



My condition changed, what do I need to do?

If your impairment has changed or you have undergone a medical procedure you must submit a Medical Review Request to your International Sport Federation. If you do not, your actions may be investigated. To find out more see the *International Standard for Athlete Evaluation* and *Athlete Classification Code*.

I do not think I am in the right sport class, what can I do?

If you have just come out of athlete evaluation and you do not agree with the decision taken, your National Body or National Paralympic Committee (not yourself) can submit a protest within the time-line set by the sport. The protest must detail the reasons for the disagreement, with reference to the applicable Classification Rule(s). To find out more about protests see the *International Standard for Protests and Appeals*.

I do not think my competitor is in the right class, what can I do?

Only the International Sport Federation can determine whether your competitor is in the correct class. Your National Body or National Paralympic Committee may submit a strongly reasoned case to the International Sport Federation, which may decide to launch an International Sport Federation protest. To find out more about protests see the *International Standard for Protests and Appeals*.

NOTE: Please be advised that this document serves as a guide and it does not substitute the *2015 Athlete Classification Code* (Code). In case of any discrepancy between this information and the Code, the Code prevails.



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Athlete Reference Guide

To the 2015 Athlete Classification Code

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Why should I read this?

Athlete classification helps to structure the competition in Para sport. Athletes are grouped so that sporting excellence determines which athlete or team is successful. Classification determines if you can compete and who you compete against. Not knowing the classification rules of your sport is like not knowing the technical rules of your sport. We encourage all athletes to familiarise themselves with the classification rules by reading the *Athlete Classification Code* and the *International Standards*.

Why do I need to be classified?

To ensure sporting excellence determines which athlete or team is successful, all athletes competing must be given a sport class and sport class status. You cannot compete internationally without a sport class. The only way to be given a sport class and sport class status is through athlete evaluation by an international classification panel. See the *International Standard for Athlete Evaluation* for more detail.

How does it work?

Athlete evaluation begins by determining whether or not you have an eligible impairment for a given sport. There are 10 across all Para sports, originating from the member organisations. If you have an eligible impairment for a given sport, a classification panel will evaluate you and determine whether or not you meet the minimum impairment criteria (minimum impairment criteria are

set by the sport at a level that ensures a significant sport activity limitation will result). If you meet minimum impairment criteria, you will complete the other aspects of athlete evaluation, including a sports specific assessment, if required. You will then be allocated a sport class and a sport class status. Note that sports specific minimum impairment criteria are not yet available for vision impairment, but are currently being developed. You can learn more in the *International Standard for Athlete Evaluation* and *International Standard for Eligible Impairments*.

Where and when does it happen?

Athlete evaluation currently occurs on site in the days preceding certain identified international competitions (not necessarily at every competition). Every athlete will be evaluated at least once at the beginning of their international career. Further evaluations depend on the type of impairment and the impact on the sport; some athletes may only be seen once in their career (such as athletes with limb deficiency) and others regularly (for example, athletes with co-ordination impairments or degenerative health conditions). Find out more about where and when this can happen in the *International Standard for Athlete Evaluation*.

Who does it?

Athletes are evaluated by a classification panel, which is made up of at least two classifiers. These classifiers are trained and certified as officials by the International Sport Federation who governs the sport. Classifiers are experts and have complimentary knowledge about both impairment and the impact it has on the sport (for example, physicians, physiotherapists, former athletes, coaches). See the *International Standard for Classifier Personnel and Training* for more detail.

I am impaired, but still not given a sport class!

Para sports cater for only 10 eligible impairments across all sports. But not all sports cater for all 10 eligible impairments (for example, judo is exclusively for athletes with vision impairment). So if you do not have one for a given sport, you cannot compete in that sport. Furthermore, if you have an eligible impairment but do not meet the minimal impairment criteria you cannot compete in that Para sport. In this case, it is

not questioned whether or not you have impairment, but whether or not your impairment leads to significant activity limitation to participate in that Para sport.

If I train hard will my sport class change?

No, you will not change sport class by training hard. Athlete classification aims to minimise the impact of the eligible impairment on the outcome of competition. So, the athlete with the best skills, physiology, psychology and training wins. However, your sport class might change with maturation if your initial athlete evaluation was at a young age.

