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## **Tournament Organisers Guide to Dealing with Disability Issues**

**This should be read in conjunction with the BFA's code of conduct that endorses legislation relating to equality and diversity and safe guarding and Disability Discrimination Policy in the Members' Handbook.**

BFA flyball provides a unique level of access for people of all abilities to actively participate in competitive sport. We are proud to include in our membership people from all backgrounds and ability but we must also understand the positive action that may need to be taken to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy the same level of access to flyball. The Equalities Act 2010 protects disabled people and their carers from unlawful discrimination in all aspects of life including voluntary memberships of clubs and associations. The Act is therefore fully applicable to the BFA, its membership and our activities.

The Act places obligations on Officials, Members and Tournament Organisers to avoid as far as possible by reasonable means the disadvantage which a disabled flyballer or carer might experience because of their disability (and this may involve a degree of anticipatory thought and planning). The duty requires Members to take positive steps, or 'reasonable adjustment' wherever practicable, to ensure that disabled people and carers can fully participate in the racing, camping, associated flyball events and any benefits of membership or attendance at a tournament, training event or seminar that is provided for everyone else.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

Reasonable adjustments should always be made to enable disabled flyballers to participate in flyball, despite their disability. However, the adjustments do have to be 'reasonable':

- Reasonable adjustments should be made to enable a disabled person to overcome their disadvantage and participate in flyball.
- A person for whom reasonable adjustments are made should not be asked to pay for the adjustments.
- Reasonable adjustments must be practical and affordable by the TO.

This means it is acceptable for a flyball club running a small show in an expensive venue and hiring in all the show equipment to determine that they cannot afford to spend on disabled access measures. However, a larger show that makes a profit may be better placed financially and would be expected to make those reasonable adjustments. This requires a bit of judgement and you must

be prepared to provide evidence of your decision if challenged about not making reasonable adjustments on the argument of cost.

It is important to remember reasonable adjustments are more usually about thinking about things differently, problem solving and forward planning rather than about costs. Most of all follow good practice from other shows and take advice from the BFA Accessibility Officer if in any doubt.

### **Things for a TO to Consider Regarding the Inclusion of Disabled Flyballers**

Whilst you should assume a fair degree of accessibility is always going to be required and you will have disabled people attending your show, there is no obligation for anyone to declare their disability to you. You should therefore make some basic assumptions (accessible toilets and vehicular access to camping), but also be prepared to take specific request for people who are happy to alert you to any difficulties they may have due to their disability. It is therefore good practice for your show schedule to provide the opportunity for competitors to declare any disability they would like to be considered by the TO. Should anyone declare a particular issue to you should also share this information with the tournament Head Judge.

**Accessible Toilet Facilities.** You should provide an accessible toilet as a matter of course, but do you have enough, and if not, can you afford another one? Think about how many competitors and visitors you are going to have, will one be enough and have you had any special requests before-hand indicating you may need more?

Disabled portaloos vary in cost and what you get for your money. Some aren't as accessible as you might think, so know what you are ordering. What you are looking for is something which allows room for a wheel chair and turning space and a carer, and grab handles. An external base of about 1.55m is reasonable. Toilet paper and washing facilities should be at wheel chair level. Some usefully come with a changing area so these can double up as baby changing or low-level toddler's toileting. However, the baby changing shelf can sometimes restrict a wheel chair user's mobility and movement in the toilet. Make sure the entrance doesn't have a high lip and has ground level wheelchair access.

Good practice is to place the disabled toilet to one side of the other toilets and put a notice on that elsan shouldn't be emptied in it and priority for use is for disabled flyballers. Please consider that standing in a queue for a toilet isn't ideal for disabled people for reasons of mobility, unsteadiness or weak bowels and bladder. Also, please remember to ensure that this toilet is serviced regularly - if the disabled toilet is in a mess or toilet roll has run out disabled people do not have the option of using another toilet.

### **Accessible Camping**

If requested, consideration should be given to allocating camping as close to the ring, toilets and other facilities as practicable for disabled people. Many physically disabled people with blue badges will struggle to walk 100 meters, some can walk 50m others 20m or less, a blue badge doesn't define limits, so don't assume. Can you reduce distances between camping, the ring and accessible toilets?

Ideally a camping area should be marked out so it is easy and safe for vehicles, especially emergency vehicles to drive in and out. Disabled flyballers may need to drive to the ring and day-park, and back to the camping area if you are unable to collocate them all together closely. Marked vehicular access also enables easy use of motability scooters. An awareness as to where vehicles are likely to go is useful for disabled people, especially children with special needs such as deafness, ADHD and autism; it is helpful for them, and their carers, to know where vehicles are likely to be moving.

For a whole variety of reasons, not all of which are disability related, **a 5mph speed limit must be enforced.**

There should also be adequate space between camping units to not only prevent the spread of fire but to ensure the safe evacuation of disabled people and their dogs should there be a fire. The space between units should be 6 meters where possible. It is also good practice to have fire-fighting equipment available nearby to camping units. Whilst attending teams will need take on responsibility for evacuating disabled people in their own team in the event of fire, TOs need to consider that this may take time; a physically disabled person is going to move very slowly, a deaf person will need to be personally alerted, and a visually impaired person properly orientated.

If for any reason camping has to be across a public access road from the racing, it is good practice to give disabled people the choice of camping in the main field even if this means they are separated from their teams if you can't accommodate them all; but think through responsibility for evacuation in the event of an emergency if this is the case. What is important here is choice; the choice of safe camping on the main field or with team at their own and team's responsibility. There should also be some measures to slow traffic by making drivers aware that there is an event and people crossing the road, such as 'Event in Progress' or 'People Crossing' signs, as disabled people may cross the road more slowly. You could make arrangements for any disabled flyballers parking over a road to drive to the rings for racing and back to their camping area if they need to rest.

### **Accessible Ring**

All entrances to the rings should be at least 32"/81.28cm in width to allow for easy wheelchair access.

### **Disabled Children**

A flyball weekend is a wonderful experience for children especially disabled children who can widen their friendship groups in a supportive environment. Disabled children include not only physical and sensory disabled children but also those with autism, ADHD and other invisible disabilities. Disabled children are particularly vulnerable.

It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure all children, including disabled children are safe at all times. However, as TO you have a responsibility to highlight any potential hazards at the venue by clear notices, fencing off and tannoy announcements. Children are adventurous, and some disabled children have reduced awareness of danger. Any hazards at the venue like ponds, rivers, farm buildings and other unsafe areas or equipment should have notices and if possible hazard tape. If there is public access to the venue parents will need to be aware of this as children with SEN are at heightened risk from stranger danger.

### **My venue isn't accessible**

If a venue is not accessible the BFA Accessibility Officer can be contacted to see if it can be made accessible by problem solving. If this cannot be done and there is nothing a TO can do to resolve this by planning or reasonable cost such as an additional accessible toilet. An alternative venue should also be considered, however, in the event that there is no alternative venue available at reasonable cost teams should be adequately warned (show schedule) so that there are no surprises on arrival.

Things to warn teams about in advance could be:

- Camping in a different field or across a road to the ring.
- The distances between camping and the ring if excessive.
- Known hazards on site (e.g. river/deep water/public access)

The BFA Accessibility Officer can be contacted for advice on any of the above issues  
accessibility@bfa.email

