

The **Compensator**

**A Quarterly Update from
Wheelchair & Ambulatory
Sports USA**

Spring 2014



Table of Contents

From the Chair.....Page 2

Welcome Mike
Mushett!..... Page 3

Chapter Membership/
Regional Structure..... Page 4

Disabled Youth Sports
Initiative.....Page 5

IWAS World Junior
Games-Team USA.....Page 6

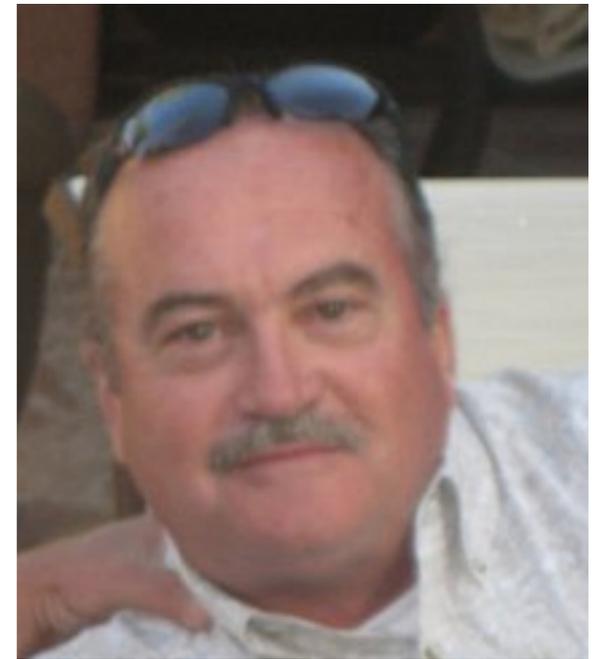
National Junior Disability
Championships NJDC.....Page 7

Membership Benefits.....Page 8

An E-Publication of Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA

From the Chair

**The Viewpoint of Gregg Baumgarten
Chairman of Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA**



Welcome to The Compensator, the official e-publication of Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA. For those of you who are unaware, a compensator is the device on the frame of a racing wheelchair that allows the chair to arc around the corners of a track without having to “hitch” the front wheel. This e-newsletter represents our effort to better communicate with our members, families, volunteers, sponsors, disabled sports organizations, state associations and other stakeholders. There are new and exciting programs, events and initiatives currently being implemented within WASUSA, in addition to the local network of programming, regional competitions and national events that we have conducted since 1956!

Our focus in the coming year will be to continue to develop added benefits to your individual membership, increase value for chapter members, further develop the strategic priorities for our regional structure and expand our network of quality local and regional competitions. Additionally, through the development of the Disabled Youth Sports Initiative, WASUSA intends to address the barriers that exist for youngsters with physical disability to fully engage in active lifestyles, including training needs, lack of awareness, financial constraints, lack of proximal programming and advocacy.

This is an exciting time for Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA, as an organization. We have endured some pretty challenging times and our future looks bright! Currently, the landscape of the disabled sports and Paralympic movements is a dynamically changing environment. New opportunities are developing every day for programming, collaborative partnerships and ongoing outreach. WASUSA finds itself in a very good position to leverage this dynamic environment into actionable initiatives and is poised to do just that. This “window of opportunity” will not last forever so it is vital that we implement a coherent, cohesive and comprehensive action plan. Each of you can begin your support by becoming a member of WASUSA. Your support helps us grow! I look forward to the opportunity in the future to further communicate with you regarding the progress that our organization is making toward these goals. More information to come!

WASUSA Welcomes Mike Mushett!

Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA is pleased to introduce Mike Mushett as the new Executive Director of the organization. Mike will be tasked with leading the ongoing programming initiatives, including the expansion of chapters and regional membership, the implementation of the Disabled Youth Sports Initiative, developing new funding sources and many other assignments. Mike has a long history within the disabled sports movement and brings a wealth of experience to his new job. He started his career in sports and recreation for disabled populations as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist in Michigan more than 35 years ago. Most recently, Mike has come to WASUSA from US Paralympics where he was the Director of Sport Outreach and Development. He has held key administrative positions with BlazeSports, the United States Cerebral Palsy Athletic Association and Georgia State University. Mike also served as the Chief Games Operating Officer for the Paralympic Games held in Atlanta in 1996. In addition, Mike has also worked as an independent sports consultant, developing marketing materials along with media productions associated with the Atlanta Paralympic Games.



Ralph Armento, WASUSA Director of Office Operations, will remain in his current position with WASUSA, and will be overseeing membership, chapter, sanctioning, insurance coverage and competition issues. The addition of Mike to Team WASUSA will enable us to expand on existing programs and implement new initiatives in order to reach more youth and adults. WASUSA is looking forward to working to building our chapter network; increasing the number and improving the quality of our regionals; and providing added value to membership.

Mike's official duties began on February 1st. WASUSA is very excited by the opportunities that the addition of Mike represents to the organization. If you have suggestions for Mike on how to further the mission of WASUSA or would like to contact Mike to congratulate him, his new email address is mmushett@wasusa.org. Welcome Mike!

WASUSA Chapters/Regions

Those of you who had the opportunity to attend this year's WASUSA National Delegate Assembly in Ames, Iowa last fall learned how the restructured Chapter Membership and Regional governance framework was designed and how it would provide more responsive oversight and structure. For program year 2014, the final phase of regional development will be complete, leaving WASUSA with three regional areas, the Eastern, Central and Western regions. Each of these regions will consist of WASUSA Chapter Members that will constitute the regional council for each of the regions. As an example, in the Western Region, the old Rocky Mountain region in Colorado, Far West region in the Bay Area, Arizona Disabled Sports and other former regions would become Chapter Members, subject to renewal of Chapter status every year. In addition, WASUSA is in the process of adding Chapter Members in the Los Angeles area and the Salt Lake City area, among other geographic areas. All of these WASUSA Chapter Members would represent the Western Regional Council that would meet by telephone conference periodically to coordinate competition schedules, develop a network of trainings and workshops; follow up with school systems in their geographic areas in terms of inclusive practices; and competition support. Currently, Dr. Jerry Clayton is the Regional Point for the Western Region, Paul Johnson is the Regional Point for the Central Region and Melinda Chappell is the Regional Point for the Eastern Region. All of these contacts have graciously volunteered to coordinate the transition and development that will serve to enhance programming, lower costs and maximize resources.

It is the vision of the Board of Directors of WASUSA that each Regional Council will someday be endowed with their own working budget to fund the specific priorities of each region that have been determined by the regional councils in terms of competition schedules and support, coaches and officials training, and other regional needs. Some of the goals for the regional councils would include:

- 1. Establishment of at least two Tier 3 competitions, one in the north and one in the south of every region.**
- 2. The addition of multiple Tier 1 & 2 competitions throughout each region to provide more and proximal competitions to athletes.**
- 3. The development of a cadre of regional officials and logistics personnel and funding for travel to support regional competitions, maximizing resources by minimizing travel costs, etc.**
- 4. Development of a regional network of workshops/seminars for coaches, athletes, officials, school personnel, etc.**
- 5. Development of a regional strategy for implementation of Best Practices in Inclusion for regional school districts.**

With everyone's support and assistance, this vision will become a reality for WASUSA! Copy and paste this link into your browser for a regional map: <http://www.wasusa.org/rpocontacts.htm>

The Disabled Youth Sports Initiative

The Disabled Youth Sports Initiative is a new, multi-faceted program of Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA designed to identify, educate and enable youngsters with physical disabilities to participate in recreational and competitive sports opportunities in their communities. Although this has long been the mission of WASUSA, the organization is mobilizing to address the issue of promoting active lifestyles in a critically underserved population, youth with physical disabilities. Research from the Centers for Disease Control has already established the health care issues in the United States with regards to obesity and inactive lifestyles in our young people. What you may not realize is that youth with disability are 38% more likely to be inactive, mainly due to lack of opportunities. Research also provides an insight into the benefits derived from activity, recreation and competition, including improved self-esteem, fitness levels, academic achievement and overall health. Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA has been a leader in the identification, instruction and implementation of sports programming for the disabled for more than five decades.

WASUSA has identified five key barriers to participation in active lifestyles by youth with physical disabilities and has developed a strategic plan to address each issue. The five key barriers include limited community and participant awareness; lack of quality, trained coaches; family financial challenges to participation; scarcity of local and regional training and competition opportunities in specific geographic locations; and lack of inclusive opportunities in mainstream youth sports. WASUSA has embarked on a mission to address each of these barriers, including increased awareness and education seminars and presentations; expanded coaches training opportunities; development of an equipment loaner program; expansion of our chapter membership network and local and regional competitions; and participation in the Athletics for All Task Force developing Best Practices for inclusion of participants with disabilities. By recognizing this critical public health issue and developing a strategic plan to address it, WASUSA is committed to contributing to the effort to encourage healthy lifestyles, decrease skyrocketing healthcare costs and improve the quality of life for a critically underserved population. The critical task for WASUSA at the moment is to educate potential corporate sponsors, charitable foundations and the general public regarding the nature of our mission, provide a vision that will ensure its success and identify collaborative opportunities for corporations, agencies and foundations to become involved in our efforts. More information will be coming in the next months on how each of you can become involved in the Disabled Youth Sports Initiative.

Iowa State Ready for Junior Nationals!



The Local Organizing Committee is heavily engaged in preparation for the 2014 edition of the National Junior Disability Championships to be held on the campus of Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. Adaptive Sports Iowa, under the leadership of Mike Boone, and the Ames Convention and Visitor's Bureau, led by the efforts of Seann DeMaris are busy planning all aspects of NJDC for the state of the art facilities, including Cyclone Stadium, Furman Aquatic Center and Beyer Hall. The Games will be held from July 6th to the 13th and will include Track, Field, Archery, Swimming and Powerlifting. For the first time, in collaboration with BlazeSports, NJDC will also host Boccia competition for the many athletes who enjoy

this sport. This is an excellent opportunity to provide a new sport for athletes with more significant disabilities since there is such a strong Boccia presence in the midwest. Also, the Junior Committee continues to encourage coaches and parents of athletes with Cerebral Palsy to train and compete in the field events from the old US Cerebral Palsy Athletic Association, including the High Toss, Distance Toss, Thrust Kick, etc. Junior Chairperson Debbie Armento has expressed a desire to see more athletes competing in this amazing competition, including athletes with Cerebral Palsy. Those events have not disappeared....only the athletes! Remember, all athletes seeking to compete in NJDC must meet qualifying standards at a WASUSA sanctioned meet or equivalent. If you are unsure as to the viability of a meet for qualification, do not hesitate to call the WASUSA national office at 732-266-2634.



Jr Team USA Set for IWAS World Games!



The 2014 edition of the International Wheelchair & Amputee Sports Federation's (IWAS) World Junior Games are returning to where it all began....Stoke - Mandeville, UK, birthplace of the modern Paralympic movement. The WASUSA Junior Team USA staff & athletes have been selected and will train and compete in preparation for the Games beginning August 2nd through August 8th. Team Leader Barb Chambers reports that the selection process was very difficult but the staff is excited about the potential that this Team USA represents, both on the field of competition and off. Competition for the World Junior Games includes Track, Field, Swimming, Archery and Paratriathlon. Stay tuned for updates!

Pictured above is the US Flag being brought into the stadium during Opening Ceremonies of the IWAS World Junior Games in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

Pictured at right is the 2013 WASUSA Junior Team USA that competed at the IWAS World Junior Games held in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.



WASUSA Membership - Just do it!

Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA is a membership organization and relies on it's members to chart the course for the future. As a member, each of you has an opportunity to shape how WASUSA programs and initiatives are developed, implemented and evaluated. The organization relies on membership to support our programs, assist with development and ensure success. It is vital to the mission and vision of WASUSA that no one "sit on the sidelines" and actively engage in support of the incredible programming that WASUSA represents. The Board of Directors of WASUSA is working diligently to improve and increase the benefits and value of being a member of the organization, including discounts, scholarship and funding opportunities.....all of this in addition to the outstanding competitions we sanction. We need each of you to become a member or renew your membership in Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA to make this vision happen! Many of you may not be aware that there is a multi-year option now for membership in WASUSA for all of you who have a tough time remembering to re-up your membership. We also continue to offer the Recreational Membership for those athletes who are only interested in participating in one WASUSA sanctioned meet and not receiving other benefits of membership.

One of those benefits mentioned above is the opportunity to be drawn for a \$250 Athlete Development Fund Scholarship if you become a member or renew your membership by March 31st, 2014. Twenty (20) \$250 scholarships will be drawn in April from the memberships that have been received by March 31st. These scholarships can be used by athletes for travel or training expenses, assigned by parents/coaches/family to designated athletes or used for their own travel expenses. Scholarships will be drawn every year so multi-year members will be eligible each year for the scholarship drawing. Only those athletes/coaches/family that have been drawn for scholarships on a given year will not be eligible for drawing the following year. Get your membership in now!!

Below is a summary of membership options and benefits associated with membership.

<u>Membership</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
Recreational Membership	\$10	Participation in One (1) WASUSA Sanctioned Meet
Multi-Year Memberships *includes all benefits		
1 Year Membership	\$50	*Unlimited Participation in WASUSA Sanctioned Meets
2 Year Membership	\$95	*Eligible for ADF Scholarship drawing
3 Year Membership	\$140	*40% Discount on Subscription to Sports n' Spokes
		*Eligibility for International Sports Opportunities