

MAINSTREAM INCLUSION

Athletes with disabilities can and do participate in typical or “mainstream” formats of lacrosse at all levels of play—from youth to the pros. Anyone with the desire and ability to play a mainstream format of lacrosse with reasonable accommodations should be allowed to do so.

What's the Policy?

In the United States, school districts must provide an equal opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in extracurricular sports. At a minimum, schools must try to determine if modifications or adaptations would allow an individual student to participate alongside their non-disabled peers. See here for more info: [Students with Disabilities in Extracurricular Athletics](#)

Accommodate or Create

Importantly, these guidelines do not require schools or other organizations to change essential elements of the sport, give students with disabilities an unfair advantage, or compromise safety in any way. Students with disabilities still need to qualify and compete with everyone else to earn their place on a team. Some examples of reasonable accommodation may include:

- Utilizing an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter, printed collateral, and hand signals to assist an athlete with a hearing impairment.
- Allowing an athlete with an amputation or limb difference to play with modified protective equipment that does not compromise safety.
- Providing glucose testing and insulin administration to an athlete with diabetes.

In some cases, students with certain disabilities may not be safely included in existing sport programs. If reasonable accommodations cannot be made, then school districts may create new adaptive sport programs specifically for disabled students. For example:

- **Inclusive Lacrosse:** programming hosted in an accessible space that offers station-based skills or small-sided games for athletes with a wide variety of disabilities.
- **Unified Lacrosse:** programming that allows students with cognitive or developmental disabilities to play alongside non-disabled students as teammates.
- **Wheelchair Lacrosse:** programming that combines eligible students from several different school districts into one regional wheelchair lacrosse team.