



VSI Inclusion Guidelines for Disability Swimming



VIRGINIA
SWIMMING

I. USA Swimming Standards - In compliance with USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, VSI desires to accommodate disabled swimmers. A disability is defined as a permanent physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities.

II. VSI Special Administrative Standards

1. VSI welcomes all swimmers with a disability who wish to participate in VSI sanctioned meets.
2. Disabilities encompass the following major areas:
 - a. Hearing impairment
 - b. Visual impairment
 - c. Cognitive disabilities such as mental retardation, severe learning disabilities, or autism
 - d. Physical disabilities such as amputations, cerebral palsy, dwarfism, spinal injury, or other mobility impairments
3. VSI member clubs are encouraged to include swimmers with a disability and are encouraged to make common-sense adjustments to their venues to accommodate the needs of athletes with a disability.
4. Accommodations during practices should be up to the discretion of the head coach. Examples of such accommodations are:
 - a. Allowing helpers as needed for the disabled swimmer.
 - b. Including the disabled swimmer in practices by the swimmer's ability rather than age.
 - c. The coach of the practice group should have the same expectations of the swimmer with a disability as the other swimmers in that group with respect to effort, attendance, and other aspects of work ethic.
 - d. The same principles of training/conditioning, biomechanics, and sport psychology apply to the swimmers with a disability as the other athletes.
5. Inclusion of swimmers with a disability in VSI sanctioned meets. This policy applies only to swimmers with permanent disabilities as defined above by USA Swimming.
 - a. In all regular season meets and District/Regional Championships, disabled swimmers need not have achieved the qualifying time standards. The Meet Referee/Meet Director, working with the coach of the disabled swimmer to ensure that no undue focus is placed on the swimmer during the meet, shall have the authority to accommodate the swimmer without substantial negative impact on the meet time line. Examples of such accommodations include:
 - 1) Allow the disabled swimmer to compete at a shorter distance, e.g. a 50-yard distance within a 100-yard event.

- 2) Seed the disabled swimmer by time rather than age; e.g., a 13-year-old disabled swimmer could be seeded in the 11-12 age group of the same event.
 - b. In all LSC Championship meets, disabled swimmers may enter provided the swimmer has achieved a time better than 87% of the listed qualifying time for either the USA Swimming Disability Championships or the US Paralympic National Swimming Championships. The entry may involve permission of the Meet Director and Senior or Age Group Chairman.
 - c. The Meet Referee may make accommodations as described above (or others, as recommended by the Adapted Swimming Committee based upon the specific disability). Final seeding decisions rest with Meet Referee.
 - d. Places and awards for disabled swimmers can only be earned in the swimmers actual event and/or age group. At the discretion of the meet host special awards may be given to disabled swimmers.
6. The following statement shall be included on all meet announcements receiving a sanction from VSI: *"VSI and host clubs along with their Meet Referees are committed to the VSI Inclusion Policy for Disability Swimmers. Athletes with a disability are welcomed and shall provide advance notice of desired accommodations to the Meet Director. The athlete (or the athlete's coach) is also responsible for notifying the session referee of any disability prior to the competition."*