

Competitions

NZWR run several competitions throughout the year. These tournaments cater for everyone who is interesting in playing Wheelchair rugby. For new athletes there are introductory tournaments like a Bash and for more experienced athletes our pinnacle even the National Championships. NZWR host tournaments all over New Zealand including: The Bash, our domestic competition 2 rounds of WRC, Low pointer, Nationals, and we are looking to introduce the new 5's version of the game. NZWR also encourages regions close together to have inter regional matches.

NZWR also runs a high-performance programme for the national team called the Wheel Blacks to compete internationally. NZWR supports the Wheel Blacks to train and compete in many of the top international competitions around the world. These include Asia-Oceania zonals, World Qualifiers, Paralympic Qualifiers, Canada Cup, Australian Nationals, World Championships and Paralympics to name a few.



Members

Wheelchair rugby has a long history in New Zealand. There are around 50 athletes with a 3rd of these being female. Currently in New Zealand we have 7 regions being represented in our domestic competitions, Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Manawatu, Wellington, Canterbury, and our newest region Otago.

NZWR Support and Contact

Key Contact
Cherie Harris-President
E-mail: president@wheelchairrugby.org.nz
Robert Hewitt-Sport Development officer
E-mail: sdo@wheelchairrugby.org.nz
Ph: 0225265319
Support NZWR, its athletes, the referees and the wheelchair rugby community by visiting the give a little page and donating

https://givealittle.co.nz/org/nz-wheelchair-rugby-inc

NEW ZEALAND WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

Information on Wheelchair rugby and what we do in New Zealand





Introduction to Wheelchair Rugby

Wheelchair Rugby is a mixed team sport for men and women with physical impairments. A unique sport created by athletes, it combines elements of basketball, rugby and ice hockey. Players compete in teams of four to carry a ball across the opposing teams try line. Contact between wheelchairs is permitted, players use their to block and hold opponents.

Wheelchair Rugby players compete in manual wheelchairs designed for the sport. Players must meet a minimum impairment criteria and be classifiable under the sports classification rules.

Wheelchair rugby is a Paralympic sport, played by many countries all over the world. New Zealand's international team is called the Wheel Blacks and currently ranks inside the top 10 teams in the world.



Why facilities are needed?

Wheelchair rugby is played indoors on a regulation basketball court. Hardwood is the preferred surface, although other surfaces are acceptable. The playing surface must be accessible to people in wheelchairs. Any facilities used for Wheelchair Basketball can also be used for Wheelchair rugby.

Why equipment is needed?

Athletes compete in chairs that are specifically built to specification to ensure safety and fairness in international competition. All wheelchairs must meet these requirements.

The game is played with a ball similar to a volleyball. Four cones, pylons or markers are used to mark the try lines.

A game clock is also required, any clock used for basketball, handball or other similar sports will be sufficient.

It is also recommended although not necessary athletes wear glove's when pushing a rugby chair to ensure the safety of their hands.

History of Wheelchair Rugby

Wheelchair rugby was invented in 1977 in Winnipeg Canada, by a group of Quadriplegic athletes who were looking for an alternative to wheelchair basketball. They wanted a sport that would reduce arm and hand function to participate equally.

The sport they created, originally called Murderball, is now known as wheelchair rugby. There is a very well documentary called Murderball about the sport.

The Sport first appeared outside of Canadian 1979 at a demonstration at Southwest State University in Minnesota. The first Canadian National Championship was held that same year. The first team in the USA was formed in 1981, and the first international tournament bringing together teams from Canada and the USA was held in 1982.

Wheelchair rugby has developed into a fast, dynamic entertaining game of physicality and tactics that makes it one of the most popular sports at the Paralympics.



The Wheelblacks

New Zealand is represented on the international stage by the Wheelblacks. The Wheelblacks run a high-performance programme to develop athletes to be able to take on the best in the world.

The Wheelblacks have both male and female athletes representing New Zealand and rank inside the top 10 teams in the world and have a lot of success in major tournaments over the year.

At world Champs Silver in 1998 and 2006
At the Paralympics Gold in 2004 and bronze in 19996 and 2000.

Volunteering

If you would like to get involved in wheelchair rugby but do not have an impairment there are many ways you can get involved with your local regional team and then perhaps progress onto being part of the Wheel Blacks through becoming a mechanic, caregiver, staff member or if officiating is your thing there is plenty of opportunities to become a referee. Please E-mail Rob Hewitt the SDO if you would like more information on these opportunities at admin@wheelchairrugby.org.nz



Who Can Play?

Wheelchair Rugby players must have a physical impairment which affects their arms and legs. Most players have spinal cord injuries with full or partial paralysis of the legs and par al paralysis of the arms. Some athletes have cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, amputations, polio, or other neurological conditions. Men and women compete on the same teams and in the same competitions. Players are assigned a sport class based on their level of impairment; teams must field players with a mix of classes, allowing players with different functional abilities to compete together.

In New Zealand we have a "social grading" for athletes that are developing or do not classify into the sport to play internationally but still want to play. If you think you are not impaired enough to play but want to this is what social gradings are to help with. If you are interested in playing, please e-mail Rob Hewitt the SDO if you would like more at admin@wheelchairrugby.org.nz