

ABLE BOWLING STRIKES A PLACE AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

In an effort to further its inclusiveness in competition, the Commonwealth Games added bowling to its list of Able Games in 2024. The competition will take place again at the NRV Superbowl in Christiansburg on Thursday, July 24, 2025.

Amanda Crawford will coordinate the competition, a role she is familiar with because the NRV Superbowl is home to multiple leagues for physically challenged individuals.

“In the spring and fall, they take up 28 lanes on Thursday nights,” she said of the popularity of bowling as an adaptive sport. “We do a lot of different things, and we always have, so it is wonderful for us to be able to do that as part of the Commonwealth Games.

In its first year, about 40 bowlers with special needs took part in Able Bowling. Crawford hopes to double that this year, hoping to spread the word throughout Virginia.

The Able Bowling competition on July 24 will be the first bowling event of the Commonwealth Games, with seniors competing on Friday and the annual Games’ bowling competition taking place Saturday and Sunday, July 26-27. This marks the 28th year the NRV Superbowl has been the site of bowling in the Commonwealth Games.

The accommodations for Able bowling depends on the person. Volunteers are on hand to assist the Able athletes, and the rails can be used for those unable to lift and roll a ball.

“Last year, the participants bowled without bumpers, and we organized them into age groups, similar to the standard Commonwealth Games format. However, if someone needed rails or bumpers, we would certainly accommodate that,” Crawford said. “We’re open to including more accessibility options, like ramps for those in wheelchairs, if needed.”

Increasing the number of participants could be as easy as getting the word out, considering the popularity of adaptive bowling. While it’s not as active in the summer, Crawford said the bowlers are eager to get back to the lanes.

“The participants absolutely love it. College students and adult volunteers assist them, and they look forward to it every week. When there’s a break, they always call to ask when it’s starting again,” she said.

The entry fee is \$10 per Able bowler and pre-registration is required. For more information, go to <https://www.commonwealthgames.org/bowling-able>

