BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

SAFEPLAY

WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

Safe Play brings together the key safety considerations for running wheelchair basketball sessions, covering the venue, equipment, coaching, and the athlete. It sets out the minimum standards and good practice expected across clubs, schools, and community organisations delivering the sport, so that sessions and games can be run as safely and inclusively as possible.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- Read through each section before running your first session, then keep it as a reference.
- Use the checklists (risk assessment, chair maintenance, accessibility) as working tools at your venue.
- Follow the links to the Resource Library for downloadable templates and further guidance.
- Revisit the guidance periodically, especially if delivering to a new group or venue.

CONTENTS

02 The Venue
04 The Chair
05 The Playing Equipment
06 The Activity
08 The Coach
09 The Athlete
10 Golden Rules

SAFE PLAY

THE VENUE
SAFE PLAY

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

1 - Accessibility
When selecting and assessing venues, consideration should be given to accessibility for all participants, officials and spectators.

Checklist:
- Accessible parking spaces.
- Step-free access to the venue.
- Accessible toilets and changing facilities.
- Suitable spectator seating areas.
- Clear signage throughout the venue.
- Accessible emergency evacuation procedures.
- Suitable lighting and noise levels.
- Availability of quiet spaces where required.
- Reasonable adjustments should be considered to support participation for all individuals.

2 - Risk Assessment
Carrying out a risk assessment is a necessary requirement to ensure that sessions and games are as safe as possible.

What should be included in a risk assessment?
Identify:
- any unsafe conditions
- actions to identify and resolve potential risks
- the person who is responsible for resolving the risk

Once the risks have been identified, measures should be put in place to reduce the risk. The person who carried out the risk assessment should then assess whether the corrective action was successful.

How often should a risk assessment be carried out?
An annual formal risk assessment should be a minimum requirement, however good practice for the coach is to carry out routine checks at each training session. A risk assessment will be required for each training / match venue.

Routine checklist
- equipment is in good working order
- the sports hall is clean and free from obstacles and debris
- whether participants are carrying injuries
- that participants have access to water
(e.g. own water bottle, water fountain, facilities on site)

What happens if risks are identified?
- Any risks identified should be recorded and addressed.
- If the risk is low the coach/event lead will need to judge whether the activity or event can run safely.
- Based on the levels of risk identified the coach/event lead will need to judge whether the activity or event can run safely or if the risk is so high that the activity or event needs to be canceled.

Emergency Action Planning
In addition to completing a risk assessment, coaches and event leads should ensure that an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is in place and understood by all staff and volunteers involved in the session.

Before each session, check:
- *Location of the nearest first aid kit.*
- *Location of the nearest Automated External Defibrillator (AED).*
- *Emergency exit routes and assembly points.*
- *Exact venue address and postcode for emergency services.*
- *Availability of a charged mobile phone.*
- *Emergency contact details for participants.*
- *Procedures for reporting and recording incidents.*

All coaches, volunteers and officials should know their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

Concussion and Head Injuries
Participant welfare should always take priority over training or competition.

If a participant receives a blow to the head or experiences symptoms consistent with concussion, they should:
- *Be removed from activity immediately.*
- *Not return to play during the same session or event.*
- *Be monitored by a responsible adult.*
- *Seek appropriate medical advice.*
- *Follow any return to play guidance implemented by the club, school, organisation or BWB.*

Symptoms may include:
- *Headache*
- *Dizziness*
- *Confusion*
- *Blurred vision*
- *Balance difficulties*
- *Memory problems*
- *Nausea*

WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Check out the Sport and Recreation Alliance concussion guidelines



Environmental Considerations

Environmental factors should be considered when planning and delivering sessions.

Coaches should consider:

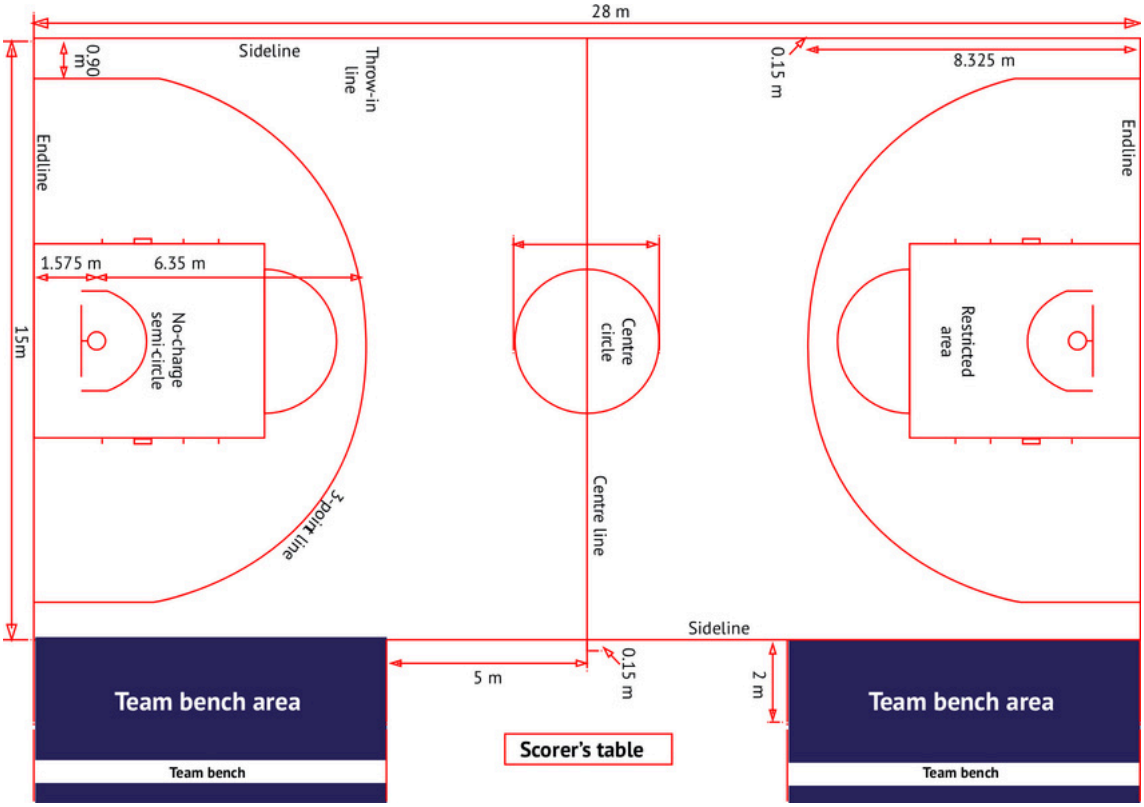
- Venue temperature.
- Ventilation and air quality.
- Hydration opportunities.
- Travel conditions.
- Lighting levels.
- Surface conditions.
- Seasonal weather impacts.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Download a template Risk Assessment form from the resource library of the British Wheelchair Basketball website.

Activities may need to be adapted, postponed or cancelled if environmental factors create an unacceptable level of risk.

2. Court Specifications



Key considerations

- Run-off - a minimum of 1m-2m is required around the boundaries of the court (depending on the competition).
- Court dimensions - from 26m x 14m to 28m x 15m (dependent on league).
- Timber A3 or A4 floor is recommended.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Download the Sports Floor Guidance document from the British Wheelchair Basketball website.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Download the British Wheelchair Basketball National Competition Regulations for information about the requirements for each league.



THE CHAIR
SAFE PLAY

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

1 - Size

Where possible, athletes should use an appropriate sized wheelchair that they feel comfortable in. An appropriate wheelchair will allow the athlete to have reasonable hand contact positions on the wheels without forcing them into extreme ranges of motion.

For young athletes, the sports wheelchairs that are available at a club may be too large. Using a wheelchair that is too large can be detrimental to performance and is not recommended. In these situations, adaptations can be made to the activity / equipment to allow participation in a safe manner. Examples of adaptations include:

- using a static chair (ensure there is appropriate grip to the surface)

This would be suitable for beginners and very young athletes as a method of introducing the athlete to throwing and catching activities.

As athletes advance in the sport they may prefer to have their own bespoke wheelchair.

2 - Chair Maintenance

It is important for athletes to maintain their sports wheelchairs regularly to keep it working as it should.

Basketball wheelchair care and maintenance checklist:

- Is the frame structurally sound with no visible cracks present?
- Are the main wheel axles correctly adjusted with the wheels fully secured?
- Is there any debris wrapped around castor axles or bearings?
- Are the castor forks secure? Do they rotate freely?
- Are the tyres the correct pressure?
- Are there any tears, rips or degradation of the foams and seat and back upholsteries?
- Are straps fitted?

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Refer to the latest edition of the IWBF Official Wheelchair Basketball Rules available on the IWBF website



THE PLAYING EQUIPMENT
SAFE PLAY

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

1 - Baskets and targets

The standard basketball hoop is 10-feet high with a hoop that is 18cm in diameter. Adapting the basket or target is a good way to make wheelchair basketball more accessible

Alternatives to the standard 10-foot basket include:

- 8-foot basket
- floor baskets
- targets, hoops and scoring areas

2 - Balls

Basketballs range from size 3 to 7.

Training sessions can incorporate a variety of ball sizes depending on the age and stage of the athlete. Recommendations for the size of ball in relation to the age of the athlete are listed below.

Age	Size	Hoop Height
Boys and girls aged 5-7 years old	Size 3	6 foot
Boys and girls aged 7-9 years old	Size 5	8 Foot
Boys and girls aged 10- 13 years old	Size 6	8 Foot
Girls and women aged 14+ years old	Size 6	10 Foot
Boys and men aged 14+ years old	Size 7	10 Foot

The use of alternatives such as soft touch balls, balloons and balls with a bell or rattle inside can help the coach to tailor the session to suit the needs of the participant.

3 - The Court

Adaptations can be made to the size of the court to suit the needs of the participants or the activity such as:

- using a smaller section of the basketball court e.g. half court, just the restricted area
- using different court markings e.g. a badminton court
- temporary lines

There are no specific guidelines for the size of court to be used when adapting a session or game, however the age/stage of the group and the outcomes of the activity should be a consideration.

4 - Other Equipment

Simple equipment adaptations can help make sessions more inclusive and accessible, including:

- High-visibility bibs to support participants with visual impairments.
- Coloured cones or markers to clearly define playing areas.
- Whistles, visual cue cards or hand signals to support communication.

Equipment should be selected based on the needs of the participants and the objectives of the activity.



THE ACTIVITY
SAFE PLAY

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

1 - Athlete/Staff Ratios

Every session must have a minimum of two safely recruited, DBS-checked and safeguarding-trained adults present at all times, regardless of group size. Volunteers or assistant coaches under the age of 18 do not count towards this adult supervisor headcount.

Recommended Coach Ratios:

Where a session includes a mix of ages, the ratio for the youngest participant present should always be followed.

- Aged 5 to 8 years: 1 coach to 6 children
- Aged 9 to 12 years: 1 coach to 8 children
- Aged 13 to 18 years: 1 coach to 10 children
- Aged 18+: 1 coach to 12 adults

When to Increase Supervision Additional

Safely recruited adults should be added above these baseline numbers for higher-risk activities, participants with additional medical or physical needs, or when travelling to away fixtures. This ensures the group is never left with only one adult if a supervisor needs to step away, for example to deal with an injury.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Refer to the NSPCC Learning safeguarding and supervision guidance for full national policy details.

2 - Session duration and training to competition ratio

Age	Training Session Duration	Training to Competitive Gamed Ratio
5-9	60 Minutes	All fun activity based
10-13	75-90 minutes	75% Training 25% Competitive
14-17	90-120 minutes	75% Training 25% Competitive
18+	120 minutes	50% Training 50% Competitive

3. Adapting the Activity

Open activities – Everyone can play

Everyone does the same activity with minimal or no adaptations to the environment or equipment; open activities are by their nature inclusive so that the activity suits every participant. For example, warm-up or cool down, and cooperative or unstructured movement games (like collecting games).

Modified activities – Change to include

Everyone plays the same game or performs the same activity however the rules, equipment or area of activity are adapted to promote the inclusion of all individuals regardless of their abilities. For example, playing wheelchair basketball with a variety of targets, such as a lowered basket, a hoop taped to the wall or a box on the floor so that participants choose to score in the target most suited to their abilities.

Parallel activities – Ability groups

In this approach, although participants follow a common activity theme, they do so at their own pace and level by working in groups based on their abilities. For example, the group could be split into two with one group using an 8-foot basket and the other a 10-foot basket. One consideration in the parallel approach is that abilities can change dependent upon the activity.

Separate or alternate activities

This approach emphasises that, on occasions, it may be better for a person to practice sports individually or with similar ability peers. For example, it may be more effective to withdraw an individual in order to practice to enable successful integration into a game situation with the rest of the group.

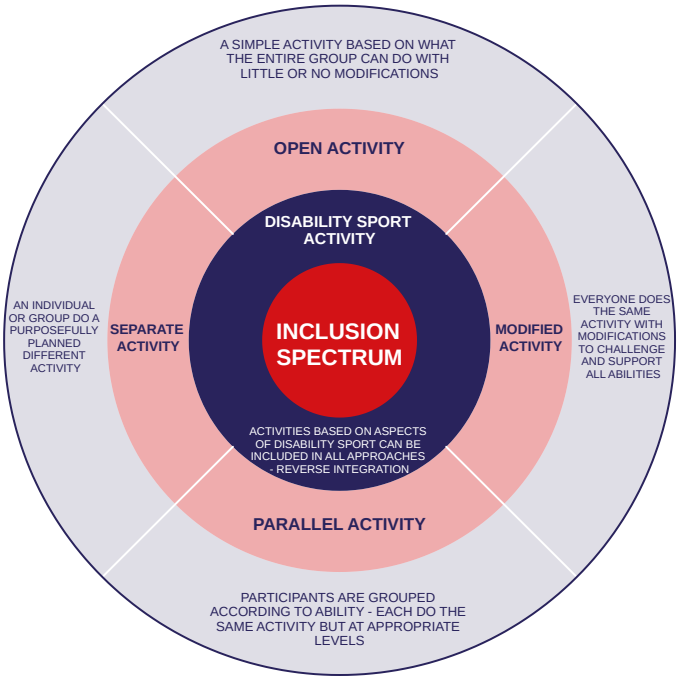
Reverse inclusion

Reverse inclusion is where non-disabled young people are included in disability sports together with disabled peers. The sport of wheelchair basketball is an inclusive sport and therefore reverse inclusions happens regularly with the inclusion of siblings, friends, parents and others.

THE ACTIVITY
SAFE PLAY

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

THE INCLUSION SPECTRUM



THE INCLUSION SPECTRUM, BLACK AND STEVENSON (2012)

THE STEP TOOL

The STEP tool provides a simple framework for adapting activity so that everyone can be included and participate together.

Space

- Increase or decrease the size of the activity area.
- Vary the distance to be covered to suit different abilities or mobility levels.
- Use zoning, e.g. where participants are matched by ability and therefore have more opportunity to participate.

Task

Ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to participate, e.g. break down complex skills into smaller components if this helps participants to more easily develop skills.

Equipment

- Increase or decrease the size of the equipment to suit the ability or age range of the participants, or depending on the kind of skill being practised.
- Provide options that enable people to participate in different ways, e.g. using a javelin ball to grip better.
- The use of bell or rattle balls can assist the inclusion of some players.

People

- Match participants of similar ability in small-sided or close marking activities.
- Balance team numbers according to the overall ability of the group, i.e. it may be preferable to play with teams of unequal numbers to facilitate inclusion of some participants and maximise participation of others.

THE COACH
SAFE PLAY

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

1 - Coaching Qualifications
A coach e.g. training session coach, game coach, Head Coach should be qualified to a minimum of a Level 2 BWB coaching award to coach unsupervised. You must be aged 18 or over to attend a Level 2 qualification. Clubs have a duty of care to check people who are recruited into positions of responsibility. Information around safe recruitment can be found on the CPSU website https://thecpsu.org.uk

*Checks may include DBS or self-declaration, references, experience and qualifications.

2 - Safeguarding Qualifications
An introductory Safeguarding qualification, dated within three years, is required for all coaches. Safeguarding course providers for sports coaches;

- *UK Coaching: Safeguarding and Protecting Children*
- *CPSU/NSPCC: Basic Safeguarding Training*
- *CPSU/NSPCC: Introductory Safeguarding Training*

Safeguarding Adults at Risk
Safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond children and young people.

Coaches, volunteers and club officials should remain vigilant to concerns relating to adults at risk and know how to report concerns appropriately.

Examples may include:

- Physical abuse.
- Financial abuse.
- Psychological or emotional abuse.
- Neglect.
- Discriminatory behaviour.
- Exploitation.

Any concerns should be reported following club and BWB safeguarding procedures.

3 - Digital Safeguarding and Communication
Coaches should communicate with athletes, parents and carers in a manner that is safe, transparent and appropriate.

Good practice includes:
- Using club-approved communication platforms where possible.
- Including parents or carers in communications with children and young people.
- Avoiding private or secret messaging.
- Maintaining professional boundaries at all times.
- Obtaining appropriate consent before sharing photographs or video footage.
- Following club and governing body social media guidance.

All concerns relating to online behaviour or digital communication should be reported through safeguarding procedures.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

You can download safeguarding resources from the British Wheelchair Basketball website.

3 - First Aid
A First Aid qualification, dated within three years, is recommended for coaches.

4 - Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
There are many CPD opportunities available to coaches. It is recommended that coaches complete regular formal CPD (e.g. courses, workshops, qualifications) and informal CPD (e.g. observing other coaches, discussions with other coaches, online forums, reading) to stay up-to-date.

5 - Insurance / registration
Active wheelchair basketball coaches or activators in BWB affiliated clubs must register as a coach with BWB.

To register for a coaching licence you must have:
- A coaching qualification (Activator, Level 1, 2 or 3)
- A safeguarding certificate completed in the past 3 years (covering the entire season being registered for)
- A DBS check completed via a BWB member club dated within 3 years. of the end of each season (31st August).

Important to note:
- Registered non-league clubs must also register their coaches.
- Insurance for voluntary coaches is included in the membership fee.
- Coaches who are paid to coach must have their own insurance in place before coaching.



THE ATHLETE

SAFE PLAY

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

The coach has a responsibility to ensure that athlete welfare is paramount. Considerations for coaches when developing athletes.

1 - Age / maturation

How old is the athlete? How mature is the athlete physically and emotionally?

Coaches should recognise and be aware of the differences in chronological age and development age when designing programmes for adolescent athletes. For example, two children may be the same chronological age but be years apart in development age. Athletes are individuals and will pass through stages of development at different times.

How can I implement this in training sessions?

- Group athletes by maturation rather than chronological age.

2 - Training age / entry point

Look at the athlete as a whole. Is this the first time they have been involved in wheelchair basketball? Are they currently doing any physical activity?

Training shouldn't be restricted by chronological age. Athletes who have received no formal training may take part in activities that are usually done by younger athletes to allow them to develop the correct fundamental movement skills.

How can I implement this in training sessions?

- Communicate with athletes and gain an understanding of any previous activity.
- Don't just group athletes by age, however please be aware that it might not be suitable to put an adult with a child because of their physical differences.
- Allow time for individual development in training sessions.

3. Classification / functional ability

Things to consider around classification and functional ability:

- allow players to play different roles within the team, not just the roles 'traditionally' played by similar class athletes.
- focus on individual development as well as team development.
- the performance of a skill may be different between athletes depending on their functional ability. Coaches need to have an understanding of this to adjust instruction of skills and techniques.
- integrate classification into the player's development at the appropriate time.

You can find more information about classification by:

- attending the BWB Club Classifiers workshop
- reading the IWBF Player Classification Manual
- watching the IWBF Player Classification video

4 - Medical Information and Individual Needs

Coaches should have an awareness of any relevant medical information that may impact participation.

Subject to organisational procedures and data protection requirements, information may include:

- Relevant medical conditions.
- Allergies.
- Emergency medication requirements.
- Support or communication needs.
- Emergency contact details.

Coaches should ensure appropriate action plans are in place where required and review information regularly.



5 - Athlete Load

BWB have introduced this guidance on Playing Load for Junior athletes because we take the welfare of our athletes seriously. Managing training and playing load in athletes is fundamental in ensuring a long sporting career. We take great care to ensure that athlete development should be considered a long-term project with no short cuts that might impact that athlete's career in the future.

We also recognize that every athlete is different. Age, Gender, Physical Development, Intensity, Maturity, Previous injury and Ongoing Medical Conditions can all make a difference to what can be safely expected from an athlete.

We recognize it is a complex equation and that Individualized and context specific approaches work best. As one size does not fit all we have chosen to provide this broad guidance rather than detailed rules.

In putting together this guidance we have discussed with BWB Performance team, considered academic literature on this topic and benchmarked what other team sports such as Football, Field Hockey and Running Basketball.

	U18 TRAINING	U18 MATCH	U14 TRAINING	U14 MATCH	REST DAYS
BWB RECOMMENDATION PER DAY	A maximum of 240 minutes training per day No more than 120 mins of Intensive training. The remaining 120 mins should include: Light Training, Preparation, Warm Up, Warm Down, Skills Training or Analysis	A maximum of 3 x junior matches per day **OR** 2 x Senior Matches.	A maximum of 240 minutes training per day No more than 100 mins of Intensive training. The remaining 140 mins should include: Light Training, Preparation, Warm Up, Warm Down, Skills Training or Analysis	A maximum of 2 x U18 Matches **OR** 3 x U14 Matches U14 **Do Not** play in adult matches.	
BWB RECOMMENDATION PER WEEK	A maximum of 10 hours Intensive training per week No more than 20 hours total training per week total	A maximum of 5 Junior matches per week **OR** 4 Senior Matches per Week **OR** Any Combination of up to 4 matches	A Maximum of 8.5 hours Intensive Training a week No More than 17 hours total Training per week	A maximum of 5 x U14 matches per week **OR** 4 x U18 Matches per Week **OR** Any Combination of Junior Games up to 4 matches	2 Days

BRITISH WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

SAFEPLAY GOLDEN RULES

- Welfare of participants comes first.
- Challenge by choice and participant-centred coaching.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Complete risk assessments and routine safety checks.
- Record incidents and near misses.
- Communicate openly with participants and parents/carers.
- Create an inclusive environment where everyone can participate safely.