

Registration as an athlete with a learning disability

A guide to help you register as an athlete with a learning disability in England

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Mencap
SPORT

Endorsed by:



This guide may be updated from time to time. Please check www.mencap.org.uk/sport for the latest version



Introduction

Registering as an athlete with learning disability is often confusing. This guide will help you choose the type of registration that you need to take part in sports events and competitions in England and where to go to get help.

Sport for people with a disability is often divided into different groups so that people compete against people with similar disabilities. This means that a person with a visual impairment will compete against other people with a visual impairment, people who use wheelchairs to play sport compete against others people who use wheelchairs, and people with learning disabilities compete against other people with similar learning disabilities.



This makes sure that competition is fair and equal.

These different groups are called classifications, and it is normally necessary for athletes to register to take part in their classification. This normally means proving that you meet the criteria for the classification, just like proving that you fit into a particular age group for example. The criteria for learning disability sport includes having an IQ below 75 though there are some extra requirements.

Getting a classification in learning disability sport has always been confusing but Mencap Sport can help you. In England there are two levels of registration or classification for athletes with learning disability. It is important that you have the right one.



Sport in schools and local clubs

Most people's first experience of sport is at school or in a local club. Here it is all about fun and getting involved so classification usually does not matter. It only becomes important when you start to take part in competitions. Just as having a 25 year old competing against a 10 year old would not be fair, so, having someone who does not have a learning disability competing against someone who does is not normally fair.

You may have seen examples of this on television when watching the Paralympics and it's just like splitting adults from juniors, or men from women.

The first step is to get a National Registration.

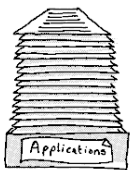
National Registration

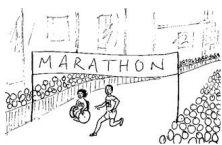
The system is run by the UK Sports Association (UKSA) on behalf of Mencap in England.

You will need a national registration if you want to take part in national competitions run by Mencap, Disability Sport Events (DSE) and many of the National Governing Bodies of Sport such as England Netball. These include the National Netball Championships, DSE Junior Swimming Championships or the Mencap National Athletics Championships for example.

To get a national registration, UKSA will need to see your forms filled in and a copy of an IQ test or a statement of education need – the forms explain exactly what information is needed. You will also need to send some photos. Once you have a national registration it is not normally necessary to re-apply.

A new version of the form was introduced in January 2006 and copies are available from Mencap Sport.





International Registration

As you get better in sport, you will probably be asked to get an international registration. This is a much longer form which needs a lot more information. It also means that you will probably need to have an IQ and other tests which can be expensive.

This is because an international registration is valid right up to Paralympic level, if you were to get that far, so the criteria is very strict.

This system is also run by the UK Sports Association but Mencap Sport can help you.

To get an international registration, there are various bits of information you need to provide. This is all explained on the form which is available from Mencap Sport.

You will need an international registration if you are selected by Mencap Sport for the England national squad, are invited to join the GB team in an INAS competition (INAS is the world governing body for learning disability sport), or are invited to take part in a Paralympic competition run by IPC (the International Paralympic Committee).



Swimming

Swimmers also need an international registration if they want to take part in any ASA (Amateur Swimming Association) event including County Championships, or the DSE Long Course event. This is because swimmers also need a Functional Ability Card (FAC card) which can only be given once you have an international classification. The ASA will help you apply for this.

International re-registration

Many athletes who already have an international registration have recently been told that they need to re-register. This is because in 2005 the form was changed. The new one is called the 'April 2005' form.

Any registration that was made on an earlier form may not be valid and athletes must re-apply on the new form. You need to contact Mencap Sport for advice on what you need to do.

Swimmers holding an FAC card will need to re-apply.



Special Olympics

Special Olympics have their own systems and you should contact your local club or their national office on 0207 696 5569 for information.

Where to go for advice

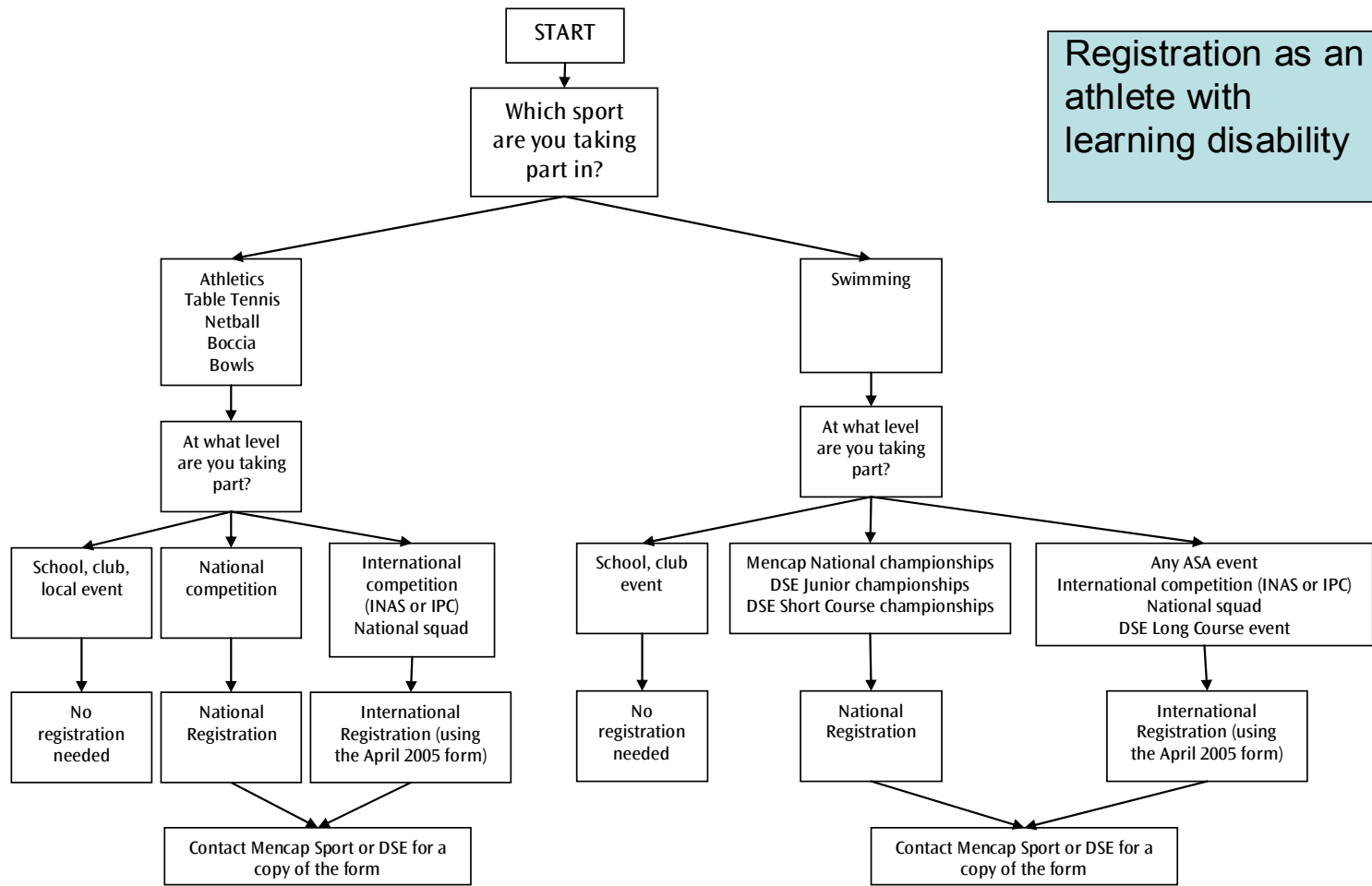
You can contact Mencap Sport on 01924 234 912 or email us at sport@mencap.org.uk to get copies of the forms, or to get help and information. Disability Sport Events (DSE) also have copies of the form and they can be contacted on 0161 953 2499.



Swimmers can contact the ASA on 01509 618 700.

This information is for people who live in England. If you live in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland then please contact the UK Sports Association on 0870 770 2464.

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For football and other sports, please contact Mencap Sport for advice.