

‘Step-Up’ A Step by Step Guide to Initiating and Maintaining Wheelchair Rugby in YOUR Country

International Wheelchair Rugby Federation
Development Committee

The International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF), through its Development Committee, works to promote the development of wheelchair rugby around the world. If you are interested in establishing a wheelchair rugby program in your country, we are here to help. This guide will provide a brief outline of how IWRF can work with you.

Step 1 - Ground Zero

➤ First contact

In this step, the goal is to identify a key individual from IWRF to be a direct link to the developing nation. This will usually be a member of the Development Committee who lives in your zone-see your Zonal Development Commissioner below. As the initial contacts are made this person may hand over to an experienced person closer to your country or someone who may speak the local language.

To make your first contact with the IWRF, contact the IWRF main office. Full IWRF contact information is provided at the end of this document. You can also contact IWRF through the ‘Contact IWRF’ link on our web site (http://www.iwrf.com/?page=contact_us). Please ensure you provide a return email address or other contact information.

Once we have received your request, it will be passed on to the Development Committee and then to a specific contact within your zone. Current IWRF contacts can be found here:

<http://www.iwrf.com/?page=development>

- **Asia-Oceania-Africa**

- Chérie Harris - IWRF Development Chair, (New Zealand)
- Jo Hajjar (Australia)
- Maria Kimani (Kenya)
- Pappu Modak (Bangladesh)
- Deb Duffield (United Kingdom/New Zealand)

- **Americas**

- Duncan Campbell – (Canada)
- Juan Foa – Americas Head (Argentina)

- **Europe**

Sofia Beloka – Europe Head (Greece)

Naomi O’Reilly (Ireland)

- Access to information

Your local IWRF contact will work with you to see what version of the IWRF Resource Package will be most appropriate for you to view. This Resource Package is on the website <http://www.iwrf.com/?page=development> and comes in the form of a DVD with many detailed areas of the game such as mechanics, classification, ball handling, drills, medical needs, types of chairs, etc. outlined in an easy-to-view format. You may also obtain basic information and rules on the website.

Check out countries within your zone and nearby that play rugby and may have a website. Ask for information if you cannot find it especially illustrative material on game chairs.

- Networking

It is important to spread the word far and wide to ensure a start-up program catches hold and continues to expand. Player recruitment, fundraising, basic support means actively communicating with National Governing Bodies, National Paralympic Committees, Rehabilitation Centers, Public and Private Hospitals, Medical Health Professionals, Schools, Local sporting clubs, to name a few.

- Equipment

Wheelchair rugby is played with a volleyball and sports wheelchairs. Originally players started out using their everyday chairs but these will soon become damaged when one player brings out their rugby chair. Basketball chairs will suffice if rugby chairs are not plentiful and day chairs are getting damaged. Ask for second hand basketball chairs from local clubs. Check out the IWRF website for any second hand rugby chairs that people are willing to donate.

Remember, it is not necessary to have new wheelchair rugby chairs to begin with – any chair will do to get people playing.

Players generally wear rubber gloves to protect their hands and aid with gripping the ball.

Should you be interested in buying a new rugby chair, a list of wheelchair manufacturers who produce wheelchair rugby chairs is provided on the IWRF website www.iwrf.com.

Step 2 - Development Clinics

Once all stages of “Step 1” are fulfilled the developing nation may apply to the IWRF Development Committee to provide professionals to conduct a Development Clinic. This is

usually hosted and expenses paid for by the developing country. Depending on the availability of funds, experience and necessity the Development Committee will appoint representatives to host these clinics.

Clinics will be held for players, coaches, classifiers, referees and health/support staff:

- Topics: A presentation of the IWRF and of the Development Committee; An introduction to the sport of Wheelchair Rugby; Player eligibility; Game rules; Basic drills.
- Duration: This is flexible given the number of attendees, space provided, equipment available etc but two and a half days is a good indicator.
- Necessities: People! If possible the Clinic would be attended by current and future players, coaches, referees, table officials, classifiers, mechanics, administrators, volunteers, support staff and any person interested in becoming involved with wheelchair rugby. If required a person to assist with translation.

A gym with court space for playing wheelchair rugby and space for classroom sessions will be essential.

Sporting equipment – wheelchair rugby chairs (basketball chairs will do if there are not any rugby chairs available), volleyballs.

- Cost: In most cases the host country will cover all expenses associated with the conduct of the clinic. The IWRF will try wherever possible to send those living close to the developing country to conduct the clinic in aid of keeping costs down.

Step 3 - Development Tournaments

For national wheelchair rugby programs to grow it will be important to get regular game experience. More info can be provided from your Zone Representative. Zone tournaments will be too competitive and developing countries will not be ready for them yet. Therefore it will be extremely helpful for beginning nations to get their national players on the court by the implementation of Development Tournaments with the following characteristics:

- National Tournament: This should gather as many club teams or as many wheelchair rugby athletes in the country as possible. This is also the 'Older Brother Concept', where few experienced countries or athletes are invited to participate and tutor the developing countries teams and athletes. Ideally these are neighboring countries or at least within your zone.

- Annual events: These should gather developing wheelchair rugby teams from the same Zone for competition. Wherever possible try to invite a country or several players that are experienced in the game to attend to act as mentors.
- Affordable low entry fees: These are needed to cover the travel expenses of international delegates (classifiers, referees, technical delegate).
- IWRF Sanction: This is currently needed to initiate and validate a World Ranking and Classification of players. An IWRF sanction is needed to begin competitive and ranked international competitions. Ask your IWRF contact about qualifying tournaments. In order to compete in an IWRF Sanctioned Tournament, your country will need to be an IWRF member. Your IWRF contact will provide you with more information about the membership requirements as you continue to develop.

JUST DO IT – we are here to help and answer any questions you may have. Wheelchair Rugby is well worth the effort with everyone involved developing not just a passion for the game but an addiction!

All the Best – we look forward to seeing you on the World stage in the future!

How to Contact the IWRF:

Mailing Address: IWRF
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Canada

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Email: info@iwrf.com

IWRF can also be reached via Skype at SkypeID **calliwrf**