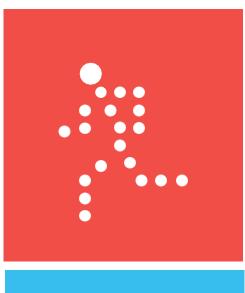


# NWABA PROGRAM & SERVICES

## **NWABA Athlete Handbook**















### **ENRICHING LIVES. PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES.**

#### **EVERYONE DESERVES AN OPPORTUNITY**

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes' (NWABA) mission is to provide life-changing opportunities through sports and physical activity for children, youth, and adults across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. We believe that every individual with a visual impairment deserves the opportunity to participate, build friendships, compete, be part of a caring, supportive community, and achieve their goals in all areas of life. Our programs are the catalyst that make this a reality for all of the individuals that we serve and are the driving force for everything that we do. Through these life-changing experiences, NWABA athletes gain self-confidence, independence, vocational skills, and lifelong relationships. Our athletes leave behind sedentary, isolated lives fulfilling our vision in transforming the quality of life for all individuals who are blind and visually impaired through participation in sports and physical activity.

#### **OUR TEAM**

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA) was formed in 2007 by our Founder, President/CEO, Billy Henry. The organization served six athletes in its first year and we now serve over 500 athletes across four states, providing 1700 program and service interactions. Currently, our programs and services team is comprised of experts in the field of adapted physical education, recreation, and sport. Together we work to provide the best possible experiences at NWABA events, in schools, and in the community. With our extensive knowledge in the field and connections throughout the world, we are able to stay up to date on the most innovative research in the field of physical education and physical activity for individuals who are blind and visually impaired. In addition, our team serves on several boards representing NWABA at a national and international level.

MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER, PRESIDENT/CEO

Click here to access our message!

#### **MISSION**

To provide life-changing opportunities through sports and physical activity to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

#### **CORE VALUES**

**Grow Boldly.** We are committed to cultivating opportunities for individual and organizational growth.

**Be Transparent.** We operate with full transparency, bringing honesty and integrity to everything we do.

**Be Inclusive.** We welcome, serve, and support all people with dignity and respect.

**Strive for Excellence.** We bring steadfast determination in pursuit of our mission and our goals.

**Empower People.** We champion potential and empower people to turn their ambitions into reality.

#### **VISION**

To be the national leader in transforming the quality of life for all individuals who are blind and visually impaired, through sports and physical activity.





#### FOSTERING COMMUNITY, INSTILLING CONFIDENCE, AND PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Whether an individual is learning to swim before they take their first steps, lost their vision later in life and desires a sense of community, or simply wants to experience the joy of the outdoors, NWABA believes people of all ages deserve the opportunity to participate and to achieve their goals.

#### MAKE A DIFFERENCE

NWABA is an athlete-centered, volunteer-driven organization. Thanks to the unyielding generosity of hundreds of volunteers annually, NWABA is able to continue growing our programs to reach individuals across the Northwest, regardless of age, background, or ability. Each and every volunteer brings us a bit further in our mission.

"NWABA gives us the opportunity to do activities that we could only dream of doing or somehow find a way to do them with a great deal of research and effort. NWABA is a gift for those of us who are blind or visually impaired; to give us some freedom back to participate in some of our favorite activities or others perhaps that we have never tried. Many of these activities seem so simple or routine to most people but to us they are huge." – Ken, Athlete – Eugene, OR

As an athlete, you could be hiking a new trail, learning to tandem bike, or paddling across your favorite lake. Best of all, you will connect with a community of wonderful individuals.

#### SIX CORE PROGRAMS

**Sports Outreach** - Northwest Association for Blind Athletes' (NWABA) Sports Outreach Program provides on-going programming, Paralympic Experiences, and clinics to individuals of all ages and abilities with visual impairments in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. This is NWABA's cornerstone program. With the help of dedicated volunteers, athletes learn to bike, run independently, build endurance in hiking, and other truly life-changing opportunities that transcend the program.

**Camp Spark** - Northwest Association for Blind Athletes' (NWABA) Camp Spark program provides a comprehensive, overnight, sports camp for campers to participate in NWABA's various sports and recreation activities with their peers. We emphasize vocational skills, social engagement and health through this model. Our goal is to create a positive, inclusive environment that enhances overall quality of life.

**Sports Adaptations** - Northwest Association for Blind Athletes' (NWABA) Sports Adaptations Program provides consultations and adaptations to athletes, parents, and PE teachers to allow individuals with visual impairments better integration into PE classes and community-based physical activity programs. This program provides physical education consultations, lending adapted equipment from NWABA's lending library, and providing a video resource library with instructional videos for different types of physical activities for individuals with visual impairments.

**Increasing Visibility** - Northwest Association for Blind Athletes' (NWABA) Increasing Visibility Program brings awareness to the public about the need for sport and physical activity programs and services for individuals who are blind and visually impaired. We do this by attending awareness events, participating in public speaking engagements, and hosting informational booths. NWABA is committed to advocating for individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

**Scholarships** - Northwest Association for Blind Athletes' (NWABA) Scholarship Program provides funding and support to allow individuals to travel to competitions and purchase basic adaptive sports equipment. These transformational scholarships fulfill dreams that are not met through other NWABA programs.

**Sports Teams** - Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA) supports various sports teams throughout our regions to provide on-going, weekly programming in Goalball and Dragon Boating. Through on-going and competitive opportunities, our athletes learn to be a team player, relieve stress, conquer isolation and depression, experience success, and have fun!



# SNAPSHOT: NWABA PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & SPORT SEASONS

#### Spring/Summer Events – (April – September)

Sports Outreach, On-Going Programming:

- Description: NWABA provides weekly sports and physical activity opportunities to our athletes to hone athletic skills and build community through group events.
- Sports Include: Tandem biking, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, hiking, beep baseball and kickball, 5-a-side soccer, track & field, and goalball.
- Time Commitment: 3 to 4 hours at one time. Times vary, on weekdays, evenings, and weekends.

#### Sports Outreach, Summer Paralympic Experiences:

- Description: NWABA travels throughout four states to provide one day of Paralympic sports to youth.
- Sports Include: Kayaking, paddle boarding, track and field, tandem biking, beep baseball and kickball, 5-aside soccer and more.
- Time Commitment: 3 to 6 hours at one time. Times vary, on weekdays, evenings, and weekends.

#### Fall Events - (September - October)

Sports Outreach, On-Going Programming:

- Sports Include: Swimming, goalball, hiking, and tandem biking.
- Time Commitment: 3 to 4 hours at one time. Times vary, on weekdays, evenings and weekends.

#### Sports Outreach, Fall Paralympic Experiences:

- Sports Include: Track and field, tandem biking, Judo, goalball, 5-a-side soccer, cooperative field games, and other sports.
- Time Commitment: 3 to 6 hours at one time. Times vary, on weekdays, evenings, and weekends.

#### Winter Events – (November – March)

Sports Outreach, On-Going Programming:

- Description: NWABA travels to a mountain or trail near you to ski, snowboard, or snowshoe with athletes. When we are not on the mountain, we are in the pool, swimming.
- Sports Include: Skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, goalball, and swimming.
- Time Commitment: 2 to 4 hours at one time. Times vary, on weekdays, evenings, and weekends.

## QUESTIONS VIDEO LINK





### **Athlete Policies & Procedures**

#### Requirements:

- Must be legally blind or receiving vision services
- Any age, stage, or ability level welcome
- Athletes under 18 must be accompanied by an adult

#### **Dress Code:**

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA) strives to create an environment where everyone can fully engage in the activities while feeling comfortable. While participating with NWABA, please keep in mind that you are a representative of our organization. As a representative, please dress and groom yourself in an appropriate manner. Attire should fulfill necessity of comfort and safety for the pending weather conditions and activities.

- Athletic pants, shorts that are mid-thigh or longer
- Full length long or short sleeve t-shirts, polo shirts, athletic tank tops
- Appropriate weather apparel, snow pants, winter gloves, hats, sunglasses, raincoat, etc.
- Swimsuit (a modest, athletic swimsuit or compression shorts/shirt)
- Sneakers or supportive athletic footwear with closed toes such as hiking boots, tennis shoes, or athletic shoes. Multi-functional sandals with closed or open toe and heel strap are appropriate for water sport events only

Please note all required safety gear, such as helmets, are provided through NWABA if you do not have your own. Please do not wear clothing with offensive language, alcohol, or drug references. Please do not wear clothes that may be revealing, which expose breasts, buttocks or navel, such as shirts with low neck lines, cut-off shirts, spaghetti strap tank tops and clothing that is very tight. Clothing should support one's body in an athletic setting. NWABA team members reserve the right to dismiss anyone not following the dress code.

#### **Safety Policy:**

NWABA believes that safety is a priority at all programs. Athletes must follow instructions given by NWABA team member at all times such as staying within in approved areas, reporting all accidents and injuries, no matter how minor, to an NWABA team member immediately, and always following the buddy system. There is at least one first-aid certified team member at every event to assist in emergency situations. If you find yourself in an emergency and unable to reach NWABA team member, you should call 911.

#### **Medical Emergency & Non-Emergency Procedures:**

NWABA team members are first-aid/CPR & AED certified. Every athlete has to consent to medical treatment in the case of an emergency to participate in an NWABA event. This consent was given on the athlete registration form. In the event of a medical emergency, NWABA will provide the best care possible until proper emergency care services arrive. In non-emergency medical events where the athlete is conscious, NWABA will work with the athlete (and parent or guardian if applicable) to determine the best steps to receive care when applicable. The importance of emergency contacts is critical in these situations. Emergency contacts should be people who can support care post-event if needed.

In a non-life threatening emergency, such as a broken wrist, NWABA will support in contacting the emergency contact to help our athlete's access necessary care. Every situation varies and providing transportation in an NWABA vehicle to a medical facility is not always available. In the event NWABA is able or assists an athlete (and parent or guardian if applicable) to a medical facility, an NWABA team member will ensure the athlete (and parent or guardian if applicable) is checked in and in good condition prior to departing. Other means of transporting home will be up to the athlete (and parent or guardian if applicable) and emergency contact to arrange.

In the unlikely event a minor (athlete or participant under 18 years of age) does not have a parent or guardian with them, an NWABA team member will remain with the minor until a parent or guardian is present.



#### **At-Will Policy:**

NWABA athletes may end their relationship with NWABA at any time. Additionally, NWABA reserves the right to end its relationship with any of its athletes at any time.

#### **Termination Policy:**

Athletes are vital to the culture and success of NWABA programs; however, the Northwest Association for Blind Athletes reserves the right to terminate their relationship with any athlete, for any reason, at any time. When applicable, attempts will be made to reconcile the situation between the organization and athlete(s) involved. Grounds for termination include, but are not limited to violation of athlete code of conduct, violation of athlete policies, violation of state and federal laws, theft, inappropriate conduct, unresolvable conflicts of interest, and falsification of application materials.

#### **Confidentiality Policy:**

All current and past athletes, participants, volunteers and team members have a right to privacy. All information acquired while engaging as an athlete with NWABA must be considered confidential. By participating with NWABA, athletes agree that this information should not be shared with anyone except for an NWABA team member. This means athletes will not disclose or use such information for the benefit of others who have no need to know and/or to persons outside the organization without prior written authorization from the Founder, CEO & President. If you are asked by someone outside of NWABA to divulge confidential organizational information, you must refer them to an NWABA team member immediately.

#### **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy:**

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes is committed to fostering and maintaining an environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. In keeping with this commitment, we will not tolerate unlawful harassment of our athletes by anyone, including any volunteer, athlete, NWABA team member, vendor, customer, or other third party. Any athlete who believes that they are being harassed or has witnessed what they believe to be harassment is encouraged to identify the offensive behavior to the person who is harassing. For example, "Please don't use that kind of language around me." Having such a discussion is an acceptable approach, but it is not required. Any athlete who believes they are the victim of harassment or has witnessed such harassment must take the following actions as applicable to your situation:

- 1. Immediately notify the NWABA team member in charge at the event so the situation can be promptly investigated and remedied.
- 2. In instances where you are not satisfied with the team member's response or you are uncomfortable for any reason addressing such concerns to said, you are expected to contact the Senior Director of Programs and Services. In the event you are not satisfied with the Sr. Director of Programs and Services response or you are uncomfortable for any reason addressing such concerns to said, you can contact our CEO/Founder. If you are not satisfied or you are uncomfortable for any reason addressing such concerns to CEO/Founder you can contact our Board of Directors Chair.
- 3. You are encouraged to provide as much specific information as possible related to your report of harassment.

It is NWABA's policy to investigate all harassment complaints thoroughly and promptly. To the fullest practical extent, the confidentiality of those involved will be maintained. It is the responsibility of all athletes, volunteers, and team members to be truthful, accurate, and cooperative during a harassment complaint investigation.

#### **Grievance Policy:**

Any athlete who feels that a volunteer, athlete, or a team member has treated them unfairly may request a meeting with the appropriate team member to discuss their grievance. We ask that any grievances pertaining to a specific event, the NWABA team members who were present at the event be contacted first. If an athlete feels the team members present at the event have treated them unfairly, they may contact the Sr. Director of Programs. If an athlete feels that the Sr. Director of Programs has treated them unfairly, they may contact our CEO/Founder.



#### Attendance:

NWABA relies on the attendance and promptness of athletes to provide the best programming possible for all attendees. We ask that athletes arrive promptly and communicate if they are running late to an event so our team can plan accordingly. When a designated pick-up time has been established, NWABA has a 15-minute grace period after the pick-up time that allows unforeseen circumstances to happen. Once the 15-minute grace period has lapsed, NWABA will continue on to the event.

If you are unable to attend an event that you registered to attend, we ask you contact us immediately so we can make appropriate plans. We request 36-72 hours' notice for a cancellation in advance of an event, when possible. We have a waitlist for many events and want to ensure that if you are unable to attend we know as soon as possible to allow another athlete to attend. We understand unforeseen circumstances occur and are understanding of these instances; however, it is important to call in any case. If an athlete has a series of no call, no show absences, NWABA reserves the right to dismiss the athlete of further participating in future events.

We advise anyone who is feeling ill to stay home and not attend NWABA programs or events. Please be mindful of this leading up to programs or events. To protect the health and safety of athletes, volunteers, and team members we ask you to think twice before attending if you have been ill or around someone who has been ill.

#### No Contact, No Show Policy:

NWABA has instituted a no contact, no show policy to ensure we are upholding everyone to a high standard of commitment. If an athlete does not inform us of a cancellation and does not show up to the program or event, below are the steps we will take to ensure it does not happen again.

- 1. After 1<sup>st</sup> No Contact, No Show: NWABA team member will send an email with a read receipt, informing of the first no call, no show offense. If we do not receive the read receipt within a week, we will call said athlete to confirm they understand the policy.
- 2. After 2<sup>nd</sup> No Contact, No Show: NWABA team member will call athlete. If athlete is not reached, leave a voicemail to follow up with one of our team members. NWABA will follow up within one week without contact.
- 3. After 3<sup>rd</sup> No Contact, No Show: NWABA team member will email athlete to let them know that they will not be allowed to attend 30 days of programs with NWABA from the date of their 3<sup>rd</sup> no call, no show.

We ask athletes call and email if an extenuating circumstance arises so we can ensure contact has been made, especially day of event. At any time, NWABA reserves the right to dismiss athletes from an event if we believe the attendance and no contact; no show policy is not being respected.

#### **Conflict of Interest:**

Athletes will not engage in activities, either with the organization, NWABA team members, or with a volunteer of the organization, which may be or may have the appearance of a conflict of interest. Examples of such activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Athletes may not accept payment of any kind for services rendered during scheduled programs and services.
- Athletes may not use privileged or personal information obtained through NWABA activities for personal gain.

#### **Interpersonal Relationship Disclosure Policy:**

The presence of a conflict of interest created by a consensual or familial relationship should be disclosed to an NWABA team member in order to avoid a potential violation of this policy. NWABA does not seek to monitor such relationships, but merely to acknowledge their existence and to make sure that suitable propriety is maintained among all parties.



#### **Weapon Policy:**

Athletes are prohibited from possessing or using weapons at NWABA events. Weapons include, but are not limited to, guns, knives, or swords with blades over four inches in length, explosives, or any chemical whose purpose is to cause harm to another person. Regardless of whether an athlete possesses a concealed weapons permit or is allowed by law to possess a weapon, weapons are prohibited at NWABA events. Weapons are also prohibited in any location in which an athlete takes part in through NWABA including transportation in NWABA vehicles.

#### **Transportation Policy:**

Athletes who request transportation to and from NWABA events are required to follow through with the request on the day of the event. Athletes are not able to request rides from volunteers, arrange with other parties at the event, effectively changing their request of transportation from NWABA mid-event. Athletes can prearrange transportation. Prearranged transportation must be communicated to NWABA so team members can properly account for the number of seats available in the vehicle.

#### **Drug & Alcohol Policy:**

Athletes are prohibited from participating on behalf of the organization while impaired by the use of legal or illegal drugs. Consuming and/or possessing alcoholic beverages or tobacco products while participating as an athlete in an NWABA program event is prohibited.

#### **Medication Administration Policy:**

At no time is an athlete allowed to administer any medications to another athlete or volunteer, including but not limited to substances controlled by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or substances a person might use to maintain and/or improve their health. If an athlete or volunteer is requiring medication, please notify an NWABA team member, who will work with the athlete or volunteer to determine the best solution. Athletes are allowed to self-administer medication, including emergency medication, if it is noted in their health history.

#### **Media/External Communication Policy:**

Any and all media should go through NWABA team member. While athletes are always welcome to ask for photos from events at which they participated, we ask that they do not take personal photos at the event to respect the diverse needs of our participants and volunteers. If you are approached by someone in the media or any external agency, please direct them to an NWABA team member to ensure accurate information and usage.

#### Is NWABA affiliated with USABA?

United States Association of Blind Athletes, USABA focuses their work helping elite level athletes reach the Paralympic Games and other high-level competitive goals. NWABA's focus is not elite level athletes; we focus on improving the quality of life for all individuals with visual impairments that we serve through on-going programs and services. We are fortunate to have USABA as a partner to refer to when athletes want to compete at an elite level and we appreciate all of the work they do.

#### **NWABA Athlete Code of Conduct:**

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA) is committed to our mission of providing life-changing opportunities through sports and physical activity to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. Athlete participation and support is an integral and necessary component of reaching our mission. We value the time and energy athletes dedicate to participating in NWABA programming.

All NWABA athletes agree to observe the following code of conduct:

Please note, an adult\* athlete is eighteen or older.

Respect for Myself and Others:

- I will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of athletes, participants, volunteers, team members, and others.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion or ability. Discriminatory behavior will not be tolerated.
- I will be a positive peer towards each person.



#### Ensure a Positive Experience:

- I will respect the talent, strengths, abilities, and goals of each person.
- I will ensure each person participates in sports and physical activity that challenge individual potential and are appropriate to their ability.
- I will be fair, considerate, and honest with people and communicate clearly.
- If I feel I am being challenged outside my ability level, I will do my best to advocate for myself.

#### Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions:

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation, and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity, and fair sportsmanship to all involved in the event and will encourage others to do so as well (athletes, other volunteers, team members, family members, friends, etc.).
- I will not be under the influence or partake in drinking alcohol, smoking, or use legal and illegal recreational drugs while representing NWABA as an athlete.
- I will refrain from any form of abuse towards athletes, volunteers, NWABA team members, and others, including inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances on others, verbal, physical, and emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my purview and report any such abuse to an NWABA team member immediately.

#### Health and Safety:

- I will speak up if I notice the equipment I am using needs maintenance for safe use.
- I will stay within the parameters set by team members and the group at the beginning of the event to the best of my ability.
- I will use designated safety equipment assigned or permitted by NWABA team member.
- I will inform an NWABA team member, as soon as possible, if I alter equipment during an event.
- I will review with an NWABA team member pertinent medical information regarding myself, be aware of any personal limitations, medical or otherwise, and be sure to communicate clearly as changes arise.
- I will seek medical attention from an NWABA team member or professional when necessary.
- I will report any injury to a member of NWABA team member in a timely manner and assist in completing an honest incident report.

#### Interpersonal Relationships and Disclosure

- I will disclose any conflict of interest created by a consensual or familial relationship to avoid a potential violation of this policy.
- I will not be alone with any athlete or volunteer in any area or location where we cannot be in sight of other team members or volunteers (in person or via cameras).
- I will refrain from any interactions outside of program activities with athletes under the age of eighteen years of age that are participants in NWABA programs, unless parent or guardian consent has been given.
- I will refrain from non-program related electronic communications with athletes under the age of eighteen. This includes but is not limited to phone calls, texts, emails, Facebook and other social media, unless parent or guardian consent has been given.
- I will use good judgement with electronic communications between athletes, volunteers, and others affiliated with NWABA. This includes but is not limited to phone calls, texts, emails, Facebook and other social media.
- I understand that if I fail to disclose a conflict of interest or fail to disclose in a timely manner it will constitute as a violation of this code of conduct.

#### Acknowledgment & Agreement

- I acknowledge NWABA events are inclusive environments open to people of different ages, nationalities, religions, cultures and backgrounds. Athletes, volunteers and team members have different knowledge, abilities, and experience than I do. I will engage in conversation that is age appropriate for the entire group.
- If I am unclear or uncomfortable with any direction or information given by NWABA, I will communicate my concerns with an NWABA team member for further clarification and instruction.
- Violations of the athlete code of conduct and agreement will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Such disciplinary action shall be conducted in accordance with existing NWABA policies and procedures.



This handbook is intended to provide you with information about NWABA policies and procedures currently in effect. No handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As NWABA continues to grow, we reserve the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the handbook as we deem appropriate, to our sole discretion. We will keep you informed when any such changes occur.

I acknowledge that I have read the athlete handbook and I accept full responsibility for familiarizing myself with the policies contained in the Athlete Handbook. I certify that I understand the signature below acts as my legal signature on this document. For athletes under the age of 18, parent or guardian's signature is required and certifies that I, the parent/guardian understand the signature below acts as my legal signature on this document on behalf of the athlete.

Athlete Name	Signature	Date
Parent Name	Signature	Date

#### **NWABA Contact Information**

NWABA has a team member in the office M-F 8:00 – 5:00. Program team members are not always available during these times. If you would like to come to the NWABA office, please schedule an appointment with an NWABA team member prior. You are always welcome to email or leave a voicemail and a team member will respond as promptly as possible.

Office Main Phone: 360.448.7254 Ext. 2 reaches our Programs Team directly

**Mailing Address:** PO BOX 65265, Vancouver WA 98665-0009 **Office Address:** 703 Broadway St, Ste 600, Vancouver WA 98665

Website: www.nwaba.org

Team Contact Page: <a href="https://nwaba.org/about/our-team/">https://nwaba.org/about/our-team/</a>

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