



# Wheelchair Sports

**T**he Center for Rehabilitation Medicine's Wheelchair Sports Program is sponsored by Northridge Hospital Medical Center and is designed to help men, women and teens with permanent disabilities live more active and productive lives. Wheelchair Sports can play a critical role in a person's psychological well-being in addition to physical benefits, which include toning, strengthening, increasing aerobic capacity and improving overall health. Just as importantly, it can motivate an individual who has led a very isolated life, to participate with others who have had similar experiences. We offer a range of sports activities – all of which share the proud “Northridge Knights” or “Northridge Kings” team names.

## Wheelchair Hockey

This high-contact competitive game is based on inline skate hockey rules with several additions to accommodate for manual wheelchairs. For example, the hockey sticks can be modified for the player and some participants may need to tape the stick to their hand or wheelchair. In addition, a lightweight plastic ball is substituted for a puck. We are particularly proud of our “Northridge Knights” who were named the 2000 National Champions at the Amateur Athletic Union National Wheelchair Hockey Tournament.

## Wheelchair Basketball

Wheelchair Basketball was originally developed by World War II veterans in the United States in 1946. Adhering to the same rules as on a regulation

basketball court, the goal of each team is to score into the opponents' basket and prevent the other team from gaining control of the ball or scoring. One exception is that a player with the ball may push the wheelchair two times in any direction without bouncing the ball, but must bounce the ball to the floor before the third push. Players undergo similar training as typical basketball players to improve their ball control, stamina, defensive skills and shooting skills, as well as learning to run various plays on offense and defense.

## Wheelchair Quad Rugby

This highly-competitive contact sport is played on a regulation basketball court. Two teams of four players attempt to carry a regulation volleyball over the defensive team's end line while the defensive team tries to force the offense to turn over the ball in some manner. To score a point, a player must cross the goal line with two of their four wheels while retaining possession of the ball. Northridge Hospital's two Quad Rugby teams, the “Northridge Knights” and the “Northridge Kings” have competed at the national level for several years. Some team members have even been invited to participate in worldwide competitions.



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## **Over the Line**

This softball-like game allows two, three-person teams to play in a four-inning competition. Running bases is not required. Instead, the player at bat must hit the ball “over the line” without the opposing team catching the ball on the fly or after the first bounce. Three base hits equal one run. This adaptation of America’s favorite pastime is co-sponsored by Northridge Hospital and the Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks.

## **Wheelchair Football**

The ever-popular Wheelchair Football team rules are adapted from flag football with six players on each team. The asphalt “field”—which is easier to maneuver in a wheelchair—is 80 yards long and 22 yards wide, with first-down marker lines every 15 yards. A one-hand touch above the waist constitutes a tackle. Each year, the Wheelchair Football team

displays their zest for the game when they travel to Las Vegas for the annual touch-football tournament in addition to participating in several local competitions.

## **Wheelchair Tennis**

The Wheelchair Tennis program follows the same rules endorsed by the International Tennis Federation except in wheelchair tennis, the ball can bounce twice before being returned. The team is comprised of four players who fine tune their skills at local Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks tennis courts so they are at the top of their game to compete nationwide.

For a list of wheelchair sports offered through Northridge Hospital Medical Center, please contact the Therapeutic Recreation Department at (818) 885-8500, ext. 3610.