



Physical Activity and Visual Impairment



**Association sportive
des aveugles du Québec**

June 2009

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

The Association sportive des aveugles du Québec (ASAQ) has existed since 1979. Since its beginnings, it has given itself the mission of gathering people who are living with a visual impairment and more specifically of allowing these people to practice amateur sport.

While it is responsible for competition sports, the ASAQ has also made development one of its top priorities. Thus, the low rate of participation among youth living with a visual impairment when it comes to sports and physical activities has become a topic of discussion. The ASAQ wishes to provide elements that will allow an improvement of the access and support offered to these youths.

A recently completed survey on physical activity has been sent to the parents of children living with a visual impairment who attend a school of the Montreal School Board, the English Montreal School Board, the Premières-Seigneuries School Board or the Marie-Victorin School Board. This survey revealed a lack of physical activity among young people, as much at home as in school. This phenomenon is more apparent in girls than in boys. Parents who completed the survey claimed that the lack of resources and information was a major obstacle to the participation of their child to different sports.

We have created this guide to better inform people about the many possibilities open to people living with a visual impairment so as to give them ideas for inclusion in physical activities and sports, therefore breaking their isolation.

Though it contains a lot of information, this guide is rather a complement to the handbook “Active Living Through Physical Education: Maximizing Opportunities for Students with a Visual Impairment”, created by the Canadian Council of the Blind in collaboration with the Active Living Alliance. This manual has been created with the objectives of helping teachers understand visual impairment and of giving them advice on how to make their different activities accessible.



Picture : Lucie Pelletier



Picture: Annie Pouliot



Picture : Lucie Pelletier



Physical activity among people living with a visual impairment

The benefits of physical activity are no longer questioned, whether at the physical, psychological or social level. Between 10 and 14% of the Canadian population is living with a handicap and the Canadian government has recently expressed the opinion that a full participation to physical activities is an essential condition to maintaining a good health for all people, whether or not they have a handicap (Canadian Sports Centers, 2006).

Sports and physical activities can be tools to promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups into community life. Whether it's in the schoolyard, at the community centre or in a stadium, sport unites athletes, coaches, officials, participants and spectators who all come from different social groups. Thus, sport is an environment conducive to the creation of a harmonious society and to the celebration of diversity (Invest in Canada, 2004). According to the Canadian Sports Centers (2006), sports for people with handicaps have known a rapid expansion over the last few years, so that now many sports can be practiced by people with handicaps, whether recreationally or competitively.

Many factors can be used to explain the passive lifestyle of people living with a visual impairment. These include the lack of resources and of accessible activities, the fear of getting hurt, the need for particular guidance and the lack of information about the available activities.

We have tried, in this guide, to create a list of physical activities and sports open to people who are living with a visual impairment. This list could be used by educators, counselor-teachers, parents of children living with a visual impairment or by people who have a visual impairment themselves. The list of activities presented in this guide is not exhaustive. We wanted to make this guide easy to read, but more importantly we wanted to make it useful. You will find here a wide range of physical activities and sports, both recreational and competitive. Some activities may seem odd, but one of our objectives was to cover the widest range of tastes and interests so as to reach as many people as possible. Many other energy-consuming activities exist; it's simply a question of being creative, but the most important part is to have fun. Go ahead, be creative and have great time!



Picture : Lise Vézina

Section 1: Recreational physical activities

◆ Archery

Archery is one of the most recent sports in the category of sports for people living with a visual impairment. This sport develops concentration, spatio-temporal representation and discipline. Archers who have a visual impairment can use a tripod onto which a metal rod is tied. The archer's hand brushes against this rod. Another adaptation system consists of placing a transmitter on the target and an acoustic receptor on the arch. The receptor produces a signal that becomes louder as the receptor nears the target.

◆ Alpine skiing

Accompanied by a guide, a skier with a visual impairment can reach great speeds during descents. (Techniques and adaptations are explained in section 2.).

who guides them.

◆ Billiards

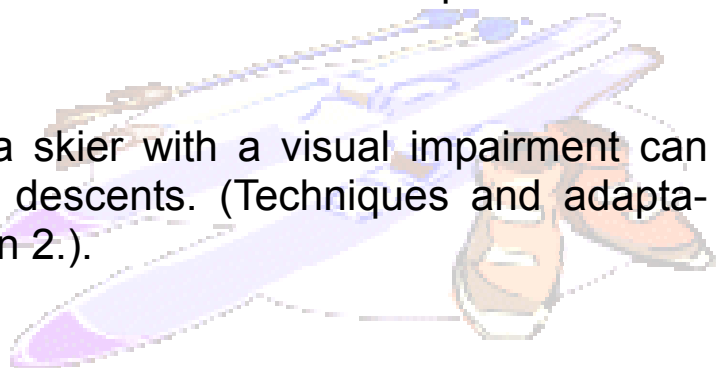
Billiards is a game of skill where the goal is to send all the balls into the pockets using a pole called a cue. Players who have a visual impairment can orient themselves thanks to the lines all around the table or with the help of another player. It is possible to play alone or in teams.

◆ Bodybuilding

The goal of bodybuilding is to develop muscular strength and endurance. This can be done to increase one's muscular mass or simply to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

◆ Bowls

Bowls are similar to lawn bowling, but are played on gravel. Originally played in France, this activity has hundreds of thousands of adepts all over the world. The goal of the game is to bring as many bowls as possible as close as possible to the jack. As in lawn bowling, players with a visual impairment play with a director.



♦ **Bowling**

This sport, which is played in over 20 countries all over the world, has the advantage that it can be played by both seeing and visually impaired people at the same time. A player with a visual impairment can have either an assistant to help him/her aim or a ramp, easily taken apart, that the player follows with one hand while throwing with the other.

♦ **Canoe**

For those who like the outdoors and the smell of water and wood, canoeing and canoe-camping can be interesting activities. Communication is essential when trying to decide which direction and rowing tempo to take.

♦ **Cross-country skiing**

Cross-country skiing is a sport that can be practiced on flat or hilly terrain. Just like snowshoeing and hiking, cross-country skiing can be made easier thanks to a guide.

♦ **Dragon Boat**

Dragon boat is a nautical team sport that takes place on a 45-foot canoe which can hold 22 people, including 20 paddlers. It is possible to join a team by getting information at the *Parc Jean Drapeau*: www.parcjeandrapeau.com

♦ **Curling**

Curling has been played for over 35 years by people with a visual impairment. It is a sport where two teams of four players slide stones on a frozen surface. The stones must slide as close as possible to the target, i.e. the center of a circle. A guide directs the person with a visual impairment.

♦ **Dance**

No matter what kind of dance you choose, this activity is always fun and can reach different levels of difficulty. It helps the athlete develop notions of movement of his/her body in space and rhythm and also develops coordination and a sense of direction.

◆ **Fitness workouts**

Fitness workout classes are varied, ranging from step to kick-boxing, and they are, for the most part, accessible to people with a visual impairment. Often, all that is needed is an instructor or a guide who clearly describes the moves.

◆ **Goalball**

Goalball is the first team sport invented especially for athletes with a visual impairment. In goalball, two teams of three players compete and have to score goals using a ball containing sound bells.

◆ **Golf**

The player must hit his/her ball as close as possible to a hole placed on the green. A player with a visual impairment teams up with a seeing player or a guide.

◆ **Gymnastics**

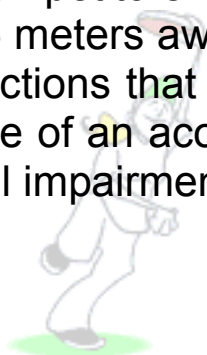
Gymnastics cover a wide range of sports and activities. By adapting contrasts, it is possible for people with a visual impairment to participate in floor and bar events, as well as in jumps, beams and ring events.

◆ **Hang-Glider**

Hang-gliding is a thrilling aerial activity that is very appreciated by fans of extreme sports. This activity, which is accessible to people living with a visual impairment, should be avoided by those who are afraid of heights!

◆ **Frisbee**

Competitors in a Frisbee contest throw from a line placed 5, 10 or 15 meters away from a football goal. This goal is separated into 4 sections that each correspond to a certain amount of points. The use of an acoustic signal is allowed for throwers who have a visual impairment.



◆ **Hiking**

Whether you are great athlete or a simple hiker, you will love discovering different parts of the country through hiking. Being accompanied by a guide will make your life easier when will come the time to explore rough trails.

◆ **Horseback riding**

Horseback riding is a sport that is usually appreciated by people with a visual impairment. This activity gives the rider the occasion to discover fascinating beasts and to learn everything about taking care of horses. When the time comes to complete an obstacle course, a rider who has a visual impairment can be accompanied by up to nine people who will act as acoustic guides at each obstacle. The rider will also be allowed to go around the track twice before carrying out his/her performance.

◆ **Ice skating**

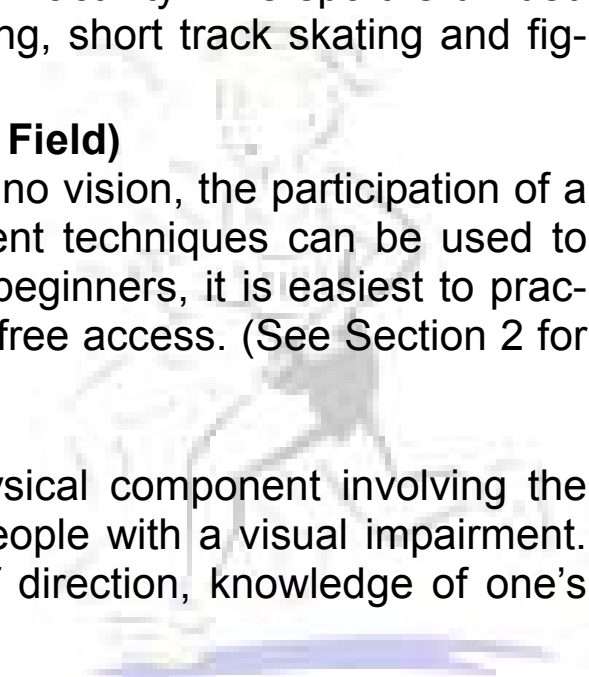
Ice skating is a challenging and fun activity. This sport is divided into three categories: speed skating, short track skating and figure skating.

◆ **Jogging (see also Track and Field)**

For people who have very little or no vision, the participation of a guide runner is necessary. Different techniques can be used to participate in a racing event. For beginners, it is easiest to practice on a track. Many places offer free access. (See Section 2 for adaptations).

◆ **Judo**

Judo, thanks to its important physical component involving the sense of touch, is practiced by people with a visual impairment. Judo develops strength, sense of direction, knowledge of one's body, balance and respect.



◆ **Kayak**

Kayaking is usually done in groups of two or more; the participant with a visual impairment can feel the kayak's movements and can be guided in larger movements by a seeing kayaker.

◆ **Lawn Bowling**

Lawn bowling is an outdoor activity that takes place on a field called the green. The goal of the game is to get as many bowls as possible close to a target called the jack. The player is guided by a director who tells him/her about the position of the bowls on the green and the direction in which the player must throw.

◆ **Powerlifting**

Powerlifting is an individual sport, in the same family as weightlifting. It includes 3 events: the bench press, the squat and the deadlift. It allows the athlete to develop muscular strength and can be practiced at low cost at home or in a gym. Athletes with a visual impairment can compete at different levels.

◆ **Rafting**

Rafting is a sport in which the rafter must navigate on very agitated sections of rivers on a stable pneumatic boat.

◆ **Rock-Climbing**

Rock climbing can take place on a natural or artificial wall. The sense of touch is usually enough for the climber to find the grips, but this doesn't stop this sport from being a challenge for everyone. A climber with a visual impairment can be accompanied by a guide who will give him/her indications to make the climb easier.

◆ **Rollerblading**

Rollerblading was invented in the 18th century to replace ice skating during the summer. It is possible to practice different forms of rollerblading: speed skating, long-distance skating, acrobatic skating, roller hockey, etc. A rollerblader who has a visual impairment can be accompanied by a guide wearing colourful clothing.

◆ **Rowing**

Rowing is an interesting activity that is easily accessible to a person living with a visual impairment, given this sport is practiced two by two or in teams. Many rowing clubs in Quebec offer initiation courses for all ages.

◆ **Shooting**

Shooting can be done in a shooting club with the help of an acoustic target. This target allows the shooter to aim and also indicates whether the shot was a hit or a miss.

◆ **Sliding**

At any age, this activity is a lot of fun, whether it's to cool down on a hot summer day or to take advantage of a beautiful winter day! A day sliding can be very energy-consuming!

◆ **Skipping rope**

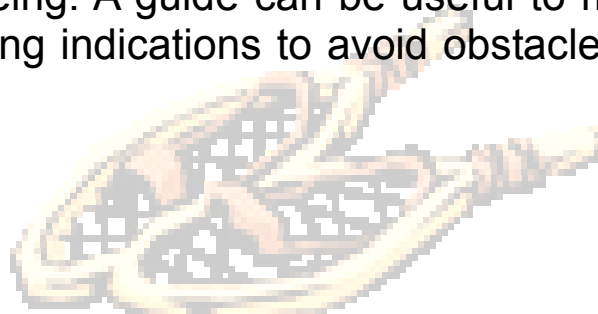
Playing with a skipping rope is a very popular activity in schoolyards. Skipping rope can even help a youngster develop a better balance.

◆ **Snowboarding**

Snowboarding, like ski, is one a sport that allows an athlete with a visual impairment to move at high speeds. A snowboarder with a visual impairment is accompanied by a guide.

◆ **Snowshoeing**

Snowshoeing is an activity that is practiced in the same way as hiking or cross-country skiing. People with a visual impairment can easily practice snowshoeing. A guide can be useful to make the experience easier by giving indications to avoid obstacles, to follow the right trail, etc.



◆ **Sound hockey**

The rules of sound hockey are the same as the rules for regular ice hockey, with one exception: for a goal to be accepted by the referee there must have been at least one pass made within the opposing team's zone. Sound hockey started in the 1950s, when someone had the idea of using a 48 oz tin can, painted black, as a puck.

◆ **Soccer**

Soccer for people with a visual impairment, or cecifoot, is played on a smaller court (approximately the size of a handball court). Two teams, each with 5 players at a time on the court, compete. Two categories exist: players with no vision and players with little vision. In the blind players' category, a sound ball and acoustic signals are used, whereas players with low vision usually prefer a ball with contrasting colours. The outline of the court is marked with a cord onto which are hung small sound bells.

◆ **Swimming**

When a swimmer has a visual impairment, a person at each end of the pool uses a pole to warn the swimmer that he/she is approaching the wall (see section 2 for full adaptations).

◆ **Tandem**

In tandem biking, the athlete who has a visual impairment sits in the back and his/her guide sits in the front, to guide the bike. This sport then becomes a team sport and it is very popular among people who have a visual impairment and wish to maintain an active lifestyle.

◆ **Track and field**

Track and field includes a wide range of activities, including sprints, long distance races, throwing events (shot put, discus throw, javelin throw) and jumps (high jump and long jump). Each of these activities can be adapted for a person with a visual impairment. (See section 2 for adaptations).

◆ **Walking with ankle weights**

This activity is simple, efficient and not very costly. It is accessible to all and can easily be carried out with a white cane, a guide-dog or a guide.

◆ **Water Aerobics**

Water aerobics is a recreational or training activity that takes place in a pool and allows the athlete to develop important cardio-vascular and muscular abilities. It is done in groups, with an instructor. People with a visual impairment can integrate regular groups (with the music at a lower volume and a good description of the moves). This type of activity requires very minimal modifications.

◆ **Water skiing**

Water skiing consists of getting pulled by a boat while trying to stay balanced on two skis. A person sitting in the back of a boat can guide a visually impaired skier with vocal instructions or acoustic signals.

◆ **Wrestling**

The only modification made to traditional wrestling so that athletes with a visual impairment can participate is that during a battle, the two wrestlers always stay in contact, from the starting grip to the end of the battle.

◆ **Yoga**

Yoga is the science of the fusion of the body and the mind towards unity. Yoga includes different postures, balanced breathing exercises as well as the control of senses which should lead to relaxation, concentration and meditation. This activity is easily accessible to people who have a visual impairment with the help of a teacher who clearly describes the movements.

◆ Yoyo

Yoyo is a game that consists of throwing a yoyo and bringing it back in a continuous back-and-forth motion. There are different complex figures in yoyo that require greater talent. There are also yoyo contests.

This section aimed at giving you ideas about physical activities that people living with a visual impairment can practice. No matter the activity, three types of adaptations can be used: the use of a guide, a modified teaching technique or adaptation of the equipment.



Picture : <http://veloptimum.net/Pierre-OlivierBoily.html>

Section 2: Competitive sports

International level competitions for people living with a visual impairment take place in many disciplines. The sports on the program for the summer and winter Paralympics in which people with a visual impairment can participate are:

Alpine skiing	Biathlon	Cross-country skiing		
Goalball	Judo	Swimming	Tandem	Track and field

Six of these disciplines are easily accessible in Quebec at the moment: alpine skiing, goalball, judo, swimming, tandem and track and field. We will try to describe the main rules, approached and adaptations used to make these sports accessible to people who have a visual impairment.

The technical information included not exhaustive, but can encourage a first contact with the sport. The first step that needs to be taken if you like a discipline is without a doubt to approach a club in your region. Some judo and cycling clubs, whose coordinates you will find in section 3 of this guide, have already welcomed people living with a visual impairment or have participated in a training session given by the *Association sportive des aveugles du Québec*. The ASAQ, whose goal is to increase the amount of resources and sport clubs accessible to people with a visual impairment, can travel to raise awareness among coaches as well as to help them adapt their trainings.

Structure of the competition system:

International level

IBSA: International Blind Sports Association
www.ibsa.es

National level

CBSA: Canadian Blind Sports Association
www.canadianblindsports.ca

Provincial level

ASAQ : Association sportive des aveugles du Québec
www.sportsaveugles.qc.ca

Athlete classification:

B1

No perception of light in either eye. Impossibility to recognize the shape of a hand no matter the distance or the direction.

B2

Ability to recognize the shape of a hand with a 5% visual accuracy and a field of vision of less than 5 degrees in the best eye, after correction.

B3

A visual accuracy of between 5 and 10% and/or a field of vision of 5 to 20 degrees, in the best eye after correction.

Alpine ski

Alpine ski paralympic athletes use the same installations as the Olympic Games women's teams. Alpine ski is presently practiced by visually impaired athletes in 35 countries and this number is constantly increasing.

Alpine Canada Alpin has established, within the last few years, a solid development structure to encourage elite level athletes. Athletes with a handicap will now be integrated into the Quebec competition clubs, with non-handicapped skiers and their certified coaches from the Canadian Ski Coaches Federation (CSCF). They will train on the same tracks and benefit from the same structures and the same support as all the alpine ski competition athletes in Quebec.

Alpine ski is governed by the IPC (International Paralympic Committee) through the IPC's Alpine Skiing Technical Committee. The International Ski Federation's rules are used during the winter Paralympic games, with only a few adjustments.



Picture : www.nscd.org

Rules

In all categories (B1 - B2 - B3), a guide is mandatory and the competitor and the guide form a team. Visually impaired skiers are guided through the run by seeing guides who use only vocal signals or radio communication to give indications about the track. All blind competitors (B1) must wear padded protection goggles during the competition.

No physical contact between the guide and the competitor is allowed during the race. The distance between the guide and the athlete in technical events (slalom and giant slalom) should not exceed two direction changes and in the speed events (downhill and Super-G) it must not exceed one direction change.

In the category for skiers with partial vision, the guide must ski in front of the athlete. In the B1 category, the guide can ski in front or in back of the athlete.

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514 252-3089 # 3724



Picture : Comité paralympique canadien



Goalball

First team sport created especially for people who have a visual impairment, goalball was invented after the Second World War as a method of rehabilitation of people who had been blinded during the war. A little later, rules appeared and goalball made its entry at the Paralympic games in 1976.

Each team is composed of up to six players. There are three players at a time on the court for each team. One game is composed of two twelve-minute periods. The goal of the game is to roll the sound ball on the ground to try and get it past the other team, into the goal. The players on the defensive team must try to stop the ball by lying down on their side. If the ball enters the goal, the team who threw it gets a point. If one of the players stops the ball, that player can throw it or can pass it to a teammate.

The goalball court is marked by a line of black tape under which a rope is placed, to create a tactile line. With the help of this tactile line, the players can find their way around the court. All the players must wear eyeshades.



Picture : Claude Dagenais

Five basic goalball rules

1. Third time throw: One player must not throw the ball more than two consecutive times. The third time, a penalty will be given and the player will remain alone on the court to block a throw from the opposing team.

2. High ball: The ball must roll on the ground and it must touch the ground before the three-meter line, found in front of the team area. If it does not touch the ground before this line, the player who threw will remain alone on the court to defend a penalty.

3. Ten seconds: From the moment the ball first touches a player on the defensive team, this team has exactly 10 seconds to throw the ball. If they take more than 10 seconds, a team penalty will be given and the last person to throw will defend a penalty.

4. Eyeshades: Players are not allowed, at any time after the game has started, to touch their eyeshades without having gotten permission to do so from the referee. A penalty will be given if this rule is broken.

5. Silence: It is strictly forbidden for the coach or any other player who is not on the court to talk to the players apart from during an official stop of the game. The referee can think that the coach is giving the players instructions and will give the team a team penalty. The last player to have thrown will then have to defend the penalty.



Judo

Judo is a sport which requires the acquisition of techniques such as the throw, holding, the strangle-hold and the arm-lock, which make it possible to gain control over the opponent. Judo is an art of self-control with the goal of stabilising the opponent without hurting them.

The basic exercises that make it possible to gain control on one's body are the most important exercises. Judo allows its learners to develop strength, resistance, balance and a good sense of direction as well as a good control of their breathing. All these elements are important not only for judo, but also for daily life. This is why many youths who have a visual impairment love this sport.

The practice of most sports accessible to athletes who have a visual impairment requires a guide or an acoustic aid to orient the athlete. However, in judo, athletes can perform alone, given the nature of this sport. The athlete holds onto his/her opponent's kimono. There exists a wide variety of grips and it is very important to learn these different techniques from the start.

Furthermore, judo is the only sport where adequate falling techniques are learnt. This aspect can allow a young person who has a visual impairment to control the insecurity associated to his/her handicap. These techniques help avoid injuries in falls during a bout, but can also be applied to daily life.

Athletes must conform to a slightly modified version of the International Judo Federation's rules. All competitions include men's elimination competitions in seven weight categories. To score points, a competitor must show rapid reflexes, agility and strength. The athletes must keep their balance to react to the opponent's attacks and to counter-attack. The attack and counter-attack techniques that are worth points include propulsion, pinning and the neck hold. At the beginning of the match, the referee claps his hands once to indicate that the athletes may advance until a contact is made. Once the contact has been made, the athletes grip their opponent's uniform (the judogi). The referee then tells the athletes when they can let go and wait for the beginning of the match. Athletes are not allowed to move their feet as long as a grip has not been established with the opponent. Before the combat starts, the athletes establish a grip and this grip cannot be broken except for a change of position. If a competitor lets go of the opponent with both hands during a bout, the referee stops the bout and the two athletes re-establish a grip. Competition tatamis have different textures identifying different zones.



Picture :
Lucie Pelletier

Classification

All athletes with a visual impairment who respect the International Blind Sports Association's norms are eligible for judo competitions.

Men's weight categories

- ◆ Men superlightweight – Up to 60 kg
- ◆ Men very lightweight – Up to 66 kg
- ◆ Men lightweight – Up to 73 kg
- ◆ Men light middleweight – Up to 81 kg
- ◆ Men middleweight – Up to 90 kg
- ◆ Men light heavyweight – Up to 100 kg
- ◆ Men heavyweight – More than 100 kg



Picture : IBSA World Youth Championship 2005



Swimming

Swimming is an individual sport, accessible and adaptable for people who have a visual impairment. It is possible to participate in these competitions in three different categories, B1, B2 and B3. In the B1 category, swimmers must wear blackened eye-shades to ensure that they cannot perceive light.

To teach young athletes the different swimming styles, it is preferable to be in the water so as to be able to touch the athlete while explaining the arm and leg movements. The swimming techniques are the same as those used by seeing athletes. Training plans are therefore similar and the expectancies towards young athletes with a visual impairment should also be similar. If the young swimmer is in a group where he/she is the only one with a visual impairment, the coach should always choose this swimmer for demonstrations, so that the child can immediately understand the proper technique.

When training, it may be efficient to place the swimmer who has a visual impairment behind a swimmer who is slightly faster who will be able to communicate with him/her. This will make the athlete who has a visual impairment progress and he/she will gain confidence more rapidly. The cables used to separate the lanes must be very visible, i.e. brightly coloured or striped.



Picture : IBSA World Youth Championship 2005

Tapping

During the 1980's, a technique was developed to let the swimmers who had a visual impairment know that the end of the pool was approaching. This technique is called tapping. Two guides are placed at either end of the pool and give the swimmer the information he/she needs to execute a good turn and reach their full potential. For tapping, a pole ending with a ball the size of a tennis ball is used. The guides must synchronize their tap at the precise moment at which the athlete must prepare his/her turn to avoid losing precious seconds. A high level of trust is crucial between the guide and the athlete. This technique can be used for swimmers in the B1 and B2 categories. B3 swimmers cannot use any outside help during national or international competitions. Therefore, they must learn to realise that the end of the pool is approaching and that they must prepare to turn. To do this, they can use marks on the wall or near the end of the lap. Furthermore, swimmers can count the number of strokes they need to give on a lap that is 25 or 50 meters long, depending on the pool's length.

The events

- ◆ 100 and 200 meters butterfly
- ◆ 100 and 200 meters backstroke
- ◆ 50, 100 and 200 meters breaststroke
- ◆ 50, 100, 200, 400 and 800 meters freestyle (women)
- ◆ 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500 meters freestyle (men)
- ◆ 200 and 400 meters medley*

*During relay races, the coach can direct the transitions as the swimmers cannot see their teammate approaching.



Tandem

Many people who have a visual impairment practice or have already tried tandem biking, as a leisure activity. Others have decided to practice tandem during competitions with the ultimate goal of one day participating in the World Championships.

During competitions, the three categories of visually impaired athletes (B1, B2 and B3) compete together. There are different types of competitions, both on track and on road.

The track events include the sprint, where two tandems compete on 1 km, as well as the individual pursuit on 3 or 4 km. In the men's category, there is also the Olympic pursuit in which two teams of three tandems compete on a 4 km distance.

Tandem biking isn't difficult to learn. However, athletes who have a visual impairment must have a blind faith in their pilot!



Picture : www.ibsa.es



Track and Field

Racing

For B1s

For people who have very little or no vision, the use of a guide runner is necessary. Different techniques can be used to participate in a race event. A rope of approximately 75 cm held at either end by the guide and the visually impaired runner is a common technique. During the first tries, shorter ropes are sometimes used to increase the runner's confidence. It is not recommended to wear the rope wrapped around a finger or a wrist, because a fall could then cause serious injuries.

It is recommended to start training with a guide by walking and gradually moving on to jogging until the two runners find a good rhythm. It is also preferable to start on a track, far from any obstacles. The guide usually runs next to or slightly behind the runner and can be on the inner or outer side of the track. A guide's mission is to give the runner minimal information, i.e. directions, obstacles and other runners' positions.



Picture : IBSA World Youth
Championship 2005

For B2s and B3s

Depending on the runner's level of vision, guides can wear a very coloured number and can place themselves in a position allowing the runner to follow them. Communication between the two teammates is very important in finding the best way to guide.

For all runners

It is recommended to start either on a track or on another safe surface before running on the sidewalk or in the street. The guide has the responsibility of giving all the information concerning the surface on which they are running. He/She must mention all holes and crevices in the way. If the runner has enough vision to run safely without a guide, it is preferable for this runner to use the inside lane on the track during races, so as to be able to follow the grass line.

General remarks:

It is important that the guide be slightly faster than the visually impaired runner so that the guide can concentrate on communication rather than on his/her own rhythm.

The runner must pass the arrival line before the guide to avoid disqualification.

Sprint

The best times have been accomplished with a guide, as opposed to other techniques. However, the use of a guide to run a sprint requires a great deal of training, particularly when it comes to starts and the starting blocks. The runner and the guide each have a lane during the race.

Marathon

The marathon is present at the Olympics since the first modern Olympic games in Athens, in 1896. This sport, which consists of a 42.195 km race, develops endurance as well as the cardio-vascular capacities of the athlete. The adaptations for runners with a visual impairment are those described earlier.

Discus throw and shot put

The installations necessary for shot put and discus throw for people who have a visual impairment are almost identical to the installations for seeing throwers. The main difficulty remains throwing the shot or the discus within the limits. The thrower can aim thanks to a block placed at the front of the throwing circle. Furthermore, it is possible to add a towel or another object completely at the back of the circle.



Picture : <http://francegagne.sys-tech.net>

High jump

For B1s

The greatest difficulty in the event is the impossibility for the jumper to locate the bar. A marker is placed at the starting point and the jumpers calculate their steps from the marker to the place where they must begin their jump. To determine the exact position of the bar, a sound-emitting instrument can be placed on the bar. The learning of this discipline is complex and requires a good task analysis capacity, starting without the bar. The use of sound-emitting instruments is not allowed during competitions, but B1 athletes can be accompanied by a person who will serve as a guide to give indications and make orientation easier. Furthermore, athletes are allowed to touch the bar before jumping. If the athlete makes the bar fall, this does not count as a trial.

For B2s and B3s

The bar is usually striped black and white and can be even more visible thanks to brightly coloured tape.

Long jump

For B1s

The main difficulties in long jump for athletes with a visual impairment are to stay on the run-off track, to avoid foot faults and to land safely in the sand trap. The most efficient technique seems to be using a vocal guide, i.e. a person who will guide the athlete with their voice.

The acoustic guides place themselves facing the athlete, at the end of the sand trap. They must start by crying out “here”, and the athlete must point to them. This ensures that the jumper will run in the right direction. After that, the acoustic guide cries “Ok-ready-go-go-go”. If the runner leaves the track, the guide says “stop”.

The jumping surface is slightly different from the one in long jump for seeing athletes. Instead of jumping before a take-off line, the runner with a visual impairment has to jump from a surface covered with a small layer of powder which leaves a footprint of the last step in contact with the ground. The jump distance is calculated from the footprint left in the powder. Practice with this technique is the same as for a seeing athlete: the athlete must learn to recognize the best moment and the best place to begin the jump. The jumpers must therefore count their steps to be able to jump in the right place.

For B2s and B3s

The take-off line can be made very visible, by being either black or brightly coloured. Orange cones can be placed at either end of the take-off line. In the last 3 to 7 meters, the runner can also mark his/her points of reference with brightly coloured four-inch stickers on either side of the track.



Picture : <http://uk.sports.yahoo.com>

Main rules concerning guides in track and field

- 1.** Only the guides of B1 and B2 runners can accompany the competitors on the track or inside the jumping and throwing areas. These guides must be clearly identified.
- 2.** The triple jump and long jump competitors in the B1 category can use an acoustic guide to provide acoustic orientation during the approach as well as a guide to assist the athlete in his/her positioning on the track.
- 3.** B2 athletes, for jumping events, can be accompanied on the competition site by only one person who can act as an acoustic guide or simply as a guide. No other person is allowed in the competition area.
- 4.** B1 and B2 athletes can use a guide. Apart from certain exceptions, the athletes must provide their own guide.
- 5.** During the races, at the arrival line or in the exchange zone, the guide must always be placed behind the athletes, to one side.
- 6.** The choice of the guiding technique used is up to the athlete. During a race, the runner can choose to be guided by the elbow, by a rope, or freely. Furthermore, runners can receive verbal instructions from the guide.
- 7.** If a rope is used, the guide and the runner cannot be more than 50 cm apart.
- 8.** The guide must never pull or push the athlete. Breaking this rule can lead to disqualification.

Section 3: Available resources

This section was created to help you find the available resources necessary to practice adapted, safe and structured physical activities. Very often, the first step will be to get information, in your neighbourhood, about the activities that already exist which you could join or to which you could register your child.

Association sportive des aveugles du Québec (ASAQ)

The ASAQ gave itself the mission of promoting the practice of amateur sport among people living with a visual impairment so as to encourage their integration in society. The ASAQ structures the practice of sports for people who have a visual impairment, such as track and field, lawn bowling, goalball, tandem, golf, swimming and judo. The ASAQ also organises regional, provincial, national and international competitions.

Phone number: 514 252-3178

Website: www.sportsaveugles.qc.ca

Association des sports pour personnes aveugles de Montréal (ASAM)

The ASAM aims at bringing together people who have a visual impairment so as to promote and develop among them good physical health as well as the practice of recreational amateur sport and physical activities.

Phone number: 514 252-3178

Website: www.sportsaveugles.qc.ca

Quebec Foundation for the Blind (QFB)

The QFB offers activities to young people who have a visual impairment at an affordable price with the necessary supervision.

Phone number: 514 259-9470

Website: www.aveugles.org/english.php

ALPIN AND CROSS-COUNTRY SKI

Recreational ski

Association des sports pour aveugles de Montréal

Phone number: 514 252-3178

Quebec Foundation for the Blind

Phone number: 514 259-9470

Competitive alpine ski

Alpine Canada Alpin

www.canski.org

Phone number: 403 777- 3200

GOALBALL

Montreal: *Association sportive des aveugles du Québec*

Phone number: 514 252-3178

Quebec: *Le Carrefour Québécois des personnes aveugles*

danielle.cqpa@sympatico.ca Phone number: 418 622-5314

Abitibi: *Association pour Personnes Handicapées Visuelles de Rouyn-Noranda*

Phone number: 819 762-2823

Îles-de-la-Madeleine:

Marceline Bénard: 418 986-2100

GOLF

Association sportive des aveugles du Québec

Phone number: 514 252-3178

HOCKEY

Les Hiboux de Montréal

Gilles Ouellet

Phone number: 514-260-6953

JUDO

Montreal

Anjou Judo Club

8330, Place Chénier – Anjou

Resource-person: Réjean Lavoie

judoanjou@hotmail.com

Phone number: 514 352-9403

Hakudokan Judo Club

10142, St Laurent blvd. – Montréal

Resource-person: Raymond Damblant

club@judohakudokan.com

Phone number: 514 387-6978

Judo Monde

Gadbois Sports Center

5485, chemin de la Côte St Paul – Montreal

Resource-person: Christian Royer

judoroyer@yahoo.com

Phone number: 514 935-3030

Jujitsu Sen Judo Club

Vieux Montréal CEGEP

255, Ontario Est – Montreal

Resource-person: Frédérick S. Gauthier

judosen@hotmail.com

Phone number: 514 839-5575

Shidokan Judo Club

5319, avenue Notre-Dame-de-Grâce – Montreal

Resource-person: Hiroshi Nakamura

Phone number: 514 481-2424

Montréal

Haut-Richelieu Judo Club

80, Clermont st. - St Luc

Resource-person: Gérald Poirier

gerald_poirier@videotron.ca

Phone number: 450 359-8754

Olympique Judo Club

5770, Aline st. – Brossard

Resource-person: Catalin Guica

judoolympique@yahoo.ca Phone number: 450 466-7222

Laval

Judosphère

500, Chemin des Anciens – Deux-Montagnes

Resource-person: Marc Cantin

johanne.hcantin@videotron.ca Phone number: 450 623-8307

Mauricie

Seikidokan Judo Club

Industrial Building of the exposition terrain

1760, boulevard des Forges – Trois-Rivières

Resource-person: François Noël

francoisnoel1@videotron.ca Phone number: 819 376-2996

Québec

Beauport Dojo

2175, St-Clément – Beauport

Resource-person: Daniel Tabouret

dojobeauport@oricom.ca Phone number: 418 666-2177

LAWN BOWLING

Quebec Blind Lawn Bowling Association

Phone number: 514 487-2808

TANDEM

Competitive cycling

Fédération québécoise des sports cyclistes

Phone number: 514 252-3071

Association sportive des aveugles du Québec

Phone number: 514 252-3178

Cycling clubs

Montréal

Club de cycliste LaPraicycle

Maurice Pinglot

mauricepinglot@sympatico.ca

Phone number: 450 444-2625

www.lapraicycle.ca

Club de cycliste de Contrecoeur

Alain Levasseur

alevasseur_59@hotmail.com

Phone number: 450 587-2800

www.dynamiks.ca

Estrée

Club de cycliste Sherbrooke

Guy Marcotte

ccs_route@hotmail.com

Phone number: 819 566-2380

www.abacom.com/~ccs

Québec

Club de cycliste Élycycle - Sports Experts

Jean-Yves Labonté

elicycle@yahoo.ca

Phone number: 418 663-0897

ou 418 932-5857

Recreational cycling

Association des sports pour aveugles de Montréal

Phone number: 514 252-3178

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