



## AAASP Milestones and Historical Timeline Through 2000

### **1980–1988**

- Educators within Georgia’s DeKalb County School District (DCSD) initiated a volunteer after-school sports program for students with physical disabilities.

### **1989-1990**

- Parents of students with physical disabilities in Georgia’s DCSD met with members of the Board of Education to advocate for hiring a full-time Coordinator to manage and lead the adapted sports program, which had gone beyond the capacity of volunteer efforts.
- DCSD has hired Bev Vaughn, a certified therapeutic recreation therapist at Emory University Hospital with experience and expertise in developing and administering programs for underserved populations in clinical, community, and educational settings, to serve as the school district's first Adapted Sports Coordinator.

### **1991-1995**

- Vaughn thoroughly evaluated the program, transforming it from an after-school recreational activity into an athletic program that more closely resembles school athletics for students without disabilities.
- The program’s design now meets the standards set by national adult disabled sports governing bodies and interscholastic athletics for students without disabilities.
- Emphasis is placed on academic standards, standardized seasons, cross-disability rules, policies, and educational training for coaches. Vaughn is assembling a team of leaders in paralympic sports, high school athletics, and business to explore program expansion and replication in other school districts.

### **1996-1999**

- The Georgia State Senate commended the DCSD Adapted Sports Program through Senate Resolution 262.
- The Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee (APOC) endorses AAASP, and the APOC Youth and Education Committee named DCSD the “Model for the Nation.”
- Tommie Storms, a businesswoman, broadcast professional, and post-secondary education program director, developed a business plan to replicate the DCSD adapted sports model, as reconceptualized by Vaughn. The plan involves forming a non-profit association to provide leadership and governance for a replicable school-based league system.
- Vaughn and Storms founded the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Vaughn takes on the role of AAASP’s CEO, while Storms assumes the position of AAASP’s COO.
- Ron Lykins, a Paralympic wheelchair basketball coach, has been hired as the AAASP Director of Training. He will create and oversee AAASP-adapted sports educational coaching courses.
- Leslie Sweatman joined the AAASP staff as the organization’s State Coordinator and assisted with educational training for coaches and officials. She previously taught students with orthopedic impairments at Avondale High School in the DCSD, specializing in coaching the wheelchair team in handball and basketball.



American Association of  
**adaptED SPORTS**  
PROGRAMS

*Off the Sidelines, Into the Game!*

- AAASP develops a school-based membership structure and administrative plans for standardized adapted team sports, program implementation, and sustainability.
- AAASP and the United States Disabled Athletes Fund are collaborating to expand the DeKalb school's adapted sports model as a Paralympic legacy program across other school districts in Georgia.
- AAASP hosted a free workshop at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta on September 15, 1996, for school-aged students with physical disabilities and their parents. The workshop featured a panel discussion with experts, a demonstration of wheelchair team handball, guided discussion groups, and an opportunity for parents to register their children for the wheelchair team handball program.
- AAASP implemented wheelchair team handball (formerly indoor wheelchair soccer) as its first competitive sport for physically disabled students. In January 1997, AAASP introduced its second competitive sport, wheelchair basketball. Track and field was offered in the spring of 1997. AAASP adapted the rules of the national governing bodies for disabled sports to facilitate appropriate competition for school children with various physical disabilities.
- Between 1996 and 1998, more than a dozen new teams were created in three adapted team sports. Twenty-five coaches received training and certification in wheelchair team handball and wheelchair basketball. Six disability sports classifiers were trained in collaboration with Walton Rehabilitation Hospital, Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute, and Scottish Rite Children's Hospital. Sixteen referees were trained in wheelchair team handball and wheelchair basketball. Five Adapted Sports Coordinators underwent training. Ten workshops were conducted for parents and teachers. Seventy regular-season games took place statewide.
- Professors from Emory University and the University of Georgia conducted a comprehensive study on participants in adapted sports programs, documenting improvements in physical, emotional, and social aspects of their lives.
- AAASP assumes management and financial responsibilities for the Southeast Regional Victory Games track and field meet, formerly known as the DeKalb–Gwinnett Victory Games. This competition will be the primary event of AAASP's track and field season in the state of Georgia.
- The Georgia state legislature appropriates funds to support AAASP's operations.
- Inaugural recipient of the IMPACT Award, United Way of Metro Atlanta, for exemplifying the goals of America's Promise (headed by Retired General Colin Powell) to empower America's youth.
- Received the Community Program Award, Tommy Nobis Center Foundation, for an outstanding, proactive, and innovative approach to helping those with physical disabilities reach their full potential.
- Named Semi-finalist (Top 100 of 1600 applicants) in "Innovations in American Government Award," Ford Foundation, John F. Kennedy School of Government.