

SOUTHEASTERN CHRONICLES



NEWS • IMPACT • COMMUNITY • ADVOCACY

AUGUST • SEPTEMBER 2026



VETERANS IN MOTION

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SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER ATHLETES
SHINE AT THE NATIONAL VETERANS
WHEELCHAIR GAMES – DETROIT 2026

SERVING THOSE SERVED

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Serving Those Served

The Team Behind The Mission

Hollis L. Bush, Jr. – Executive Director

Evet Williams – Marketing Director

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Women’s Veteran Empowerment
Coordinator – Natasha Faison-Williams

Membership Director—Michael Bishop

MS Coordinator—Amy Dotson

Chapter Newsletter Editor – Amy Dotson

Volunteer Coordinator – Evett Williams

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President

Dewayne McGowan



Moving Forward Together

**Serving Veterans. Strengthening Our Chapter.
Building Our Future.**

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Southeastern Chapter, had a very active month in July. On July 1, we hosted a cookout for Spinal Cord Injury inpatients at the Charlie Norwood Veterans Administration Hospital, along with members and staff of the PVA Southeastern Chapter. Hamburgers, hot dogs, and all the trimmings were served to approximately 270 people. We extend our sincere thanks to the Penske Truck Rental employees for helping make this event a success and for lending their grilling expertise. Other July activities included our July 8 membership meeting, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games held July 9–14 in Detroit, Michigan, the Veterans Outdoor Challenge from July 15 through August 8, the PVA MS Committee meeting on July 28, SCI Unit bowling on July 29, and a meet and greet for the MVASC Tournament.

I would also like to thank our Executive Director, Hollis Bush, for his diligent work on behalf of our chapter, and our Marketing Director, Evett Williams, whose contributions extend far beyond office work. Our chapter's success would not be possible without the hard work, dedication, and many forms of support you both provide. Again, thank you for the outstanding work you do each day on behalf of the PVA Southeastern Chapter.

Please mark your calendars for the following upcoming dates and meetings in September 2026:

- September 9, 2026 Membership Meeting at 1:00pm EDT
- September 16, 2026 PVA Southeastern Chapter Awareness Table in Carl Vinson VAMC 10:00am - 2:00pm EDT
- September 23, 2026 SCI Unit Bowling at Northside Lanes, North Augusta, SC 11:00am - 3:00pm EDT
- September 25-28, 2026 PVA National Women's Veterans Empowerment Retreat, Orlando, FL

As I continue acclimating to the role of President, I want the PVA Southeastern Chapter Board of Directors to know how much I appreciate your enthusiasm, guidance, and expertise. Your support is helping me become an effective President who keeps the best interests of our veterans at heart.

Sincerely,

Dewayne McGowan, President
Paralyzed Veterans of America – Southeastern Chapter

Thank you
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Hollis Bush



Serving Our Members, Strengthening Our Chapter

A second round of "Congratulations" for chapter athletes who participated in the 2026 National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

Your office staff continues to provide superior support to membership and chapter leadership. Transparency on current operations and upcoming events through bimonthly Executive Committee Zoom meetings and bimonthly written reports, ensure that your chapter leadership are fully informed and able to make prudent decisions regarding chapter business.

The office is here for the membership and leadership. Lastly, this is your chapter, please "Get Involved"!!

PVA
Paralyzed Veterans of America

Southeastern Chapter

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National Director PVASE

Rick Evans

Looking Ahead to the Future

As we prepare for the upcoming Paralyzed Veterans of America Fall Board of Directors Meeting, our focus remains on the future of our organization and the veterans we serve.

One of our highest priorities is identifying new ways to grow our membership and ensure that more eligible veterans learn about the benefits, advocacy, and lifelong support that Paralyzed Veterans of America provides. Expanding our reach strengthens our voice and enables us to better serve veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders across the country.

Advocacy also continues to be at the forefront of our mission. We remain committed to protecting and improving veterans' healthcare, benefits, and the programs that enhance quality of life for our members and all veterans.

As we move into the Fall Board meeting, several proposed resolutions will be presented for consideration. While I cannot share details at this time, these proposals have the potential to shape the future direction of our organization. I look forward to providing updates as more information becomes available following the Board's discussions.

At this time, there are no additional Executive Committee updates to report. However, I encourage you to stay engaged and informed. If you have questions, concerns, or topics you would like raised at the national level, please don't hesitate to reach out to me before the Fall Board of Directors Meeting. Your input is valuable, and I am honored to represent the Southeastern Chapter and ensure your voice is heard.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your National Director.

Rick Evans
National Director

PTSD Is Earned

Many of us accept the mantle of the United States of America and bear the battle to ensure that we, as Americans, can live in a free and democratic nation. These battles take a toll on not only the bodies of those who serve but also our emotions and our thoughts. We seek therapy from "professionals" who may or may not have an understanding that:

PTSD is a sign of absolute strength. It is not a sign of weakness!

PTSD is earned by doing what others can not or will not due to terror!

By Larry Dodson



Membership by the Numbers

As of this reporting period, total membership stands at **1,494**. The membership is predominantly male, with **1,327 males (89%)** and **167 females (11%)**.

The largest age groups are **65–74 (460 members)** and **75–84 (386 members)**, followed by **55–64 (338 members)**, reflecting an older membership population.

By race, the membership includes:

White, not Hispanic/Latino: **761**

Black, not Hispanic/Latino: **494**

Hispanic/Latino: **36**

Native American or Alaskan Native: **22**

Asian or Pacific Islander: **6**

Other: **14**

Not Available: **161**

A total of **803 members (54%)** are connected to services, while **690 (46%)** are not.

The organization serves **944 members with spinal cord disabilities (SCI/SCD)**. The leading causes of SCI are:

Vehicular accidents: **332**

Other traumatic injuries: **212**

Medical/Surgical complications: **133**

Flying/Falling objects: **79**

Violence: **66**

Sports/Recreational injuries: **57**

Unknown: **37**

Pedestrian accidents: **7**

Additionally, the membership includes **311 members with Multiple Sclerosis (MS)** and **68 members with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)**, highlighting the organization's continued support for members living with neurological conditions.

Overall, the membership reflects a diverse population of veterans with a wide range of service eras, disabilities, and support needs. Continued outreach and service connection efforts remain important to ensure members have access to the resources and benefits available to them.



Sports & Recreation Director

Rick Evans

Keeping the Momentum Going

The Southeastern Chapter continues to raise the bar in adaptive sports, and our athletes made us proud at the 2026 National Veterans Wheelchair Games!

Congratulations to Jaylen Davis, one of our novice athletes, and his father for winning the Up/Down Cornhole Tournament Championship. Their inspiring journey will be featured in an upcoming issue of PN Magazine, and we look forward to celebrating their accomplishment with our entire chapter.

We also extend our heartfelt congratulations to CeCe Mazyck, recipient of the prestigious Spirit of the Games Award. This peer-nominated honor recognizes an athlete who exemplifies determination, perseverance, sportsmanship, and the true spirit of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. CeCe's award reflects the outstanding character found throughout our chapter.

One of the highlights of the Games came off the competition floor as well. Athletes from across the country complimented our chapter's new uniforms, and our members proudly represented the Southeastern Chapter with professionalism, pride, and team spirit.

The excitement continues this month as we host the PVA National Pickleball Camp on August 14–15 in North Augusta, SC. Open to all veterans, the camp offers an opportunity to develop skills, build friendships, and experience the camaraderie that adaptive sports provide. Best of all, the equipment used during the camp will be donated to our chapter, with a portion also being donated to the recreation center in appreciation for their partnership.

Our chapter is also proud to have several members competing in the USA Wheelchair Football League during the 2026 season. We wish them a successful season and look forward to following their accomplishments.

Looking ahead, we are planning bowling training clinics in Charleston, South Carolina, and Salisbury, North Carolina, in collaboration with local VA Recreation Therapy staff. We are also working to host a Boccia clinic at the Dublin VA Medical Center in Dublin, Georgia. These events are part of our ongoing effort to expand adaptive sports opportunities and strengthen our partnerships with VA Recreation Therapy teams throughout the Southeastern Chapter's service area.

Adaptive sports do more than promote physical fitness—they build confidence, foster independence, create lasting friendships, and remind us that there are no limits to what our veterans can accomplish. We encourage every member to participate in an upcoming event, try a new sport, or cheer on a fellow veteran. There is a place for everyone in Southeastern Chapter Sports & Recreation, and we look forward to seeing you at our next event!

Rick Evans
Sports & Recreation Director PVASE

PVASE SHINES ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

Southeastern Chapter Athletes Bring Home Medals from the National Veterans Wheelchair Games

34 ATHLETES | NUMEROUS MEDALS | ONE TEAM



TEAM PVASE EARNED SECOND PLACE AMONG PVA CHAPTERS NATIONWIDE

The Paralyzed Veterans of America Southeastern Chapter made an impressive showing at the 2026 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, held July 9–14 in Detroit, Michigan. Thirty-four PVASE athletes traveled to the Games, representing the chapter with determination, sportsmanship, camaraderie, and an unwavering competitive spirit.

By the end of the competition, PVASE athletes had earned numerous medals, placing the Southeastern Chapter second among PVA chapters nationwide in total medals won.

It was an achievement worthy of celebration, but the story of this year's Games goes far beyond the medal count.

COMPETING WITH PURPOSE

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games bring together veterans from across the country for several days of adaptive sports competition, fellowship, and camaraderie. For PVASE members, the Games provided another opportunity to demonstrate what is possible through preparation, perseverance, and the willingness to compete.

PVASE's 34 athletes represented areas throughout the chapter's service region, including the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA), Atlanta, Dublin, Salisbury, North Carolina, and Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Throughout the Games, our athletes competed with intensity while supporting and encouraging one another. Whether they finished on the medal stand or accomplished a personal goal, each athlete contributed to an outstanding week for the Southeastern Chapter.

MEDALS FOR PVASE

PVASE athletes returned home with an impressive collection of medals.

Finishing second among PVA chapters nationwide in total medals is a tremendous accomplishment and a reflection of the talent, preparation, and commitment of our athletes.

Behind every medal are hours of preparation, determination, adaptability, and perseverance. Each trip to the podium represents an athlete who accepted the challenge to compete and gave their best on a national stage.

But medals tell only part of the story.

MORE THAN COMPETITION

One of the greatest strengths of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games is the community created through adaptive sports.

Throughout the week in Detroit, PVASE members demonstrated the camaraderie that makes the Southeastern Chapter special. They encouraged one another, celebrated each other's accomplishments, offered support through challenges, and proudly represented their chapter and fellow veterans.

Those moments matter just as much as the final scores.

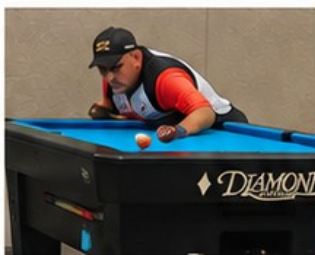
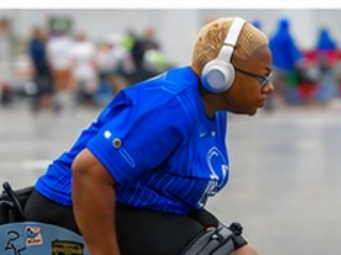
The Games remind us that adaptive sports can provide opportunities for competition while also building confidence, independence, friendships, and a renewed sense of what is possible.

PROUDLY REPRESENTING PVASE

To all 34 athletes who represented the Southeastern Chapter at the 2026 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, we congratulate you on an outstanding performance.

Whether you returned home with a medal, achieved a personal best, competed in a new event, or simply challenged yourself to do something you had never done before, you made PVASE proud.

Thank you for representing our chapter, your fellow veterans, your families, and your communities with determination and sportsmanship.



CONGRATULATIONS, TEAM PVASE!

Congratulations to PVASE Medal Winners

James Beilfuss	Wonzie Holmes	Keith Thompson	Joann Dickson-Smith	Toney Lattimore	Jalen Davis	Natasha Faison-Williams
Discus Gold	Boccia Gold	Boccia Gold	Adaptive Fitness Gold	Air Pistol Bronze	Cornhole Gold	Cycling Gold
Javelin Gold	Motorized Slalom Gold	Nine Ball Gold	Bowling Gold			Shot put Gold
Shot Put Gold	Bowling Gold	Motorized Slalom Silver	Shot Put Gold			Javelin Gold
Pickleball Silver	Shot Put Gold	The Rally Silver	Discus Silver			Field Discus Gold
	Discus Gold	Corn Hole Silver	The Rally Silver			Powerlifting Gold
	Javelin Gold	Table Tennis Bronze				Adaptive Fitness Gold
	Nine Ball Silver					Basketball Silver
						Softball Bronze

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The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic 2027 application process has begun.

Applications will be open until November 30, 2026. To apply, visit <https://wintersportsclinic.org/participate/>.

Please call Suzanne Kenrick, CTRS, ATP, at 706-733-0188 x31947 or your Recreation Therapist for more information.

Member Spotlight

Centra “CeCe” Mazyck

RECIPIENT OF THE PRESTIGIOUS
SPRIT OF THE GAMES AWARD

An Inspiration On and Off the Field of Competition

The Paralyzed Veterans of America Southeastern Chapter is incredibly proud to celebrate Centra “CeCe” Mazyck, recipient of the prestigious **Spirit of the Games Award** at this year’s National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Detroit!

This distinguished honor is especially meaningful because it is voted on by fellow athletes—those who witness firsthand the determination, perseverance, and heart displayed throughout the Games.

The Spirit of the Games Award is presented each year to one athlete who exemplifies exceptional drive, unwavering commitment, resilience, and the true spirit of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

CeCe embodies all of these qualities and more. Her strength in the face of challenges, her grit, and the positivity she shares with everyone around her inspire athletes, volunteers, and spectators alike. She reminds us that true victory isn’t measured only by medals—it’s measured by courage, character, and the impact we have on others.



*True victory isn’t measured only by medals—it’s measured by **courage, character, and the impact** we have on others.*

CeCe, thank you for representing the PVA Southeastern Chapter with excellence. Your perseverance and joyful spirit have made us all proud.

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!



MEET YOUR BOARD

GETTING TO KNOW THE LEADERS SERVING YOU



MICHAEL BISHOP SECRETARY, PVASE



Michael Bishop has been a dedicated member of Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) since 1998 and has served as the organization's Membership Director and Secretary since September 2024. A resident of Beech Island since 2007, Michael is committed to supporting fellow veterans and promoting opportunities for individuals with disabilities.



Michael medically retired from the U.S. Army Infantry in 1998 after serving with the 82nd Airborne Division. Following a motor vehicle accident, he sustained a T3 complete spinal cord injury resulting in paraplegia. Since then, he has embraced new challenges with determination and resilience.



He holds associate degrees in Animal Science and Cyber Security and is an avid participant in adaptive sports. His athletic pursuits have included handcycling, pickleball, and air pistol shooting. Among his accomplishments are completing the Sadler's Alaska Challenge and participating in the Bike Ride Across Georgia.



Michael enjoys road trips, van camping, and mountain biking, always seeking new adventures and opportunities to stay active. He has competed in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games eight times and attended the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic three times. In addition to competing, he has volunteered with organizations such as Catalyst Sports and Walton Options, helping expand adaptive recreation opportunities for others.



Michael has been married since 2005 and continues to advocate for veterans, adaptive sports, and living an active, fulfilling life.

“

*Challenges don't define us.
Our response to them does.
Live active. Give back.
Keep moving forward.*

”



PROUDLY SERVED

U.S. Army Infantry
82nd Airborne Division
Medically Retired in 1998



BOARD SERVICE

Membership Director & Secretary
PVASE
Since September 2024



PERSONAL

Married since 2005
Resident of Beech Island, SC
since 2007

MEET YOUR BOARD

GETTING TO KNOW THE LEADERS SERVING YOU



JAMES BEILFUSS CHAPLAIN, PVASE



I am a 57-year-old proud USAF veteran. For 32 years, my incredible wife Lynn has been my rock, keeping our lives running smoothly. We are blessed with three children — Jim III (Theresa), Katelyn (Aaron), and Joshua — and three wonderful grandchildren: Lucas, Cooper, and Reegan.



I have a strong faith in God and He has saved my life more than once. I have served in the church in multiple capacities and have taken counseling classes within the church to help and serve people and my goal has always been able to serve veterans.



I served as a Security Policeman in the United States Air Force from 1987 to 1992. In 1990, right before Desert Storm, I broke my back. Due to lack of proper X-rays and care, I spent my final 18 months of my enlightenment on light duty and bed rest. After leaving service, I endured 13 back surgeries. During the 11th surgery in 2015, a massive blood clot formed in my spinal cord, paralyzing me from the waist down and nearly killing me. At 47 years old and 285 pounds, I was in constant pain, miserable and lost.



That darkest moment introduced me to adaptive sports, which became my lifesaver and renewed my purpose. I embraced wheelchair basketball, adaptive powerlifting, adaptive fitness, wheelchair softball, golf, and field events (throws). Through consistent training and dedication, I lost 85 pounds and have added 35 pounds of functional muscle. At 57, I am now fitter and stronger than at any point in my life.



I continue to compete in wheelchair Softball, wheelchair Football and field events while maintaining a serious adaptive training regimen. Adaptive sports didn't just change my body — they gave me my life back.



I am excited and honored to be your Chaplain. If you need me feel free to reach out. Just please start with a text because I filter due to a large amount of spam calls.

“

*Adaptive sports didn't just
change my body — they
gave me my life back.*

”



PROUDLY SERVED

United States Air Force
1987 – 1992
Security Policeman



FAITH. SERVICE. PURPOSE.

Guided by faith.
Driven by purpose.
Dedicated to serving veterans.



FAMILY

Married to Lynn for 32 years.
Proud father of three and
grandfather of three.

Paralyzed Veterans of America Southeastern

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Empowered Women. Stronger Together

Natasha Faison-Williams, PVASE Women's Empowerment Leader, is a proud U.S. Army veteran who served 15 years, para-athlete, and woman living with a T-4 spinal cord injury. She is passionate about creating opportunities for women members to connect, network, grow as leaders, and become the best versions of themselves.

Natasha will represent PVASE at the 2026 PVA National Women Veterans Empowerment Retreat, September 25–28, bringing back new ideas and resources to strengthen our Chapter's Women's Empowerment program.

She will also host PVASE Women's Empowerment Zoom Meeting in October 2026. Stay tuned for details, we look forward to connecting with you!

Government Relations

FROM PVA NATIONAL | WASHINGTON UPDATE

FIGHT CONTINUES TO INCLUDE ACCESS TO IVF IN THE NDAA

Negotiations are underway for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) with an expected price tag of a whopping \$1.15 trillion. Advocates are again battling committees and politics to increase access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) for service members who are struggling with building a family.

Last year, language expanding access to IVF made it through the conference process, which is when the Senate and House Armed Services Committees reconcile the language between their versions of the bill. However, it was pulled at the last minute due to “moral objections” raised by Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA).

This year, expansion language was included in the Senate base text of the bill, but a competing amendment was added which led to intense debate and political fights, ultimately leading to the removal of the IVF provisions. This development was surprising since identical language was supported only a few months ago.

On July 22, the House voted to pass their NDAA on a narrow bipartisan vote of 216 to 212, which included IVF expansion in the language. The Senate has yet to consider its bill on the floor. We will keep you updated on the NDAA as it moves through Congress.

Source: PVA Washington Update, Issue 14, Volume 34, July 31, 2026. Reprinted with permission from Paralyzed Veterans of America. © 2026 Paralyzed Veterans of America. All rights reserved.



MS Committee Representative

Amy Dotson

Your Chapter, Your Voice: Building an MS Committee Together

On 28 July I attended my first meeting with PVA National MS Committee. One of the main takeaways is that each chapter should form an MS Committee instead of just having a PoC. The chair for the chapter committee would be the de facto PoC at that point. I would love for our chapter to create a robust committee so that we have more involvement and participation with our fellow members. The committee will allow for a better flow of ideas and reduce the chances of a single point of failure than just having a single PoC. This is your chapter and your committee, lend it your voice. We will be having a MS zoom call for the chapter on 19 Aug at 1800 ET. We can discuss more about the committee and brainstorm some ideas we have to be more active for our members.

There are quarterly town hall calls that PVA National MS Committee hosts that are open to all those with MS or those who want to learn more about MS. The next MS Town Hall is 25 Aug at 1630 ET. If you have requests for topics, please send them my way at least a week prior to give the committee time to prepare an answer to address the question or concern. Town halls are structured more formally than our chapter's MS zoom calls.

National MS Committee also wants to know about the great things you are doing. Send me your "MS Boots on the Ground" reports with photos so we can share our successes and accomplishments.

I look forward to seeing you all at the zooms and town hall meetings and seeing what we can accomplish together.

Thank You DJ Smooth

Every party needs a great DJ and their music in order to be successful. Your chapter had that and more at our annual Independence Day cookout when D. J. Smooth (Gary Jordan) pulled up in his truck, with a trailer filled with equipment and vinyl. He plugged in and began entertaining us with a great mix of Rhythm & Blues, Country, Oldies but Goodies, Jazz, and The Latest Hits. Many of you know Gary from his years of working on the spinal cord injury unit at the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in Augusta, GA. Gary has a special place in his heart for our veterans and as such he graciously donated his time and talent to making our cookout for the patients and staff of our SCI/D Unit into a celebration!

When you see Gary in the halls or in your room, please take time to say thank you for sharing his talent in support of our veterans, staff, and your PVA Southeastern Chapter.

By Larry Dodson





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Rehabilitation in Adaptive Sports: A Pathway to Recovery, Performance, and Inclusion

Adaptive sports have transformed the way individuals with physical, sensory, or intellectual disabilities participate in physical activity and competition. Through specialized equipment, modified rules, and inclusive environments, these sports provide opportunities for people to stay active, regain independence, and compete at recreational and elite levels. At the center of this journey is rehabilitation, which extends far beyond recovering from an injury. Rehabilitation helps individuals rebuild strength, improve function, develop confidence, and safely return to the activities they enjoy.

When rehabilitation and adaptive sports work together, the benefits reach far beyond athletic performance. Participants often experience improvements in physical health, mental well-being, independence, and overall quality of life. This collaborative approach allows athletes to recover safely while giving them the tools they need to achieve their personal goals.

Rehabilitation in Adaptive Sports

Rehabilitation in adaptive sports begins with a comprehensive, person-centered assessment. Rather than focusing solely on a diagnosis, rehabilitation professionals evaluate an individual's goals, medical history, functional abilities, and the physical demands of the sport they wish to participate in. Every rehabilitation plan is individualized because no two athletes have the same needs, abilities, or objectives.

Successful rehabilitation depends on a multidisciplinary team that may include physical therapists, occupational therapists, sports medicine physicians, rehabilitation nurses, athletic trainers, prosthetists and orthotists, exercise physiologists, and mental health professionals. Together, these specialists develop personalized treatment plans that help athletes recover safely while maximizing long term performance.

The primary goals of rehabilitation include restoring strength, flexibility, balance, coordination, endurance, and mobility while reducing pain and minimizing the risk of future injury. Rehabilitation professionals also help athletes develop new movement strategies, modify techniques when necessary, and optimize adaptive equipment for both comfort and performance.

Stages of Rehabilitation for Adaptive Athletes

Every rehabilitation journey is unique, but most adaptive athletes progress through several key stages. Each phase builds upon the previous one, helping individuals recover safely while preparing them for long-term participation in sports.

1. Pre Participation Evaluation and Goal Setting

Rehabilitation begins with comprehensive medical clearance and functional assessment. Healthcare professionals evaluate strength, endurance, balance, coordination, flexibility, sensation, cardiovascular health, and any limitations that could affect participation. During this stage, the athlete and rehabilitation team establish SMART goals that provide realistic milestones and help guide the recovery process.

2. Injury Treatment and Healing

If an injury or surgery has occurred, the focus shifts to tissue healing, pain management, and gradually restoring movement. Athletes who use prosthetic devices or other adaptive equipment may also require adjustments to improve comfort, support healing, and prepare the body for increased activity.

3. Rehabilitation and Conditioning

As healing progresses, rehabilitation focuses on rebuilding the body's foundation. Strength training, cardiovascular conditioning, flexibility exercises, balance training, and endurance work all become priorities. Rehabilitation professionals carefully monitor progress because adaptive athletes may rely on compensatory movement patterns that increase the risk of overuse injuries if not addressed early.

4. Skill Development and Sport Specific Training

As overall fitness improves, rehabilitation becomes more focused on the athlete's chosen sport. Training emphasizes movement technique, coordination, equipment handling, and sport specific skills while continuing to prioritize safety.

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5. Return to Competition or Increased Participation

The final stage involves a gradual return to competition or higher levels of participation. Rather than rushing back into full activity, rehabilitation professionals carefully monitor training intensity, equipment fit, fatigue, and overall performance. Ongoing assessments ensure athletes continue progressing safely while minimizing the risk of reinjury.

Benefits Beyond the Field of Play

The benefits of rehabilitation extend far beyond athletic performance. While improving physical abilities is one of its primary goals, rehabilitation also supports mental health, independence, and social inclusion. Physically, regular participation in adaptive sports improves cardiovascular health, muscular strength, flexibility, bone density, mobility, and overall fitness.

The psychological benefits are equally significant. Many individuals experience greater self-confidence, reduced anxiety, improved resilience, and a renewed sense of purpose. Adaptive sports often provide opportunities to overcome personal challenges, build self-esteem, and establish meaningful goals throughout recovery.

Participation also creates valuable social connections. Athletes become part of supportive communities that include teammates, coaches, rehabilitation professionals, friends, and family members. These relationships improve motivation, encourage long term participation, and help reduce feelings of isolation.

A Team Based Approach

Successful rehabilitation is built on collaboration. Physical therapists and occupational therapists focus on restoring movement, improving functional abilities, and adapting daily activities. Prosthetists and orthotists ensure adaptive devices fit comfortably and perform effectively during training and competition.

Athletic trainers and sports medicine physicians help prevent injuries, monitor recovery, and safely guide athletes back into competition. Strength and conditioning specialists design individualized exercise programs, while mental health professionals and peer mentors provide emotional support, motivation, and strategies for overcoming challenges throughout the rehabilitation process.

Overcoming Barriers

Although adaptive sports continue to grow, many athletes still face barriers that limit participation. Financial costs, transportation challenges, limited access to adaptive equipment, and the availability of accessible facilities can all make participation difficult. Some individuals also experience fear of reinjury or lack confidence when returning to sports following a life-changing injury.

Rehabilitation professionals play an important role in addressing these obstacles. They connect athletes with community resources, recommend funding opportunities, ensure proper equipment fitting, and create gradual return to activity plans that rebuild confidence while reducing the risk of future injuries.

Getting Started

Beginning rehabilitation for adaptive sports starts with open communication between athletes and their healthcare team. Individuals should discuss their athletic goals, medical history, and any physical limitations while seeking referrals to rehabilitation professionals experienced in adaptive sports. A comprehensive evaluation should include assessments of physical function, adaptive equipment, and sport specific needs. Developing a realistic progression plan with measurable goals helps athletes improve strength, endurance, and technical skills while minimizing injury risk.

Looking Ahead

Rehabilitation remains the foundation that connects recovery with performance. Through collaboration among healthcare professionals, coaches, families, and athletes, adaptive sports become much more than competition. They provide opportunities for recovery, independence, personal growth, and inclusion.

PVASE IN ACTION

★★ SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED ★★



THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBERS, ATHLETES, VOLUNTEERS, AND SUPPORTERS
★★ WHO MAKE OUR MISSION POSSIBLE! ★★



Membership Application

An individual is eligible for membership by meeting the following criteria: (1) is a citizen of the United States; (2) was regularly enlisted, inducted or commissioned for active duty service in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard of the United States, or our allies as evidenced by other-than-dishonorable character of service documented by a verifiable DD-214 or DD-215 (entry-level separation not acceptable); (3A) was separated from the service in the Armed Forces under conditions other than dishonorable; or (3B) is on active duty or must continue to serve after the cessation of hostilities; and (4) has suffered a spinal cord injury or disease (such as MS, ALS), whether or not service connected in origin. Membership is free. **Complete and return application to the chapter of choice or by mail/email to: Paralyzed Veterans of America Membership Department, 1875 Eye Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20006; (E) members@pva.org.** Providing the requested information is entirely voluntary but required for membership with Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Chapter Name: _____

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Social Security Number: _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Race/Ethnicity:

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ African American/Descent ☐ Hispanic/Latino

☐ Native American/Alaskan Native ☐ Caucasian

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Email: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

VETERAN STATUS INFORMATION

Please submit the following with application:

- DD Form 214 showing character of discharge.
- Medical evidence of spinal cord injury or involvement (medical records or physician's statement).

Proof of active duty status must be verified prior to membership approval.

Have you been discharged under conditions that are less than honorable? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain: _____

Are you a United States citizen? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a spinal cord injury or disease? ☐ Yes ☐ No If disease, specify: _____

Is your spinal cord injury or spinal cord disease service connected? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Paralyzed Veterans of America is your accredited representative, do you permit PVA Service Officers to provide information to PVA National Membership Department relative to your membership eligibility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct, that I have read and meet the qualifications and I understand that my membership could be denied or revoked if any information provided is inaccurate.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

PVASE Team at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Detroit



SCI/D COORDINATORS

Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, GA

SCI Clinic Coordinator: (800)836-5561, ext. 33778 or 33710
SCI Outpatient Clinic Nurse, (800)836-5561, ext. 32245
SCI Home Care Coordinator
SCI Fee B&B: Shavondria Davis, (800)836-5561, ext. 32242

Atlanta/Decatur VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Corey Ashmore, 404-321-6111, ext. 202475

Birmingham VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Nazaren Hartman, 205-933-8101, ext. 6453

Central Alabama Veterans Healthcare System (Montgomery/Tuskegee)

SCI/D Coordinator: Tammy Davidson, 334-727-0550, ext. 53219

Charleston VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Cheryl Jefferson, 843-789-6456 or 843-577-5011, ext. 206456

Columbia VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Rosland Sims, 803-869-0122

Dublin VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Kierra Allen, 478-274-5459

Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: James Smith, 205-554-3542

Asheville VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Amy Pike, 828-298-7911, ext. 15384

Mountain Home VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Marcy Fleenor, 423-979-2647 or 423-926-1171, ext. 2746

Salisbury VA Medical Center

SCI/D Coordinator: Alice Gatewood, 704-638-9000, ext. 3144

Southeastern Chapter Membership

Chapter Membership Director: Michael Bishop

Membership Leads:

Asheville, NC: Dewayne McGowan

Atlanta, GA: Jason Dills

Augusta, GA: Michael Bishop

Birmingham, AL: Vacant

Charleston, SC: Joseph Gethers

Columbia, SC: Joseph Gethers

Dublin, GA: Keith Thompson

Montgomery, AL: Vacant

Mountain Home, TN: Dewayne McGowan

All membership meetings will be conducted via Zoom unless otherwise communicated.

Ways To Donate and Support Our Veterans

The Paralyzed Veterans of America – Southeastern Chapter deeply appreciates your generosity. Your donation helps us provide vital support to veterans living with spinal cord injuries and diseases. You can give in the way that works best for you:

By Mail: Send checks payable to *PVA Southeastern Chapter* to: 4010 Deans Bridge Rd Hephzibah, GA 30815

Online via PayPal

Through Facebook Fundraisers

Every contribution makes a difference. Thank you for standing with our heroes.



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