



Exercise with a visual limitation

Tips for dealing with and guiding an athlete who is partially sighted

Initial situation

- 1 Ask about the nature of the visual impairment. Regularly test at which distance the athlete can see objects or details.
- 2 Ask which visual functions are affected. For instance, is there a field of vision defect, reduced visual acuity, sensitivity to light, disturbed vision of colour or depths? Have the athlete explain this in detail.
- 3 Are there athletic limitations? For instance, has the athlete undergone eye surgery recently or are the eyes extra vulnerable for another reason?

Organisation

- 4 Consult with the athlete whether XL equipment or decelerating/contrasting sports equipment is of added value. Always choose colours together which the athlete can best distinguish between and add additional contrast where necessary.
- 5 Many athletes who are visually impaired are bothered by direct sunlight or artificial light. Have them indicate what lighting they find pleasant.
- 6 Do not leave unnecessary material lying around. Indicate where dangerous obstacles and items are located.

Coaching/guidance/differentiation

- 7 Discuss how you will inform the other athletes. For the purpose of safety and participation, it is important that they are aware.
- 8 Agree on a signal to quickly stop an activity. This can be a whistle signal or the word stop, for instance.
- 9 Ask whether it is necessary to indicate changes in surface (e.g. from grass to stone, steps, tree roots). Provide short and clear information/commands.

- 10 Have the athlete view everything that is relevant from up close and check whether the activity is clear.
- 11 Adjust the rules if necessary to reduce the difference in level. The same rules do not have to apply to everyone.

Evaluation

- 12 After a while, evaluate together how their exercise experience is and in what area they may want to be supported even better. Also indicate what you feel comfortable with as a supervisor.

More information and instruction

For more information and instructional videos, go to <https://www.visio.org/sports>