

Classification

Value: Empowerment and social support in sport

Activity: Examining functional classification in Paralympic Sport

GENERAL GOAL

Students understand the meaning and aims of functional classification in Paralympic Sport.

SPECIFIC GOALS

- To experience movement difficulties.
- To understand why athletes with a disability compete in different classes.
- To learn the basic principles of the Paralympic classification system.

ENVIRONMENT

Indoor (sports hall) or outdoor (playground).

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

- One rolling board per child = similar to a skateboard, measuring approximately 40cm x 60cm (see photo page 2).
- Four packs of playing cards.
- Fluorescent jackets or bands of different colours.
- Hula-hoop

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE ACTIVITY

Session leader and assistants.

STARTING THE ACTIVITY

The group is divided in pairs and each pair receives a rolling board. The session leader emphasises safety issues (e.g., do not place your hands under the board, do not bump into each other, keep good personal space and control your speed). After that, the session leader encourages the students to freely experiment moving throughout the court with the rolling boards. Possible movement options can be: push with one/two hands, push with one/two legs, lie on the board on the back/stomach, sit on one knee/two knees/the buttocks, moving forward/backward, pushing each other, etc.



RUNNING THE ACTIVITY

Warm up

Each student receives a rolling board and a game of tag is played. The 'taggers' wear fluorescent jackets. When a child is tagged, he or she becomes the 'tagger' and puts on the jacket. The session leader gives different movement tasks to the students (e.g., use only one hand, one leg, sitting/lying, etc.).

Competition between classes

For the second part of the activity, the group is divided into four, and each group takes position in separate corners of the sports hall or playground. Each group receives a hoop and the session leader then divides four decks of cards randomly among all hoops lying within the play field. Each group receives a different coloured fluorescent jacket which represents a type of disability (e.g., use only one hand, one leg, sitting or lying, etc.). The task is to collect all the cards from the same colour in their hoop (diamonds, spades, clubs and hearts) as fast as possible while moving on the rolling board throughout the play area. When every group has played the game two to three times, always rotating through the different disability types, the session leader initiates a class discussion. Students are asked whether they feel it is reasonable for persons with different disability types to compete against each other and if not what some possible solutions are. The session leader leads the students towards the solution of classification. Principles of classification will become clear by implementing the last part of the activity.

Mixed team competition

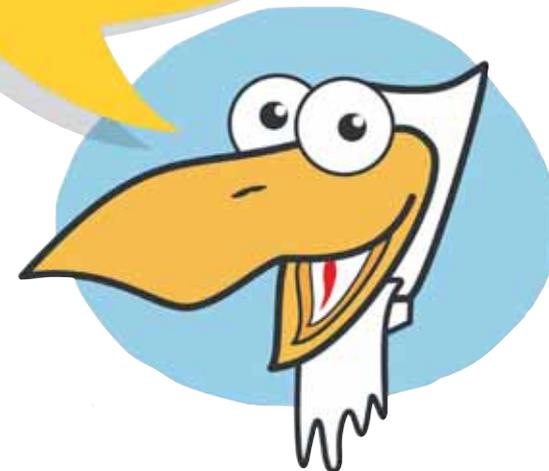
Mixed teams are composed and within each team players have different points representing various types of abilities/disabilities (e.g., classification point system). The mixed teams begin to play a 10-pass Basketball game where each team is required to give 10 consecutive passes as fast as possible without dropping the ball. The students can put five players on the court, and the total amount of points allowed on the court at one time may not exceed 15 points. The 10-pass Basketball game is a suggestion, however there are multiple activity alternatives (e.g., Volleyball, Netball, etc.).



Photo © IPC

Did you know...?

For some athletes, classification is an ongoing process. When an athlete starts competing, they are allocated a class that may be reviewed throughout their career.



GUIDELINES FOR ADAPTATION TO YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS

- Use two disability groups to compare (due to the fact that multiple disability groups might be confusing/complicated for younger age groups).

GUIDELINES FOR ADAPTATION TO OLDER PARTICIPANTS

- If you have space and equipment (e.g., wheelchairs, straps, tapes) you can introduce the 10-pass Basketball game with simulation of various degrees of movement limitations (e.g., no limitation, upper body strapped to wheelchair, fingers taped together or in special glove).

REFLECTION

This activity relies heavily on the guidance of the session leader to provide information and stimulate the student's understanding. By experiencing unfair competition (during the above-mentioned activities) and finding solutions, the students will gain insight into the classification principles of Paralympic Sport. Students need to understand that classification in Paralympic Sport is employed in order to ensure fair competition amount the athletes. In addition, classification encourages participation rather than exclusion and encourages integration rather than disability specific competition.

The session leader will initiate a discussion related to the goal of this activity.

- How did you feel during the competition? Why?
- How would you describe 'classification' in Paralympic Sport?
- Why is it important to have classification?
- Can athletes with different abilities and characteristics compete together? If so, how?



classification groups

Here is an example of the different classification groups at the Paralympic Games:

cerebral palsy

amputee

blindness/
visual impairment

'les autres'

spinal injury



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LINKS

Website: www.paralympic.org/release/classification
PSD Manual: Section Two, Chapter 10

