

# TEACHING DEAF STUDENTS TO SPORTS AND THE IMPACT OF EXERCISE IN THE PARALYMPIC GAMES

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**ABSTRACT**--Talking about "sports for all" is the challenge that the association AMT Concept asbl (Access and Mobility for all) wanted to raise, in collaboration with the Sport sector and Sports infrastructure of the French Community Commission (COCOF) and with support from the Brussels French-speaking Service for People with Disabilities and Works Evening. We hope that this guide will improve the accessibility of sports facilities for people with reduced mobility (PRM) The practice of sport is beneficial for both health and development staff. For people with disabilities, it is a great way to express their potential instead of exposing their limits. Sport appears as an undeniable factor in improving quality of life as much as great tool for recognition and integration into society. The routes of disabled athletes are here to testify to the absolute need to evolve mentalities to make sport accessible to all.

**Keywords**-- Teaching deaf students to sports and the impact of exercise in the Paralympic Games

## I. INTRODUCTION

A priori and on the condition that the sports infrastructures are arranged in as a result, people with disabilities can exercise many disciplines sports. Sports organized for this type of public are generally listed in three categories: sport for deaf and hard of hearing people, Paralympic sports (for physically disabled and visually impaired people) and finally sport for people with intellectual disabilities. Each group has its own story, its organization, his competitions and his vision of sport.

The main objective of this guide is to give such an overview of the reality as possible of the accessibility of sports infrastructure in the Region of Brussels-Capital. The information gathered here is intended to supplement the "Sports Guide" and the COCOF website so that it is aimed at an audience as well wide as possible. The consultation of this guide will allow people with mobility reduced to know the level of accessibility of sports facilities in which they wish to surrender.

Faced with the current lack of information, the first stage of this work consisted by creating an evaluation grid allowing to analyze point by point the accessibility of the sports infrastructure of the Brussels-Capital Region. This tool allowed us to collect the data necessary for our study in the field.

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Based on the information gathered, we were able to determine the level accessibility of each of the sports facilities visited: accessible, accessible with some reasonable and inaccessible accommodations. We held takes into account in our assessment the three fundamental aspects of the concept of accessibility:

access built environments of all kinds, circulate horizontally and vertically without any obstacle and use all the structures made available public. To this triad, we added the notion of "practicing" to cover the specifics of sports buildings.

A chapter of this report, supplemented by an appendix, is devoted to the presentation Title IV of the Regional Planning Regulations (RRU) which governs matters relating to accessibility of public buildings to PRMs in the Brussels-Capital Region. It's about there of minimum standards to respect during any new construction or any renovation of an old building, but we think it would be useful to put in place more ambitious standards and adapt them to the more specific needs of athletes in disability.

The conclusions of our study, developed in the form of recommendations, could form the basis for the creation of a practical accessibility code. These concrete development proposals aim to improve the current accessibility of sports infrastructure, favoring the principle of autonomy of people reduced mobility and the comfort and safety of all users.

We hope that this guide will prove to be an effective tool in promoting a sports policy promoting the integration of disabled people, real "Cultural revolution" of the sports world.

The person with reduced mobility:

Anyone who is hampered in their mobility due to their size, condition, age, a permanent or temporary disability as well as due to devices or instruments to which she must resort to move. Several factors contribute to hampering mobility of individuals: blindness, deafness, intellectual disability, pregnancy, consequences of accident, difficulty understanding the language. It can also just be a shopping cart or a pram to maneuver or a bulky object to transport.

## **II. THE DISABLED PERSON**

By disabled person is meant any person with a resulting disability physical (including sensory and not visible), or mental (i.e. intellectual, cognitive or psychic).

## **III. THE CONCEPT OF DISABILITY**

Generally, the concept of disability is only used to designate impairments physical or sensory, permanent or temporary, which result from illnesses or trauma. This approach neglects the environmental and social aspects that are all "disabling" factors detrimental to the autonomy of people reduced mobility and integration of people with disabilities.

In reality, disability should be seen as the result of the interaction between a given functional decrease and the environment in which the person affected. From this point of view, we consider that the environment can cause a mobility handicap for people who use wheelchairs rolling or using a cane or prosthesis or sensory impairment for people who move without vision or hearing.

In conclusion, the accessibility of places open to the public, a fortiori sports facilities, is essential for people with disabilities. No adapted or not fitted out, the environment hinders their possibilities of movement and reinforces their dependence or isolation, thus creating the true situation of handicap. Sport for deaf and hard of hearing people

### ***Disciplines:***

The hard of hearing or deaf are physically able to exercise any what a sporting activity. However, on a sports field as elsewhere, the hard of hearing people have their own unique way of communicating. This is the reason which separate Olympics for the hearing impaired continue to be organized.

### ***Accessibility:***

- Reach, access, circulate, use
- quality lighting and acoustics
- access to information and signage: visual supports

### ***Practice***

- rooms with quality acoustics and lighting
- Sport for people with intellectual disabilities

Disciplines:

People with intellectual disabilities are physically able to exercise any sporting activity.

### ***Accessibility:***

Developments made to make infrastructure accessible to people suffering from a physical or sensory handicap are all likely to improve reception mentally disabled athletes.

However, it is less a matter of adapting facilities than having staff sensitized, capable of providing assistance when needed or supervising the least autonomous. So that the person with intellectual disabilities benefits from the greatest autonomy, she needs support to help her find her bearings and make her choice. In the same spirit, care must also be taken to set up a code of simple and clear visual communication.

### ***Swimming:***

Swimming is a sport accessible to all and which allows rapid progress, whatever the starting level or type of impairment of the swimmers. So it's not about only a sporting or recreational activity, but also a real art therapeutic. The accessibility of swimming pools is therefore essential.

In this type of installation more than elsewhere, any arrangement intended to improve accessibility has positive benefits for all visitors. Convalescent, elderly, pregnant women or those with small children cannot than to appreciate the simple and unimpeded paths planned for the passage of people in wheelchairs.

### ***Accessibility of swimming pools:***

The requirements for overall accessibility are identical to those presented in the sections above. However, around the basin, attention must be paid more specific to the following points:

- risk of slipping on wet ground: installation of handrails along pathways
- footbaths: a spray bar for the foot (which also sprinkles the wheelchairs) allows circulation common to all audiences. AT default, the footbaths must be able to be bypassed or covered by a removable floor wider than a wheelchair.
- access to the pool: design or equip each pool to allow access to water as independently and discreetly as possible.

## **IV. RELATED WORK**

Deaf and hard of hearing people have a long and rich history with sports. This complex story is due to the fact that deafness, an often "invisible" handicap, has enabled many deaf and hard of hearing athletes to participate in competitions open to the able-bodied. Many deaf people have already participated in the Olympic Games and some have been able to shine in the past. These include the Hungarian Rejto ildiko, who remains one of the most successful women in the history of fencing, or the swimmers Jeff James Float and Terence Parkin.

However, from the 19th century (there are many references in 1888 to the creation of a sports club for the Deaf in Berlin), it was considered that the specific communication needs of deaf people in the sports field required the implementation of specific competitions.

However, it was not until the interwar period that a movement came together to offer deaf and hard of hearing competitors on the model of the Olympic Games, sports competitions which are specially dedicated to them.

Thus in 1924, under the impulse of the French Eugène Rubens-Alcais, himself deaf, the International Committee of the Silent Sports organizes in Paris "The silent games" ("The silent Games"). These games, inspired by the model of the Olympic games, will therefore be held every four years (with the exception of periods of war) and will experience an ever-increasing success. These games are still organized today, by the CISS (now the International Committee for the Deaf Sports) under the name of "Deaflympics".

In 1949, on the model of the Olympic Winter Games, winter games were created. This development also forced to define a deafness criterion to allow a fair practice of these sports, and these games are today reserved for athletes with a hearing loss of at least 55 decibels. Historically, deaf sport has had a community affirmative function. Indeed, at one time, the beginning of the 20th century, when the deaf were described as intellectually and linguistically inferior people and often considered as a subclass of the population, a certain Eugène Rubens-Alcais decided to react by organizing an international deaf competition (1st Deaflympics, see box). It was his way of showing that the deaf community was also valuable, just as others organized banquets or organized associations.

Even today, the Deaflympics still represent a fabulous platform for highlighting the deaf community, at least in the organizing country. This is one of the arguments regularly put forward by deaf associations when the Paralympic movement seeks to absorb them: melted into the mass of different handicaps, the deaf would lose their visibility.

Why independent sports organizations?

While deaf athletes around the world have grouped themselves into independent organizations that are neither part of the hearing world nor the world of people with disabilities, it is not due to chance or a whim for no reason. The beginning of the explanation can be found in the fact that everyday deaf people do not define themselves in terms of their hearing loss, but constitute a cultural and identity minority with their own language.

If they do not feel like handicapped in the practice of sport, the fact remains that the deaf, as in many other fields, always end up having communication problems when they are engaged in clubs of hearing . A total or partial loss of information which, in the long run, tends to discourage the deaf person and push them to give up sport.

Conversely, in deaf clubs where communication based on sign language is practiced, deaf athletes receive all information on an equal footing and can practice their discipline independently. A sense of autonomy and self-determination further reinforced by the fact that in most deaf sports organizations, only deaf people can hold leadership positions. This results in social fulfillment (broken isolation) and markedly improved self-confidence!  
The Difference:

Although not defined as disabled, hearing loss remains a factor that does not allow deaf people to compete on an equal footing. Indeed, not only does deafness influence the learning of movements, but it also prevents people with it from receiving information which is transmitted by acoustics such as the condition of a ground (the ground does not sound the same wood, dry or soaked soil, etc.), proximity to another player, etc. Very fine subtleties, but which can make quite a difference in competition.

In Switzerland too, the deaf have been very active in sport since the beginning of the 20th century. A pioneer in this area, the Gehörlosen Sportverein Zürich was founded in 1916 and is the first sports association for the deaf in Switzerland. At the national level, the Sports Federation of the Deaf of Switzerland (SGSV-FSSS) was founded in 1930, making it the oldest sports organization in the field of disability in Switzerland.

Since its creation, the Swiss Deaf Sports Federation has set itself the objective of encouraging the practice of deaf sport across the country and in various disciplines, in particular by supporting the different sections and their members. The organization of courses and training camps was the logical follow-up to this objective.

In recent years, the encouragement of sport for young deaf people (at school or in clubs) has gradually become one of the new priorities of the Swiss Sports Federation of the Deaf and this is why it has, in particular , intensified its collaboration with schools and other institutions and regularly set up camps for young people

Definition:

Deafness is a physiological deficiency which more or less deteriorates the perception of the sound environment, which impairs the understanding of linguistic codes and which constitutes a major obstacle to participation in communication networks.

Hearing impairment (AD) is the impairment that affects the most people in France. In the absence of official statistics, the number of French people with hearing loss is estimated at 7%, one in 1000 of whom are deaf pre-lingual (deaf before the appearance of language).

Hearing impairment comes from hereditary, congenital or accidental causes (noise, illnesses, drugs). It is also a consequence of aging. The severity of the disability depends on 2 criteria:

-The degree of hearing loss:

Relational isolation is all the more dramatic as the deficit is significant, but even a moderate hearing impairment always leads to a breakdown in communication which is detrimental for social integration, intellectual and psychological development.

-The age of onset of deafness:

Disability is all the more serious since it appears early (at birth or before language acquisition). There is then a risk of double handicap: Deafness and MUTITE. Deafness makes it difficult to learn oral and written language, and even more so if deafness appears early in the child's life (deafness from birth). It can penalize access to cultural capital and slow down the relational experience.

## V. TYPICAL PERFORMANCE BEHAVIORS

Deafness is particularly characterized by its consequences in communication and mastery of oral and written language.

Communication problems can be of several types:

- Difficulties in learning the spoken language without reference to an acoustic model.
- A lack of know-how in the use of the linguistic code by lack of communication experience and a lack of general and cultural knowledge which can be the consequence.

Nancy-Metz Academy GTP "Adapted EPS" 2009 Page 2organizes his perception of the environment without sound clues, without crescendo of noises informing him of events taking place near him (arrival of the mother for example). He lives in a visual world, without temporal relief. Her moments in life are paraded like a series of slides.

In young deaf children, the acquisition of words is insufficient in quality and quantity. Words can be recognized or repeated by the deaf child, but their treatment is not correct.

The lexicon is less precise (coat = anorak, jacket). Abstract words have a blurry meaning, sometimes deviant (I don't think = I don't understand). Homophones are a source of errors (car = bus or because). The pictorial expressions are understood literally. The perception of the syntax and the organization of a sentence is global, incomplete. Only the nouns, verbs and adjectives are identified; pronouns and prepositions are often omitted.

Growing up, the deaf child widens his environment and his experiences without capturing, in the oral messages which are addressed to him, all the clues allowing him to organize, to link the actions by a causal link and chronology. The table presented in the appendix details these various elements.

Understanding behaviors It is classic to say that deafness is a handicap which cannot be seen and which may not be detectable at the first contact with the deaf person. It is quite easy to distinguish a severe severe deaf student when speaking. Its communication mode is identifiable: it most often has a jerky speech rate with sounds in the bass register. Her gaze is, most often, wandering and floating in search of clues to understand her environment. His hearing aids can be quite visible and, when a student uses sign language, it is also easy to understand that you are in the presence of a deaf person.

Generally, the pupil is educated alone in ordinary class in his sector establishment. There are few groups of AD supported collectively except in specialized centers or within the framework of the UPI Hearing Impairment device.

There is a great variety in the situations encountered: indeed, some students can benefit from one or 2 prostheses (ear contour or cochlear implant), and can also use the French Sign Language (LSF), the Spoken Language Completed (LPC) or lip reading. Some speak, others do not. Some may be deaf speaking orally and others may be deaf speaking orally and use LPC at the same time.

The diversity of the situations encountered can also be explained by the degree of deafness of the pupil, by the age of onset of deafness (pre lingual or post lingual) and by the support from which the child has benefited (center specialist, medical, psychological, parental help).

This diversity requires on the part of the worker, a knowledge of the files of each student and above all direct contact with this student.

All these elements will lead each hearing impaired student to experience their deafness in a personal way and to develop unique behaviors and modes of communication specific to their situation.

Mobileizable resources in EPS:

Deafness does not directly affect the resources of all types that a DA student can mobilize. All the disciplines of EPS, classically approached, are thus accessible to him.

However, certain specific activities, such as parachuting, diving or rifle shooting, require the prior opinion of a specialist (ENT, sports doctor or federal doctor).

Accidental or medical perforation of the eardrum remains the major contraindication to the practice of an aquatic activity or at altitude. Possible development: It is essential to identify handicapping situations for the DA student.

SPACE: the area of evolution in EPS is generally large (gymnasium, swimming pool, football field, etc.) and the more the distance increases the more difficult it is for a DA to perceive the sound signals. These environments are generally noisy. The origin of the sounds as well as their direction are more difficult to identify by the DA student. The teacher cannot always be in front of each student, contrary to the class situation, and he is often far from the student. The latter, due to his deafness, essentially uses the sight to process environmental information, which will require constant attention and may cause him to feel tired or even demotivated.

The apparatus: hearing correction, which allows bilateral contours or even cochlear implants, does not make hearing normal in intensity or frequency. In sports, the value of prostheses is limited due to the noisy atmosphere, the playing distances, the large volumes and the distance from the contact person. Removing the ear hooks during sports does not penalize the student in any way. The student is then advised to remove them to avoid shock or sweat that could damage their devices.

Inter-student exchanges in sporting activity require a common communication code. A rejection phenomenon towards the DA student may appear. The other students may have the impression that this one understood the nature of the exchanges without this being really the case. In the same vein, verbally developing a collective strategy (of attack or defense for example) can exclude the DA student.

Action delay / information transmission: In team sports, advice, directives, intra-team exchanges of an oral nature will not be perceived by the DA student. The specific means of arbitration (the whistle, the starter's pistol) will be poorly discriminated. In addition, the obligation to use visual signals to transmit information creates discrepancies in the course of the action. An instruction transmitted orally is perceived in all directions almost instantaneously and can be processed by the student quickly. On the other hand, the information transmitted by the visual channel is not very easy and leads to a stop or a slowing down of the action.

Sometimes difficult for the student to use written documents to assess the student's knowledge: the DA student's language skills (lexical field, grammar, syntax, etc.) are often more limited than those of a hearing student. The use of Multiple Choice Questionnaire (MCQ), without content adjustments, generally poses a problem for the DA student. The instructions may not be understood or misinterpreted. , The use of writing, a language modality poorly mastered in a pre-lingual deaf person, is often a source of errors, hence the interest in using LSF, LPC or reformulation.

Limited use of visual codes specific to a sporting discipline (refereeing, scoring points.): Knowledge of these codes is often more difficult to acquire in DA students. Access to these specific gestures (for example that of indicating an exit from a ball in volleyball) requires work of presentation, explanation and practical situation. The terminology of each sport discipline requires the same approach.

Possible general arrangement:

Often when discovering the deafness of the child, a moment of amazement can lead to what is called, A PHENOMENON OF SURDI-MUTITE INCIDENT: "The Other is deaf and dumb, I become so too. It is imperative to avoid this and speak in front of the student DA

Do not hesitate to challenge the DA by physical contact. He's used to it, as he's also used to not always being understood. The main thing is to stay in the communication phase.

The arrangements will be focused mainly on communication: how to make it effective, how to transmit information (instructions, explanation, mediation, exchange ...) by adapting to the incapacity, more or less significant, of the student to hear a instructions usually transmitted by the sound channel as well as their sometimes limited cultural background.

Precaution to take:

- Solicit his attention and wait if necessary for him to look at you.
- Face the pupil or in his field of vision while avoiding being backlit
- Use the maximum of various supports to explain a situation; written support, use of a table, drawing, demonstration ...
- Continue to speak while articulating well and keeping a normal speech rate.
- Use the simplest possible terms as well as simple sentences.
- Ensure that the student has understood the instruction by asking him to reformulate with his words and / or have the instruction reformulated by another student.
- Set up regulation systems in case the student does not understand the current exercise. For example, during a football game, ask the other students on the field to raise their arms so that the DA student understands that he must stop playing during a foul whistled by the referee.
- Use visual aids instead of sound signals. For example, indicate the start or end of a race by a visual signal, identify the person who assumes a particular social role (referee, assessor) by a specific signal (particular jersey color, armband, etc.)

In general, it is essential to explain to the DA student the objectives of the session by presenting what will be asked of him: number of exercises requested, area of evolution, conditions for success of the exercise, role this each ... This will undoubtedly allow him to anticipate the content of the session and reduce any stress. The message



must be passed before the action, when the student can direct his gaze towards his interlocutor. In action, he won't be able to do it. It is therefore necessary to contextualize the action to be performed.

The consequences of deafness also imply, in terms of the material security of the student and his entourage, a permanent reflection on the part of the teacher as to his placement, facing the DA student, for each new pedagogical situation.

## VI. CONCLUSION

### *Competence 1: Produce a measured performance*

- During a race start: The student's motor response to the sound signal is not good, the teacher must be about 20 meters in front of him and use a visual code to trigger the start by putting in the DA student's race lane. The distance of 20 meters will allow the teacher to react in the event of a false start and to be able to stop the student's run. Placed too close to the starting line, the professor will not have this possibility.

- In the middle distance race, during a test in an exam situation, it is possible to give the DA student his lap time by means of a small whiteboard presented in front of him. If there is a need to stop the race, it is important to place students on the course to intervene.

- In the context of throws (weight javelin, etc.), the teacher places himself in the pupil's visual field. If the oral instructions are transmitted on the back of the DA pupil, the pupil may overturn with the device; obvious danger with a javelin in hand. The teacher in front of the student can also intervene if the deaf student decides to pick up his machine when the other students have not yet launched their own.

For a swim start, the problem remains the same and the remedies too.

### *Skill 2: Adapting your movements to different types of environment.*

- Climbing: In the case of a pedagogical situation aimed at developing the skill of "climbing in the lead", a deaf person could put himself in danger if he does not respect the maximum height of evolution imposed by the teacher. As the oral recall works very poorly, it is therefore necessary, beforehand, to ensure that the instruction is understood by the DA student by illustrating the exercise requested by explicit diagrams and / or by having it performed by another student. . In a situation of "climbing in a reel", it is possible to define a code with the rope as a vector of information: the insurer can indicate that the exercise is stopped by 2 short strokes for example.

**Competence 3:** Design and carry out actions with artistic, aesthetic and expression aims.

- In dance. For the perception of sounds, the use of a wooden floor is ideal, it transmits vibrations at best. In activities using a sound medium, it is possible to find bright technical devices indicating variations in rhythms and intensity.

### *Skill 4: confront each other individually or collectively*

- In team sports, it is extremely difficult to intervene during the action. Assuming the role of arbitrator can allow discussion on the ground with the DA student. It is necessary to indicate to the various protagonists, the presence of a deaf person on the ground. Providing players with accommodations to deal with the fact that the DA pupil does not hear the referee's whistle greatly reduces the tensions that this can cause. Example: raise your hand or temporarily turn off the light in the gymnasium to alert the hearing impaired person to a whistled fault.

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