

Paratriathlon Event FAQ's

What are some of the special considerations to take into account for the race venue in general?

Ensure that handicap accessible parking is available for packet pickup and at the race venue. Also, ensure that handicap accessible portable toilets are available.

How do I get Paratriathletes to my race?

Advertising on your event website that your event is Paratriathlete friendly.

Do I need to award Paratriathlon Awards?

If you plan on incorporating age group awards then you should plan on having Paratriathlon awards available as well.

Do visually impaired athlete's guides need to be an annual ATA member or one-day ATA members?

Yes, all visually impaired guides need to have either an annual ATA membership or a one-day membership.

What is a handler's role?

A handler is there to assist the Paratriathlete with anything they need without hindering other competitors or pushing them forward in transition. A handler can strip their wetsuit, help them in transition with their gear, as well as hand them anything they will need at the swim start or swim exit.

Where do I secure handlers?

Not every athlete will need a handler, but an RD should always offer and help recruit the volunteers. The easiest way to recruit is to add this job to your volunteer list. Some athletes will also bring their own handler, so you should ask the athlete if they need you to recruit one for them.

What is the difference between a handler and a guide?

A handler is there to assist the Paratriathlete with anything they need without hindering other competitors or pushing them forward in transition. A handler can strip their wetsuit, help them in transition with their gear, as well as hand them anything they will need at the swim start or swim exit. A guide is someone who competes alongside a visually impaired athlete throughout the race and acts as the Paratriathlete's guide. Guides must meet the membership requirements.

Are there any special considerations for the medical staff to know about Paratriathletes?

The medical staff needs to know who the Paratriathletes are, what their disability is, and what medications they are taking. This information will be helpful for the medical staff to know in case a Paratriathlete ends up in the medical tent.

Swim

In what type of body of water are Paratriathletes able to swim?

Paratriathletes are able to swim in any type of water ranging from ocean, lake, river, or pool.

Are Paratriathletes able to swim a multiple loop course?

Yes, however, these athletes are not able to exit the water to start a second lap, so there needs to be a way for them to start the second lap while they are still in the water.

Do Paratriathletes require their own wave start?

It is not mandatory that they have their own wave start, however, it is encouraged to let them be the first wave and have a 5 – 10 minute head start before the next wave start. Some of the Paratriathletes will not be swimming freestyle and will therefore be slower in the water and you do not want other swimmers swimming over top of them. A time trial start is okay as long as you give the Paratriathletes some time before starting the able-bodied age groupers.

What is the ideal surface for the swim exit?

Sand and/or stairs as the exit will make it very difficult for the Paratriathletes to exit the water and get into transition. Grass and a ramp, if needed, will be the best way to go.

Does my event need water exit handlers?

Most of the Paratriathletes will require help when exiting the water, so providing specific water exit handlers for these athletes would be ideal. A wheelchair athlete will need to be carried from the water exit to their wheelchair. An athlete with a leg amputee would need assistance obtaining their leg at the swim exit or getting their crutches. If you do not have water exit handlers, you will need to ensure each Paratriathlete is assigned a handler to perform this task at the water exit.

What special considerations will be required in transition?

A grass transition can be difficult for wheelchair athletes, so an asphalt transition is always best. The Paratriathletes need more bike rack space in transition, so giving each athlete at least 6 feet will be necessary. Arm and leg amputees as well as visually impaired athletes will require a folding chair at their bike rack space to sit and put their shoes and legs/braces on. Tight turns inside the transition area and around other racks will need to be eliminated as some of the equipment does not have a wide turn radius.

Bike

My bike course has sharp turns, will Paratriathletes be able to navigate this?

Most Paratriathletes will be able to navigate regular bike course conditions, but a handcycle (wheelchair users race in these for the bike) and the tandem bikes (visually impaired athletes use these) have a very wide turn radius.

What can I do if my bike course has a curb to go over between transition and the mount/dismount line?

Creating a durable wooden ramp that all athletes can go over would be ideal. If this is not feasible, then you will need to think about a different place for the mount line that does not involve any curbs.

Can my bike course be open to car traffic?

It may, but please keep in mind that the handcycles are very low to the ground and are sometimes challenging to see by cars. Providing flags or asking the athlete to bring a flag would be the safest action to take.

Is any hill too steep for Paratriathletes to navigate on a bike course?

Yes, any hill with a gradient of 12% or greater will not be feasible for some Paratriathletes as some Paratriathletes cannot get out of the saddle to peddle and those on a handcycle will also have a difficult time climbing.

Run

Can my run course be on a sidewalk?

Yes, as long as the sidewalk is wide enough to accommodate 2 racing wheelchairs side by side going in the same direction. If your course is an out and back on the same sidewalk, it is likely not wide enough. Make sure there are no curbs to get athletes onto the sidewalks as racing wheelchairs are not able to navigate these.

My run course has sharp turns, are Paratriathletes able to navigate these?

Most Paratriathletes are able to navigate regular run course conditions, but a racing wheelchair has a very wide turn radius.

Is any hill too steep for Paratriathletes to navigate on a run course?

Yes, any hill with a gradient of 12% or greater will not be feasible for some Paratriathletes as some Paratriathletes cannot get out of the saddle to peddle and those on a handcycle will also have a difficult time climbing.

I have a time-limit for my race. Should I advertise this to the Paratriathletes?

Yes, absolutely! Letting them know this before race day and before they sign up is the best way to ensure that Paratriathletes attending your event can meet your time limit for the course.

Categories

What are the different Paratriathlon Categories?

PT 1 – Wheelchair Users

Includes athletes with comparable activity limitation and an impairment of, but not limited to: muscle power, limb deficiency, hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis that prevent the ability to safely ride a conventional bike and run. Athletes must use a recumbent handcycle on the bike course and a racing wheelchair on the run segment.

PT 2 – Severe Impairment

Includes athletes with comparable activity limitation and an impairment of, but not limited to, limb deficiency, hypertonia, ataxia and/or athetosis, impaired muscle power or range of movement. In both bike and run segments, amputee athletes may use approved prosthesis or other supportive devices.

PT 3 – Moderate Impairment

Includes athletes with comparable activity limitation and an impairment of, but not limited to, limb deficiency, hypertonia, ataxia, and/or athetosis, impaired muscle power or range of movement. In both bike and run segments, the athlete may use approved prosthesis or other supportive devices.

PT 4 – Mild Impairment

Includes athletes with comparable activity limitation and an impairment of, but not limited to, limb deficiency, hypertonia, ataxia and/or athetosis, impaired muscle power or range of movement. In both bike and run segments, the athlete may use approved prosthesis or other supportive devices.

PT 5 – Total or Partial visual impairment (IBSA/IPC defined sub-classes B1, B2, and B3)

Includes athletes who are totally blind, from no light perception in either eye, to some light perception but unable to recognize the shape of a hand at any distance or in any direction. (B1) and partially sighted athletes with a visual acuity or less than 6/60 vision or visual field less than 20 degrees with best corrective vision (B2 - B3). One guide is mandatory throughout the race. Must ride a tandem during the bike segment.