

PARA ATHLETES IN THE SPORT OF SWIMMING

PIAA creates a culture of inclusion and opportunity for para-athletes. Para-Swimming is an adaptation of the sport of swimming for athletes with physical disabilities. Competition in Para-Swimming is open to both girls and boys, competing against the same gender.

This is to provide more opportunities for student-athletes in the post-season. Para-Swimming athletes have the opportunity to qualify and compete at the PIAA State Championships in two Para-Swimming events.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Para-athletes may qualify and participate in the 50 freestyle and 100 freestyle at the state meet.

- The member school must sponsor swimming and diving or be in a co-op with a member school.
 - a. Abiding by the PIAA Constitution and By-Laws.
- The student-athlete must uphold the team expectations for practice and competition.
- Para-Swimming athletes shall compete in school-issued or school-approved uniforms.
 - a. If the athlete is in need of a uniform modification or has a vision impairment and needs special equipment i.e. tapper or light/signal. A request for modification needs to be submitted from the school to the PIAA office.
- Athletes will be able to set a state record at the state meet only.
- There are two classifications: Class 1 and Class 2
 - a. To be placed in a classification, the Para-Athlete must complete the Para-Swimming verification form (attachment) to be placed in their respective classification.
- Each member school must follow the 2024-25 NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Book.

****At the coaches' discretion, para-athletes may compete for points or swimming exhibition in regular season competitions. They are not bound to the 50 freestyle and 100 freestyle, the 50/100 freestyle are added events for para-swimming athletes to compete against other para-athletes.***

SPORT CLASSIFICATIONS:

Class 1 – Ambulatory with assistance (can use a wheelchair with high functioning upper body), Multiple limb deficiencies, Dwarfism, Visual impairment and/or Intellectual impairment.

Class 2 – Non-Ambulatory (using a wheelchair) with limited use of all four extremities.

DEFINING CLASSIFICATIONS:

Classification provides a structure for Para-Swimming competition. It groups the eligible athletes in sport classes according to their activity limitation. Having a regional [USA Para-Swimming classification](#) is helpful to assign respective classification to para-athletes.

DEFINING PARA-ATHLETES:

Para-Swimming is an adaptation of the sport of swimming for athletes with physical disabilities such as dwarfism, amputation/limb loss, blindness/visual impairment, spinal cord injury/wheelchair-users, cerebral palsy/brain injury/stroke and/or intellectual impairment.

REGULAR SEASON:

- Para-Athletes may compete during the regular season.
- Para-Athletes may score points if the opposing team has Para-Athletes.
 - Use NFHS Swimming and Diving rule 7-1-2 for individual scoring
 - If there is not an even representation among teams, modified scoring shall be based upon the number of Para-Athletes competing in the event.
 - 2 participants: 1st place – 2 points, 2nd place – 0 point
 - 3 participants: 1st place – 5 points, 2nd place – 3 points, 3rd place – 0 point
 - 4 participants: 1st place – 6 points, 2nd place – 4 points, 3rd place – 2 points, 4th place – 0 point
- Para-Athletes may swim with lanes between competitors.
 - A wall lane shall be requested as per the needs of the swimmer.

QUALIFYING FOR THE STATE MEET:

- Para-Athletes must compete at the District Championship to qualify for the state meet.
- Districts will add the event to HyTek, either before or after the same event as traditional athletes.
 - a. If there are not enough athletes to fill all pool lanes, para-athletes may swim with a lane between swimmers or swim as a mixed class but be scored and qualified separately in their respective class.
- Each District will be required to submit results to the PIAA office at the conclusion of each District Championship.
- Para-Athletes may compete in a maximum of two individual events: 50 Freestyle and 100 Freestyle
 - a. If the Para-Athlete qualifies for an individual event, they can choose to swim in either the traditional event or the para-event. Their respective District representative must contact the PIAA office of any changes before ***Monday, March 3, 2024, at 12:00 p.m.***
- Para-Athletes will have a designated lane for warm-ups.
- If there are multiple teams at the State Meet with Para-Athlete(s), teams may score points for a combined team title.
- No more than the top eight (8) place finishers in each event may receive individual medals.

Class 1 Standards

Varsity Qualifying Time Standards 2024:

Para-Swimming Events	Time Standard
Girls 50 Free	39.69
Boys 50 Free	34.79
Girls 100 Free	1:24.79
Boys 100 Free	1:15.69

Junior High/Middle School Qualifying Time Standards 2024:

Para-Swimming Events	Time Standard
Girls 50 Free	48.89
Boys 50 Free	44.19
Girls 100 Free	1:44.29
Boys 100 Free	1:36.09

Class 2 Standards

Varsity Qualifying Time Standards 2024:

Para-Swimming Events	Time Standard
Girls 50 Free	1:24.89
Boys 50 Free	1:18.29
Girls 100 Free	2:58.09
Boys 100 Free	2:56.69

Junior High/Middle School Qualifying Time Standards 2024:

Para-Swimming Events	Time Standard
Girls 50 Free	1:44.49
Boys 50 Free	1:39.29
Girls 100 Free	3:44.19
Boys 100 Free	3:39.19

Medal Standards

Consistent with PIAA's goal of expanding competitive opportunities for students with disabilities, Para Ambulatory Athletes and Wheelchair Athletes will have an opportunity to earn individual awards at the PIAA Championship Meet. For each event in which two or more Para Ambulatory Athletes or Wheelchair Athletes compete, gold, silver, and bronze medals will be presented to the top finishers based on place, time and distance consistent with any other event in which students without disabilities compete. If two Para Ambulatory Athletes or Wheelchair Athletes compete in a single event, then finishers will earn individual awards based upon their finish of place and time.

Medal Standards - Class 1 Standards - Girls

	50 Free	100 Free
Gold Medal	34.69	1:14.00
Silver Medal	36.19	1:16.50
Bronze Medal	37.69	1:19.00

Medal Standards - Class 1 Standards - Boys

	50 Free	100 Free
Gold Medal	29.79	1:05.69
Silver Medal	31.29	1:08.19
Bronze Medal	32.79	1:10.69

Medal Standards - Class 2 Standards - Girls

	50 Free	100 Free
Gold Medal	1:19.89	2:48.09
Silver Medal	1:21.39	2:50.59
Bronze Medal	1:22.89	2:53.09

Medal Standards - Class 2 Standards - Boys

	50 Free	100 Free
Gold Medal	1:13.29	2:46.69
Silver Medal	1:14.79	2:49.19
Bronze Medal	1:16.29	2:51.69

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Where can Para-Athletes compete?

Swim Para-Athletes can compete at any PIAA sanctioned meet, representing their member school.

How does a Para-Athlete participate for their high school swim team?

The athlete must abide by the PIAA eligibility requirements and follow the same member school procedures established for traditional athletes competing in swimming.

How does a coach enter a Para-Athlete in the State meet?

The athlete must qualify through their respective District qualifying meet.

Can a parent represent a Para-Athlete at the State Championships?

Athletes must be represented by their school appointed coach or the member school submits a letter to the PIAA office to receive approval to be on deck.

Can Para-Athletes obtain assistance from the coaches or other personnel?

When necessary, the coach(es) or meet staff will be available to assist athletes in the competition area.

**The Member School may also register an assistant to accompany the student-athlete on the Para-Swimming verification form ([link](#)).*

Are the NFHS uniform rules in place for Para-Athletes?

Yes, all uniform rules and regulations are in effect just as with traditional athletes. Any exceptions/modifications need to be requested through the school and be approved from the PIAA office.

Can a Para-Athlete score points?

Yes, they can score points during the regular season in traditional events or if they are competing against other Para-Athletes from the opposing team in a dual meet. If there are two or more teams with Para-Athletes competing at the state meet. They can score points towards a combined team title.



PARA-SWIMMING VERIFICATION FORM

The purpose of this form is to declare an athlete's eligibility for PIAA para-swimming events in accordance with the criteria adopted by the Board of Directors and referenced in accordance with USA Para-Swimming guidelines. A copy of this form, which shall be submitted on a yearly basis, must be sent to the PIAA and the original kept on permanent file with the student-athlete(s) high school. This form must be submitted no later than 5:00PM on Sunday February 2, 2025.

PART ONE: ATHLETE INFORMATION

Name _____ Gender _____ Grade _____
Last First MI

PART TWO: HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name _____ Head Coach _____

Address _____
Street

I certify that the above-named athlete meets all PIAA eligibility requirements listed in the Bylaws.

Signature of HS Principal (or Principal Designee) Title: _____ Date: _____

Name of Assistant (if any) who will accompany the student-athlete _____

PART THREE: PARENT/GUARDIAN CERTIFICATION

I certify that the above-named athlete applicant meets the PIAA Disability Criteria listed below and in the PIAA Para-Swimming Event Eligibility Rules and Regulations for the selected classification.

Printed name of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

PART FOUR: CLASSIFICATIONS FOR PARA-SWIMMERS – CHECK ONE

_____**CLASS 1** – Ambulatory with assistance (can use a wheelchair with a high functioning upper body), Multiple limb deficiencies, Dwarfism, Visual impairment, and/or Intellectual impairment.

_____**CLASS 2** – Non-ambulatory (uses a wheelchair) with limited use of all four extremities.

Please return this form to PIAA Assistant Executive Director Lyndsay A. Barna (lbarna@piaa.org)

** PIAA in no way certifies or assesses the ability of any individual student athlete. PIAA is relying on the parent and/or guardian of the student athlete and the high school principal to certify any individual student athlete's ability and eligibility under the PIAA Para-Swimming Standards.*