



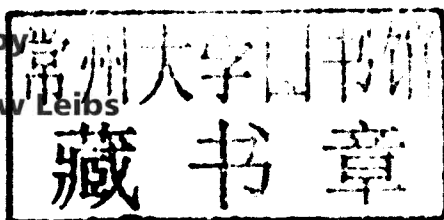
A Volume in Critical Concerns in Blindness

The Encyclopedia of Sports and Recreation for People With Visual Impairments

Andrew Leibs

The Encyclopedia of Sports and Recreation for People With Visual Impairments

by
Andrew Leibs



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The Encyclopedia of Sports and Recreation for People With Visual Impairments

A Volume in
Critical Concerns in Blindness

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*The Encyclopedia of Sports and Recreation
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by Andrew Leibs

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Arthur O'Neill of the Carroll Center for the Blind, who, for decades, has availed countless persons with visual impairments of the transformative power of sports participation.

FOREWORD

Lauren J. Lieberman

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to write this forward for the book *The Encyclopedia of Sports and Recreation for People with Visual Impairments* by Andrew Leibs. Andrew has taken his knowledge, expertise, and passion and turned it into an amazing contribution to the field.

I have been in this field for over 25 years and I still see children with visual impairments sitting on the side during their physical education class. I still see children who will not run or participate in sports for fear of peer teasing and ridicule. I see children who spend the summer at home inside as their parents cannot find adequate summer programs that will meet their needs. I see children who have never run a mile before. I see children who have never run, batted a ball, jumped off a diving board, or been asked to play in a soccer game—all because they have a visual impairment. I often meet teachers who have no idea how to teach the children with visual impairments who are on their caseload. I am currently a professor at The College at Brockport and I teach both undergraduate and graduate classes in adapted physical education. I have co-authored the book *Games for People with Sensory Impairments* (2nd ed.), *Strategies for Inclusion* (2nd ed.); *Paraeducators in Physical Education*; *Going Places*; *Physical Education, Recreation and Sports for Children With Visual Impairments, Blindness, or Deafblindness*; and *Everybody Plays*. I am the founder and director of Camp Abilities: a developmental sports camp for children who are visually impaired, blind, or deafblind.

The beauty of this book is that it takes an array of common sports and activities and shows how a person with a visual impairment can partici-

pate in these sports. Also included is valuable information on equipment, rules, and instructional and environmental modifications necessary to facilitate activities. This book also provides links to websites and available videos relating to each sport. One of the most unique aspects of this book is how Andrew profiles sports using the voices of nearly 100 athletes who are visually impaired. Andrew includes quotes from athletes who play these sports both young and old! The creativity, imagination, and commitment that Andrew shows through this book is incredible.

This book truly looks at life and how to create your own destiny by developing a life of sports, physical activity, and recreation. A visual impairment should not be an obstacle, but a variable when choosing an activity. In my experience I believe that this book will promote self-esteem, build powerful motor skills, increase much needed fitness levels, and empower parents to let their children do the same things their peers do.

I would like to personally thank Andrew for his dedication and commitment to the field. His creativity, energy, enthusiasm, and passion can now be shared with others through this amazing book of sports and activities.

PREFACE

This people's encyclopedia of sports and recreation was written for persons who are blind and visually impaired and the professionals (teachers, counselors, and administrators) who serve them. The book surveys the far-reaching fitness and recreation opportunities that have grown rapidly over the past 20 years.

The 1990 passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) opened up parks, pools, and public recreation programs. Growth of the Paralympic Games, which has achieved parity of prestige with the Olympics, has spawned an expanding infrastructure of adaptive sports products, programs, and personnel. The Disability Movement has created an inclusion consciousness and raised expectations for fitness opportunities among persons with all types of disabilities. Initiatives such as the Wounded Warriors Sport Project—which provides adaptive sports instruction to injured U.S. soldiers—has sparked a further surge in accessible programs especially in skiing.

Not long ago, if a child had a visual impairment, their sports involvement rarely exceeded sitting on the sidelines in gym class or keeping score while their classmates played. Today, summer camps offer kids opportunities to skydive or even fly a plane; developmental camps enable athletes of all ages and abilities a low-cost way to try or to build skills in sports such as skiing and tandem cycling; runners compete for prize money and national road race championships, and Paralympic prospects can earn residency at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO.

Navigating this new world of activity can be difficult. Government agencies, nonprofits, and regional recreation providers often lack the resources to market their opportunities. Earlier works on blind sports

either told the stories of elite athletes or presented approaches that treated sports as specialized learning, therapy, or rehabilitation. For most people, however, sports are a vital component of personal expression and interaction that can open paths to adventure, confidence, and health. That is the perspective that this book promotes.

This book presents a panoramic view of the possible told through stories of both top athletes and those simply seeking ways to become more active. The brief chapters emphasize how to get involved and how participating in an activity can enhance one's life. It strives to be comprehensive, which is nearly impossible in our digital age. Enough resources are profiled, however, for readers to explore activities that interest them. They can then use the Internet to turn that inspiration into action. Most organizations have websites and can be followed on Facebook or Twitter, while competitive highlights and demonstration videos for most sports are available on YouTube.

The hope is that this book will inspire readers to discover sports and activities they would like to try, and find in the stories of the athletes profiled effective approaches to getting started. Knowing what you want is the first step. The second is looking at blindness and accessibility in new ways. Blindness is no longer a barrier to any sport. Over the past 2 decades, "accessibility" has quickly evolved from a kind concept to a call to action. Persons with visual impairments now have the resources to answer that call, though it often takes determination, flexibility, and creativity to ensure one's participation.

The benefits of sports and recreation go beyond improved cardiovascular and mental fitness. Increasing strength and endurance builds confidence and self-esteem. Participation in games and team sports build character through social interaction. And the physical components of many activities force one to reach out with their body and confront the world. Such actions not only squeeze more serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins out of the brain, but can also tap undiscovered aquifers of competitiveness.

Opportunities today are far-reaching; all one has to do is express an interest to find people and programs eager to get them in the game.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge a few special contributors that helped shape this project, including: Carolyn Marvin, for her tireless proofreading and feedback; Dr. Lauren J. Lieberman, for her editorial guidance; Annemarie Cooke, for convincing me to finally attend Ski for Light; Lisamaria Martinez, for her efforts to promote sports through the National Federation of the Blind; and James Mastro, for his contributions to blind sports as exemplary athlete, teacher, writer, and promoter of Showdown.

VISION CLASSIFICATIONS

In blind sports, especially in competitions sanctioned by the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) and United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA), athletes are classified according to degree of vision loss.

Perfect vision is 20/20. This means a person with 20/200 or 20/600 vision would have to stand 20 feet away from something. A person with 20/20 vision could see from 200 or 600 feet respectively.

IBSA VISUAL CLASSIFICATIONS

- **Class B1:** No light perception in either eye up to light perception, but unable to recognize the shape of a hand at any distance or in any direction.
- **Class B2:** From ability to recognize the shape of a hand up to visual acuity of 20/600 and/or a visual field of less than 5 degrees in the best eye with the best practical eye correction.
- **Class B3:** From visual acuity above 20/600 and up to visual acuity of 20/200 and/or a visual field of less than 20 degrees and more than 5 degrees in the best eye with the best practical eye correction.
- The USABA recognizes a fourth classification for athletes with low vision
- **Class B4:** From visual acuity above 20/200 and up to visual acuity of 20/70 and a visual field larger than 20 degrees in the best eye with the best practical eye correction.

While many competitions, including the Paralympics, hold separate events for each vision class, the trend is to combine all athletes who are blind into one division. The goal is to increase participation and make events more uniform and competitive.

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