

Welcome to our team!



Welcome to the Dixie Wheelchair Athletic Association (DWAA)! The DWAA region includes Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. This association has a long 35+ year history of providing competitive sports and recreational opportunities for athletes with physical and visual disabilities. DWAA started in 1980 with the Georgia Invitational Wheelchair Games held in Marietta, GA and in 1981 merged with the Alabama Associations to become the Dixie Wheelchair Athletic Association.

The region has a rich history of the development of sports for athletes with physical disabilities such as wheelchair racing through the passion for speed of athletes such as George Murray, Jimmy Green, and Laverne Achenbach. Early field athletes include Joe Booth, Bart Dodson, Tommy Hite, Terry Lee, and Randy Segner and the most acclaimed weightlifters were Mitch Strickland and Jeanne Wilson.

This enthusiasm to excel in competitive sports necessitated the evolution of the competition equipment resulting in the founding of 2 surviving specialty sports equipment companies: Eagle Sports Chairs and Top End. Along with the athletes, others who made the competitions happen (including the rules) include Doug Brush, Sherry Crooks, Bryna Helfer, Joe Little, David Morris, Linda Priest, Ronnie Pulley, Stephanie Orr, Les Rothman, Margie (Sloan) Staton, Donnie Sloan, and Barb (Leidheiser) Trader. Ronnie Pulley and Les Rothman were instrumental in developing the National Wheelchair Officials Associations (NWOA) to certify officials.

Many national and international championships have been held in this region. The 1996 Paralympics were in Atlanta, Georgia for the first time held immediately after the Olympics. This led to the formation of United States Disabled Athlete Fund with the program BlazeSports. Other national championship events include basketball, quad rugby, swimming, boccia, and the National Junior Disability Championships.

DWAA region is home to MANY adapted recreational and competitive sports programs such as Paralympic Sports Tampa Bay, Shepherd Center Sports Teams, Lakeshore Foundation, and Georgia Blazers. We hope this website will serve as a resource to you for available programs in our area which includes the annual Dixie Games.

Randy Chiavaroli
Dixie BOD Chairperson