

BROCK NIAGARA PENGUINS

Parasport Program for Youth and Adults with a Disability



Reviewed 2026

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WELCOME TO BROCK NIAGARA PENGUINS

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us! Brock Niagara Penguins is Niagara's premier parasport program for youth and adults with a physical disability, supported by Brock Sports and Recreation.

Our program consists of (sport offerings may vary year to year):

Program	Location
Para-Swimming	Brock University
Wheelchair Basketball	Brock University and Canada Games
Boccia	Canada Game Park
Sitting Volleyball	Canada Game Park
Indoor Handcycling and Wheelchair Racing	Haig Bowl Arena and Canada Games
ParaSport Camp	Brock University

Participants may be attending one, two or all of the programs throughout the year. All programs strive towards improving physical activity levels, increasing independence and providing a social opportunity for participants.

The success of the program depends on you, the volunteer. Consistency is important for all the participants and coaches so please be on time and attend all the practices you have committed too. If in an emergency you are unable to attend, it is imperative that you get in touch with your coach immediately. Without volunteers, we cannot run the program.

NIAGARA PENGUINS VISION

Brock Niagara Penguins strives to foster opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities in a recreational setting. It promotes *physical activity* and offers sporting opportunities for those with disabilities. The aim is to have participants experiencing success through achievement, while developing *social and leadership skills* that are critical in fostering a *healthy and caring community*.

VALUES

Brock Niagara Penguins allows youth and adults the opportunity to *meet friends, have fun* and develop a *healthy active lifestyle*. The focus is placed on building *individual confidence and self-esteem*, in an environment without inadvertent roadblocks and restrictions. Athletes will aspire to be *role models* with peers and responsible community leaders.

Brock Niagara Penguins provides not only opportunities for youth with disabilities, but also is a place where brothers and sisters, able-bodied or disabled can *develop together*. Their continued accomplishments and growth will act as a model for the success of the program.

“Emphasis on individual achievements & gaining skills as a member of a strong team”



OUR TEAM

Brock Niagara Penguins is a collaborative community that is possible because of the interest and dedication of our athletes, volunteers and supporters.

Each **athlete** has been a contributing member of a team, while gaining individual skills, supporting the mission of the Penguins.

However, the Penguins are so much more than the athletes in the gym, pool and court. It is possible because of the **volunteers** that come out to all the practices, games and events. Every year we rely on volunteers to assist the athletes and support the program, with over 25 volunteers actively involved every year, from the community, Brock and Niagara College.

Penguins also rely on support from **organizations and community** members who year after year provide donations and in-kind funding to support the program and athletes.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: niagarapenguins@brocku.ca

Phone Number: (905) 359-6283

Website: www.niagarapenguins.org

Twitter: @niagarapenguins

COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

Brock Niagara Penguins are grateful for these organizations for their support

- Brock Sports & Recreation
- Brock Niagara Aquatics
- Niagara Children's Centre
- City of St. Catharines
- ParaSport Ontario
- Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association
- Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association
- Lawson Foundation
- Shelley Gautier ParaSport Foundation
- Tetra Society
- Niagara College



ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

Volunteers

- Provide group or one-to-one support for the athletes.
- Get to know athletes and their needs to promote individual success.
- Assist with set-up and take-down duties, which can include (but is not limited to) lane ropes, equipment and welcoming athletes.
- Wear appropriate attire for the program (i.e. swimming or gym activities).
- If swimming, have general swim abilities or inform the coach of problem areas.
- Provide completed volunteer forms and all other documentation.
- Assist athletes to follow and adhere to instructions given by the coach or any other leading member of the group.
- Re-directing athlete behaviours in a positive direction and ask for assistance from the coach if necessary.
- Stay focused on the task at hand and act in such a way that facilitates the type of behaviour and language expected of the athletes.
- Demonstrate and adhere to the Penguins vision statement and values.
- Responsible for motivating the athletes and each other to participate in a team environment.
- Regular communication with the coaches.
- Exercise patience and empathy towards each athlete's varying needs and contribute any adaptive ideas or suggestions.
- Report difficulties/concerns to the coach immediately

Supporters

- Includes any organization/partnership /company associated with the Brock Niagara Penguins.
- Provide support to the Penguins in their specified area of service.
 - This could vary from informing the community of program information, management of facilities and the employees of the facility, management of accounts and grant funds etc.
- Responsible for forwarding questions/concerns about the Penguins program to the coaches.

Coaches

- Current First Aid/CPR certification.
- Knowledge and experience in working alongside persons with disabilities.
- Knowledge of the safe uses for equipment, gym spaces/water safety.

- Understand the emergency action plan.
- Provide a practice outline for each weekly session with success-oriented activities that address the goals of the session.
- Structure a practice that incorporates elements of skill development, individual achievement, athlete choice, goal setting and fun for each athlete.
- Provide technique/skill instruction to volunteers and athletes.
- Ensure all the equipment needed is present, available and safe for use.
- Organize and assist in the setup and take down of equipment.
- Inform volunteers of what will ensue during the practice and what role each of them will resume.
- Provide behaviour management support for volunteers and athletes.
- Responsible for taking attendance of volunteers and athletes.
- Responsible for collecting/distributing newsletters and/or any other necessary documentation and passing it on to the coach.
- Adhere to overall outline and long-term goal guidelines of the program.
- Expected to believe in and demonstrate the Penguins vision statement and value codes.
- Make sure each athlete and volunteer have a positive experience and also one that is destined for success.
- Monitor the safety of all participants and volunteers.
- Provide first aid when necessary.
- Responsible for making/suggesting adaptations in the program to suit each athlete's needs.
- Designate parts of the practice for the volunteers to lead and gain experience as a leader.
- Regular communication with coach, parents and volunteers.
- Communicate with the director any concerns, incidents or changes.
- Take weekly attendance and assist with the registration process.
- Motivate volunteers, athletes and parents.

Athletes

- Come dressed and ready to participate.
- Adhere to the goals of the practice and the program.
- Regular communication with coaches and volunteers.
- Have a positive and respectful attitude towards the program, the other participants, the volunteers and the coach.

- contribute to the team at all times
- practice good respect, teamwork, positive attitude, integrity and character
- Fill out all necessary registration forms and code of conduct forms.

Parent/Guardian

- Inform coach/volunteers of any unusual changes in the athlete that may affect their performance or behaviour
- Provide all necessary documentation to coaches.
- Be willing to regularly communicate with the coach.
- Inform the coach when an athlete is not able to attend a practice or event.
- Responsible for getting athletes to the venue and ready to participate when needed.
- Responsible for any changing, toileting, medication and personal care.
- Be present at the end of the session to pick up athletes.
- Discuss any concerns or questions with the coaches.

POLICIES

REFUND POLICY

Full refunds may be issued only two weeks prior to the beginning of the program. An athlete who is requesting a refund within the two weeks leading up to the program or after program has started will have to contact the director of programming. The fees for the athlete T-shirt will be taken into consideration (\$15 This value). Should an athlete join after the sessions have begun, the rate will be pro-rated depending on the number of sessions left in the program schedule.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any member associated with athlete or volunteer information must refrain from disclosing any such information outside of legal or performance-based duties. This includes identifying athletes involved in the program to people not involved, disclosing phone numbers, emails, medical information, behavioural information, etc. Breach in the above mentioned will result in immediate dismissal.

HEALTH

Illness causing absence from the program is to be reported to the coach/ head coach. If a volunteer is absent without valid reason (decided by head coach/coach), volunteer

hours will not be awarded for credit. Informing the coach of illness or ill health of any participant must be immediate so the proper steps can be taken to ensure the safety of the individual and the others.

CLOTHING

Must wear suitable, appropriate, youth-friendly bathing suit in the pool area; comfortable, supportive shoes in the gym. Attire must allow for physical activity, transfers and lifting.

It is important for volunteers to wear the Brock Niagara Penguins T-shirts (if available) when on deck at the pool or in gym, so they are easily identifiable to parents and athletes. Clean shirts and shorts are permitted in the pool over a bathing suit.

EQUIPMENT

Use of equipment is for programming only, if anyone would like to use the facility or equipment outside program, permission from facility organizer is necessary. Respect the equipment and use it only as instructions dictate or with approved adaptations. Report any damaged, broken equipment immediately to coach or director.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Parents/guardians will have specified upon registration 'permission' or 'no permission' for photographs to be taken of the athletes to be used in public areas. For those that specify 'no permission' it is best to ask the guardian if personal pictures are permitted. Cameras are not permitted in the change room, locker room or rest room areas or pool; failure to comply will result in immediate dismissal. Personal care assistance is sometime required, under no circumstances will there be photos that degrade or embarrass any participant.

CONTACT WITH ATHLETES OUTSIDE PROGRAM

While some volunteers have contact with the athletes in the school setting or other employment/community modalities, it is suggested that outside contact be discussed with the parent/guardian to ensure the understanding and safety of all involved.

SMOKING AND USE OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Smoking or the use of controlled substances while on program duty is NOT permitted; immediate dismissal will result. All volunteers and coaches must follow their code of conduct during programming hours.

RELATIONSHIP POLICIES

Personal relationships extending beyond the boundaries of the program are not permitted while either participant is registered and/or attending.

Volunteer-athlete relationships within the program are extremely important and extremely delicate; volunteers need to be aware and knowledgeable about how to act in instances of unusual health, sexual or social behaviour.

AWARENESS

Be aware of the athletes' health, hygiene, physical and emotional well-being.

Volunteers need to be aware of all actions and interactions with athletes so that there are never misconceptions; if there is confusion as to what the appropriate behaviour in a situation is, consult the coach/ head coach. Volunteers and coaches must never meet alone with an athlete and should not communicate via social media to one athlete.

DISCIPLINE

There should never be physical contact made while providing disciplinary instructions unless the recipient is causing harm to themselves or others; it is the LAST resort. Before touching a child, call for assistance and if possible, consult the coach. There will be no tolerance for discipline that is emotionally, physically or verbally abusive; this will result in dismissal or strategies to improve behaviour. Discipline will be given in non-degrading manners, aimed towards a positive end result; no undue harm to an athlete's self-esteem, personal self-worth or competence will be tolerated. If behaviour management strategies are necessary, consultation with coach/ head coach is strongly suggested to help maintain professionalism and consistency.

ATHLETE CARE

All programs are group based with a support ratio of 4:1, if an athlete requires greater supervision or medical care, a personal attendant must attend with the athlete, to ensure their care and safety. Toileting, changing, transportation and other related things are the responsibility of the athlete and guardian and not the coach or volunteer.

Under no circumstances should a coach or volunteer be left alone with an athlete.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

All media regarding public relations and communication is handled by Brock University. Never give out personal information to the media without receiving permission from the director. Media coverage for events and promotion is welcomed with the supervision

and consent of a director. Visitors are welcome with the consent of a coach/ director. Refusal of a visitor or select media is at the discretion of the coach/director; if there is a problem with a visitor or the media, volunteers are to inform the coach who is entitled to act appropriately to address the immediate situation. The media or visitors should under NO circumstances be left alone with an athlete or group of athletes.

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Upon participating in the Brock Niagara Penguins programs, we need to ensure that volunteers and coaches are working in a safe and consistent manner. Since the programs entail physical activity as well as working with people and movement, you may be exposed to the following common risks:

Slips and falls

Mitigate risk: Wear appropriate footwear, do not run in hallways, be aware of others and surroundings (i.e. be aware of objects blocking doorways, exits, clear hallways of clutter).

Theft and loss of personal property

Mitigate risk: use lockers in changerooms, do not bring valuables to programs.

Injury caused by aggression

Mitigate risk: Be aware of individual triggers, personal space, and rough housing. Become familiar with successful de-escalation techniques for the individual.

Blood spill

Mitigate risk: Lifeguards on duty, staff on duty with valid certifications. Lifeguards or Equipment room staff will call custodial staff to use their blood spill kit should it be needed.

Drowning

Mitigate risk: Lifeguards on duty with valid certifications. You must be actively supervising your group.

**Please note that at facility staff on duty are there to assist with injury/ incidents and follow-up with emergency procedures.*

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

911 Emergency:

NOT AT BROCK: Call 911! Identify yourself, your location, and the incident.
Canada Games Complex information provided to coaches

AT BROCK: Call 911! Then call Campus Security (905) 688-555 ext. 3200 who will direct EMS. If the Cage staff were not involved for assistance, notify them. Inform your coach/director.

Fires:

- Supervisor acts as Fire Warden, he/she will direct you
- All persons will be directed to nearest emergency exit, an outside door or a fire separated area
 - **If in gym 2:** Evacuated to the alumni field
 - **If in pool:** Evacuated to northwest side of pool, unless told by staff to evacuate outside
 - **Other locations:** Follow direction from the staff personal
- No re-entering building until emergency personnel gives okay
- Small fires should be treated with urgency, and get participants out of the building
- Pull fire alarm

Lock down:

- Secure immediate area
- **If in pool area:** Gather near hot tub, to prevent being seen
 - Turn off lights
 - Lock or barricade; observation deck door, change room doors
- **If in gymnasiums:**
 - Turn off lights, stay away from doors, silence cell phones
 - Lock or barricade doors
 - Stay quiet
- Call 911

Power outage:

- **If in the pool area:** The lifeguards will clear the pool, and have people stay on the deck until it is apparent that the outage will be longer. Volunteers should stay with their group and ensure that they have everyone with them. All contacting (of FM, etc.) will be done by pool staff.
- **If in gymnasiums:** Ensure that all participants are safely stopped from their activity. Stay with the group in the gym (emergency lighting will come on). Cage (equipment room staff) will take charge of the facility and will let you know whether to move participants to another area.

Inclement weather:

- University closures will be listed on the Brock University website by 7 a.m.
- A phone message will be recorded on the Welcome Desk, Aquatics, Equipment Room and Zone answering machines to indicate that activities are cancelled due to inclement weather.
- Director will post on the website calendar and twitter if the program is cancelled.

Missing child:

- Communication is important
- Ask parent where they were to meet
- Ask volunteers and coach the last time the child was seen and in what location
- Get child's name and brief description
- Inform any supervisors in building, and relay child information
- Call Campus Security EXT 3200 if at Brock University
- Adherence to the emergency procedures will ensure the emergency is resolved as quickly as possible
- Confidentiality and consistency will be exercised
- Everyone will act in a calm and professional manner to ensure organization and efficiency
- Emergency procedures for each facility will be followed; coach will be responsible for educating volunteers on the procedures and the roles they will play
- When child is found notify everyone who was assisting

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

In the gymnasiums: the Cage

At the pool: Lifeguards or the Cage

At Children's Centre: Receptionist/Security

Harriet Tubman Public School: On duty City employee

Port Weller Community Centre: On duty City employee

Heartland Forest: Heartland Forest staff

Canada Games Park: Staff at front desk

<u>Brock University</u>	<u>Ext.</u>
Campus Security.....	3200/4300
Facility Management.....	3717
Equipment Room.....	3377

<u>Region</u>	<u>Phone#</u>
Fire, Police Ambulance.....	911
Niagara Public Health.....	905-688-3762
General Hospital.....	905-684-7271

ROWAN'S LAW- CONCUSSION SAFETY

What is a concussion?

- A concussion is a brain injury. It can't be seen on X-rays, CT scans or MRIs. It may affect the way a person thinks, feels and acts.
- Any blow to the head, face or neck may cause a concussion. A concussion may also be caused by a blow to the body if the force of the blow causes the brain to move around inside the skull.
 - Examples include being hit in the head with a ball or falling hard onto the floor.
- A concussion is a serious injury. While the effects are typically short-term, a concussion can lead to long-lasting symptoms and even long-term effects, such as memory problems or depression.

Recognize symptoms of a concussion

Everyone can help recognize a possible concussion if they know what to look for.

A person with a concussion might have any of the signs or symptoms listed below. They might show up right away or hours, or even days later. Just one sign or symptom is enough to suspect a concussion. Most people with a concussion do not lose consciousness.

Common signs and symptoms

Physical: Headache, pressure in the head, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, blurred vision, sensitivity to light or sound, ringing in the ears, balance problems, tired or low energy, drowsiness, "Don't feel right"

Sleep-related: Sleeping more or less than usual or having a hard time falling asleep

Cognitive (Thinking): Not thinking clearly, slower thinking, feeling confused, problems concentrating, problems remembering

Emotional: irritability (easily upset or angered), depression, sadness, nervous or anxious

Government of Ontario

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-concussion-awareness-resources>

On July 1, 2019, new rules came into effect through Rowan's Law, to improve concussion safety in amateur competitive sport.

If you are an athlete under 26 years of age*, parent of an athlete under 18, coach, team trainer or official and your sport organization has advised that you need to follow the rules of Rowan's Law you need to:

- review any one of Ontario's official Concussion Awareness Resources before registering or serving with your sport organization; and
- review your sport organization's Concussion Code of Conduct that they will provide to you; and
- confirm that you have reviewed both of these resources every year with your sport organization(s)

Emergency Situations

Call 911 if the person is unconscious, has lost consciousness or had a seizure.

If they are conscious:

- visit an emergency room or primary care provider, such as your family doctor or nurse practitioner
- contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 to get health advice or information

Look out for signs of a concussion in others. Symptoms may appear immediately or be felt days after an injury, especially in children and the elderly. If symptoms appear or persist, visit a physician or nurse practitioner.

Preventing a Concussion

- First, educate yourself about concussions. You should also:
- Ensure you/your athletes use sports equipment that is in good condition;
- Ensure that you/athletes you are supervising wear equipment that fits properly;
- Ensure you/your athletes respect the rules of the sport;
- Commit to your sport organization/school's Concussion Code of Conduct and make sure your athletes do, too;
- Promote a safe and comfortable environment for everyone to report injuries. Make sure everyone understands the risks of not speaking up.

What to do if you Suspect a Concussion

- If you suspect a concussion, remove yourself or the person you are supervising from the activity right away. Continuing to participate puts you or the person with a suspected concussion at risk of more severe, longer-lasting symptoms.
- Call the parent/guardian (for athletes under 18 years of age) or emergency contact. Don't leave anyone with a suspected concussion alone.
- Anyone who has been removed from sport with a suspected concussion should see a physician or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.
- That person should not return to unrestricted participation in training, practice or competition until they have received **medical clearance**. Support gradual return.

Receipt of Review of Concussion Awareness Resource

Thank you for completing your review of the Concussion Awareness Resource.

Under *Rowan's Law*, your sport organization will ask you to confirm that you reviewed one of the Concussion Awareness Resources in this website ([Ontario.ca/concussions](https://ontario.ca/concussions)) before you can register/participate in a sport.

You must review one of the resources once a year, and then confirm that you have completed the review every time you register with a sport organization. If you want to use this form to show that you have reviewed the concussion awareness resource, you can provide the completed form to your sport organization(s).

If you would like to have a record of your review of the concussion awareness resource, you can complete this form and keep it as a receipt to remind you of the date on which you reviewed it.

Once you complete this form, you can save it (to your personal device/computer) or print this page to share with your sport organization and/or to serve as a reminder of when to review the Concussion Awareness Resources again next year.

Receipt of Review

I, _____ (name) confirm that I have reviewed a Concussion Awareness Resource.

Signature

Date

Disclaimer: Your completion of this form will not constitute confirmation that you have reviewed the concussion awareness resources for the purpose of *Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety)*, 2018. If you want to use this form to show that you have reviewed the concussion awareness resources, you must provide the completed form to your sport organization(s). This form will not be saved by the Government of Ontario and the Government of Ontario assumes no responsibility for confirming that you have reviewed the concussion awareness resource.

CODE OF CONDUCT

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

- Volunteers play an essential role in the Penguins program, as they are the ones who hold the responsibility of assisting the athletes while they aim to reach their personal goals.
- They become the role models for those who come to learn social, personal and life skills; they have the chance to change a life.

Volunteer Declaration Form:

- *I will respect the rights, self-respect and worth of athletes, other volunteers, coaches, siblings and spectators.*
 - *I will respect the personal talent and individual ability of each athlete and help them work towards their individual goals.*
 - *I understand that I must act as role model who promotes the positive aspects of sport for athletes with physical disabilities.*
 - *I will show respect to all members of the university, volunteers and supervisors.*
 - *I will encourage athletes with disabilities while promoting independence.*
 - *I will promote good sportsmanship and respect amongst athletes.*
 - *I will ensure that the facilities and equipment are safe to be used by athletes.*
 - *I understand that alcohol or drug use will not be permitted during volunteering hours.*
 - *I understand that I am expected to provide my own transportation to and from Brock Niagara Penguins programs.*
 - *I understand that if I have concerns or feedback, I can feel comfortable approaching the Head Coach.*
 - *I understand that I am responsible for making it to training sessions and all swimming/gym sessions that I have committed to attending unless extenuating circumstances do not allow it, at which time it is my responsibility to notify the Head Coach.*
- I understand the rule of two and that I will not be alone with an athlete under any circumstances.*

Signature _____ **Date**_____

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Athlete Code of Conduct and Eligibility Criteria ensures that every athlete can participate in the Brock Niagara Penguins program in a safe, healthy, and enjoyable environment.

Code of Conduct:

I will follow the rules and procedures of the Brock Niagara Penguins, Brock University and all other locations I am in with the Penguins team.

I will practice good sportspersonship.

I will respect my fellow athletes, coaches and volunteers.

I will encourage and applaud my team-mates for all positive accomplishments

I will behave appropriately at all Brock Niagara Penguins programs & events.

I will contribute to the team at all times

Eligibility Criteria:

This program is for athletes with physical disabilities aged 6 plus.

Sitting Volleyball players can sit independently on the floor and have upper body mobility to throw and strike a ball.

Wheelchair basketball athletes will have a physical disability with the ability to propel themselves sufficiently in a sport wheelchair.

Swim athletes will have a physical disability and are comfortable in the water.

All programs are group based with a support ratio of 4:1.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

PROGRAMS

Brock Niagara Penguins provides a unique opportunity for youth and adults with physical disabilities to participate in their choice of:

- 1. Swimming Program**
- 2. Wheelchair Basketball team**
- 3. Boccia program**
- 4. Sitting Volleyball program**
- 5. Indoor Handcycling and Wheelchair Racing**
- 7. ParaSport Summer Camp**



SWIMMING PROGRAM

When: Once a week, for approximately 8-10 weeks, for 3 sessions (Sept, Jan and April start)

Where: Brock University, Walker Sports Complex - Eleanor Misener Aquatic Centre

What: The Penguin swim team aims for many different individual goals that reflect each athlete and their skill level, however the group goals remain similar. At the end of 10 weeks there is an option for each athlete to enter a competitive swim meet.

Skills: Each week represents a progression in skill development. Some participants follow their own goal setting program. Every session focuses on physical fitness and skill progression in the water, an opportunity to grow socially and individually, a push towards healthy lifestyle choices and finding fun in fitness.



WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL PROGRAM

When: Ranging from 1-2 times a week, recreation and competitive teams throughout the year

Where: Brock University, Walker Sports Complex - Gym 2, Canada Games Complex

What: The Penguin wheelchair basketball team aims to encourage individual goal setting that reflects each athlete and their skill level, however the group goals remain similar. The team will have weekly house league games and will compete in OWSA (Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association) tournaments and clinics as they are available.

Skills: Every session focuses on physical fitness and skill progression on the court, an opportunity to grow socially and individually, a push towards healthy lifestyle choices all with having fun in the game. Each week represents a progression in skill development. Some participants follow their own goal setting program.



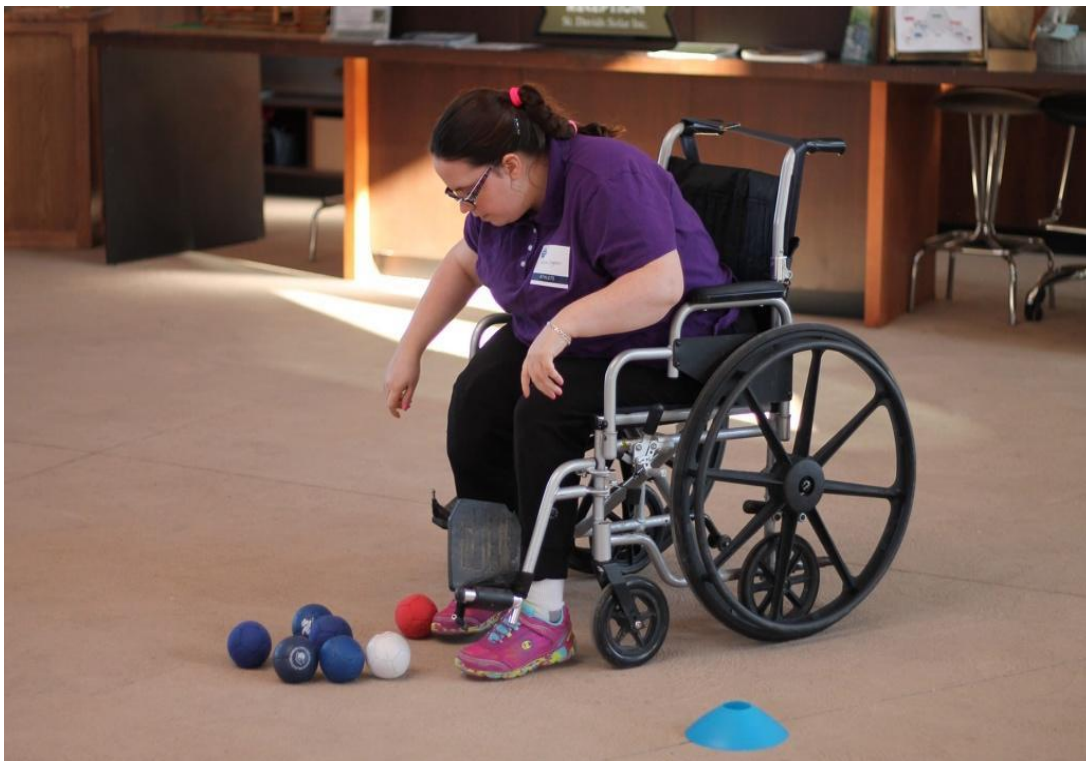
BOCCIA PROGRAM

When: Once weekly, junior and senior divisions, September to April

Where: Canada Games Complex

What: The Penguin Boccia team aims for many different individual goals that reflect each athlete and their skill level, however the group goals remain similar. Every session focuses on physical fitness and skill progression, an opportunity to grow socially and individually, a push towards healthy lifestyle choices and finding fun in the sport. The players will play among themselves and have the opportunity to attend ParaSport – OCPSA (Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association) tournaments and clinics as they are available.

Skills: Each week represents a progression in skill development. Some participants follow their own goal setting program.



SITTING VOLLEYBALL PROGRAM

When: once weekly, for 8-10 weeks (September to March)

Where: Location may vary

What: The Penguin sitting volleyball team aims for many different individual goals that reflect each athlete and their skill level, however the group goals remain similar. Every session focuses on physical fitness and skill progression on the court, an opportunity to grow socially and individually, a push towards healthy lifestyle choices and finding fun in the sport. The team will have the opportunity to play in tournaments or clinics through ParaSport Ontario as they become available.

Skills: Each week represents a progression in skill development. Some participants follow their own goal setting program.



INDOOR HANDCYCLING & WHEELCHAIR RACING

When: Once weekly, throughout the year (January to June)

Where: Port Weller Community Centre

What: For the winter months, Indoor Handcycling is similar to a spin class where an instructor leads a program at a variety of intensities. Class starts with a warm-up and runs in intervals with breaks in between. During the spring months (weather permitting), the class will ride outdoor trails. Participants will learn about the handcycles gears and brakes. For competitive youth athletes, there may be opportunities to participate in sanctioned wheelchair racing events.

Skills: Handcycling is a means to improve cardiovascular health and increases upper-body strength. Classes are organized to improve technique and build endurance and power. Each week represents a progression in these skill developments. Some participants follow their own goal setting program.



PARASPORT SUMMER CAMP

When: 1 week (5 days), July or August (depending on the year), 9am-4pm.

Where: Brock University

What: Parasport Camp aims to provide youth athletes opportunities to try out many parasports and camp activities throughout the week such as wheelchair basketball, yoga, frisbee golf, martial arts, sitting volleyball, dance, boccia, archery, bowling, hiking and more. This camp is organized to encourage physically active games, creative opportunities in a fun and inclusive social setting.

Skills: Athletes are exposed to various para-sport programs. Athletes learn how to work as a team and the importance of sportsmanship. They are able to learn and develop sport specific skills such as dribbling and passing.



RESOURCES

It is imperative to remember that there are variations of traits, personalities and intellectual abilities.

“NO TWO ATHLETES ARE ALIKE”

- *Always encourage and have a positive attitude.*
- *Frustration is allowed and if an athlete needs a break provide them with the opportunity. Reflect and come back with new energy and determination.*
- *Communicate with the athlete and get them involved in working through ideas to modify the activity so that the maximal amount of success can be achieved while still creating a challenge.*
- *Be ready with options so if one thing doesn't work, there is a quiet counter to something else that might.*

CEREBRAL PALSY (CP)

- CP is an umbrella term for a group of non-progressive disability that affects human development.
- It is caused by damage to the motor control centers of the brain (the area in the brain that helps the body move efficiently) and can happen during pregnancy, labour/childbirth or development.
- There is no cure for CP, but treatment often improves muscle spasms, strength and control and developmental delays.
- Children and adults with CP can vary dramatically with some needing wheelchairs and assistance by using walkers, braces or orthotics.
- Some common traits include
 -
 - muscle tightness or spasms, involuntary movement, difficulty with gross motor skills (running, walking...), difficulty with fine motor skills (writing, zippers...) or a difficulty in perception and sensation.
- *In the Pool and Gym:*
 - *Because of the cold water in the pool, participants with CP may experience sudden and intensified muscle spasticity, to help them counter this keep them moving and warm*
 - *In either program, help the athlete to feel comfortable experimenting with the less functional part of their bodies and encourage them to use and strengthen them*
 - *Frustration may result from this, but as with anyone else who is frustrated, talk with them, listen to them, help them be patient with themselves.*

For more information:

THE ONTARIO FOUNDATION FOR CEREBRAL PALSY (www.ofcp.on.ca)

THE CANADIAN CEREBRAL PALSY SPORT ASSOCIATION (www.ccpssa.ca)

AUTISM

- Autism Spectrum Disorder has best been described as a neurological disorder, but there is much that is unknown about it.
- Persons with Autism often share more differences than similarities, so it is best to understand individual needs.
- Common traits may include Impaired ability to engage in social interactions (difficulty understanding non-verbal cues), impaired communication skills and specific behavioural patterns (preoccupation, difficulties with transition, repetitive behaviours...)
- *In the Pool and Gym:*
 - *Help the athlete stay focused by eliminating excess distractions*
 - *Keep the environment clear or clutter*
 - *Keep instructions simple and short, depending on the athlete, give instructions in a one-on-one setting*
 - *If the athlete has trouble understanding verbal instructions, try using picture cards*
 - *If frustration occurs, try removing the athlete or the stimulus the athlete is finding difficult and let them calm down first before re-entering the activity*
 - *Plan for smooth transitions*

For more information:

AUTISM SOCIETY CANADA (www.autismsocietycanada.ca)

AUTISM ONTARIO (www.autismontario.com)

DOWNS SYNDROME (DS)

- DS is caused by extra genetic material on chromosome 21.
- Physically it is characterized with unique facial traits, like round eyes, a round face, a small round nose and enlarged tongue; but this can be variable.
- Secondary complications are very common with anything from congenital heart defects to hearing loss.
- Communication difficulties often play a large role in social and behavioural development.
- *In the Pool and Gym:*
 - *Find fun ways to disguise skills and keep activities changing.*
 - *Transitions can be difficult for some, so make sure (as with all athletes) to get to know them.*
 - *Keep encouraging and be excited about the activities.*

For more information:

CANADIAN DOWN SYNDROME SOCIETY (www.cdss.com)

DOWN SYNDROME ONLINE (www.down-syndrome.org)

Spinal Injury

- Damage to any part of the spinal cord or nerves at the end of the spinal cord (cauda equina).
- Causes permanent changes in strength, sensation, and other body functions below the site of the injury.
- Signs and symptoms are: loss of movement, loss or altered sensation, loss of bowel or bladder control, exaggerated reflex activities or spasms, pain or an intense stinging sensation, and/or difficulty breathing.

For more information:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/spinal-injury>

Brain Injury

- Caused from a violent blow or jolt to the head or body, an object that penetrates brain tissue.
- Major causes are falls, vehicle-related collisions, violence, sport injuries, and explosive blasts and other combat injuries.
- Signs and symptoms can be physical, intellectual, communication, behavioral, emotional, and/or sensory.

For more information:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/traumatic-brain-injury/symptoms-causes/syc-20378557>

SPINA BIFIDA

- Is a birth abnormality where the spinal cord is malformed and lacks the protective skeletal and soft tissue covering it.
- It can occur along the spine, and in severe cases can engulf the whole cord.
- As a general rule, below the level of the malformation, the nerves dysfunction and result in paralysis and loss of sensation.
- Surgery is often needed in the earlier and later stages of life to guard against infection and further malformation.
- Due to weakness or paralysis from the malformation, many individuals require assistive aids and therapy.
- People with Spina Bifida generally have typically developing intellectual skills, although learning disabilities or mental impairment can occur.
- Having a positive self-image is an imperative aspect of their lives.

For more information:

www.spinabifida.com