

2026-2027 INDOOR PARA TRACK & FIELD FORMAT

For student-athletes with visual impairments and those with mobility/physical impairments

Student athletes at MIAA member schools who have a visual or mobility impairment of the type and severity described below, who also meet all MIAA requirements for participation on their school indoor track and field teams, are eligible to compete in the Para Track & Field category at MIAA Championship meets.

EVENTS AND QUALIFICATION

Eligible and qualified student-athletes may compete in the 55m dash; the wheelchair 300m race; the Para Ambulatory or Blind/VI 1000m races, and/or the Shot Put.

Student-athletes eligible for Para Track & field competition must achieve the modified qualifying standard for their category in each event to be entered in the Divisional Meet. Athletes may achieve a Divisional meet qualifying mark at any current season competition entered as a bona fide member of the school team. Athletes will advance to the Meet of Champions if they post a result in the Divisional meet or at the discretion of the MIAA.

2026-27 Divisional Meet Qualification Standards

PARA - GIRLS				PARA - BOYS		
Event	Blind/VI	Para-Amb	WC/Seated	Blind/VI	Para-Amb	WC/Seated
55m	10.00	11.50	20.00	9.00	10.50	25.00
300m			1:30.00			1:10.00
1000m	4:00	4:00		3:30	3:30	
Shot	20'0"	10'0"	7'0"	25'0"	15'0"	10'0"

* An athlete eligible for Para Track & Field events is not restricted to the Para events if the athlete has achieved the qualifying mark(s) for other Championship events.

**Schools may request that an athlete competing in one or more of the Para Track & Field events be entered in up to two additional events that do not have Para Track & Field category competition (3 event maximum). MIAA will grant this request based on the athlete's performances in that event during the current season and meet management considerations. Participation in these events will be on an exhibition basis and no points will be scored. Requests must be made to the Tournament Director in writing by the final entry date for the meet.

SEEDING

Para Ambulatory and Blind/VI athletes will be seeded within the main field according to their actual qualifying marks. Wheelchair racers will be seeded at the discretion of meet management except that only one (1) wheelchair racer will be seeded in any given heat for races of 300m or longer. Seated throwers will be seeded at the front of a flight chosen by the meet officials and will make six attempts consecutively before standing athletes begin their rotation.

COMPETITION CATEGORIES

1. BLIND/VISUALLY IMPAIRED

- Eligibility - Athletes must be registered with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind as legally blind. Legally blind is defined as having best corrected vision of 20/200 or lower in the better eye OR as having a field of vision of less than 20 degrees.
- Para track & field accommodations – *Running*: Athletes who are totally blind or with very low vision run with a guide, using a shoelace/tether held between the two runners to keep them stride for stride. The

guide is generally a teammate or may be a coach (generally under the age of 26). The runner/guide pair gets two lanes and uses the start line of the inside lane. Athletes with more vision run without a guide. *Throwing*: Athletes may be guided to the circle/runway by a coach or teammate and may receive initial orientation. The athlete or coach may place a towel or object outside the circle to provide additional orientation. No coaching is allowed during the attempt.

- c. Competition Format – Athletes are included in the most appropriate heats or flights based on the actual seed times/marks of each individual. This may mean that two blind athletes running the same event may race in different heats if their seed times warrant.

2. PARA-AMBULATORY

- a. Eligibility – Athletes must be affected by one of the following conditions/circumstances at the level described:
 - i. Amputation through the ankle, or another orthopedic/neuromuscular impairment resulting in a similar loss of running-related function.
 - ii. Amputation through the wrist of one (sprints only) or both arms; amputation of one/both arms through the elbow; limb deficiency/paralysis of one/both arms.
 - iii. Dwarfism – (achondroplasia or a variant) with height/arm/sum measurements all not more than: boys 145cm/66cm/200cm; girls 137cm/63cm/190cm
 - iv. Cerebral Palsy, Traumatic Brain Injury or Stroke - must have diagnosis of CP or other non-progressive brain damage with locomotor dysfunction.
- b. Para track & field accommodations – *Running*: Athletes may choose to start out of blocks or may not be able to place hands on ground; *Throwing*: Some sport class groups will use lighter implements based on World Para Athletics rules.
- c. Competition Format – Athletes are included in the most appropriate heats or flights based on the actual seed times/marks of each individual.

3. WHEELCHAIR/SEATED

- a. Eligibility – Athletes must be affected by one of the following conditions/circumstances at the level described.
 - i. Spinal Cord Injury, Spina Bifida, or other neuromuscular impairment resulting in loss of function in the lower extremities such that running is impractical.
 - ii. Above-knee amputation of one or both lower extremities, hip disarticulation, or similar impairments such that dynamic balance is severely compromised. *Note*: Amputees or athletes with similar impairments sometimes run in Para-ambulatory races and throw in seated events.
 - iii. Cerebral Palsy, Traumatic Brain Injury or Stroke - must have diagnosis of CP or other non-progressive brain damage with locomotor dysfunction such that running is impractical.
- b. Para track & field accommodations – *Throwing* – the throwing chair has maximum height and other specifications; some sport classes use lighter implements according to World Para Athletics rules; a coach may assist the athlete getting to and setting up in the circle, and departing the circle at the conclusion of the attempts.
- c. Competition Format – *Racing*: Wheelchair racers will have an empty lane on either side of them. For races of 300m or longer, there will be only 1 wheelchair racer in any heat, and time-trial scoring will be used. *Throwing*: seated athletes can be placed at the front of an appropriate flight; if using a throwing chair, athletes make all six attempts consecutively, except at the Divisional Meet and Meet of Champions, where they make 3 plus 3.

Scoring for Para Athletes

If 3 or more Athletes compete in the same category in one of the designated Para events (55m, 300m/1,000m or Shot Put), the event will be scored. Para competitors in any other events are non-scoring.

For example, there will need to be 3 or more Visually Impaired Athletes in the 55 Meter event in order for these athletes to count in the team score. If one Ambulatory Athlete, one Visually Impaired Athlete, and one Wheelchair Athlete all competed in the 55 Meters, no athletes would score in that event.

The Scoring for Para Events will be as follows:

For 3 competitors, in the same category, in the same event:

- 1st place - 2 points
- 2nd place - 1 point
- 3rd place - 0 points.

If there are more than 3 competitors in the same category in the same event the point scoring is assigned as follows:

- Divide the number of competitors by 2, then round up to the next integer. This is the number of scoring places.
- Assign points starting with the winner receiving points equal to the number of scoring places, then reducing the assigned points by one point for each lower scoring place.

EXAMPLE: 5 Ambulatory Athletes in the 55 Meter Dash:

1. Divide 5 by 2, get 2.5, round up to 3. Three places score.
2. Winner gets 3 points (number of scoring places).
3. Second place gets 2 points, and 3rd place gets 1 point.

LINK TO WORLD PARA ATHLETICS RULEBOOK: <https://www.paralympic.org/athletics/rules>