

Here are some rules and regulations of Wheelchair Rugby (there are many more but here are the important ones):

1. Everyone is given a classification based on their physical function of either 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, or 3.5. This point value is determined by highly skilled physical therapists, known as classifiers, that perform a variety of manual muscle tests and observations of watching an athlete play to determine an appropriate point value. The higher the point value (3.5 being the highest and 0.5 being the lowest) the more function that player has. I am a 2.0 and I have seen other players with CMT be as high as 3.5 or as low as a 1.0. This is because CMT affects everyone differently. Players who are 45 or older or are female get an automatic 0.5 deduction.

2. Only 4 players on each team are allowed on the court at one time and the combined point value of those players on court for each team can not exceed 8 points. For instance, if all the players on court, for one of the two teams, have all their players have the same point value of 3.0 (3-point value x 4 players = 12 points on court which exceeds the 8 points allowed) this is considered an illegal lineup and will result in the team forfeiting the game. This rule is there to make sure all players get a chance to play.

3. Left: Offensive Chair | Right: Defensive Chair

There are two types of chairs used to play this game. One is called an offensive chair and is mainly used by the higher functional players and is designed to be nimble. It is much more circular and is made to weave in between and around players. The next type of chair is called a defensive chair and it is made with an elongated front end that resembles a pick axe. This chair is mainly used by lower functioning players and it is designed to “pick” the front end of the opponent’s wheel or chair. If done correctly it can stop an opponent in his/her (the sport is co-ed) tracks. These chairs provide a greater defensive advantage. If you are having a hard time imagining what this looks like I have added photos to help give a better visualization.

4. The game is a combination of sports including hockey, soccer, able-bodied rugby, American football, and wheelchair basketball. The game is played on a full size indoor basketball court. At the baseline on both sides of the court are two cones separated by 12 feet and that make up the goal. A goal or “try” is scored every time a player with the ball crosses between the two cones. The ball is a large sized volleyball and can be thrown in any direction (not just backwards like able-bodied rugby). No player on player contact is permitted but full chair contact is allowed and is also encouraged. In other words, you can’t punch someone in the throat, but you can hit his/hers chair as hard as you want even if they flip over.

5. The game is played in 4 quarters, with each quarter lasting 8 minutes long. The game begins with a tip-off in the middle of the court. When a goal is scored there is a change of possession. The offense only has 10 seconds to inbound the ball, 12 seconds to get it past half court, and 40 seconds to score. If the ball is not scored in 40 seconds, it results in a change of possession.

I know it may seem like a lot of information to take in but it should help you get a good idea of what the sport looks like. Have Fun!