



NWABA Virtual Athlete Handbook

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, Montana, and beyond. We believe that every individual who is blind 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 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 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 550 athletes across the globe, providing 3500 programs and service interactions. Currently, our programs and services team are 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 can 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Vancouver Office –

Physical: 703 Broadway Street, Suite 600, Vancouver, WA 98660

Mailing: PO Box 61489, Vancouver, WA 98666

360.448.7254. main 800.880.9837.

Boise Office –

Physical & Mailing: 1444 S. Entertainment Ave., Suite 201, Boise, ID 83709

208.314.7035. main 800.880.9837 toll free/fax

Email: virtualprograms@nwaba.org

Website: www.nwaba.org



MISSION

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

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.

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.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

NWABA is an athlete-centered, volunteer-driven organization. Thanks to the unyielding generosity of hundreds of volunteers annually, NWABA can continue growing our programs to reach individuals across the Northwest, and beyond, regardless of age, background, or ability.

“I have been looking for exercise classes for a very long time and didn’t have much luck. I even joined gyms which was a disaster because they didn’t know how to work with someone who is blind. I was fortunate to find dance and yoga instructors who knew how to work with me but I was looking for different kinds of workouts. Last January I found on YouTube audio described workout videos and then discovered I could do live virtual workouts on Zoom. I started with NWABA in February and have been attending classes ever since. I can honestly say it has positively impacted my life. The staff is excellent and has helped me learn the workouts. I highly recommend them to others who are blind and looking for a workout program.”

– Shelly, Athlete – Lancaster, NY

As an athlete, you could be trying a new workout for the first time, or celebrating



completing your first 100 classes with us. Best of all, you will connect with a community of wonderful individuals.

FOUR CORE PROGRAMS

Our **Sports Outreach** program provides 15+ different physical activity and sport opportunities through on-going programs, clinics, and Paralympic Experiences to ensure that individuals of all ages and abilities who are blind and visually impaired have access to participate.

Our **Virtual Programs** provide a variety of 60-minute live and pre-recorded, audio-described and high-contrast virtual workouts to keep you healthy and active at home. Our virtual programs are open to individuals of all ages and fitness levels, expanding across the globe.

Our **Camp Spark** program is a comprehensive residential sports camp for youth and young adults, ages 8 to 21, who are blind and visually impaired. Camp sessions last three or six days and generally take place at rented facilities at universities, or retreat centers during the winter and summer months.

Our **Sports Adaptations** provides equipment lending, a comprehensive instructional video library and consultations for athletes, educators, school districts and families.

Additional Services, NWABA also supports the community by increasing visibility and awareness throughout the region, as well as providing scholarships and grants to local sports teams and individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

NWABA Virtual Program Workouts

We have several types of virtual workouts for athletes to participate in.

- **Core Stability:** focuses on strengthening the core muscles which are the foundation for all exercise. This class typically has a Pilates-style flow with occasional abdominal circuits.
- **Deep Stretch:** Come increase your flexibility with us as we flow through relaxing dynamic and static stretches aimed to increase our range of motion.
- **Circuit Workout:** This is a circuit-style workout that typically consists of 4 circuits of exercise, creating a full body strength workout by the time you are finished!
- **Dance Aerobics:** This is a dance-fitness class that includes exercise and dance moves. We practice different sequences of moves and switches are called out as the music plays!
- **Cardio:** The cardio workout will keep you moving for the whole session! We complete exercises with active rest in between.
- **Balance & Control/Yoga:** Wind down the week with our active yoga session led by one of our very own athletes who is a certified yoga instructor!



- Seated Workout: Join us for a workout that is completed entirely from a seated position! Enjoy class formats from each of our different workout classes including dance aerobics, core stability, circuit workouts, cardio, and yoga!

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Commitment & Education

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes welcomes, serves, and supports all people with dignity and respect. To fulfill our mission of providing life-changing opportunities through sports and physical activity to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, it is imperative that NWABA's athletes, volunteers, leadership, and employees reflect the rich landscape of our populations. We work tirelessly to ensure that our athletes have equitable access to sports, physical activity, and essential programs. By respecting and including everyone, we will benefit from a mix of ideas, perspectives, and life experiences in all areas of our work to help us achieve our goals and to fulfill our mission.

IDEA highlights efforts toward underserved communities by addressing structural inequities.

- Inclusion: All feel welcomed and valued
- Diversity: All the ways we differ
- Equity: All having the opportunity to fully participate
- Access: Of any and all abilities

Land Acknowledgment

NWABA recognizes the original stewards of the lands to which we provide our programs & services. At our programs we acknowledge, respect, and support the Native Peoples.

"We gratefully acknowledge the Native Peoples on whose ancestral homelands we gather, as well as the diverse and vibrant Native communities who make their home today." – National Museum of the American Indian

Names & Pronouns

We respect all individuals by affirming their chosen name and pronouns. We have a diverse group of people representing many cultures around the world. NWABA creates opportunities for athletes, volunteers, and team members to share pronouns and their chosen names. We ask everyone to learn the pronunciation of names and pronouns when shared. If someone makes a mistake, we apologize and move on. We help others by gently correcting them if they misgender someone or say a name incorrectly. We ask that everyone is respectful and honor everyone by being mindful at NWABA events.

Ableism (*References – Access Living*)

What is Ableism, and why does NWABA want me to know about it?



Ableism is discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require ‘fixing’ and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as ‘less than,’ and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities. It stems from the belief that disabled people need ‘fixing’. That they are less than. It is treating disabled people less favorably than non-disabled people. It can appear in many forms.

Positive Ableism: When the person thinks that the disabled individual needs saving or rescuing. This is harmful.

Negative ableism: When a person or entity is hostile, denying disabled people opportunities that would otherwise be open to them.

- **Microaggressions:** hurtful comments, words, and actions
- **Lack of Accessibility:** not considering the access needs of disabled people, therefore disabling the disabled
- **Privilege:** failure to see beyond your own lived experience, assuming non-visible disabilities are made up
- **Language:** using outdated and offensive language, using language that infantilizes or is condescending “you are a superhero”
- **Attitudes:** believing all disabled people need to be fixed, that they are less than, or believing that by volunteering I am their hero or savior
- **Internalized ableism:** when a disabled person believes that they are less than others or that they are not good enough, a result of stereotypes, misconceptions, and discrimination

Disability does not mean people are inferior. Disability is another way for a mind and/or body to be. We ask all our athletes and volunteers to take some time to reflect on their current language, experiences and beliefs to ensure we are providing the most inclusive, and empowering experiences possible. We expect our athletes and volunteers to learn and grow with NWABA, engaging with our core values to provide the best experience possible for everyone at our events. If we observe language or mannerisms that are not in line with our core values, we will address the situation immediately. As always, we welcome any questions to support everyone in their growth and experiences with NWABA. We have provided several different resources below to support greater understanding of the topics discussed.

Additional Resources & References

- [What is IDEA](#) – (7-minute read)
- [Definitions of IDEA](#) – (5-minute read)



- [Honoring Original Indigenous Inhabitants](#) - (5-minute read)
- [A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment](#) - (5-minute read)
- [Gender Fluidity: What does it mean?](#) – (3-minute read)
- [What are pronouns?](#) - (3-minute read)
- [Access Living on what on Ableism 101](#) – (3-minute read)
- [Haben Girma Time 100 Talks](#) (5-minute video)
- [Disabling Ableism: The Modern Pathway to Inclusion](#) –TedTalk (46-minute video)
- [Things People with Disabilities Wish You Knew](#) – BuzzFeed Video (7-minute video)
- [Podcast The Pain of Ableism and Disability Prejudice](#) – Author of Ableism: The Causes and Consequences of Disability Prejudice discuss how disability does not equal inability. (17-minute video)
- [Disabled NOT Differently Abled](#) - Youtuber Molly Burke & Two Hot Takes discuss stories from people with disabilities and her take on what is acceptable and what is not as a blind woman. (1.5-hour video)

Athlete Policies & Procedures

Please read through NWABA’s policies and procedures. These policies and procedures listed below are in an overview format. To review our [athlete policies](#) in their entirety please go to this [link](#). If you have any questions or would like to request a copy of these policies, please reach out to our team.

Requirements:

- Must be legally blind or receiving vision services
- Any age, stage, or ability level welcome
- Athletes under the age of 18 *may* be required to be accompanied by an adult

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:

- Immediately notify the NWABA team member in charge at the event so the situation can be promptly investigated and remedied.
- Provide as much specific information as possible related to your report of harassment.



- 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 can follow our grievance policy.

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.

Health History:

In the application process you provided health history information. It is important for our team to be as prepared as possible while at programs and services. Please ensure this information is accurate and true. Keeping this information up to date supports NWABA in our safety procedures. If you have any changes to your health history email our team to keep us informed or update your profile information in RegPack.

Emergency Contacts:

NWABA asks every athlete to provide two emergency contacts. At minimum one of these emergency contacts should be local to the area to support potential post-care in case of a medical emergency that requires transport to a local hospital or urgent care. If you have any changes to your emergency contacts email our team to keep us informed or update your profile information in RegPack.

Present Level of Activity (PLA):

An accurate description of present level of activity is imperative to safety at events. We meet our athletes at every age, stage, and ability level. We have a wide range of athlete fitness levels, ranging from Level 1 to Level 5 or Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. In the registration process we ask for present level of activity so we can best support you at our events with instruction. Your present level of activity can grow and change as we experience life due to increased stamina and activity, or decreased mobility caused by injury or circumstance. Our team will work with you to determine your current PLA. This is crucial in our process, and we ask that you are transparent with our team.

Together we can work towards your goals as an athlete and to do that we need a place to start! Below is an outline of our levels for present level of fitness, when determining your level, please assess based on your last 30 days of activity.

Level 1: Sedentary – Less than 3,000 steps daily, activities include reading, tv watching, using computers or other sedentary activities during leisure or work time etc.

Level 2: Lightly Active – 3,000-10,000 steps daily, and/or non-vigorous exercise 1 – 3 times per week,

Level 3: Moderately Active – 10,000-12,000 steps daily, and/or exercise 3 – 5 times per week,



Level 4: Highly Active – 12,000-15,000 steps daily, and/or exercise 5 – 7 times per week,

Level 5: Extremely Active – 15,000+ steps daily, and/or intense exercise or hard physical labor 7 days a week,

Safety Policy:

NWABA believes that safety is a priority for all programs. Athletes must follow instructions always given by NWABA team members. In order to participate safely in NWABA workouts, participants must have space the size of a yoga mat. If an incident occurs during a workout session that makes an athlete uncomfortable, that athlete can leave the workout and must follow-up with an NWABA team member as soon as possible. The NWABA team will also reach out to athletes to follow-up with any concerns.

Medical Emergency & Non-Emergency Procedures:

NWABA team members are first aid/CPR & AED certified. Every athlete must consent to medical treatment in case of an emergency to participate in a NWABA event. This consent was given on the athlete registration form. In the event of a medical emergency, where the athlete is unable to respond, NWABA will provide the best care possible until proper emergency care services arrive. If it is determined that the athlete needs more care than can be provided virtually, the NWABA team member will contact local authorities or emergency contacts to complete a welfare check.

In non-emergency medical events where the athlete is conscious, NWABA will work with the athlete 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.

Child & Participant Protection Policy:

NWABA understands that child abuse and the inappropriate contact of youth and individuals with disabilities is a pervasive problem that must be managed in a pro-active manner if we are to protect those in our care. All volunteers must watch our Child & Participant Protection Policy video which outlines our policies and procedures to mitigate and manage potential risk or abuse or incidents to occur. If an allegation or incident does occur, we will proactively work with the authorities and the parties involved to respond in a prompt and empathetic manner. Athletes also have access to this policy in the link provided above.

Interpersonal Relationship Disclosure Policy:

The presence of a conflict of interest created by a consensual or familial relationship should be disclosed to a 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.

Conflict of Interest:

Athletes will not engage in activities, either with the organization or with a volunteer of the organization, which may be or may have the appearance of a conflict of interest. If an athlete has a question about a potential conflict of interest, please reach out to a NWABA team member.

Examples of such activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Volunteers nor athletes may not accept payment of any kind for services rendered during scheduled volunteer hours.
- Volunteers nor athletes may not use privileged or personal information obtained through volunteer activities for personal gain.

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.

Confidentiality Policy:

All current and past athletes, participants, volunteers, and team members have a right to privacy. All information acquired while engaging with athletes, participants and volunteers with NWABA must be considered confidential. By participating with NWABA, athletes agree that this information should not be shared with anyone except for a NWABA team member when applicable. 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 Vice President, Programs & Services, or designee. If you are asked by someone outside of NWABA to divulge confidential organizational information, you must refer them to a NWABA team member immediately.

Media/ External Communication Policy:

All media should go through NWABA's team members. While athletes are always welcome to ask for photos from events at which they participated, we ask that they do not take personal photos during workouts to respect the diverse needs of our participants and volunteers. All workouts will be recorded for safety and quality assurance. Workout recordings are regularly posted on Youtube for athletes to complete if they have had to miss a live class. If an athlete does not want a specific video recording to be uploaded to Youtube, they must notify the NWABA team immediately after the workout.



If you are approached by someone in the media or any external agency, please direct them to a NWABA team member to ensure accurate information. We ask that no athletes or volunteers speak with the media unless a team member has approved it.

Attendance:

NWABA relies on the attendance of athletes to provide the best programming. We ask that athletes arrive promptly and communicate if they are running late to an event so our team can plan accordingly. If you are unable to attend an event that you registered to participate in, we ask you to contact us immediately so we can make appropriate plans. Athlete workout registrations can be changed at any time.

We advise anyone who is feeling ill to rest and not attend NWABA workouts. We ask athletes to call, text or email if they are no longer able to attend a workout that they are registered for. At any time, NWABA reserves the right to dismiss athletes from NWABA programs and services if we believe the attendance policy is not being respected.

Dress Code:

Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA) strives to create an environment where everyone can fully engage in the activities while feeling comfortable. The dress code for athletes is in line with the dress code for NWABA's team members. While participating with NWABA, please keep in mind that you are a representative of NWABA. As a representative, please dress and groom yourself in a professional manner.

- Athletic pants, shorts that are mid-thigh or longer
- Full length long or short sleeve t-shirts, polo shirts, athletic tank tops

Please do not wear clothing with offensive language, alcohol, or drug references. Clothing should support one's body in an athletic setting. NWABA team members reserve the right to turn the camera off of anyone not following the dress code.

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 VP Programs & Services. If any communication is needed beyond our VP, please contact our CEO/Founder.

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 NWABA's core values, athlete code of conduct, violation of athlete policies, violation of state and federal laws, theft, inappropriate conduct, unresolvable conflicts of interest, and falsification of registration materials.

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 assisting with NWABA programming.

Note – An adult is 18 years or older.

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

Respect for Myself and Others:

- I will respect the rights, and dignity of athletes, participants, volunteers, NWABA's 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 all.

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 respectfully.
- 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 professionalism to all involved in the event (athletes, other volunteers, NWABA's team members, family members, friends, etc.).
- I will encourage other athletes and volunteers to demonstrate the same qualities as the above point states.



- I will not be under the influence or partake in drinking alcohol, smoking, or use legal and illegal recreational drugs while representing NWABA as a volunteer.
- I will refrain from any form of abuse towards athletes 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 or volunteers in my purview and report any such abuse to NWABA team members 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 by NWABA team member.
- I will inform a NWABA team member, as soon as possible, if I alter equipment during the event.
- I will review with a NWABA team member pertinent medical information regarding myself, be aware of any limitations, medical or otherwise, and be sure to communicate clearly when questions arise.
- I will seek medical attention from a NWABA team member or professional when necessary.
- I will report any injury to a NWABA team member as soon as possible and assist in completing an honest incident report.

Interpersonal Relationships and Disclosure:

- I will disclose any conflict of interest created by an amorous 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 the athlete/volunteer and I are not in 'line of sight' by and NWABA team member or other NWABA volunteers (in person or via cameras).
- I will refrain from any interactions outside of program activities with athletes or volunteers under the age of eighteen years of age that are participants in NWABA programs.
- I will refrain from non-program related electronic communications with athletes or volunteers under the age of eighteen. This includes but is not limited to phone calls, texts, emails, and social media.
- I will use good judgement with electronic communications between adult athlete and volunteers and myself. This includes but is not limited to phone calls, texts, emails, and 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 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 NWABA's team members have different knowledge, ability, 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 given duty or information received by NWABA, I will communicate my concerns with a NWABA team member for further clarification, instructions and/or possible reassignment.
- 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 force. 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, in our sole discretion. We will keep you informed when any such changes occur.

I **acknowledge** that I have read the Athlete Handbook and the Athlete Code of Conduct, and I accept full responsibility for familiarizing myself with the policies contained in the Athlete Handbook & Athlete Code of Conduct. I **certify that I understand the signature below acts as my legal signature on this document.**

Print Full Name (First, Last): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) **Today's Date: 9/8/2023**

Signature: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)