



## WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

### History

Wheelchair Rugby is a team sport for male and female athletes with a mobility-related disability in at least three limbs (tetraplegia). It is a unique sport created by athletes with a disability and combines elements of basketball, handball and ice hockey. Wheelchair Rugby was invented in 1977 in Winnipeg, Canada, and was originally known as “Murderball” because of its aggressive nature. Today, Wheelchair Rugby is a Paralympic sport played in many countries, and is under development in several others.

### Description of the game

Wheelchair Rugby is a team sport for male and female athletes with a disability. The aim is to score tries by crossing the opposing team’s try line while in possession of the ball. The ball may be passed, thrown, batted, rolled, dribbled, or carried in any direction subject to the restrictions laid down in the rules. The team scoring the most tries by the end of the game is declared the winner.

## Equipment

Athletes compete in manual wheelchairs that are specially designed for wheelchair rugby use. The rules of the sport include detailed specifications for the wheelchairs to ensure safety and fairness; in international competition, all wheelchairs must meet these requirements. To begin to play, any manual sports wheelchair may be used, although the game is easier when played in a specialized rugby wheelchair. Many players begin using wheelchairs adapted from wheelchair basketball.

There are two types of wheelchair rugby chairs: offensive and defensive chairs. Offensive chairs are set up for speed and mobility and contain a front bumper to prevent other wheelchairs from hooking it. These chairs are used by players with more function. Defensive wheelchairs, like the one pictured on the left contain bumpers set up to hook and hold other players. These wheelchairs are most often used by players with less function.

The game is played with a white ball identical in size and shape to a regulation volleyball. In addition to the ball, four cones, pylons, or other similar markers are required to mark the ends of the goal lines. A game clock and a 40-second score clock are also required; any clocks used for basketball, handball, or other similar sports will be sufficient.



## Rules

Wheelchair rugby is mostly played by two teams of up to twelve players. Only four players from each team may be on the court at any time. It is a mixed-gender sport, and both male and female athletes play on the same teams.

Wheelchair rugby is played indoors on a hardwood court of the same measurements as a regulation basketball court—28 metres long by 15 metres wide. The required court markings



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are a centre line and circle, and a key area measuring 8 metres wide by 1.75 metres deep at each end of the court.

The goal line is the section of the end line within the key. Each end of the goal line is marked with a cone-shaped pylon. Players score by carrying the ball across the goal line. For a goal to count, two wheels of the player's wheelchair must cross the line while the player has possession of the ball.

A team is not allowed to have more than three players in their own key while they are defending their goal line. Offensive players are not permitted to remain in the opposing team's key for more than ten seconds.

A player with possession of the ball must bounce or pass the ball within ten seconds.

A team's back court is the half of the court containing the goal they are defending; their front court is the half containing the goal they are attacking. Teams have twelve seconds to advance the ball from their back court into the front court and a total of forty seconds to score a point or concede possession.

Physical contact between wheelchairs is permitted, and forms a major part of the game. However, physical contact between wheelchairs that is deemed dangerous—such as striking another player from behind—is not allowed. Direct physical contact between players is not permitted.

Fouls are penalized by either a one-minute penalty, for defensive fouls and technical fouls, or a loss of possession, for offensive fouls. In some cases, a penalty goal may be awarded in lieu of a penalty. Common fouls include spinning (striking an opponent's wheelchair behind the main axle, causing it to spin horizontally or vertically), illegal use of hands or reaching in (striking an opponent with the arms or hands), and holding (holding or obstructing an opponent by grasping with the hands or arms or falling onto them).

Wheelchair rugby games consist of four eight-minute quarters. If the game is tied at the end of regulation play, three-minute overtime periods are played.

Much like able-bodied rugby matches, highly competitive wheelchair rugby games are fluid and fast-moving, with possession switching back and forth between the teams while play continues. The game clock is stopped when a goal is scored or in the event of a violation—such as a ball being played out of bounds—or a foul. Players may only be substituted during a stoppage in play.

## Possible adaptations

Wheelchair rugby is a game that can be played by both disabled and able bodied people. It is the only variation of rugby that is fully inclusive, meaning it offers the opportunity for both disabled and able bodied people to play on the same team. Able-bodied people just sit on the same wheelchairs as people with disabilities and they play together in mixed teams.

### Sources of information

[Wheelchair rugby - Wikipedia](#)

[Wheelchair Rugby - WheelPower](#)

[Wheelchair Rugby Rules – WWR \(worldwheelchair.rugby\)](#)

[Wheelchair Rugby Rules – WWR \(worldwheelchair.rugby\)](#)

### Pictures

[9,103 Wheelchair Rugby Stock Photos, High-Res Pictures, and Images - Getty Images](#)



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