



## American Association of AdaptED Sports Programs' Impact and Legacy Highlighted in Online Historical Exhibit, "25 Years of Innovation and Achievement"

**ATLANTA – (Date TBD)** - From its founding inspired by the 1996 Paralympic games to fostering the play of over 7,034 athletes to date, The American Association of AdaptED Sports (AdaptED Sports/AAASP), "[25 years of Innovation and Achievement](https://adaptedsports.org/25-years-of-innovation-and-achievement/)", online exhibit highlights the growth, evolution, and impact of the American Association of AdaptED Sports Programs, and the people who made it possible. Through photos, newspaper clippings, videos, and quotes, virtual visitors to the exhibit get to experience the story and legacy of AdaptED Sports like never before. View the exhibit at: <https://adaptedsports.org/25-years-of-innovation-and-achievement/>.

The exhibit is part of a three-part awareness and resource campaign introduced in 2023. The American Association of AdaptED Sports is reintroducing its logo to emphasize the "ED" in adapted to remind and inform the community its mission is based on having adapted and standardized EDUCATION based sports for the physically disabled. The organization will begin referring to itself more often as **AdaptED Sports**, rather than AAASP. Read more about this awareness campaign at: <https://adaptedsports.org/new-year-new-emphasis-on-education-new-online-exhibit-confronting-lack-of-awareness-sidelining-disabled-students/>

Visitors will be inspired by the stories of people who have helped to make AdaptED Sports a success. Former Georgia High School Association (GHSA) Executive Director, Dr. Ralph Swearngin, a trailblazer who helped make the AAASP/GHSA Alliance a reality, helped make history in 2004 as AAASP/GHSA Wheelchair Basketball State Championship was held as part of the GHSA State Basketball Championship, the first time a wheelchair championship was part of a traditional championship event. A story about the rivalry between the Gwinnett Heat and the Houston County Sharks basketball teams highlights the fun and excitement of adapted sports and how these athletes are inspiring each other to be the best they can be! The exhibit pays tribute to everyone who has made AdaptED Sports a success and serves as an inspiration for the future.

Over the last year, AdaptED Sports collaborated with History Associates Inc., a historical research firm with over 40 years of experience in exhibits, research, interpretive planning, and archives to create the exhibit housing 55 Stories, with over 225 Images and videos. Bev Vaughn, former AAASP Co-Founder/Executive Director, and now Advisor to AdaptED Sports, took the lead on the project; compiling and organizing the AAASP historical documents into 5-year segments to assist with the planning phase. The History Associates team performed an archival assessment of AdaptED Sports' collection, and then worked with Vaughn and current AdaptED Sports Executive Director and Co-Founder, Tommie Storms, to create a strategy and ultimately, the exhibit content. "Sharing our 25-year history in an accessible way – the early visionaries, the firsts, the moving stories, the innovations - was simply daunting when we began, said Storms, "But, HAI's archivists and historians immediately helped us visualize, organize and share it all. We are so grateful for HAI – and extremely proud of the final exhibit." said Storms.



"I think the exhibit does a great job of balancing the administrative history of AAASP with highlighting the stories of those who've made the organization what it is today, including coaches, staff, supporters, athletes and alumni," said Robert Scott Vierick, History Associates Inc. Senior Historian and Interpretive Planner.

The exhibit is hosted on the *Pass It Down* platform, a platform for creating immersive and versatile digital experiences. Each story has a main image with a title that the viewer can click on to read more. Each story is about 200-400 words in length and within the story are additional photos, documents, and videos the viewer can scroll through.

"It's easy to forget the many challenges we overcame as a community, and an organization, to now be where we are," said Vaughn. "Our objective is that as one moves through the exhibit that our archivists have assisted in compiling, they'll quickly realize how much has been accomplished. AAASP introduced a whole new paradigm to interscholastic sport. In shifting old perceptions around what a young person with a physical disability is truly capable of achieving, we've removed barriers and opened doors of opportunity for the equally deserving, athletically talented students," said Vaughn.

The *Pass It Down* platform makes it easy to add new content. As AdaptED Sports' story continues to evolve, new stories can be submitted by staff, athletes, volunteers, coaches, and alumni for consideration to be added to the exhibit. Visit <https://adaptedsports.org/25-years-of-innovation-and-achievement/> to view the exhibit.

#### **ABOUT AAASP**

The American Association of AdaptED Sports Programs (AdaptED Sports/AAASP), headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, is a not-for-profit association dedicated to developing interscholastic adapted sports programs in partnership with national, state, and local educational agencies. It represents a standardized approach to extracurricular adapted team sports and has developed one of the nation's most comprehensive school-based athletic programs for students with physical disabilities attending elementary, middle, or high school. For more information, please visit our website at <http://adaptedsports.org> or join our conversations on Twitter at: @AdaptedSports

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