



HIGH SCHOOL ADAPTIVE SPORTS

PRESENTED BY KENNETH WHALEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

TIPS FOR COACHING AN ADAPTIVE ATHLETE

A GUIDE FOR A HIGH SCHOOL COACH



TIP ONE – COMMUNICATION

Keeping open lines of communication with your athlete is vital to their success. Understand their season expectations, individual goals, and team objectives. Have regular check-ins with your athlete to better recognize their needs and how you can support them.

TIP TWO – LEARN ABOUT YOUR ATHLETE’S DISABILITY

Take the time to speak with your athlete one-on-one about their disability. Learn about how it affects them. Be sure to keep the focus on what they CAN do and not what they CAN’T do. All disabilities are different and not all disabilities affect an individual the same way. Inquire about any necessary medical information prior to season beginning.

TIP THREE – UNDERSTAND THE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR A HIGH SCHOOL ADAPTIVE ATHLETE

Each state has different rules, regulations, and disciplines for adaptive athletes. Research your State High School Association when learning about the options available to your athlete. As a coach, it is your responsibility to ensure your athlete is properly entered into a meet/game by reaching out to a Meet/Game Director prior to the event to discuss how to seamlessly include the athlete in the competition.

TIP FOUR – ADAPT YOUR COACHING MATERIAL AS NEEDED

Challenge your athlete – but understand that their training style may be different depending on their disability. You will not be able to train an adaptive athlete as you train a non-disabled athlete. Be prepared to support as needed while still allowing them to try new things, test their boundaries, and learn. Practice patience and encouragement when your athlete is learning a new skill.

If you are struggling with modifying workouts for your adaptive athlete, please reach out to highschoolsports@challengedathletes.org and we can connect you with an expert coach to assist.

TIP FIVE – INCLUSION

Do not favor or treat your adaptive athlete differently than your other non-disabled athlete. Ensure that they do not feel different than any other athlete. Include them in all team workouts, modifying as needed, and help establish strong communication and relationship between them and their teammates.