

# The **adapted** SPORTS™ Report

Off the Sidelines - Into the Game!

Winter 2005-2006

## TEN YEARS STRONG!

*Bev Vaughn and Tommie Storms, founders of the American Association of adaptedSPORTS™ Programs, have lead a historic journey on behalf of kids with physical disabilities. Here, they tell how adapted sports came to Georgia's schools.*



Bev Vaughn (left), President and CEO and Tommie Storms (right), Vice President and COO

***You were brought into the DeKalb County School system as their first full-time coordinator for adapted sports. What, specifically, did the school system determine was needed?***

**Bev:** The program was really a diamond in the rough. It had been run by volunteers and teachers who had heavy workloads in other areas. DeKalb wanted someone to oversee the entire program and to set policies, goals, and establish clear directives.

***Once you got into the program, what did you see that needed to happen?***

**Bev:** My idea was to develop a real athletic program in line with traditional interscholastic athletics. This included training and certification for coaches and officials, standards for competitions, equipment, and policies that relate to the overall educational outcomes. There was no question that these kids could achieve given the opportunity and appropriate framework.

***When did you see that the program had to grow out of the DeKalb County School System?***

**Bev:** After a few years of being there. Students and their parents began asking questions like, why aren't there other teams to play besides the DeKalb teams, or why can't we travel to another county and play a team? When Atlanta hosted the 1996



The DeKalb County School System supports Georgia's first adapted sports teams, the Silver Streaks and the Red Hot Rollers.

*Continued from cover page. . .*

Paralympic Games, parents from around the state called me asking where their child could go to play, say for example, wheelchair basketball.

Unfortunately, if they were not in DeKalb County Schools there was no place for their child to play because there weren't any other teams. No school district was offering a program like this.

***Is this what lead you to developing AAASP?***

**Bev:** Yes, this began to generate these ideas in my head that, gee, wouldn't it be great if we did have other teams to play. If communities weren't able to figure out how to get these programs up and running, maybe they were just lacking some leadership and direction. I began to think, what if we put together some sort of agency or group that could help lead communities to build their own interscholastic adapted sports programs based on the DeKalb Schools program. I discovered that parents were seeking true sports opportunities for their children with physical disabilities, and local communities were looking for appropriate training and capable leadership.

**Tommy:** We talked and talked and finally came up with a structure. So in May of 1996, I completed a business plan that I had penned from Bev's thoughts and a lot of brainstorming. We took that plan and incorporated the American Association of adaptedSPORTS™ Programs.

*My first thought was, "Can I handle it, how disabled is disabled?" There was that word "sports" and, well that just tilted my brain completely around. I didn't think of kids in wheelchairs as athletes.*

***Tommy, what was your impression when you started as a volunteer with the DeKalb program?***

**Tommy:** I just remember the very first time I walked in the door. I don't think that I'm atypical. My first thought was, 'Can I handle it. How disabled is disabled?' There was that word 'sports' and well, that just tilted my brain completely around. I didn't think of kids in wheelchairs as athletes. But I walked in and it was no different than any other group of kids, they just happened to be a little faster.

***Beyond the description of student athletes with physical disabilities or visual impairments, who are these kids?***

**Tommy:** Well... we have called them America's sidelined kids. They aren't eligible for Special Olympics because they're primary disability is physical, and they generally cannot fully participate on able-bodied teams. When we finished the first GPB

broadcast of the wheelchair basketball championship, a reporter asked an athlete on the winning team what was the most important part of the experience. Her response was, 'People looked at me.' I don't think people realize how invisible some of these kids feel.

***AAASP is 10 years old, which is a very short period of time for an organization, and AAASP has done a lot on a shoestring budget. How?***

**Tommy:** I think people pray for us on a daily basis! We've had a lot of good fortune to have people and organizations to help keep the ball in the air. And while



Photo credit: Sue Clites Photograph

America's first interscholastic wheelchair basketball championship to be included in a high school basketball championship event.

money is obviously needed, that's just not what we've been always blessed to receive. But we've gotten gym time, donated transportation, people who work tirelessly through nine games of a national competition and they seem excited to come back to work the next day. You can't put a price tag on that kind of support. That's something to wake up and smile about.

**Where do you see AAASP in 10 more years?**

**Tommie:** If it's meant to be, no one can turn it back, and if it's not, you know, no matter what you do, you're not going to be

able to build it up. We were certainly naïve in the beginning to take on disability, the school systems, attitudes of the general public, fears of parents. In 10 years, I hope that we are a household name among parents of children with physical disabilities. We need to be a household name among those who need us most. And we need to be at the top of the list of the people who can make a difference. I mean we talk about 'no child left behind' but these kids aren't even on the list to be considered to be put ahead or left behind! That's why I get up in the morning...you've got to believe it's possible or it wouldn't be worth the hard work... and it is hard work. #####

## History of Adapted Athletics in Georgia Schools

**1990-1995** Bev Vaughn, the first full-time adapted sports program coordinator in the DeKalb County, Georgia School System, develops the original model for competitive cross-disability interscholastic sports for students with physical disabilities or visual impairments.

**1996** The 1996 U.S. Paralympic Organizing Committee recognizes the DeKalb County adapted sports program as the "Model for the Nation." Vaughn recruits Tommie Storms to develop a business plan for the statewide and national expansion. The American Association of adaptedSPORTS™ Programs, Inc. is founded.

**2001** The Georgia High School Association (GHSAA) and AAASP form an alliance that results in Georgia's recognition of AAASP as the official sanctioning and governing body for the state's interscholastic adapted athletics.

**2002** The GHSAA Executive Committee votes to include a wheelchair track division in its high school track and field season beginning spring 2003.

**2003** For the first time, Georgia students with physical disabilities can be competing members of their high school track teams when GHSAA starts the wheelchair track division of its track and field season. AAASP governs the new division and trains track coaches to oversee the development of wheelchair track athletes.

**2004** For the first time in the United States, traditional high school championships include a wheelchair championship event when the AAASP Georgia Wheelchair Basketball Championship is held in conjunction with the GHSAA State Basketball Championships.

**2005** AAASP's Track and Field is fully incorporated into the GHSAA track season. AAASP continues to govern the GHSAA wheelchair competitions and train GHSAA track coaches on wheelchair track and field topics.

**2006** The AAASP Georgia Wheelchair Basketball Championship is imbedded in the GHSAA high school basketball championships schedule, making it possible for GPB to include the wheelchair game in their live broadcast.

# Fox 5 Sports Covers Georgia IWS Championship



High-speed action at the 10th AAASP Georgia IWS Championships.

**F**ox 5 Sportscaster Karen Graham does double-duty on November 12 with two sports stories about the **10th AAASP Georgia Indoor Wheelchair Soccer Championships** held at Frederick Douglass High School. Graham's 6 p.m. story followed the Atlanta Wolfpack at one game prior to championship day. Her second story in the 10 p.m. slot reported the championship results.

The West Georgia Wolverines took the 2005 varsity trophy in their match-up with the Atlanta Wolfpack, the season's highest scoring varsity team and favored to win.

The championship was too close to call until the final buzzer, with the Wolverines never more than one point up in the first half. They pulled two points in the second period of the last half, putting the final score at 13-10.

This is West Georgia's third state indoor wheelchair soccer championship putting them in second place for state titles won in the 10-year history of the Georgia's interscholastic indoor wheelchair soccer championships.

## **JV Action**

In the junior varsity championship, the Clayton Eagles added one more victory to their impressive record of holding the most state soccer titles. The 2005 trophy brings their total to five. The Eagles squared off against the debut team, the Atlanta Thunder Cats with a final score of 17-7. The Thunder Cats were undefeated the entire season, an extraordinary first-year feat.

Atlanta's Frederick Douglass High School was host venue for the tournament.

## **SPORTS CALENDAR**

### **Wheelchair Basketball**

Practices begin week of Nov 28  
Games begin week of Jan 9  
Georgia Championships  
JV Feb 25 - Varsity Mar 3

### **Power Wheelchair Hockey**

Practices begin week of Dec 5  
Games begin week of Jan 30

### **Beep Baseball**

Practices begin week of Mar 6  
Games begin week of Apr 10

### **Track & Field**

Training begins week of Nov 28  
GHSA State Meets  
Girls May 4-6 Boys May 11-13

### **Wheelchair Football**

Practices begin week of Mar 6  
Games begin week of Mar 20  
Georgia Championship Apr 29

## **GHSA AIDS IN REF RECRUITMENT**

**T**he Georgia High School Association (GHSA) is lending a hand to recruit game officials for interscholastic adapted athletics.

This past fall, GHSA announced to officials' associations in Georgia that opportunities to officiate interscholastic wheelchair basketball and football are available, and interested members should contact AAASP to arrange for training and certification for the 2006 season.



# "Can't Never Could Do Nothin'"

## *A Father Talks About His Son Becoming a Man*

*Jed Butler spoke to honorees of AAASP's 2005 ASPIRE Awards during a luncheon at Roosevelt Institute for Rehabilitation at Warm Springs, Georgia on April 30th. Jed's son Jordan plays for the Muscogee Lions.*

**W**hen Jordan was born with spina bifida in 1991, I said to myself: "Well, at least I'll never end up as one of those "soccer dads." You know, those guys who are so driven and competitive that they embarrass their kids and irritate the coaches?"

When Jordan was 5, my wife dragged us up to Decatur to see something called wheelchair basketball. And what I saw fired me up. This was not tricked-out physical therapy. This was competition: there was strategy, there was a three-chair pile-up. NASCAR meets the NBA. Guy stuff!

Jordan has been involved in AAASP from the age of 6. He's played wheelchair basketball, soccer, track and field, and now, football. He's played on teams in Cobb, Clayton, Meriwether and now Muscogee County.

We're fortunate enough to live in Columbus, where the cost of getting to practice is not a barrier to participation. Lots of families we knew from Coweta, Fayette, and Carroll Counties had to drop out of sports because of time or money or school conflicts.

*so every step of the way, I'm about teaching him job skills and life skills. And AAASP is helping me do that. The physical skills are just the jumping off place.*

Now, some folks may say: "That's too bad. But it's not really that big of a deal. I mean, we're never gonna see these kids playing in the NFL."

Well, let me tell you what. It is a big deal. It's a big deal because my dad always told me: "Can't never could do nothing." See, we're not raising a "can't." We're raising a "can." When Jordan graduates from high school or college, I don't want him drawing a government check because of his disability. I want him earning a paycheck because of his work ability.

So every step of the way, I'm about teaching him job skills and life skills. And AAASP is helping me do that. The

physical skills are just the jumping off place.

First off, there's that business of can and can't. Jordan is able to learn from his mistakes and then, pretty much let them go. At 46 years old, I'm still working on that myself.

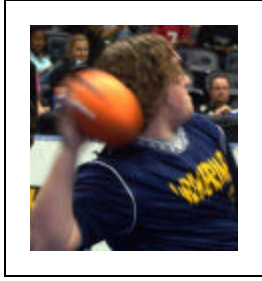


Jordan Butler (center) follows the lead block to gain yardage toward a touchdown during AAASP's Wheelchair Football pilot season

Did you ever wonder why so many successful business people came up through athletics? Sports teaches you to be confident without being over-confident. The payoff for us is that Jordan is now an "A" and "B" Honor student at Blackmon Road Middle School and has been accepted into the Liberal Arts Magnet Program at Columbus High School. Not only that - in February, he asked a girl to the Valentine's dance. And she said yes. There's another dance coming up in May. He asked another girl. She said no. Confident, but not over-confident.

Because of sports, Jordan understands that talent, speed, power and glitter - these qualities generally lose when they run up against discipline, determination, practice and teamwork. He didn't get that from watching the Pistons beat the Lakers. He got it firsthand. He learns his role and sticks to it: defense, ball-handling, and passing to the open man. Role players and team players may not sign many autographs. They just win games. And in the workplace, they just get the job done.

As you can see, it's got a hold of me. I'll be honest: I am a soccer dad. It's not just what Jordan gets. It's what I get. I get to have real conversations with my son about character. I get to watch a boy becoming a man.



# Adopt **adaptedSPORTS™**

Public interest in the well-being of persons with disabilities is at an all time high, yet financial support for programs that would benefit them is not keeping pace. According to 2004 data from the Georgia Department of Education, thousands of Georgia's children with physical disabilities could benefit from interscholastic adapted athletics.

Sports participation is often credited as a life changing experience, especially for those with physical disabilities or visual impairments. We invite your participation and support by adopting adaptedSPORTS™. Your involvement and financial generosity will go a long way toward enriching the lives of these students and ensuring that programs and equipment vital to their athletic success is available and accessible.

Together, we will get these students ***Off the Sidelines and Into the Game!***

YES! I want to adopt adaptedSPORTS™. Enclosed is my contribution of:

\_\_\_\$500    \_\_\_\$250    \_\_\_\$100    \_\_\_\$50    \_\_\_Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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You can also contribute online at [www.adaptedsports.org](http://www.adaptedsports.org)

Make checks payable to AAASP and send to:  
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## Wheelchair Basketball Broadcast Live at Gwinnett Arena

Georgia celebrates three years of high school wheelchair basketball action at Gwinnett Arena in metro Atlanta on Championship Friday (March 3). Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) will televise live as Georgia's two top varsity wheelchair basketball teams go head-to-head for the state crown.

Since 2004, the wheelchair competition has been held in conjunction with the GHSA high school basketball championships. In the first year of the combined tournament, the Nielsen ratings ranked the wheelchair game as the fifth most-watched game of the three-day event with more than 300,000 viewers statewide.

Although this is the third year that GPB has televised the wheelchair championship, it is the first time that the game will be broadcast live.

Together, GHSA and AAASP have made significant progress toward opening opportunities in adapted interscholastic athletics in Georgia schools. GHSA's invitation to AAASP to be a part of the high school basketball championships, and GPB's broadcasts have provided an exceptional opportunity for interscholastic adapted athletics to become more visible to the public. With visibility comes knowledge as to the importance of competitive interscholastic adapted athletics.

Georgia has a 10-year history of state interscholastic adapted sports such as wheelchair basketball, but students in other states still lack these opportunities.



Photo credit: Sue Clites Photography

The Atlanta Wolfpack and the Macon Bears compete for the 2005 Georgia Wheelchair Basketball Championship.

## Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Force AAASP to Alter Events

In answer to high gas prices and shortages brought on by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, AAASP adjusted its soccer and basketball schedules this year. Competition schedules changed to a double-header format rather than single games for the ten-week seasons.

According to Dean Robinson, Director of DeKalb County Schools' Special Education Transportation, condensing the competition schedules was an effective cost-saving measure. Robinson said, *"Going to double-headers has cut fuel costs and depreciation on the DeKalb County special needs buses in half."*

The 2005 AAASP Indoor Wheelchair Soccer Junior National Championship scheduled for October 22 and 23 in San Diego was cancelled due to the devastating hurricanes. Teams originally slated to attend the contest were overwhelmingly in favor of not participating rather than compete with efforts to raise funds for hurricane victims. Richard McIntyre, coach of the West Georgia Wolverines expressed his team's willingness to table their fundraising. *"We felt that the needs of the victims of Hurricane Katrina made our needs insignificant,"* said McIntyre.

San Diego will play host to the 2006 tournament. The date has not yet been determined.

# Brasile Joins Best in Sport as NYBC All Sports Hall of Fame Inductee

The Boys Club of New York inducted AAASP board member Dr. Frank M. Brasile into its Hall of Fame at the annual **All Sports Hall of Fame Dinner** at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York on November 2, 2005. Candidates for this recognition are individuals who have recognized the importance of sports in contemporary American society and its influence on children as a vehicle to promote and develop character, community and civility.

Brasile's contributions to the game of wheelchair basketball are legion. He organized the first National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball Tournament. This gave birth to the Central Intercollegiate Conference (CIC), which continues to be the cornerstone to the development of players and coaches. Brasile coached the University of Illinois team to the National Intercollegiate Championship in 1978. He was an assistant coach of the USA Women's team in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1996, 1998 and head coach in 1999 and 2000. These teams won three world championships, three silver medals and two bronze medals. In 2001, the CIC named their sportsmanship award after Brasile in recognition of his outstanding contribution, dedication, and service to the conference, wheelchair basketball and the field of therapeutic recreation.

As a university professor and lecturer, Brasile has made immeasurable contributions as a coach, educator and researcher. Among his accomplishments, he is the creator of

the first wheelchair basketball skills test, a skill assessment instrument that has been used throughout the world for research and coaching purposes.



"Athlete of the Century" Oscar Robertson (l) and 2005 Hall of Fame Inductee Frank Brasile (r).

The **Boys' Club of New York's All Sports Hall of Fame Dinner** is the premier sports dinner in the country. Each year, The Boys' Club of New York honors the achievements of the best in sport with the induction into its All Sports Hall of Fame of candidates from the world of sports executives, athletes, educators, administrators, broadcasters, journalists and recent inductees into the Baseball, Basketball, Pro Football, Hockey, Tennis and Golf Halls of Fame.

## Boys' Club of New York 2005 All Sports Hall of Fame

Shirley Babashoff	Dan Jansen
Frank Brasile	Stan Kosloski
Coach Hubie Brown	Carly Patterson
Jim Brown	Dot Richardson
Paul Camitsch	Sharon Robinson
Bill Gallo	Gale Sayers
Frank Gifford	Frank Shorter
Walter Looss	

## AAASP Board of Directors

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## Hawks and Thrashers Double-up on adaptedSPORTS Nights @ Philips Arena



The seven-year adaptedSPORTS Night tradition that began with AAASP and the Atlanta Thrashers gains momentum this year when the Atlanta Hawks and Exceptional Parent magazine join the force. The pro teams put the spotlight on student power wheelchair hockey and wheelchair basketball athletes at a home game each this season.



The Thrashers adaptedSPORTS Night will be February 4 with a Power Wheelchair Hockey demo at 5:30 pm in the CNN Center prior to the Thrasher's face-off against the Florida Panthers.



The Hawks and Exceptional Parent magazine bring adaptedSPORTS back to Philips Arena on April 7 for Disability Awareness night. AAASP's wheelchair basketball players will showcase their athleticism prior to the Hawks tip-off in an exhibition game at 6:15 p.m. Afterward, the Hawks take on the Washington Wizards.

A portion of all tickets sold through AAASP will be donated to the adaptedSPORTS programs. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Contact Evan Pearson (epearson@adaptedsports.org) or Lori Thompson (lthompson@adaptedsports.org) for more information.

## AAASP Thanks Our 2005-06 Sponsors!



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## POWER PLAYS

AAASP welcomes three new members to its Board: Quinton Fisher, President of the Financial Network Corp.; Jan Lauten, Assoc. Exec. Director of the Decatur-DeKalb YMCA; and Dennis Harkins, Provost for Georgia Perimeter College-Clarkston Campus.

*Four grant awards kick-off the 2005-06 adaptedSPORTS™ year:*  
Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation  
Atlanta Thrashers Foundation  
Kraft Foods  
Peyton Anderson Foundation

**Lisa Brasher** has been named the new head coach for Team Holyfield, AAASP's all-star wheelchair basketball team. Lisa replaces Pat Hill, who served as coach from 2000. **Carol McCullough**, AAASP Area Coordinator for the Richmond-Columbia County region, continues her second year as assistant coach. TH is a member team of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association. The all-star team is comprised of the best athletes from AAASP's statewide teams.

More than \$24,000 was raised at the '05 adaptedSPORTS Charity Golf Tournament held on September 26 at Chateau Elan in Braselton, Georgia. A silent auction featured items such as an '05 Atlanta Falcons' autographed football; and a signed zero from Atlanta Brave Chipper Jones' jersey. The Financial Network Corporation and Slappey and Sadd, Attorneys sponsored the tournament for the fifth year.

## Off the Sidelines - Into the Game

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AAASP is Georgia's governing body for interscholastic adapted athletics in member schools of the Georgia High School Association. AAASP and GHSA work together to open up opportunities in athletics for students with physical disabilities or visual impairments. AAASP offers a training and certification program for coaches throughout the United States. AAASP is a 501(c)(3) organization. Programs are made possible in part through a grant from the Georgia Department of Labor.