



*Sport in the Global Society: Contemporary Perspectives*

# **SPORT AND DISABILITY**

**FROM INTEGRATION CONTINUUM TO  
INCLUSION SPECTRUM**

Edited by  
Florian Kiuppis



# Sport and Disability

Inclusion is primarily discussed in education. With the increasing number of member states of the United Nations ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, academics have vividly discussed inclusion in the context of other areas of life, such as the community at large, as 'social inclusion' in the context of work and employment, and with regard to the aspects addressed by Article 30.5 of the Convention, namely cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport. This volume is organised around the topic inclusion in sport and has a particular focus on the participation of people with disabilities in sport. Typical barriers for people with disabilities to participate in sport include lack of awareness on the part of people without disabilities as to how to involve them in teams adequately, lack of opportunities and programmes for training and competition, too few accessible facilities due to physical barriers, and limited information on and access to resources. The chapters attribute central importance to the processes and mechanisms of inclusion that operate within sporting environments and to the question of either what happens or could happen to persons with disabilities who enter the playing field.

The chapters were originally published in a special issue of *Sport in Society*.

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Inclusion Spectrum

*Edited by*  
**Florian Kiuppis**

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**For Ute, Teresa, Rolf and Danny**



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Florian Kiuppis

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Marsha Saxton

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Martial Meziani

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# Prologue<sup>1</sup>

*Florian Kiuppis*

This volume is organised around the topic of inclusion in sport and has a particular focus on the question how the *participation of people with disabilities* in sport can be guaranteed once access has been secured. The chapters go beyond questions of who has or should have access to sport, or who makes achievements in joint physical activities, and instead move towards consideration of various terms of inclusion. Participation is understood as the process between access for all in the true sense of the word, namely covering the whole range of different target groups and all age groups, and achievement in sport experiences – eventually involving Personal Assistance Services (PAS). The goal is full enjoyment without discrimination, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – adopted in the year 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York – that provides a framework for addressing a rights-based approach to the inclusion of people with disabilities in sport. For the process of inclusion in sport, this means that all participants of a shared sport experience should be valued by the others through – what Alexy Valet calls – “the real recognition of their participation” therein (see Chapter 10). In other words, through the taken-for-grantedness that persons with disabilities are in the thick of the experience or – how Cheri Blauwet illustrates it with reference to a concept borrowed from Eli Wolff – by letting team members with disabilities merge into a “desired form of ‘invisibility’” (see Epilogue), then the above stated goal is reached.

The ideational centrepiece of the book is the “Inclusion Spectrum,” published in 1996 by Ken Black (who was at that time Inclusive Sport Officer at the Youth Sport Trust, UK), that consists of five modalities that cover the spectrum of opportunities for people with disabilities, ranging from ‘inclusion within mainstream settings’ to ‘inclusion within disability-specific opportunities’ (see Preface).

What remains at stake – and here Article 30.5 of the CRPD gets the focus of our attention – how to enable persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in sporting activities of their choice. Since it is individual preferences and wishes of people with disabilities that determine which sporting activity out of a variety of separate activities for persons with disabilities and modified activities designed for all is appropriate to set-up inclusively, “disability sport” appears to be a term that attributes each approach equal importance and validity, given that persons with disabilities can participate therein in full consideration of their individual autonomy and independence (compare CRPD, Preamble). That is why this volume contains not only articles about options of sporting activities for people with disabilities together with non-disabled peers and competitors but also contributions that emphasise disability sport in segregated settings – as the cover picture indicates: a whole variety of different forms, intersecting shapes, and overlapping colours.

## PROLOGUE

### Note

- 1 The following chapters were originally published in *Sport in Society*, volume 21, issue 1 [Special Issue “Inclusion in Sport – Disability and Participation”], in January 2018. This Prologue and the Epilogue have been added as complements to the articles (including the Preface). For Acknowledgements see the end of Chapter 1.





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## Preface

Eli A. Wolff and Mary A. Hums

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), through Article 30.5, provides the world with a framework for addressing a rights-based approach to the inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in sport, recreation and leisure activities. Article 30.5 utilizes a universal design approach and covers the spectrum of opportunities for people with disabilities: inclusion within mainstream settings as well as inclusion within disability-specific opportunities. The CRPD's language also enables opportunities for people with and without disabilities to participate and compete together through unified sports and reverse integration settings. Additionally Article 30.5 covers inclusion in venues, activities in school settings, and inclusion and access to services provided to all.

Article 30.5 is a significant contribution to the CRPD as it reinforces the vital contribution of sport, recreation and leisure to human rights and the human condition. The CRPD reinforces a paradigm shift from a medical model to a social model of disability, including the domain of sport and recreation. Article 30.5 indicates the need for people with disabilities to become full members of the sporting world with rights and dignity. People with disabilities are stakeholders at all levels of sport, recreation, physical activity, physical education and leisure and as such must be in the room as meaningfully involved and engaged participants, competitors, administrators and officials.

The CRPD has served as a catalyst for international organizations, some of which we do not typically associate with sport, to begin to adopt language inclusive of people with disabilities. Organizations such as the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP), the International Disability Alliance (IDA), and UNESCO now recognize disability in their public discourses and updated policies.

The UNOSDP includes people with disabilities as a priority area and focus of their office. UNOSDP has integrated a focus on 'Sport and Persons with Disabilities' through their Thematic Working Group of the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG) co-chaired by the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China. The Working Group focuses on the following three Strategic Priority Areas: (a) Independence and Sport Participation, (b) Using Sport to Empower Persons with Disabilities, and (c) Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities within Sport.

In 2015, IDA issued a statement titled, 'Calling for the Global Sport Community to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Accordance with the CRPD'. IDA articulates,

To ensure full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), IDA calls upon the entire global sport community, including Governmental and Non-Governmental actors, to acknowledge and promote the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in all forms of sport and recreation. This includes, but is not limited to, organized and non-formal sport, physical education, physical activity and fitness, recreation and play. The promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in sport and recreation must be consistent with the principles of the CRPD and must likewise reflect the social model understanding of disability.

In 2015, UNESCO completed its work on the revised UNESCO Charter on Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, and in so doing, included disability as a part of the new language.

The adoption of the revised Charter should mark a shift away from words towards action, from policy intent to implementation. It sets the tone for a new international sport policy debate, which should now focus on the exchange of good practice, education and training programmes, capacity development, and advocacy. This is also a strong recognition of physical education as a driver for promoting gender equality, social inclusion, non-discrimination and sustained dialogue in our societies,

said UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova.

At the time of the adoption of the revised UNESCO charter, the authors provided this statement:

The updated Charter represents a milestone in the global sporting environment, calling for people with disabilities to be at the table and visible, with a voice, at the center and within physical education, physical activity and sport. People with disabilities can no longer be on the sidelines, no longer objects of charity and pity. The new Charter reflects the paradigm shift as indicated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, moving toward empowerment, dignity, universal design and full inclusion.

The CRPD also relates to the Olympic Movement. The Olympic Movement's reach includes athletes with disabilities on several levels – competitors with disabilities in the Olympic Games, as well as athletes of the Paralympic Games, Special Olympics and Deaflympics. The CRPD reaffirms that athletes with disabilities in the Olympic Movement receive equal treatment and equal protection in the Olympic Games as well as the Paralympic Games, Special Olympics and Deaflympics. The CRPD does not call for the creation of one Games for all, but it does call for all athletes with disabilities within the Olympic Movement to be respected and valued as athletes first – all athletes are equally Olympians. While the non-discrimination language in Principle 6 of the IOC's Olympic Charter does not currently address disability, it is being recommended to the IOC to add the word 'disability' into Principle 6 to align with the CRPD. As Hudson Taylor of Athlete Ally states,

If the IOC believes the practice of sport is a human right, then they should amend Principle 6 of the Olympic Charter to include people with disabilities. Without this language, people with disabilities at the Olympic, Paralympic, Special Olympic and Deaflympic Games will not be valued, protected and respected as they deserve.

A book such as this one, with contributions from a cadre of respected authors, guides the reader via a well-laid out map to discover the scope and influence of the CRPD as it relates to sport and physical activity. As the first United Nations civil rights convention of the twenty-first century, the global footprint of the CRPD is becoming more evident. Yes, work remains to be done to level the playing field, but at least now the international rulebook has expanded and its pages, once silent on disability, have become more inclusive.

Voices of disability are being heard and valued, and the CRPD, specifically Article 30.5, has played a critical role in this new-found presence and visibility of people with disabilities in sport. Article 30.5 is a powerful tool for promoting and ensuring equality and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects and levels of sport, recreation, physical activity, physical education and leisure. We hope each chapter in this book will help readers to realize and understand how the power of sport empowers people with disabilities.

# Inclusion in sport: disability and participation

Florian Kiuppis

## ABSTRACT

For the last couple of decades UNESCO has aimed to achieve to a far extent the implementation of the guiding principle of inclusion at all levels in education systems worldwide. The idea that countries 'should ensure an inclusive education system at all levels' is also a central objective of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This Introduction to the Special Issue explores what participation as an aspect of inclusion means in general, and realistically can mean in sport and quality physical education in particular. Sport is introduced as a context in which, unlike in education, the individual choice of a sporting activity on a spectrum ranging from separate activities for persons with disabilities to modified activities designed for all makes it necessary to attribute each approach equal importance and validity instead of discrediting segregated structures and glorifying supposedly inclusive ones.

For the last couple of decades, while following up the World Conference on Special Needs Education that was held in Salamanca in 1994, UNESCO and its collaborators have aimed to achieve to a far extent the implementation of the guiding principle of *inclusion* at all levels of education systems worldwide (Kiuppis and Hausstätter 2014). In context of the most recent International Conference on Education, held in Geneva in 2008 and hosted by the International Bureau of Education (IBE), UNESCO stated:

[I]t has now been several decades since the international community provided itself with significant legal instruments which, by stressing the right of ALL children to benefit from an education without discrimination, express – implicitly or explicitly – the concept of 'Inclusive Education'. (UNESCO 2008, 3)

*Inclusion* is primarily discussed in education, as is apparent from just a quick search of the term on the Internet. However, with the increasing number of UN member states ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN 2006),<sup>1</sup> politicians and academics have vividly discussed inclusion in the context of other areas of life, such as the community at large (Milner and Kelly 2009), as 'social inclusion' in the context of work and employment (Hall and Wilton 2011), and with regard to the aspects addressed by Article 30.5 of the CRPD, namely cultural life and leisure (Singleton and Darcy 2013), recreation (Gray, Zimmerman, and Rimmer 2012) and sport (e.g. Thomas and Smith 2008; Kiuppis and Kurzke-Maasmeier 2012).