

Swim

What type of body of water can Paratriathletes swim in?

Paratriathletes can swim in any body of water type ranging from an ocean, lake, river, or pool.

Can Paratriathletes swim a multiple loop course?

Yes, but these athletes cannot exit the water to start a second lap, so you must have a way for them to start their second lap in the water.

Do the Paratriathletes need to start in their own wave?

It is not mandatory that they do start in their own wave, but it is encouraged to let them be your first wave and have a 5-10 min head start before your next wave. Some of the Paratriathletes do not swim free style and are therefore slower in the water and you do not want other swimmers swimming over the top of them. A time trial start is okay as long as you give the Paratriathletes some time before starting the age groupers.

What start mechanism do the Paratriathletes use?

According to the USAT rules, Paratriathlon events MUST have an in-water start. No pontoon dive or beach run.

What is the ideal surface of the swim exit?

Sand and or stairs as the exit make it very difficult for the Paratriathletes to exit the water and get into transition. Grass and a ramp, if needed, is the best way to go.

Does my event need water exit handlers?

Most of the Paratriathletes do need help when exiting the water, so providing specific water exit handlers for these athletes is ideal. A wheelchair athlete will need to be carried from the water exit to their wheelchair, while a leg amputee would need assistance obtaining their leg at the swim exit or getting their crutches. If you do not have water exit handlers, you need to ensure each athlete is assigned a handler to do this task at the water exit. Wheelchair athletes (Tri 1) get 2 handlers, visually impaired athletes (Tri 6) get no handlers as their guide can assist, and the rest (Tri 2-Tri 5) are allowed one, accordingly to USAT rules.

What special considerations are needed in transition?

A grass transition can be difficult for wheelchair athletes, so an asphalt transition is always best. The Paratriathletes need more bike rack space in transition, so giving each athlete at least 6 feet is necessary. Arm and leg amputees as well as visually impaired athletes will need a folding chair at their bike rack space to sit and put their shoes and legs/braces on. Tight turns inside the transition area and around other racks need to be eliminated as some of the equipment does not have a wide turn radius.

Bike

My bike course has sharp turns, can Paratriathletes navigate this?

Most paratriathletes can navigate regular bike course conditions, but a handcycle (wheelchair users race in for the bike) and the tandem bikes (visually impaired athletes use) have a very wide turn radius.

What can I do if my bike course has a curb to go over between transition and the mount/dismount line?

Creating a durable wooden ramp that all athletes can go over would be ideal. If this is not feasible, then you need to think about a different place for the mount line that does not involve any curbs.

Can my bike course be open to car-traffic?

It may, but keep in mind the handcycles are very low to the ground and are sometimes hard to see by cars. Providing flags or asking the athlete to bring a flag would be the safest action to take.

Is any hill too steep for Paratriathletes to navigate on a bike course?

Yes, any hill with a gradient of 12% or greater is not feasible for Paratriathletes because some Paratriathletes cannot get out of the saddle to peddle and those on a handcycle will have a difficult time climbing.

Run

Can my run course be on a sidewalk?

Yes, as long as the sidewalk is wide enough to accommodate 2 racing wheelchairs side by side going the same direction. If your course is an out and back on the same sidewalk, it is likely not wide enough. Make sure there are no curbs to get athletes onto the sidewalks. Racing wheelchairs cannot navigate this.

My run course has sharp turns, can Paratriathletes navigate this?

Most paratriathletes can navigate regular run course conditions, but a racing wheelchair has a very wide turn radius.

Is any hill too steep for Paratriathletes to navigate on a run course?

Yes, any hill with a gradient of 12% or greater is not feasible for Paratriathletes because the racing wheelchair users will not be able to climb this.

I have a time-limit for my race. Should I advertise this to the Paratriathletes?

Absolutely. Letting them know this before race day and before they sign up is the best way to ensure Paratriathletes that attend your event can meet your time limit for the course.

Miscellaneous

What are the different Paratriathlon Categories?

TRI 1 - Wheelchair user: Includes Paraplegic, Quadriplegic, Polio, Double Leg Amputee and disabilities that prevent the safe use of a conventional bicycle must use “hand cycle” on bike course and “racing wheelchair” on the run.



Handcycle



Racing Wheelchair

TRI 2 - Severe leg impairment, including above knee amputees. Must ride bicycle and run with above knee prosthesis or run using crutches.

TRI 3 - Les Autres: Includes athletes with Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, double leg amputee or paralysis in multiple limbs. Must ride a bicycle or tricycle and run. May use braces or prosthesis.

TRI 4 - Arm impairment: Includes paralysis, above elbow amputees and below elbow amputees, or impairment in both upper limbs. Must ride a bike. May use prosthesis, brace or sling on the bike and/or run.

TRI 5 - Moderate leg impairment: Includes below-knee amputees. Must ride a bicycle and may run with prosthesis.

TRI 6 - Visual Impairment: Includes a visual acuity of less than 6/60 vision or visual field less than 40 degrees with best corrective vision. One guide of the same gender is mandatory throughout the race.

Are there any special considerations for the race venue in general?

Yes, make sure to have handicap accessible parking available for packet pickup and at the race venue. Also make sure to have handicap accessible portable toilets.

How do I get Paratriathletes at my race?

Your first step is to advertise on your website that is friendly for them to compete at your event. You can also fill out the USAT Paratriathlon Committee’s Paratriathlon Friendly Designation Form and get awarded a special logo and have your event listed on the Paratriathlon Friendly race list.

Do I have to award Paratriathlon awards?

If you plan on having age group awards then you should plan on having Paratriathlon awards.

Do visually impaired athlete's guides need to be annual or one-day USAT members?

Yes, all visually impaired guides need to have a USAT annual membership or be a one-day member. We would recommend that you set-up a comp code in your online registration system to let the guides sign up so you know their name and they can purchase the membership needed.

Do I charge a race entry fee to the visually impaired guide?

Absolutely no.

Do I give awards, a goody bag, or a finisher medal to the visually impaired guide?

You do not have to, but you will likely have the athlete and guide attend your event the next year if you do.

What is a handler's role?

A handler is there to assist the paratriathlete with anything they need without hindering other competitors or pushing them forward in transition. A handler can strip their wetsuit, help them in transition with their gear, as well as hand them anything they need at swim exit or swim start.

Where do I secure handlers?

Not every athlete will need a handler, but a RD should always offer and help recruit the volunteer. The easiest way to recruit is to add this job to your volunteer list. Some athletes will also bring their own handler, so you should ask the athlete if they need you to recruit one for you.

Does USAT have any special rules for Paratriathletes?

Yes, and they can be found here: <http://www.usatriathlon.org/about-multisport/Rulebook.aspx#Paratriathlon>

What is the difference between a handler and a guide?

A handler is there to assist the paratriathlete with anything they need without hindering other competitors or pushing them forward in transition. A handler can strip their wetsuit, help them in transition with their gear, as well as hand them anything they need at swim exit or swim start. A guide is someone who competes alongside a visually impaired athlete throughout the race and also acts as their guide. Guides must meet the membership requirements.

Are recumbent bikes allowed?

No, recumbent bikes are never allowed in USAT Sanctioned events. Upright trikes are allowed.

Are Paratriathletes ranked separately or within their age group?

Paratriathletes are ranked within their age group and age group ranking rules apply.

Anything special for the medical staff to know about Paratriathletes?

The medical staff needs to know who the Paratriathletes are, what their disability is, and what medications they are taking. This information will be helpful for the medical staff to know in case a Paratriathlete winds up in the medical tent.



Do I have to allow a Paratriathlete to participate? If one asks to participate, am I required to modify my course so they can compete? If you have a Paratriathlete wants to compete in your race, so you should see if it is reasonable for you to accommodate and tweak your course to accommodate them. You should try and make every effort to accommodate them as they just want to race like everyone else!

What if I have additional questions?

If you have any questions on whether your course is accessible please contact the USAT Event Services Team eventservices@usatriathlon.org.