

ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY



Level 1 FOUNDATIONS

Athletes in the Foundations level are just starting out in Paralympic Track & Field. They may not be training with proper gear setups, including running blades, throwing frames or racing chairs. They are eligible to be nationally classified but do not need to be.

- Objectives:**
- Making friends
 - Having fun
 - Learning proper techniques
 - Connecting with a club that has Para Track & Field programs in their area

- How to become eligible:**
- Connect to a local Para Track & Field Club
 - Education on equipment, competition, and grants for athletes and their families
 - Connect athletes and their families with organizations such as Move United & CAF
 - Continue training
 - Identify National Classification opportunities
 - Have fun with Para Track & Field!

- Benefits:**
- Overall increase in athlete health and well-being and an opportunity to create lasting friendships
 - Develop independence & social skills
 - Structured training opportunities
 - National Classification
 - Eligible for Jr. Nationals- (Must meet age and standard requirements)

Level 2 DEVELOPMENT

Development level athletes have access to training, have an idea of what their national classification is or have been nationally classified.

- Objectives:**
- Understanding current national team standards for their classification.

- How to become eligible:**
- Fill out athlete questionnaire
 - Read through the Athlete and Sport Program Plan
 - Attend a national classification opportunity
 - Continue training and have fun

- Benefits:**
- Placed on U.S. Paralympics Track & Field radar.
 - Name listed on website as development athlete upon completion of Paralympic Track & Field specific athlete questionnaire.

Level 3 EMERGING

Emerging level athletes are tracked and evaluated by U.S. Paralympics Track & Field and their results are compared to other high performing athletes.

- Objectives:**
- Meet a minimum entry standard for their Paralympic Games event or be within 5% of the minimum entry standard

- How to become eligible:**
- Fill out athlete questionnaire
 - Understand athlete and Sport Program Plan
 - Understand selection procedures
 - Compete at World Para Athletics (WPA) sanctioned events
 - Attend Emerging athlete & USADA webinar
 - Obtain WPA Athlete License
 - Sign up for an international classification opportunity
 - Continue training and have fun!

- Benefits:**
- Overall increase in athlete health and well-being and an opportunity to create lasting friendships
 - Develop independence & social skills
 - Structured training opportunities
 - National Classification
 - Eligible for International Classification
 - Eligible for Jr. Nationals, Trials & Nationals- (Must meet age and standard requirements)

Level 4 EMERGING ELITE

Athletes in this category will be top-12 in the World Rankings in their event or in the 91-94 percentile to class A standard.

- Objectives:**
- The next stepping stone to shorten the gap between emerging athlete and making a National or major competition team.

- How to become eligible:**
- Fill out athlete questionnaire
 - Understand Athlete and Sport Program Plan
 - Review upcoming competition selection procedures
 - Compete at WPA sanctioned events
 - Attend Emerging athlete webinar
 - Obtain WPA Athlete License - yearly
 - Sign up for international classification opportunity if applicable

- Benefits:**
- Congratulatory letter from U.S. Paralympics Track & Field
 - Emerging Athlete T-Shirt or swag bag from U.S. Paralympics Track & Field
 - Eligible for invites to national team camps and competitions
 - Name listed on website as development athlete upon completion of athlete questionnaire.
 - Named to priority list for international classification if slots are available.

Level 5 NATIONAL

National level athletes have been internationally classified and have a current WPA license. Athletes have obtained a National Team A or B standard in the last calendar year to present day.

- Objectives:**
- National Team A or B
 - Internationally Classified
 - Current WPA license

- How to become eligible:**
- Understand Athlete and Sport Program Plan
 - Review upcoming competition selection procedures
 - Compete at World Para Athletics (WPA) sanctioned events
 - Obtain WPA Athlete License - yearly
 - Sign up for international classification opportunity if applicable
 - Complete national team paperwork and requirements

- Benefits:**
- Direct financial support
 - Access to USOPC funded resources including Career & Education, Health Insurance, Sports Medicine, etc.
 - Eligible for invites to fully funded competitions and camps
 - USPTF On-boarding process
 - National Team Apparel

Level 6 INTERNATIONAL

International level athletes have been named to a Paralympic Games and/or World Championship Team based on current competition athlete selection procedures.

- Objectives:**
- Jr. World Championships
 - Parapan American Games
 - World Championships
 - Paralympic Games

- How to become eligible:**
- Confirm eligibility and compete at trials or national championships
 - Confirm international classification status
 - Review upcoming competition selection procedures
 - Obtain WPA Athlete License - yearly
 - Complete required national team paperwork

- Benefits:**
- Fully funded travel opportunities for potential camps and major international competitions
 - USA team kit for selection to World Championships, Parapan and Paralympic Games teams.
 - USPTF Onboarding process
 - JUNIOR World Championships (Age Restricted)

Ongoing LIFELONG AMBASSADOR

Retired athletes may choose to stay involved by being engaged in various ways.

- Objectives:**
- Coach at various levels
 - Advocate for the sport
 - Coach at development clinics
 - Spread the word and identify talent for the Para Track & Field pipeline
 - Participate in working groups to better the program

- How to become eligible:**
- Identify opportunities within the USOPC if eligible
 - Spread the word about Para Track & Field
 - Identify opportunities to stay engaged with local clubs
 - Explore classifier, coaching, and officiating opportunities
 - Mentor new athletes
 - Sign up for Para Track & Field Newsletter

- Benefits:**
- Opportunity to stay engaged in the sport no matter what level retirement occurred at.
 - Opportunity to give back to the sport
 - Access to continued USOPC resources depending on level while competing
 - Opportunity to help development athletes
 - Opportunity to provide direct input in team selections and strategic planning for U.S. Para Track & Field

Ongoing ALL LEVELS

Focusing on family education, awareness and recruitment.

- Objectives:**
- Educate parents on the opportunities
 - Provide resources and information by utilizing CAF & Move United

- How to become eligible:**
- Sign up for Para Track & Field Newsletter
 - Spread the word about Para Track & Field
 - Explore classifier, coaching, and officiating opportunities"

Please contact Sherrice Fox at USParaTFInfo@usopc.org with additional questions.

