



CLASSIFICATION RULEBOOK

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SWIMMING CLASSIFICATION

These classification rules reflect the requirements of the International Paralympic Committee [IPC] Classification Code for international classification for IPC Swimming.

These classification rules shall be read in conjunction with the IPC Swimming Rulebook.

The purpose of the swimming classification system is to minimize the impact of impairment on the outcome of competition, so that the Athletes who succeed in competition are those with best anthropometry, physiology and psychology and who have enhanced them to best effect (training hard, quality coaching).

In order to achieve this purpose, the classes described aim to classify Athletes according to extent of activity limitation resulting from impairment. In other words place Athletes into classes according to how much their impairment affects core determinants of performance in the performance of swimming.

An athlete is eligible to compete and achieve acknowledged results at IPC Swimming competitions if they have been classified in accordance with the IPC Swimming classification system (see further) :

1. For Athletes with a physical impairment [i.e. amputees, cerebral palsy, les autres, spinal cord injured and polio]. They shall be referred to as classes 1-10 swimmers.
2. For Athletes with a visually impairment. They shall be referred to as classes 11-13.
3. For Athletes with an intellectual disability. They shall be referred to as class 14.

INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION PANEL

A classification panel is a group of classifiers appointed by IPC Swimming to conduct international classification and determine the sport class and sport class status at a particular competition. Classifiers are IPC Officials, with roles and responsibilities outlined in the IPC Classification Code, International Standard for Classifier Training and Certification.

Classifiers, as panel members, act as impartial evaluators in determining an Athlete's sport class and sport class status, and are bound by the Classifier

Code of Conduct (IPC Classification Code, International Standard for Classifier Training and Certification, 6.1.3) and the IPC Code of Ethics.

In IPC Swimming, each classification panel shall consist of at least one medical and one technical classifier.

Members of a classification panel should not have any other official responsibilities within a competition other than in connection with classification, nor should be member of a delegation.

Should conflicts arise, the parties concerned should raise these with the Chief Classifier.

ATHLETES' ELIGIBILITY

If an Athlete has an activity limitation resulting from an impairment that is not permanent and/or does not limit the Athlete's ability to compete equitably in elite sport with Athletes without impairment, the Athlete should be considered ineligible to compete.

If an Athlete fails to meet the eligibility criteria for IPC Swimming, the Athlete will be declared ineligible for IPC Swimming.

An Athlete may meet the criteria in one sport, but may be not eligible to compete in another sport.

If an Athlete is deemed ineligible for competition under the eligibility rules of IPC Swimming, this does not question the presence of a genuine impairment. This is only a ruling on the eligibility of the Athlete to compete under the sport rules of IPC Swimming.

An athlete is eligible to compete and achieve acknowledged results at IPC Swimming competitions if they have been classified in accordance with the IPC Swimming classification system (see further) :

- For Athletes with a physical impairment [i.e. amputees, cerebral palsy, les autres, spinal cord injured and polio]. They shall be referred to as classes 1-10 swimmers.
- For Athletes with a visually impairment. They shall be referred to as classes 11-13.
- For Athletes with an intellectual disability. They shall be referred to as class 14.

Athletes suffering from chronic disease, health issues with secondary physical consequences, "non-measurable" impairments are considered non-eligible for competition within IPC Swimming.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ATHLETES WITH PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

The classification system for Athletes with a physical impairment uses a numerical calculation of physical ability as a guideline and is expressed in profiles showing the variation in propulsion effectiveness of swimmers with different physical abilities [i.e. amputees, cerebral palsy, dysmelia, les autres, spinal cord injury and polio swimmers].

Athletes are eligible if affected by at least 1 of the following impairments:

- Hypertonia (i.e. Cerebral Palsy-CP, stroke, acquired brain injury)
- Ataxia (i.e. ataxia resulting from CP, brain injury)
- Athetosis (i.e. chorea, athetosis from CP)
- Limb deficiency (i.e. amputation resulting from trauma or congenital limb deficiency – dysmelia)
- Impaired passive range of movement (i.e. arthrogryposis, ankylosis, scoliosis)
- Impaired muscle power (i.e. spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, brachial plexus injury, spina bifida, post-polio, Guillain-Barre syndrome)
- Limb-length difference (i.e. congenital or traumatic causes of bone shortening in one limb)
- Short stature (i.e. achondroplasia)

Swimmers that meet the eligibility criteria (see above) but fail less than 15 points on the bench test (see further) do not meet the sport-specific minimal disability criterion, and are not subjected to the components of water test and observation in competition as part of their classification process. They are allocated sport class “ineligible to compete”.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ATHLETES WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Athletes are eligible if affected by at least 1 of the following impairments:

- Impairment of the eye structure
- Impairment of the optical nerve
- Impairment of the visual cortex of the central brain

The minimal disability criterion, complementary to the above, is a visual acuity of 6/60 or less and/or a visual field less than 20 degrees. Athletes who do not meet the minimal disability criterion are allocated sport class “ineligible to compete”.

All evaluation shall be made in the best eye with best correction [i.e. all competitors who use contact or corrective lenses must wear them when they present for evaluation, whether they intend wearing them, or not during competition].

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ATHLETES WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY*

Athletes are eligible if they have a diagnosis of intellectual disability on the basis of the definition as set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Association of Mental Retardation (AAMR). These implies:

- IQ < 75,
- adaptive behaviour, and
- age onset < 18 years

The application hereto needs to be done by using the appropriate application form from INAS-FID ([LINK TO WEBSITE](#))

Additionally, the Athlete needs to participate in sport-specific eligibility testing, by means of a computerized test-battery under the authority of IPC classifiers.

Athletes who do not meet the minimal disability criterion are allocated sport class “ineligible to compete”.

*These are interim measures awaiting the final resolution on this matter by the IPC General Assembly in November 2009.

ATHLETE EVALUATION PROCESS - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The athlete evaluation process is a process by which the athlete is assessed in accordance with the IPC Swimming classification rules. The assessment must be carried out by a panel of at minimum 2 IPC Swimming certified classifiers, of whom at least one classifier is medical classifier.

IPC Swimming will appoint one Chief Classifier who is responsible for the administration, co-ordination and implementation of classification matters for a specific competition. Athletes are responsible to follow the directives of the Chief Classifier.

Athlete evaluation takes place in the days preceding the start of a competition. This period is named 'Classification Evaluation Period'. The Chief Classifier will provide the NPCs with a classification evaluation schedule on or before the time of arrival at the competition of the Athlete. It is the responsibility of the Athlete and his/her NPC to ensure that the athlete is present at the assigned time and place, in the appropriate attire and be able to identify him/herself through passport, ID or accreditation card, or sport license.

The athlete must be accompanied by an interpreter if she/he does not speak English. The Athlete may further be accompanied by not more than one (1) representative of the athlete's NPC or National Federation (NF). An Athlete who is not accompanied will not be assessed.

All athletes must sign the Classification Consent Form at the time of classification.

The Athlete must provide information to the classification panel regarding his/her impairment, medication and/or surgery, relevant to their sports performance. Athletes with N-status (see further) will send the Medical Data Submission Form to IPC Swimming no later than 1 month in advance (see IPC Swimming website). All documentation submitted must be written in English.

The Athlete, upon request of the classification panel, may have to provide information on his/her general health status. Failure to provide this information may be deemed to constitute a case of non co-operation during Evaluation (see further).

The Athlete evaluation process includes:

- Bench test, including muscle testing, coordination testing, joint mobility testing, measurement of amputated/dysmelic limb and/or measurement of limb length and body height.
- Water test*
- Observation in competition*

* Only applicable in athletes with physical impairment

The testing is done following the procedures for testing of range of motion, coordination and muscle strength as set forth in DOCUMENT X

Athletes with a physical impairment are required to wear a swimming suit and bring their competition suit to check for adjustments to accommodate impairment which otherwise would constitute a violation to the equipment rules.

Following Athlete Evaluation, a Sport Class and Sport Class Status will be allocated to each Athlete in accordance with the IPC Swimming Classification Rulebook. This information will be kept in the IPC Swimming Classification Master List that will be available from the IPC website.

The following sport classes apply:

- S1-10, SB1-9, SM1-10 for athletes with physical impairment
- S11-13, SB11-13, SM11-13 for athletes with visual impairment
- S14, SB14, SM14 for athletes with intellectual impairment

The following sport class statuses apply in IPC Swimming:

- **New (N).** An Athlete who has not undergone International Classification Evaluation in order to obtain a Sport Class for international Competition.
- **Review (R).** An Athlete who has undergone classification evaluation but may require further evaluation. This will happen automatically at the first opportunity where international classification is offered.
- **Confirmed (C).** An Athlete with a confirmed status indicates that the Athlete has undergone classification evaluation and does not require further evaluation.
- **Ineligible (NE).** Athletes who do not meet the minimum eligibility criteria will be assigned a NE Sport class.

In circumstances where a Sport Class “Ineligible to Compete” is allocated, the athlete will not be permitted to compete and will be required to be examined by a second classification panel at earliest convenience. Awaiting the re-assessment, the athlete is found “Ineligible to Compete”. If the second classification panel confirms that the athlete’s sports class is ineligible, the athlete will have no further protest option.

Once the classification panel has made a decision on the athlete’s sport class and the sport class status, a member of the classification panel shall inform the athlete of the panel’s decision. In the case the classification panel requires observation in competition to confirm the athlete’s sport class, the athlete is informed about this decision at this stage.

At the end of each classification session (morning/afternoon/evening session) during the classification evaluation period, the Chief Classifier must convey the outcomes of the assigned sport class to the NPCs and to the Local Organizing Committee by posting on a public board with notice of date and time being posted.

The sport class status is allocated to the athlete when the athlete participated in all parts of the evaluation process.

If an Athlete fails to attend evaluation the Athlete will not be allocated the sport class and sport class status and will not be permitted to compete at that competition. Should the Chief Classifier (CC) be satisfied that the reasonable explanation exists for the failure to attend the evaluation the Athlete, time permitting, may be given a second and final chance to attend evaluation. Failure to attend evaluation includes:

- Not attending the evaluation at the specified time or place
- Not attending the evaluation with the appropriate equipment/clothing and/or documentation
- Not attending evaluation accompanied by the required Athlete Support Personnel.

An Athlete who, in the opinion of the classification panel, is unable or unwilling to participate in the evaluation shall be considered a non-co-operative and will not be allocated a sport class and sport class status, and will be not permitted to compete at that competition. Should the Chief Classifier (CC) be satisfied that the reasonable explanation exists for the failure to co-operate during the evaluation the Athlete, time permitting, may be given a second and final chance to attend and co-operate. Any Athlete found to have been non co-operative during an evaluation will not be permitted to undergo any further evaluation for a minimum of three months or such greater period of time as deemed appropriate by IPC Swimming, starting from the date upon which the Athlete failed to co-operate. Such cases will be dealt with on case by case basis.

An Athlete who, in the opinion of the Classification Panel, is intentionally misrepresenting skills and/or abilities shall be considered in violation of the Classification Rules. If the Athlete intentionally misrepresents skills and/or abilities, the Athlete will not be allocated a Sport Class or Sport Class Status, and will not be permitted to compete at that Competition. In addition, IPC Swimming will:

- Not allow the Athlete to undergo any further evaluation for that sport for a minimum of two years from the date upon which the Athlete intentionally misrepresented skills and/or abilities
- Remove any Sport Class or Sport Class Status allocated to the Athlete from its Classification Master List
- Designate the Athlete as IM (intentional misrepresentation) in its Classification Master List
- Not allow the Athlete to undergo any further evaluation for any sport within the IPC Sports for a period of two years from the date upon which the Athlete intentionally misrepresented skills and/or abilities.

An Athlete who, on a second separate occasion, intentionally misrepresents skills and/or abilities will receive a lifetime ban from IPC Swimming and future Paralympic Games.

IPC Swimming shall enforce sanctions on Athlete Support Personnel who assist or encourage an Athlete to fail to attend Athlete Evaluation, to fail to

co-operate, intentionally misrepresent skills and/or abilities or disrupt the evaluation process in any other way. The sanctions will be at least as severe as the sanctions enforced on the Athlete.

ATHLETE EVALUATION PROCESS - SPECIAL CASES

If the Athlete presents with a newly acquired impairment that has not yet led to a stabilized condition (e.g. spinal cord injury, head injury, multiple sclerosis, recent surgery), the Athlete will be evaluated under the best possible conditions, given authorization by his/her physician to participate in IPC Swimming competitions. However, the Athlete will be allocated sport class status 'C' with a set review date (e.g. review 2 years after initial evaluation) to confirm the final sport class.

If the Athlete has an impairment of progressive nature (e.g. multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, loss of vision), the Athlete will be evaluated under the best possible conditions, given authorization by his/her physician to participate in IPC Swimming competitions. However, the Athlete will be allocated sport class status 'C' with a set review date (e.g. review 2 years after initial evaluation) to confirm the final sport class.

If the case the Athlete has not achieved full physical or skeletal maturity, the Athlete will be evaluated under the best possible conditions and will be allocated sport class status 'C' with a set review date (e.g. review 2 years after initial evaluation) to confirm the final sport class.

If an Athlete has a health condition that causes pain that limits or prohibits full effort during evaluation, he/she will not be evaluated at that time. The Chief Classifier, may, time permitting, re-schedule for evaluation. However, if an athlete experiences pain during evaluation that alters their performance on these tests, then the results of the tests are not valid and the athlete will be ruled ineligible to compete.

Multiple minimal impairment:

http://www.paralympic.org/release/Summer_Sports/Athletics/News/2009_01_27_Class_Manual_-_090127_xFinalx.pdf, section 6, page 63

CLASSIFICATION PROTEST

General Principles

Protests may be submitted by submitted by the NPC Team Leader, Secretary General and/or President

The Chief Classifier shall be the person authorised to receive Protests on behalf of IPC Swimming at an event.

Protests must be submitted to the Chief Classifier within a clearly defined time period after the Athlete has been evaluated (see below)

Protests must be submitted in English on a designated Protest Form, made available by IPC Swimming. The protest must clearly detail the decision being protested, the motivation to the protest and, if applicable, together with any documents or other evidence in support of the protest

The protest is accompanied by the protest fee of 150 € to be given to the CC.

Upon receipt of the Protest Form, the CC shall conduct a review to determine if the protest can be accepted. If the protest is not accepted, the CC shall motivate the decision hereto and inform the party who lodged the protest accordingly in writing.

If the protest is accepted, the CC shall notify all relevant parties of the time and date of any subsequent protest evaluation.

- A) If there is a second panel available, the protest should be conducted at earliest convenience, before the start of the competition or next session (in case of in competition protest). The swimmer is required to attend the classification protest on the day and time of the request. If a competitor does not attend a classification protest when requested they may be disqualified from further competition.
- B) If there is no second panel available, the protest will be dealt with at the next competition the athlete participates in and a panel is available. In the meantime, the athlete competes in the latest sport class allocated to and keep the initial sport class status (N or R)

The Chief Classifier shall appoint a Protest Panel to conduct an Evaluation of the Athlete. A protest panel exists of at least 2 authorized classifiers, with at least one medical classifier.

Members of the Protest Panel should have had no direct involvement in the Evaluation which led to the most recent allocation of the Athlete's Sport Class, unless the most recent Evaluation took place more than 18 (eighteen) months prior to the Protest being submitted.

All documentation submitted with the Protest Form shall be provided to the Protest Panel. Protest Panels should conduct the protest evaluation without reference to the Classification evaluation which allocated the Athlete's most recent Sport Class preceding the protest submission.

The Protest Panel may seek medical, sport or scientific expertise in reviewing an Athlete's Sport Class.

After protest resolution all relevant parties shall be notified of the Protest decision by the CC in writing at earliest convenience.

The change of the swimmer class following the protest shall be effective immediately. The athlete is subject to re-entry conditions for forthcoming events in accordance with competition rules.

Swimmers shall be assessed in one S stroke or the SB stroke before the respective sport class is finalized.

PROTEST OPPORTUNITIES

Protest during classification evaluation period

The classification evaluation period is the period immediately preceding competition during which athletes with sport class status N or R have to present for international classification in accordance with the classification evaluation schedule.

A protest during evaluation period refers to a protest that is lodged by the own or another NPC to an athlete who presented for evaluation.

The protest is submitted within the timeframe of 3 hours after the notification of the athlete sport class and sport class status. If this time expires after 22:00 hours, the protest will be submitted no later than 08:00 the following day.

In competition protest

Immediately following the first event an athlete who is subject to observation in competition for a particular class allocation, the CC publishes the final sport class allocation on the board.

An in competition protest period refers to a protest that is lodged by the own or another NPC to an athlete that was subject to observation in competition (who entered with N or R status).

An in competition protest can not be lodged to the athlete who was protested during evaluation period of that same competition.

The protest is submitted within the timeframe of 30 minutes following the notification of the athlete sport class and sport class status.

Protests under Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances arise if the IPC Swimming Head of Classification or the competition Chief Classifier believes that an Athlete's Sport Class, including the sport class of Athletes with sport class status C, no longer reflects that Athlete's Ability to compete equitably within that Sport Class.

Exceptional circumstances may result from:

- Sport Class allocation criteria having changed since the Athlete's most recent Evaluation.
- A change in the degree of impairment of an Athlete. It is the NPC's responsibility to submit a Request for Review to IPC Swimming using the official IPC Swimming Form. Such request shall be submitted at earliest convenience following the change in degree of the impairment. Request submitted less than 3 months in advance of a competition will not be considered for any competition within that 3 months period.

Upon receipt the Head of Classification will conduct a review to determine whether all necessary information to allow for an assessment of change in the degree of impairment are included. The HoC shall dismiss the Request for Review if not all necessary information are made available. The HoC shall notify the NPC of any subsequent athlete evaluation when the Request for Review is accepted.

- An error made by a Classification Panel, which has led to the Athlete being allocated a Sport Class which is not in keeping with the Athlete's ability.
- An Athlete demonstrating significantly less or greater ability during Competition which does not reflect the Athlete's current Sport Class.

A protest under exceptional circumstances can only be initiated if detailed motivation to the protest application is provided in writing to all relevant parties.

A protest made in exceptional circumstances shall follow the same process detailed as per above.

CLASSIFICATION Appeal

The term “Appeal” refers to the procedure by which a formal objection to the manner in which Athlete Evaluation and/or Classification procedures have been conducted is submitted and subsequently resolved.

The IPC Board of Appeal of Classification (BAC) is the final appeal body in the resolution of classification issues.

The Bylaws of the IPC Board of Appeal of Classification are part of the IPC Handbook (www.paralympic.org – IPC Handbook, section 1, chapter 2.8).

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