

What is WheelChair Basketball?

Wheelchair basketball is played by people with different level of physical disabilities that prevents running, jumping and pivoting. Riding on a wheelchair, a game of basketball is played among two teams of five players each. World War II veterans originally developed the sport in 1945 as part of rehabilitation in the USA. Since then it has grown worldwide and was introduced at the Rome 1960 Paralympic Games.

Today, the sport is practised in nearly 100 countries.



How is it played?

The sport is very similar to regular basketball. The court, the hoop and the backboard are all of the same dimension. Each team has 12 players and only five on court at any point in time. The objective is to score as many baskets within four periods of 10 minutes each. Players use small and lightweight wheelchairs and usually comes with one or two smaller wheels at the front, this is to provide balance and stability. They're also strapped into the chair to allow them to be agile while in the chair.

Tournament Rules

Players cannot travel with the ball and are required to throw or bounce after every two touches on their wheelchair. Unlike regular basketball, double dribble is not considered a violation. It is allowed to dribble again after picking up one's dribble.

The scoring system is similar to able-bodied basketball:

- Free throws are worth one point.
- Field goals are worth two points.
- Field goals beyond the three-point line are worth three points.

Fouls occur when a player or their wheelchair comes into contact with their opponent, and the wheelchair is considered as an extension of the player's body in relation to establishing responsibility for contact on the court.

Classification

Wheelchair basketball players are classified by a point system, from 1 to 4.5 points. Sum of points is not allowed to exceed 14.0 point for five players on the court at any given time. Lesser points indicate a more significant activity limitation.

1 point	Little or no trunk control and thus cannot bend forward or sideways or rotate to catch and pass the ball Rely on arms to return to upright position when unbalanced Backrest of the wheelchair is a bit higher for a stable position and athletes are strapped to the wheelchair
2 points	Able to lean forward and rotate their body to some extent, allowing them to catch the ball within a larger radius Wheelchairs have a higher backrest and strapping for trunk support
3 points	Have trunk control that allows them to fully rotate and lean forward, but does not allow them to lean to the sides Wheelchair has a low backrest as they do not need sitting support
4 points	Able to move forward and rotate Able to partially lean to the sides Have difficulty with controlled movement to one side due to limitations in one lower limb
4.5 points	Least eligible impairment No restriction in trunk rotation or leaning forward or sideways

However, it is a misconception that wheelchair basketball players use the chair for everyday mobility. In fact, many wheelchair basketball athletes get out of their chair after the game and walk around. These people may not have disability noticeable to the eye but are deemed by a medical professional to have a permanent disability that disqualifies them from playing competitive basketball. For example, a person who has undergone reconstructive knee surgery will fall in this category.