Many of the students who are members of the Adaptive Sports club and who attend OSU were injured recently and the transition in learning to cope with their disability, adapt to college life, and meet new people is overwhelming. The Adaptive Sports club helps to educate members on their disabilities and help them accept it by providing ways to bring out the competitive spirit of the individual, allowing them to become involved and have the opportunity to succeed, according to the Web site.

**History:**

 **“**In 1998, Oklahoma State University students with disabilities began a petition drive to establish a sponsored OSU wheelchair basketball team and revitalize the Adaptive Sports club,” according to the Adaptive Sports club Web site. This group of students recruited team members and was finally accepted into a wheelchair basketball conference. In the beginning, an internal base of funding support was developed for facility modifications, equipment needs, and to award a limited number of out-of-state waiver scholarships, according the Web site. “As the program grew, more needs arose and a few years ago the club was able to hire a full-time coordinator and coach as a valued staff member of the Colvin recreation center, Stacy Pinney,” according to the Web site. Pinney has been able to coordinate schedules, recruit more team members, and is available on campus for members to come for help and support.

**Mission:**

 “The Adaptive Sports program enriches lives, advances knowledge and stimulates economic development through instruction, outreach, and creative activities,” according to the Web site. The Adaptive Sports program can mainstream students with disabilities into various activities including intramural sports, outdoor adventure, sport clubs and anaerobic or aerobic workout programs, according to the Web site.

 “The Adaptive Sports club is part of the Adaptive Sports program, it is made up of students from OSU and NOC, trying to join individuals with physical disabilities and those without disabilities to learn to co-mingle to know there is nothing different other than the way they get around, mainly creating disability awareness,” Pinney said. “Generally the students run this program by managing and finding funds to do the activity by fundraising or donations. Anyone can join the Adaptive Sports club, whether it be a student or a community member; the club can have up to 25 percent of members from the community, but 75 percent need to be students; not everyone has to have a disability, just a general interest in adaptive recreation,” Pinney said.

“The Adaptive Sports club impacts education through knocking down misbelieves, we educate our students and others on disabilities to help with acceptance, when they start coming out of their shell they start realizing there is nothing different between me and this person here, they start to accept it, then they become more likely to succeed or to strive to succeed and start having higher goals, this program helps facilitate them to go to school and get an education and not settle for something less,” Pinney said. “Our goal is to create awareness for our students to be able to adapt to life situations and acceptance.”

**What’s Going On:**

 The OSU wheelchair basketball team will be hosting a tournament on Oct. 3-4 in the Colvin Recreation center. Soon they will be trying to find funding through fundraising, endowments or donations. Pinney will be checking in with new recruits and members to make sure that they are adapting well to school and will also begin asking if there are other opportunities that are not offered that they would like for the club to provide. “We run a program called the Pillars of Success, an assembly we do to create awareness and promote education throughout Oklahoma, the money raised goes to the Adaptive Sports club,” Pinney said. “This money allows for the different opportunities that the club can offer.”

 “The Adaptive Sports club recently spoke to a high school football team that wasn’t making good choices. A member shared his story to help the team members understand the consequences of their choices,” Pinney said.

**What’s New:**

 Different opportunities are available through the Adaptive Sports club, according to the Web site. Some of these opportunities include tennis, fencing, and other activities that students have suggested. “A new suggestion that has been brought up is Quad Rugby, but would require a lot of money,” Pinney said. “We work with disability services quite a bit, I spoke with a new staff member, Allan Sheffield, we are talking about doing some programming for the blind students on campus and for the hearing impaired students on campus, we are hoping to reach out to those students and ask if there is something or some activity that they would like for the Adaptive Sports club to provide for them.”

**Changes:**

 “We have actually made a lot of changes this year, we dropped out of the college division and went into a championship division, where we think we can have more local games, we will be able to see various levels of talent, and travel to more tournament with the funding we have, now in this division we are in more control of where we want to go, and we will be able to allow our NOC players to play the whole season and not lose eligibility, we think we are going to have a lot more freedom to do what we want to provide a quality education for individuals with physical disabilities and also some opportunities to travel and experience adaptive recreation,” Pinney said.

**People:**

 “The program is successful because of the students, it is the student’s personalities, they make it successful by constantly going out into the public and talking to everybody, they are just really good guys, people are intrigued by them,” Pinney said.

“Some members of the Adaptive Sports club are also members of different organizations on campus,” Pinney said. “We encourage our members to find other groups to hang out with, maybe to expand or pad the resume, and to just get out there and meet other people.”

“The rewards of being involved in the Adaptive Sports club are the people I get to meet, the lives I get to impact, the people that impact my life and my kid’s life, great stories, and good friendships,” Pinney said.

 Overall, the Adaptive Sports club is just like any other club on campus other than the way some of the members get around. It is college students learning to adapt to a new way of life, a new freedom. This club allows for the extra support to help some of those students struggling with this transition to reach for higher goals and the confidence to know that they are doing something for themselves that they might not have believed possible had there not been an organization like this to spread awareness and support.