock to the four o'clock position.
7. Run practice competitions. Practice reacting to the sound of the start pistol/command.
8. Concentrate on getting both hands to stroke and recover in unison. Emphasize equal strength so the chair's motion is smooth and efficient.
9. Caution the athlete to avoid stroking past the 5 o'clock position. This may cause serious injury to the hands, arms or shoulders.
10. Special Note for Wheelchair athletes with arm paralysis. They may pull their chairs forward or push their chairs backward with their feet. Athletes who push their chairs backwards must start with all wheels behind the start line. They must wear helmets.