



**EXPLANATORY GUIDE TO  
PARALYMPIC  
CLASSIFICATION  
PARALYMPIC SUMMER SPORTS  
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**INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE**

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to explain classification and classification systems of Para sports that are currently on the Paralympic Summer Games programme. The document is intended for anyone who wishes to familiarise themselves with classification in the Paralympic Movement.

The language in this guide has been simplified in order to avoid complicated medical terms. They do not replace the [2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code and accompanying International Standards](#) but have been written to better communicate how the Paralympic Classification system works.

The guide consists of several chapters:

1. Explaining what classification is;
2. Guiding through the eligible impairments recognised in the Paralympic Movement;
3. Explaining classification systems; and
4. explaining sport classes per sport on the Paralympic Summer Games programme:
  - Archery
  - Athletics
  - Badminton
  - Boccia
  - Canoe
  - Cycling
  - Equestrian
  - Football 5-a-side
  - Goalball
  - Judo
  - Powerlifting
  - Rowing
  - Shooting
  - Sitting Volleyball
  - Swimming
  - Table tennis
  - Taekwondo
  - Triathlon
  - Wheelchair basketball
  - Wheelchair fencing
  - Wheelchair rugby
  - Wheelchair tennis

## WHAT IS CLASSIFICATION?

Classification provides a structure for competition. Athletes competing in Para sports have an impairment that leads to a competitive disadvantage. Consequently, a system has been put in place to minimise the impact of impairments on sport performance and to ensure the success of an athlete is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus. This system is called classification.

Classification determines who is eligible to compete in a Para sport and it groups the eligible athletes in sport classes according to their activity limitation in a certain sport.

## TEN ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS

The Paralympic Movement offers sport opportunities for athletes with physical, vision and/or intellectual impairments that have at least one of the 10 eligible impairments identified in the table below. This list of impairments is exclusive.

Note, on the left-hand-side of the table the eligible impairments are listed and, on the right-hand-side each eligible impairment is accompanied with an explanation. If medical terms are used, these are explained at the bottom of the page.:

Impairment	Explanation
Impaired muscle power	Athletes with impaired muscle power have a health condition that either reduces or eliminates their ability to voluntarily contract their muscles in order to move or to generate force. Examples of an underlying health condition that may lead to impaired muscle power include spinal cord injury (complete or incomplete, tetraplegia <sup>1</sup> or paraplegia <sup>2</sup> or paraparesis <sup>3</sup> ), muscular dystrophy <sup>4</sup> , post-polio syndrome <sup>5</sup> and spina bifida <sup>6</sup> .
Impaired passive range of movement	Athletes with impaired passive range of movement have a restriction or a lack of passive movement in one or more joints. Passive means that the joint is not actively or voluntarily moved by the athlete, but the movement is performed by a person

<sup>1</sup> This is another term for quadriplegia, meaning paralysis of all four limbs

<sup>2</sup> Paralysis of the legs and lower body

<sup>3</sup> Partial paralysis of the legs

<sup>4</sup> A hereditary condition marked by progressive weakening and wasting of the muscles

<sup>5</sup> Post-polio syndrome is a condition that affects polio survivors after an initial acute attack of the polio virus.

<sup>6</sup> Spina bifida occurs when the spine and membranes around the spinal cord don't close completely during pregnancy.

	assessing the athlete. Examples of an underlying health condition that may lead to impaired passive range of movement include arthrogryposis <sup>7</sup> and contracture resulting from chronic joint immobilisation or trauma affecting a joint.
Limb deficiency	Athletes with limb deficiency have total or partial absence of bones or joints as a consequence of trauma (for example traumatic amputation), illness (for example amputation due to bone cancer) or congenital limb deficiency (for example dysmelia <sup>8</sup> ).
Leg length difference	Athletes with leg length difference have a difference in the length of their legs as a result of a disturbance of limb growth, or as a result of trauma.
Short stature	Athletes with short stature have a reduced length in the bones of the arms, legs and/or trunk. Examples of an underlying health condition that may lead to short stature include achondroplasia <sup>9</sup> , growth hormone dysfunction <sup>10</sup> , and osteogenesis imperfecta <sup>11</sup>
Hypertonia	Athletes with hypertonia have an increase in muscle tension and a reduced ability of a muscle to stretch caused by damage to the central nervous system. Examples of an underlying health condition that may lead to hypertonia include cerebral palsy <sup>12</sup> , traumatic brain injury and stroke.  For the purposes of this document, hypertonia will be referred to as muscle tension for the rest of this document.

<sup>7</sup> Arthrogryposis is a condition caused by a limitation on joint motion during pregnancy, causing joint contractures - a condition of shortening and hardening of muscles, tendons or other tissue, often leading to malformed or rigid joints. The limited motion can be caused by neurologic deficits, muscle defects, connective tissue defects or lack of room in the womb.

<sup>8</sup> Dysmelia is an abnormality present at birth which is characterised by missing or shortened limbs. For the purposes of this document, dysmelia will be referred to a "missing or shortened limbs at birth".

<sup>9</sup> Achondroplasia is a hereditary condition that is characterised by short limbs and a normal torso.

<sup>10</sup> Growth hormone dysfunction occurs when the pituitary gland does not produce enough growth hormone.

<sup>11</sup> Osteogenesis imperfecta, also known as brittle bone diseases, results in bones that break easily.

<sup>12</sup> Cerebral palsy is a condition marked by impaired muscle co-ordination, typically caused by damage to the brain before or at birth.

Ataxia	Athletes with Ataxia have uncoordinated movements caused by damage to the central nervous system. Examples of an underlying health condition that may lead to Ataxia include: cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, stroke and multiple sclerosis.  For the purposes of this document ataxia will be referred to as “uncoordinated movements” for the rest of this document.
Athetosis	Athletes with Athetosis have continual slow involuntary movements. Examples of an underlying health condition that may lead to Athetosis include cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury and stroke.  For the purposes of this document athetosis will be referred to as “involuntary movements” for the rest of this document.
Vision impairment (VI)	Athletes with a vision impairment have reduced or no vision caused by damage to the eye structure, optical nerves or optical pathways, or visual cortex of the brain. Examples of an underlying health condition that may lead to vision impairment include retinitis pigmentosa <sup>13</sup> and diabetic retinopathy <sup>14</sup> .
Intellectual Impairment	Athletes with an intellectual Impairment have a restriction in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour which affects conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills required for everyday life. This Impairment must be present before the age of 18.

For further details please see the International Standard for Eligible Impairments ([link](#)) or Classification Rules and Regulations of each Para sport.

### **OTHER SIMPLIFICATIONS**

Upper limb refers to the area from the shoulder to the fingers. For the purposes of this document, we will use the term “arm” when referring to the upper limb.

Lower limb refers to the area from the hips to the toes. For the purposes of this document, we will use the term “leg” when referring to the lower limb.

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<sup>13</sup> Retinitis Pigmentosa is a group of rare, genetic disorders that involve the loss of cells in the retina, which is the light sensitive tissue at the back of the eye.

<sup>14</sup> Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes affecting the blood vessels in the retina, the light sensitive tissue at the back of the eye.

# CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

Classification systems differ by sport and are developed by the International Federations (IF) governing the sport. The IF is also responsible to review the system from time to time.

IFs decide which eligible impairments their sport will cater for. Some Paralympic sports are only designed for athletes with one eligible impairment type. Goalball, for example, is only open to athletes with a vision impairment. Other sports, such as athletics and swimming, are open to athletes with any of the 10 eligible impairments.

IFs also decide how severe an impairment must be for an athlete to be eligible to compete in their sport. For an athlete to be eligible the impairment must be severe enough that it impacts his or her sport performance. This is called the 'Minimum Impairment Criteria'. If an athlete fails to meet the Minimum Impairment Criteria, it does not question the presence of a genuine impairment. It merely means that that athlete does not meet the eligibility rules to compete in a particular sport under the IF sport rules.

Since different sports require different abilities, each sport logically requires its own classification system. For example, an impairment of the arms affects performance in a running event in athletics to a lesser extent than it affects performance in swimming.

The only exception to the sport-specific character of classification is the classification for athletes with a vision impairment. This system, with the exception of Shooting Para Sport, is still a medical system and the sport class allocated therefore applies across all other sports, but the naming of the class may differ. For further details, see the next section.

## VISION IMPAIRMENT

The following is the general structure used for the classification of athletes with a vision impairment (with exception for VI-shooting).

**B1:** The clarity of these athletes' vision is very low and/ or they have no light perception.

**B2:** Athletes with a B2 sport class have a better clarity of vision than athletes competing in the B1 sport class and/ or a visual field of less than 10 degrees diameter.

**B3:** Athletes with a B3 (or equivalent) sport class have the least severe vision impairment eligible for Paralympic sport. They have a better clarity of vision than athletes competing in the B2 sport class and/or a visual field of less than 40 degrees diameter.

Although these are the standardised sport classes for athletes with a vision impairment the names they are given will differ by sport.

## **SPORT CLASSES**

A sport class is a category which groups athletes depending on how much their impairment impacts performance in their sport. Therefore, a sport class is not necessarily comprised of one impairment type alone, but can be made up of athletes with different impairments. However, these different impairments affect sport performance to a similar extent. For example, you will find athletes with paraplegia and double above-knee amputation competing in the same sport class in athletics because their different impairments have a comparable effect on their ability to race 1,500m in a wheelchair using arm propulsion.

In individual sports, athletes should compete against athletes in their own sport class to ensure the impact of impairment is minimised. In national events and smaller international competitions athletes in different sport classes may compete together for one medal, because there are not enough athletes for each sport class to create a competitive event. In these cases, and in some sports, athletes in different sport classes are given a 'coefficient' or correction score to account for the different levels of activity limitation.

Some Para sports only have one sport class, such as Para Powerlifting.

In some team sports, the athletes are allocated points, which indicate their activity limitation. A lower score indicates a more severe activity limitation than a higher score. A team is not allowed to have more than a certain maximum sum of points on the field of play at the same time to ensure equal competition with the opposing team.

## **HOW IS A SPORT CLASS ALLOCATED TO AN ATHLETE?**

A sport class is allocated through athlete evaluation by a panel of classifiers. Each International Federation trains and certifies classifiers to conduct athlete evaluation in its sport.

Classifiers assessing athletes with the various physical impairments listed above either have a medical or paramedical background and/or are technical experts in their sport. Classifiers for athletes with a vision impairment have a background in ophthalmology or optometry. Psychologists and sport experts are responsible for the classification of athletes with an intellectual impairment.

Athlete evaluation takes place before competitions. Therefore, athletes who need to be evaluated arrive at the competition a few days early. Depending on the type and severity of the eligible impairment an athlete might undergo athlete evaluation several times throughout his or her career. Some impairments change over time, e.g. clarity of vision might decrease over time or muscle tension may

increase. Also, junior athletes may not yet have reached skeletal maturity by the time of their first evaluation (e.g. in swimming). In these cases, classifiers can decide that the athlete must be seen again at the next competition or at set timeframes (e.g. (bi-annual review).

Decisions taken by classification panels can be challenged under specific conditions. The [2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code and accompanying International Standards](#) define protest and appeal procedures, which need to be adhered to.

## **CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS OF PARALYMPIC SUMMER SPORTS**

This section provides a general overview of the classification system for each sport, the information and examples provided are not the sole profile of the sport class. Some sports use a numerical weighting system to divide athletes into sport classes. For further detail on the specifics of the classification systems please consult the relevant sport classification rules or the International Federation of that sport.



## ARCHERY

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference		Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	✓*
(*) : not at the Paralympic Games			

### SPORT CLASSES:

Paralympic archers compete in two sport classes:

#### W1

Archers in this sport class compete in a wheelchair because their impairment includes the loss of leg and trunk function. Also, their arms show a loss of muscle strength, co-ordination or range of movement. For example, one condition that might fit this sport class profile is tetraplegia.

#### OPEN

Athletes may have an impairment in the legs and use a wheelchair or have a balance impairment and shoot standing or resting on a stool. Open category athletes may shoot in recurve or compound competitions, under standard rules, and the category is featured at the Paralympic Games.

## ATHLETICS

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	✓
Intellectual impairment	✓	Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASSES:

In athletics the sport class consists of a prefix "T" or "F" and a number. The prefix T stands for "track" and jumping events, and F stands for "field." It indicates for which events the sport class applies, either for track/jump or for field events.

#### VISION IMPAIRMENT - SPORT CLASSES T/F11-T/F13

Athletes with a vision impairment compete in three sport classes from T/F 11 (B1) to T/F 13 (B3) as described in the Vision impairment section. In order to ensure a fair competition, athletes in the T/F 11 sport class are required to wear eyeshades.

#### INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT - SPORT CLASS T20/F20

Athletes in this sport class have an intellectual impairment, which typically leads to the athletes having difficulties with regards to pattern recognition, sequencing, and memory which impacts sport performance in general.

Moreover, the impairment of T/F20 athletes has been proven to have an impact on performance in the different disciplines. For example: 1,500m runners have difficulties in pacing, while in long jump the impairment makes the anticipation of the take-off board more difficult.

#### CO-ORDINATION IMPAIRMENTS - SPORT CLASSES F31, T32/F32-T38/F38

The 30s sport classes are allocated to athletes with involuntary movements, uncoordinated movements and/or muscle tension - often conditions associated with cerebral palsy or traumatic brain injury. The impairments typically affect the ability to control legs, trunk, arms and/or hand function. You will see athletes in the sport classes 31-34 compete in a seated position, e.g. in wheelchair racing or using a throwing chair. By contrast, athletes in the sport classes 35-38 show a better function in their legs and better trunk control and therefore compete standing, e.g. in running events, long jump or throwing events.

**SHORT STATURE - SPORT CLASSES T40/F40, T41/F41**

Athletes with short stature compete in the sport classes T/F40-41. There are two classes depending on the body height of the athlete and the proportionality of the arms, with athletes in sport class T/F41 being taller than athletes in sport class T/F40.

**LIMB DEFICIENCIES - SPORT CLASSES: T42/F42 - T46/F46, T47, T/F61-64**

These sport classes are designated for athletes with limb deficiencies, such as amputations or missing or shortened limbs from birth. All athletes in the 40s classes compete standing and do not use a wheelchair.

In the sport classes 42-44 the legs are affected by the impairment and in the sport classes 45-47 the arms are affected, for example by above or below elbow amputations.

Athletes with a leg deficiency who compete with a prosthesis are competing in classes T/F61-64.

For example, a shot putter with leg length difference competes in sport class F42. A shot putter with a single above knee amputation wearing a prosthesis competes in sport class F63.

**IMPAIRED MUSCLE POWER OR IMPAIRED RANGE OF MOVEMENT - SPORT CLASSES T51-54; F51-57**

In the 50s sport classes, all athletes compete in a seated position, either in wheelchair or on a throwing chair, due to impaired muscle power, restricted range of movement, limb deficiency or leg length difference. A lower number indicates a higher activity limitation.

Athletes competing in wheelchair racing events for T51-54 sport classes differ with regard to their arm, shoulder and trunk functions which are pertinent for pushing a wheelchair. Athletes in classes T51-52 have activity limitations in both legs and arms. Athletes in class T53 have full function in the arms, but have severely restricted trunk function. Athletes competing in T54 have partial to complete trunk function and may demonstrate some leg function.

For field events, the group of wheelchair athletes compete in more differentiated classes.

Athletes in sport classes F51-53 have limited shoulder, arm and hand function to different degrees and usually no trunk or leg function. This profile is, for example, seen with athletes with spinal cord injury resulting in tetraplegia. Athletes in the class F54 have normal function in their shoulders, arms and hands, but generally no trunk or leg function.

Throughout the sport classes F55-57 the trunk and leg function increases, which is an advantage in throwing events. An athlete in the F55 class has partial to full

abdominal muscle activity, but no leg function. Athletes in class F56 can partially bend their hips and legs in addition to having trunk function, while athletes in class F57 demonstrate the additional ability to extend and abduct<sup>15</sup> the hips. Athletes in class F57 may be able to stand and walk with or without an assistive device, but have to at the very least comply with the defined minimum impairment criteria.

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<sup>15</sup> Abduct means to draw away from the midline of the body or from an adjacent part or limb.

# BADMINTON

## ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	✓
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

## SPORT CLASSES:

There are six sport classes in Badminton.

### WHEELCHAIR 1 WH 1

Athletes in this class require a wheelchair to play badminton and usually have an impairment in both their legs and trunk.

### WHEELCHAIR 2 WH 2

An athlete in this class could have an impairment in one or both legs and minimal or no impairment of the trunk.

### STANDING LOWER SL 3

In this class an athlete must play standing. The athlete could have an impairment in one or both legs and poor walking/running balance.

### STANDING LOWER SL 4

A second standing class where the athlete has a lesser impairment compared to Sport Class SL 3. The athlete could have an impairment in one or both legs and a minimal impairment in walking/running balance.

### STANDING UPPER SU 5

The athlete in this class has an arm impairment due to muscle tension/uncoordinated movement/involuntary movements paralysis of one side of the body (hemiplegia<sup>16</sup>)/ paralysis affecting symmetrical parts of the body e.g. arms, face, legs (diplegia<sup>17</sup>) / paralysis restricted to one limb or region of the body

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<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this document hemiplegia will be referred to as paralysis of one side of the body for the rest of this document.

<sup>17</sup> For the purposes of this document diplegia will be referred to as paralysis affecting symmetrical parts of the body hereinafter.

(monoplegia<sup>18</sup>), Limb Deficiency, Impaired Passive Range of Motion (PROM) or Impaired Muscle Power.

### **SHORT STATURE SH 6**

These are athletes who have a short stature.

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<sup>18</sup> Monoplegia will be referred to as paralysis affecting on limb or area of the body for the remainder of this document.

## BOCCIA

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference		Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASSES:

There are four sport classes in boccia, BC1-4. All athletes compete in wheelchairs due to a loss of leg function, arm function and trunk stability, caused by a lack of muscle co-ordination, muscle power and control.

#### BC1

Athletes in this sport class have severe activity limitations affecting their legs, arms and trunk due to co-ordination impairments, and are typically dependent on a powered wheelchair. They can grasp and throw the ball and do not use assistive devices. Athletes with some leg control are allowed to propel the ball with their foot.

#### BC2

Athletes in sport class BC2 have better trunk control and arm function than the athletes in BC1. The abilities of their arms and hands often allow them to throw the ball overhand and underhand and with a variety of grasps. They are not eligible for assistance.

#### BC3

Athletes competing in sport class BC3 have significantly limited function in their arms and legs, and poor or no trunk control due to cerebral or non-cerebral origins. They are unable to consistently grasp or release the ball and to help them propel the ball onto the court, they use a ramp and other assistive devices to roll the ball with the help of a Sport Assistant.

#### BC4

While the sport classes BC1-2 include athletes with muscle tension, involuntary movements or uncoordinated movements, sport class BC4 comprises athletes with impairments that have no cerebral origin. Among possible health conditions are progressive weakness and loss of muscle mass (muscular dystrophy), spinal cord injuries or amputations affecting all four limbs. Athletes throw the ball usually with

a pendulum swing, sometimes using both hands or arms. They may use a glove to sustain their grip of the ball.



## CANOE

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	
Leg length difference		Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASSES:

Athletes can compete in two types of boat, kayak (K) and va'a (V). The kayak is propelled by a double blade paddle, while the va'a is an outrigger canoe propelled by a single-blade paddle. These athletes all have a physical impairment. Kayak and Va'a are different disciplines, each with a specific classification (KL and VL respectively) which is based on the same principle.

#### KL1

Athletes in this sports class have very limited trunk and no leg function.

#### KL2

Athletes in this sports class have partial trunk and leg function; they are able to sit upright in the kayak. Along with this, they will have limited leg movement during paddling.

#### KL3

Athletes in this sports class have trunk and partial leg function, they are able to sit with their trunk bent forward in the kayak and able to use at least one leg/prosthesis.

#### VL1

The athletes allocated in this sport class have no dynamic trunk function which is defined as not being able to sit upright on a bench with the legs hanging whilst the thighs and/or pelvis are secured and not bending the trunk forwards, backwards, sideways or rotating. These athletes should also not have any leg function.

#### VL2

These are athletes with a partial trunk and leg function. They are able to sit upright in the Va'a but might need a special backrest and have limited leg movement during paddling.

**VL3**

This class includes athletes with full dynamic trunk function or almost full dynamic trunk function.

## CYCLING

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASSES:

Athletes with physical impairments either compete on handcycles, tricycles or bicycles. Athletes with a vision impairment compete on tandems with a sighted "pilot."

#### HANDCYCLE SPORT CLASSES H1- H5

There are five different sport classes for handcycle, and lower numbers indicate a more severe activity limitation.

Athletes classified in handcycle classes H1-4 compete on a hand bike where a reclining position is mandatory. Athletes competing in the H1 class do not have any trunk and leg function and have limited arm function, e.g. because of spinal-cord injuries. Athletes in the H4 class have no leg function but good trunk and arm function.

Athletes classified in the handcycle class H5 compete from a kneeling position (HK) and can thus use their arms and trunk to accelerate the handcycle. Athletes in this sport class might have leg amputations, paraplegia or mild to moderate involuntary movements or uncoordinated movements.

#### TRICYCLE SPORT CLASSES T1, T2

Tricycle athletes are divided into two classes, T1 and T2. Athletes in the Tricycle division are unable to ride a bicycle due to lack of balance and/or restriction in pedalling due to muscle tension, uncoordinated movements or involuntary movements. The sport class T1 is allocated to athletes with more significant balance, co-ordination impairments and problems controlling movements than athletes competing in sport class T2.

#### CYCLING SPORT CLASSES C1-C5

Athletes who are able to use a standard bicycle (with approved adaptations) compete in the five sport classes C1-5. The sport class profiles include athletes with limb deficiency, impaired muscle power or range of motion and impairments affecting co-ordination, such as uncoordinated movements and involuntary

movements. Sport class C1 is allocated to athletes with the most severe activity limitation, while the sport class C5 is allocated to athletes with minimum impairments.

For example, cyclists with a double below-the-knee amputation who use a prosthesis are likely to compete in the sport class C3, while an athlete with a below knee amputation and a prosthesis on one leg would compete in the sport class C4.

### **TANDEM SPORT CLASS B**

Cyclists with a vision impairment race tandem with a sighted cyclist (pilot) in front. Cyclists in this sport class must meet the criteria as set out in the B3 profile described in the Vision impairment section to compete, therefore B1, B2 and B3 athletes compete together in one event.

## EQUESTRIAN

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	✓
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASSES:

In Para equestrian dressage riding there are five grades for athletes with different physical and vision impairments which are grouped on the basis of different medical profiles. The profile numbers are directly referenced from Para Equestrian Classification Rules ([link](#)) where further description of each profile is provided.

#### GRADE I

Athletes in grade I have severe impairments affecting all limbs and the trunk. The athlete usually requires the use of a wheelchair in daily life. They may be able to walk with an unsteady gait. Trunk and balance are severely impaired.

Profiles: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12a, 13

#### GRADE II

Athletes in grade II have either a severe impairment of the trunk and minimal impairment of the arms or moderate impairment of the trunk, arms and legs. Most athletes in this grade use a wheelchair in daily life.

Profiles: 4, 6, 9, 10a, 11a, 12b, 31a

#### GRADE III

Athletes in grade III have severe impairments in both legs with minimal or no impairment of the trunk or moderate impairment of the arms, legs and trunk. Some athletes in this grade may use a wheelchair in daily life.

Profiles: 8, 10b, 11b, 14, 17a, 18a, 27, 31b, 32

#### GRADE IV

Athletes in grade IV have a severe impairment or deficiency of both arms or a moderate impairment of all four limbs or short stature. Athletes in grade IV are able to walk and generally do not require a wheelchair in daily life.

Grade IV also includes athletes with a vision impairment as described in the B1 sport class in the Vision impairment section.

Profiles: 15, 17b, 18b, 19a, 21, 25, 26a, 28, 36

### **GRADE V**

Athletes in Grade V have a mild impairment affecting the range of movement or muscle strength or a deficiency of one limb or a mild deficiency of two limbs.

Grade V also includes athletes with a vision impairment as described in the B2 sport class in the Vision impairment section.

Profiles: 16, 19b, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26b, 37a

## FOOTBALL 5-A-SIDE

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	Involuntary movements	
Impaired passive range of movement	Muscle tension	
Limb deficiency	Uncoordinated movements	
Leg length difference	Short stature	
Intellectual impairment	Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASSES:

Only athletes who have a B1 sport class as described in the Vision impairment section may compete in football 5-a-side. This classification applies to the field players. In addition, each team has a sighted, able-bodied goalkeeper, who does not need to undergo classification. To ensure fair competition all athletes (except for the goalkeeper) must wear eyeshades.

## GOALBALL

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	Involuntary movements	
Impaired passive range of movement	Muscle tension	
Limb deficiency	Uncoordinated movements	
Leg length difference	Short stature	
Intellectual impairment	Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASS:

Athletes competing in goalball all have varying degrees of vision impairments ranging from the B1 to B3 sport classes as described in Vision impairment section. In order to ensure a fair competition between the teams, all athletes must wear eyeshades during the game.



## JUDO

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	Involuntary movements	
Impaired passive range of movement	Muscle tension	
Limb deficiency	Uncoordinated movements	
Leg length difference	Short stature	
Intellectual impairment	Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASSES:

Judoka all have varying degrees of vision impairments ranging from the B1 to B3 sport classes as described in Vision impairment section. Therefore B1, B2 and B3 athletes compete together in one event.

## POWERLIFTING

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	✓
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASS:

There is only one sport class in powerlifting, but the athletes compete in different weight categories.

Powerlifting is open to athletes with all eight eligible physical impairments. All athletes have an impairment in their legs or hips, which would prohibit them from competing in able-bodied (standing) weightlifting. In powerlifting, they therefore compete in the bench press.

## ROWING

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference		Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASSES:

There are three sport classes for athletes with above identified physical and vision impairments.

#### PR1

Includes rowers with minimal or no trunk function who primarily propel the boat through arm and shoulder function. These rowers have poor sitting balance, which requires them to be strapped to the boat/seat.

#### PR2

Includes rowers that have functional use of their arms and trunk but have weakness/absence of leg function to slide the seat.

#### PR3

Include rowers with residual function in their legs which allows them to slide the seat. This class also includes athletes with a vision impairment as described in the Vision impairment section.

## SHOOTING

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference		Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	✓*
(*) : not a Paralympic discipline			

### SPORT CLASSES:

In shooting, there are three different sport classes for Paralympic disciplines (pistol, rifle). These sport classes are specific to the event the athlete competes in - either pistol or rifle events.

#### SPORT CLASS SH1 (PISTOL)

In this sport class athletes can support the full weight of the pistol themselves. As the pistol is held with one hand only, athletes in this sport class have an impairment affecting one arm and/or the legs, for example resulting from amputations or spinal cord injuries. Some shooters compete in a seated position, while others will compete in a standing position as defined in the sport rules.

#### SPORT CLASS SH1 (RIFLE)

In this sport class athletes can support the full weight of the rifle themselves. As the rifle is held with both hands, athletes in this sport class have an impairment in their legs, for example amputations or paraplegia. Some athletes will compete in a seated position, while others will compete in a standing position.

#### SPORT CLASS SH2 (RIFLE)

In this sport class athletes have an impairment that affects their arms, meaning they are not able to support the full weight of the rifles themselves. Athletes therefore compete using a shooting stand to support the weight of the rifle. Athletes competing in this sport class have impairments such as arm amputations or congenital impairments affecting the muscle power/movement in their arms. Some SH2 shooters have impairments in both the arms and legs, such as tetraplegia. The majority of athletes in this sport class compete in a seated position.

In addition, there is a specific classification system for the discipline 'trap shooting' (not a Paralympic Games discipline) and for VI-shooting (rifle, not a Paralympic Games discipline):

**SPORT CLASS SG-S (TRAP):**

Athletes with poor balance and/or trunk stability compete from a wheelchair in a standard seated position. Athletes have an impairment in the leg(s), but no functional limitation in the arms.

**SPORT CLASS SG-L (TRAP):**

Athletes with good balance and trunk function compete from a standing position. Athletes have an impairment in the leg(s), but no functional limitation in the arms.

**SPORT CLASS SG-U (TRAP):**

Athletes with good balance and trunk function compete from a standing position. Athletes have an impairment in the non-shooting arm.

**SPORT CLASS SH-VI (RIFLE):**

VI-Shooting: athletes must have either a clarity of vision above 1.1 logMAR or a contrast sensitivity poorer or equal to 1.4logCS

## SITTING VOLLEYBALL

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASSES:

There are two sport classes in sitting volleyball, called VS1 and VS2. The impairment of athletes in sport class VS2 is generally less severe than the impairment of athletes competing in sport class VS1.

#### SPORT CLASS VS1

These athletes have impairments that significantly affect the core functions in sitting volleyball. For example, through-ankle or higher amputation, severe cases of missing or shortened limbs from birth, stiff knee due to abnormal adhesion and rigidity of the bones of the joint (ankylosed), muscle tension, uncoordinated movements and involuntary movements, etc.

#### SPORT CLASS VS2

These athletes have impairments that affect the core functions in sitting volleyball to a lesser degree. For example, amputation through the foot/feet (Lisfranc amputation), stiff (ankylosed) ankle due to abnormal adhesion and rigidity of the bones of the joint, amputation of four digits on one hand, less severe muscle tension, uncoordinated movements and involuntary movements, etc.

### SPORT-TECHNICAL RULES

There can be two athletes with sport class VS2 on the team. To ensure a fair competition between two teams, a team may only have one VS2 athlete on the court at a time. The other five athletes must have sport class VS1.

## SWIMMING

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	✓
Intellectual impairment	✓	Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASSES:

The sport class names in swimming consist of a prefix "S" or "SB" and a number. The prefixes stand for the strokes and the number indicates the sport classes.

S: freestyle, butterfly and backstroke events

SB: breaststroke

SM: individual medley. The prefix "SM" is given to athletes competing in individual medley events. It is not a sports class, but an entry index and calculated as  $(3 \times S + SB) / 4$ ; for classes S1-4 who have a 3-discipline medley, the formula is  $(2S + SB) / 3$ .

### PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT - SPORT CLASSES S1-S10

There are ten different sport classes for athletes with a physical impairment, numbered 1-10. A lower number indicates a more severe activity limitation than a higher number.

Athletes with different impairments compete against each other, because sport classes are allocated based on the impact the impairment has on swimming, rather than on the impairment itself.

To evaluate the impact of impairments on swimming, classifiers assess all functional body structures using a point system and ask the athlete to complete a water assessment. The total number of points then determines the athlete's S and SB sport classes. Due to the different demands of S and SB events, swimmers are often allocated different S and SB sport classes. The SM sport class is calculated from the S and SB sport class.

The following are general examples of impairments and resulting functional abilities described in each sport class profiles. The below combinations of S and SB sport classes are the most common combinations, but it is possible that the athlete has another combination of sport classes, for example S7 and SB 7.

**S1 SB1**

Swimmers in this sport class have a significant loss of muscle power or control in their legs, arms and hands. Some athletes also have limited trunk control. This may be caused by tetraplegia, for example. Swimmers in this class usually use a wheelchair in daily life.

**S2 SB1**

Swimmers in this sport class mainly rely on their arms for swimming. Their hand, trunk and leg function is limited due to tetraplegia or co-ordination problems, for example.

**S3 SB2**

This sport class includes athletes with amputations of both arms and legs. Swimmers with reasonable arm strokes but no use of their legs or trunk, and swimmers with severe co-ordination problems in all limbs are also included in this sport class.

**S4 SB3**

Swimmers who can use their arms and have fair function in their hands, but who cannot use their trunk or legs swim in this sport class. Athletes with amputations of three limbs could also swim in this sport class.

**S5 SB4**

Swimmers with short stature and an additional impairment, with loss of control over one side of their body (hemiplegia) or with paraplegia compete in this sport class.

**S6 SB5**

This sport class includes swimmers with short stature or amputations of both arms, or moderate co-ordination problems on one side of their body, for example.

**S7 SB6**

This sport class is for athletes with one leg and one arm amputation on opposite sides, or a paralysis of one arm and one leg on the same side.

Moreover, swimmers with full control over arms and trunk and some leg function can compete in this class.

**S8 SB7**

Swimmers who have an amputation of one arm are eligible to compete in this sport class. Also, athletes with significant restrictions across hip, knee and ankle joints could compete in this sport class.



**S9 SB8**

Athletes in this sport class, for example, swim with joint restrictions in one leg or with double below-the-knee amputations.

**S10 SB9**

This class describes minimal physical impairments of eligible swimmers. These include the loss of one hand or a movement restriction in one hip joint.

**VISION IMPAIRMENT - SPORT CLASSES S/SB11-13**

Athletes with a vision impairment compete in three sport classes from S/SB11 (B1) to S/SB13 (B3) as described in the Vision impairment section. In order to ensure a fair competition athletes in the S/SB11 sport class are required to wear blackened goggles. To ensure safety all S/SB11 swimmers must use a tapper. A tapper is a support staff that assists the athlete with a vision impairment when they approach the end of the pool by tapping them with an elongated device. Swimmers in the S/SB12 and S/SB13 sport classes may choose whether or not they wish to use a tapper.

**INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT - SPORT CLASSES S/SB14**

S14 swimmers have an intellectual impairment, which typically leads to the athletes having difficulties with regards to pattern recognition, sequencing, and memory, which impact on sport performance in general. Moreover, S14 swimmers show a higher number of strokes relative to their speed than able-bodied elite swimmers.

## TABLE TENNIS

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	✓
Intellectual impairment	✓	Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASSES:

In table tennis, athletes with physical impairments compete in sport classes 1-10 and athletes with an intellectual impairment compete in sport class 11.

Below is a detailed breakdown of all 11 sport classes.

#### SITTING CLASSES:

Athletes in the sport classes 1-5 compete in a wheelchair.

#### SPORT CLASS 1

Class 1 athletes have no sitting balance and a significantly affected playing arm, for example due to tetraplegia. Athletes often use the support of their non-playing arm to maintain their sitting balance.

#### SPORT CLASS 2

Athletes in this sport class also have no sitting balance, and their playing arm is moderately affected. Like the athletes in sport class 1, they tape the racket to the hand to make up for limited grip function.

#### SPORT CLASS 3

Athletes in sport class 3 have full hand and arm function. With their good arm function, they can manoeuvre the wheelchair while maintaining good balance of their upper body. The athlete's impairment may result from spinal cord injuries or neurological conditions, such as cerebral palsy.

#### SPORT CLASS 4

Class 4 athletes have some sitting balance and fully functional arms and hands. They can move to the front to meet their opponent's serve.

#### SPORT CLASS 5

This sport class includes athletes who compete in a wheelchair, and have normal sitting balance, arm and hand function. With the good trunk function, they can

stretch out to the sides to hit the ball. The sport class includes athletes with lower spinal cord injuries.

### **STANDING CLASSES:**

Athletes in sport classes 6-10 compete standing.

#### **SPORT CLASS 6**

Athletes in this sport class have impairments affecting both arms and legs and play standing, for example, athletes with uncoordinated movements, involuntary movements or muscle tension which affects the legs and the playing arm. These impairments impact the balance and the quality of strokes.

#### **SPORT CLASS 7**

Athletes in this sport class either have significant impairments of both legs or the playing arm, or impairments affecting arms and legs moderately (e.g. CP paralysis of one side of the body or paralysis affecting symmetrical parts of the body, such as arms, face or legs). For example, an athlete with an amputation of the playing arm above the elbow could compete in this sport class.

#### **SPORT CLASS 8**

Athletes with a moderate impairment of their legs or moderately affected playing arm compete in this sport class. An athlete with muscle weakness in one leg due to polio would, for example, compete in this sport class.

#### **SPORT CLASS 9**

Athletes in this sport class have mild impairments affecting the legs or the playing arm. Athletes with a stiff knee (i.e. CP with a weakening of one side of the body {hemiparesis} or paralysis affecting one limb or area of the body) or restricted elbow of the playing arm compete in this sport class. Also, athletes who have significant impairments in the non-playing arm compete in this sport class. This will impact serving the ball.

#### **SPORT CLASS 10**

Athletes in this sport class have relatively mild impairments, such as a stiff ankle or wrist of the playing arm. Athletes with short stature may also play in sport class 10.

#### **SPORT CLASS 11 INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT**

Table tennis athletes with an intellectual impairment typically have difficulties with: pattern recognition, sequencing, and memory, which all have an impact on table tennis skills, tactics and performance.

## TAEKWONDO

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement		Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	
Intellectual impairment	✓ *	Vision Impairment	✓ *
(*) : not a Paralympic discipline			

### SPORT CLASSES:

Taekwondo competitions have two disciplines Kyorugi and Poomsae. Classes competing in Kyorugi will have the "K" prefix. Classes competing in Poomsae will have the "P" prefix.

Currently only Kyorugi events for sport class K44 and for certain weight categories are part of the Paralympic Games program. These medal events however are also open to athletes in sport class K43.

#### CLASS K43

Athletes have restrictions on both sides of their body in the arm below the elbow joint.

#### CLASS K44

Athletes have restrictions on one side in the arm or leg.

## TRIATHLON

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference		Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	✓

### SPORT CLASSES:

In triathlon there are six different sport classes for athletes with physical impairments. Those competing in a wheelchair compete in PTWC1 and PTWC2, and those running are numbered PTS2-5. A lower number indicates a more severe activity limitation. There are three other sport classes for athletes with a vision impairment named PTVI1, PTVI2 and PTVI3.

### PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

#### PTWC1 AND PTWC2 (WHEELCHAIR RACING PARA TRIATHLETES)

Para triathletes in this class swim, cycle on a handbike and compete in a racing wheelchair for the run section. This class includes athletes with, but not limited to, impairments of muscle power, range of movement, limb deficiency such as single or double leg amputation, spinal cord injuries resulting in paraplegia or tetraplegia. The two classes PTWC1 and PTWC2 have a different activity limitation based on trunk and hip functionality and compete together in the PTWC event using a start interval system which allows for a staggered start.

#### PTS2-5 (AMBULANT PARA TRIATHLETES)

##### PTS2

This class includes athletes with a severe degree of activity limitation resulting from impairments of, but not limited to, limb deficiency, muscle tension, uncoordinated movements and or involuntary movements, impaired muscle power or range of movement. Health conditions could include severe cerebral palsy, paralysis of one side of the body from birth, above the knee amputation, etc. In both bike and run segments, amputee athletes may use an approved prosthesis or other supportive devices.

##### PTS3

This class includes athletes with a significant degree of activity limitation resulting from impairments of, but not limited to, limb deficiency, muscle tension, uncoordinated movements and or involuntary movements, impaired muscle power

or range of movement. Health conditions could include athletes with significant spastic paralysis of one side of the body, cerebral palsy, double below-knee amputation, impaired arm and legs, etc. In both bike and run segments, amputee athletes may use an approved prosthesis or other supportive devices.

#### **PTS4**

This class includes athletes with a moderate degree of activity limitation resulting from impairments of, but not limited to, limb deficiency, muscle tension, uncoordinated movements and or involuntary movements, impaired muscle power or range of movement. Health conditions could include a moderate spastic cerebral palsy, complete brachial-plexus<sup>19</sup> on one arm, through the shoulder amputation, one below-the-knee amputation, etc. In both bike and run segments, athletes with limb deficiencies may use an approved prosthesis or other supportive devices.

#### **PTS5**

This sport class includes athletes with a mild degree of activity limitation such as athletes with, but not limited to, a below the elbow arm amputation, partial loss of arm muscle power, leg deficiency, etc. This class includes athletes with a mild degree of activity limitation resulting from impairments of but not limited to, limb deficiency, impaired muscle power or range of movement. Health conditions could include athletes where the arm is missing or shortened below the elbow (from birth), clubfoot, through the wrist amputation, partial brachial-plexus<sup>19</sup> on one arm, through the ankle amputation, etc. In both bike and run segments, amputee athletes may use an approved prosthesis or other supportive devices.

#### **VISION IMPAIRMENT**

Athletes with a vision impairment belong to either one of the three sport classes from PTVI (B1) to PTVI3 (B3) as described in the Vision impairment section. They compete together in a PTVI event using a start interval system.

Para triathletes in this class must swim, ride a tandem cycle and run with the same guide throughout the entire race.

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<sup>19</sup> The **brachial plexus** is the network of nerves that sends signals from your spinal cord to your shoulder, arm and hand. Depending on the level of injury, it can affect the neuromuscular system with a complete or partial loss of muscle power and range of movement.

## WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASSES:

Wheelchair basketball players are allocated one of eight sport classes from 1.0 to 4.5 - these are described below.

All athletes compete in a wheelchair and have an impairment affecting their legs. Athletes, for example, have amputations or paraplegia. Not all the athletes are wheelchair users in daily life.

While most athletes have normal arm and hand function, the main differences between athletes of different sport classes are trunk control and sitting balance, which allows them to lean forward and sideways to catch and pass the ball.

#### SPORT CLASS 1.0

Athletes in sport class 1.0 have no trunk control and thus cannot bend forward or sideways or rotate to catch and pass the ball. To keep a stable position, the backrest of the wheelchair is a bit higher and the athletes are strapped to the wheelchair.

#### SPORT CLASS 2.0

These athletes can fully rotate their body and lean forward to some extent, allowing them to catch the ball within a larger radius. Like their team members in sport class 1.0, their wheelchairs have a higher backrest and strapping for trunk support.

#### SPORT CLASS 3.0

This profile describes athletes who can fully rotate and lean forward but cannot lean to the sides. Their sitting balance is better than their team members in class 2.0, so they usually use wheelchairs with lower backrest.

#### SPORT CLASS 4.0

While 4.0 athletes can move forward and rotate like their team members in sport class 3.0, they can partially lean to the sides as well. Often athletes in this sport

class can lean to one side only, for example, because an impairment in one leg would cause a loss of balance to the other side.

### **SPORT CLASS 4.5**

Athletes in this sport class have no restriction in trunk rotation or leaning forward or sideways. Athletes with a foot amputation or a 6 cm leg length difference would be eligible for this sport class.

An athlete can also be allocated the sport classes 1.5, 2.5 or 3.5. The activity profile of these “half-pointers” fits in between the profiles of the lower and higher class. These additional three classes complete the eight sport classes in total.

### **SPORT-TECHNICAL RULES**

Each team of five (5) athletes is allowed to have fourteen (14) points on the field of play at the same time. This means that teams need to carefully select athletes with different sport classes to complete their team, e.g. one 4.0 athlete, one 2.0 athlete, one 1.5 athlete, one 3.0 athlete and one 3.5 athlete = 14 points.



## WHEELCHAIR FENCING

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference		Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASSES:

All wheelchair fencers compete in one of the following five classes, which are in turn grouped into three event categories:

#### CLASS 1A

Athletes without sitting balance who also have a restriction in the fencing arm.

#### CLASS 1B

Athletes without sitting balance and restrictions in the fencing arm which are less severe to Class 1A.

#### CLASS 2

Athletes with fair sitting balance and a normal fencing arm, e.g. thoracic level paraplegia or incomplete tetraplegia with a minimally affected fencing arm and good sitting balance.

#### CLASS 3

Athletes with good sitting balance, without support of legs and normal fencing arm.

#### CLASS 4

Athletes with good sitting balance with the support of legs and normal fencing arm.

### CATEGORIES

Currently at official International Wheelchair Fencing competitions, the sport classes are combined into the following three categories for each event:

- **Category A:** sport classes 3 and 4.
- **Category B:** sport class 2
- **Category C:** sport classes 1A and 1B

## WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference		Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASSES:

There are seven different sport classes ranging from 0.5 to 3.5 depending on the severity of their activity limitation.

#### SPORT CLASS 0.5

Athletes in sport class 0.5 have significantly impaired movement in their shoulder, arms and hands, for example due to tetraplegia or similar neurological health conditions. These athletes typically catch the ball by scooping it into their lap and throw the ball with a 2-handed flick pass or bunt pass. Their main role on the court is usually as a defender.

#### SPORT CLASS 1.0

Athletes in this class have more balanced shoulder strength than athletes in the 0.5 sport class so their arms are held closer to their body when they are pushing. These athletes may throw the ball but are not major ball handlers due to having an impairment affecting their elbow, wrist and hand function. Their typical role on court is a defender.

#### SPORT CLASS 1.5

An athlete in sport class 1.5 has fair arm function around shoulders, elbows and wrists, which allows the athlete to be an excellent defender. A 1.5 athlete will also handle the ball more frequently, but typically they show some weakness in the wrist and hands, which leads to limited ball security and accuracy in passing the ball. Some athletes in this class may also have asymmetrical arm function, so that they mainly handle the ball with their stronger arm only.

#### SPORT CLASS 2.0

The athletes in this class have good shoulder strength and stability which allows for very effective pushing. However, there is often impairment or loss of finger function which limits ball security and overhead passes. Athletes with limb deficiency that includes the loss of hands and forearms may also appear in this

sport class. These athletes often play the role of ball handler on court and have very good speed in wheelchair activities.

### **SPORT CLASS 2.5**

Athletes in this sport class have good shoulder, elbow and wrist strength. They might have some trunk muscle control present which improves their balance in the wheelchair and improves the efficiency of their wheelchair activities. These athletes may have some ability to use their fingers, and this can enhance the security and accuracy of overhead passes and also improve their ability to catch the ball. Well balanced strength in the arms means that these athletes can manoeuvre the wheelchair very effectively. These athletes are good ball handlers and fairly fast offensive players.

### **SPORT CLASS 3.0**

Athletes in this sport class have excellent shoulder, elbow and wrist strength. For athletes who have neurological health conditions, there will usually be some finger or thumb weakness present. For athletes with limb deficiency, they may have partial loss of the palm of the hand including fingers/thumb. Athletes in this sport class generally have strong ball security in all positions, including overhead, both with one or two hands. Athletes in this sport class often have some activity in their trunk muscles that enhances both their ball control and wheelchair activities. They can dribble the ball very effectively. Typically, their role on court is as very good ball handlers and fast play makers.

### **SPORT CLASS 3.5**

A 3.5 athlete has excellent arm strength and good hand strength, which makes the athlete a major ball handler and a fast play maker in the team. Athletes in this sport class often have some trunk muscles, which helps them to rapidly accelerate their wheelchair. This will also typically allow them to have a high and upright sitting position in their wheelchair. For athletes with a limb deficiency, they may have partial loss of the palm of the hand and fingers/thumb. You will see 3.5 athlete perform controlled one-handed, long-distance passes with a high degree of accuracy.

## **SPORT-TECHNICAL RULES**

A team comprises of a maximum of 12 athletes and, during play, the total on-court value for each team of four (4) cannot exceed eight (8) points. Teams fielding female athletes also receive an additional 0.5 point allowance for each female athlete on-court. This means that teams need to carefully select athletes with different sport classes to complete their team, e.g. one 0.5 athlete, one 1.5 athlete, one 2.5 athlete, and one 3.5 athlete = 8 points.



## WHEELCHAIR TENNIS

### ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS:

Impaired muscle power	✓	Involuntary movements	✓
Impaired passive range of movement	✓	Muscle tension	✓
Limb deficiency	✓	Uncoordinated movements	✓
Leg length difference	✓	Short stature	
Intellectual impairment		Vision Impairment	

### SPORT CLASSES

There are two sport classes in wheelchair tennis and what all athletes have in common is that they have an impairment that affects at least one leg.

#### SPORT CLASS: OPEN DIVISION

Athletes are eligible to compete in the Open division if they have a permanent physical disability that results in substantial loss of function in one or both legs that meets or exceeds the sport's minimum eligibility criteria.

#### SPORT CLASS: QUAD DIVISION

Athletes who meet the eligibility criteria above but who also have a permanent physical disability that results in substantial loss of function in one or both arms, and where at least three limbs are affected, are eligible to compete in the Quad division. They have limited ability to handle the racket or to move in the wheelchair, so you will find that athletes may require racket taping and / or an assistive device in order to play.

## **WANT TO LEARN MORE?**

If you would like to learn more about classification, please take a look at the following documents.

### **IPC CLASSIFICATION CODE**

This is the most important document governing the Paralympic Movement with regard to classification. It helps to support and co-ordinate the development and implementation of accurate, reliable and consistent sport-focused classification systems. [The IPC Classification Code](#) was first published in 2007, with a second edition being published in 2015 and is part of the IPC Handbook.

### **IPC POSITION STATEMENT ON BACKGROUND AND SCIENTIFIC RATIONALE FOR CLASSIFICATION IN PARALYMPIC SPORT**

This [position statement](#), which was written by Professor Sean Tweedy and Professor Yves Vanlandewijck (leading researchers in classification), explains what evidence-based classification means and how classification systems can be based on scientific evidence. The IPC officially committed to evidence-based classification, when this position statement was approved by the Governing Board in 2009.

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE PARALYMPIC MOVEMENT**

If you want to learn more about the history of the Paralympic Movement and classification, from the beginnings in Stoke Mandeville to London 2012 Paralympic Games, then the article "Introduction to the Paralympic Movement" by Sean Tweedy and P. David Howe will be interesting for you.

The article is available in the following book:

Y.C. Vanlandewijck & W.R. Thompson (Eds.): The Paralympic Athlete. Wiley-Blackwell: IOC Handbook of Sports Medicine and Science.

### **SPORT-SPECIFIC CLASSIFICATION RULES**

Each IF is responsible for publishing classification rules and regulations. You can find these from the respective IF websites, which you are linked from the [sport section of the IPC website](#).

For news and videos about the Paralympic Movement, information about the IPC structure and classification, please visit the [IPC website](#).

You may also find the [classification section](#) on the website interesting.