

A guide to current International Paralympic Committee Classifications

Archery is open to athletes with a physical impairment and classification is broken up into three classes:

ARW1: spinal cord and cerebral palsy athletes with impairment in all four limbs

ARW2: wheelchair users with full arm function

ARST (standing): athletes who have no impairments in their arms but who have some impairment in their legs. This group also includes amputees, les autres and cerebral palsy standing athletes. Some athletes in the standing group will sit on a high stool for support but will still have their feet touching the ground.

Athletics uses a system of letters and numbers is used to distinguish between them. A letter **F** is for field athletes, **T** represents those who compete on the track, and the number shown refers to their impairment.

11-13: track and field athletes who are visually impaired

20: track and field athletes who are intellectually disabled

31-38: track and field athletes with cerebral palsy

41-46: track and field amputees and les autres

T 51-56: wheelchair track athletes

F 51-58: wheelchair field athletes

Blind athletes compete in class 11 and are permitted to run with a sighted guide, while field athletes in the class are allowed the use of acoustic signals, for example electronic noises, clapping or voices, if they compete in the 100m, long jump or triple jump.

Athletes in classes 42, 43 and 44 must wear a prosthesis while competing, but this is optional for classes 45 and 46.

Boccia (a bowling game) is open to athletes with cerebral palsy and other severe physical impairments (eg, muscular dystrophy) who compete from a wheelchair, with classification split into four classes:

BC1: Athletes may compete with the help of an assistant, who must remain outside the athlete's playing box. The assistant can only stabilize or adjust the playing chair and give a ball to the player on his request

BC2: Athletes have poor functional strength in their extremities, but can propel a wheelchair and are not eligible for assistance

BC3: For players with a very severe physical impairment. Players use an assistive device and may be assisted by a person, who will remain in the player's box but who must keep his/her back to the court and eyes averted from play

BC4: For players with other severe physical impairments - not necessarily cerebral palsy. Players are not eligible for assistance



Cycling is open to amputees, les autres, athletes with cerebral palsy and visually impaired athletes, competing in individual road race and track events.

Athletes with cerebral palsy are split into four divisions according to the level of their impairment, where class four comprises the more physically able.

Visually impaired athletes compete together with no separate classification system. They ride in tandem with a sighted guide.

Amputee, spinal cord injury and les autres competitors compete within these groups:

LC1: Riders with upper limb disabilities

LC2: Riders with impairment in one leg but who can pedal normally

LC3: Riders with impairment in one lower limb who will usually pedal with one leg only

LC4: Riders with impairment affecting both legs

Athletes with more severe impairments take part in **handcycling**, which is now included in the cycling programme.

Handcyclists compete in the following impairment divisions:

HCA: For athletes with complete loss of trunk and lower limb function

HCB: For athletes with complete loss of lower limb function and limited trunk stability

HCC: For athletes with complete loss of lower limb function but few other functional impairments, or for athletes with partial loss of lower limb function combined with other impairments which mean conventional cycling is not viable

Equestrian sport classifies riders into four different grades:

Grade 1: Severely impaired riders with cerebral palsy, les autres and spinal cord injury

Grade 2: Athletes with reasonable balance and abdominal control including amputees

Grade 3: Athletes with good balance, leg movement and coordination including blind athletes

Grade 4: Ambulant athletes (those able to walk independently) with either impaired vision or impaired arm or leg function

Football

Five-a-side football is played by those with a visual impairment, while seven-a-side football is played by athletes with cerebral palsy. People who take part in five-a-side blind football are classified, according to their level of sight, as **B1, B2 or B3**.

Players in the **B1** classification are considered blind (while those rated **B2** and **B3** are classified as visually impaired or partially sighted). Outfield players are **B1**, but must wear eye-patches and blindfolds. The goalkeeper is sighted, but cannot leave the area. There are no offside rules. The football contains ball bearings to produce a noise when it moves.

Seven-a-side football consists of players from the **C5, C6, C7** and **C8** divisions, rated according to limb control and co-ordination problems when running.

All classes are comprised of ambulant athletes, where those in **C5** are least physically able through to class eight who are minimally affected. At least one **C5** or **C6** class athlete per team must play throughout the match. If this is not possible, the team must play with six players. Furthermore, no more than three players from category **C8** are allowed to play at the same time.

Goalball is played by visually impaired athletes and a special rule means there is no need for classification. Participants wear "black out" masks to ensure everyone competes equally.

Judo is contested by visually impaired athletes only. There is no categorisation as competitors are divided by weight in the same way as able-bodied athletes.

The only sign that judo at the Paralympics is different from other top level judo events is the varied textures of the mat, indicating the competition area and zones.

Male athletes who are blind or have a visual impairment compete for the gold medal, and the competition rules follow those of the International Judo Federation.

Powerlifting is open to all athletes with a physical impairment and is classified by weight alone.

Powerlifters competing at the Paralympics have impairments including paralysis, cerebral palsy and lower limb amputation. Both male and female competitors take part in 10 weight classes

Rowing is divided into four boat classes:

LTA4+: A four-person, mixed gender, sweep-oar boat plus cox with sliding seats. Open to athletes with an impairment but who have movement in the legs, trunk and arms. A boat can include a maximum of two visually impaired athletes.

TA2x: A two-person, mixed-gender scull for athletes with trunk and arm movement only.

AM1x: A fixed-seat single scull boat for men. Athletes have full movement in their arms only.

AW1x: A fixed-seat single scull boat for women. Athletes have full movement in their arms only.

Sailing is a multi-disability sport where athletes from the amputee, cerebral palsy, visually impaired, wheelchair and les autres groups can compete together.

There are three sailing classes: the Sonar, which is a mixed three-person crew, the SKUD18, a new two-person class introduced for Beijing, and the 2.4mR event, which is single-crewed.

Competitors are ranked according to a points system where low points are given to the severely impaired and high points for the less impaired. Each crew of three is allowed a maximum of 12 points between them.

Single-handed sailors must have a minimum level of impairment which prevents them competing on equal terms with non-disabled sailors.

Shooters are divided into wheelchair and standing groups.

These divisions are split into six sub-classes, each of which determines the type of mobility equipment the competitor is allowed to use.

SH1: For pistol and rifle competitors who do not require a shooting stand

SH2: For rifle competitors who have an upper limb impairment and require a shooting stand

Swimming is the only sport that combines the conditions of limb loss, cerebral palsy (coordination and movement restrictions), spinal cord injury (weakness or paralysis involving any combination of the limbs) and other impairments (such as Dwarfism and major joint restriction conditions) across classes.

1-10: Allocated to swimmers with a physical impairment

11-13: Allocated to swimmers with a visual impairment

14: Allocated to swimmers with an intellectual disability

The prefix **S** denotes the class for freestyle, backstroke and butterfly. **SB** denotes the class for breaststroke, and **SM** denotes the class for individual medley.

The prefix and class number provide a range of classifications, from swimmers with severe impairments (**S1, SB1, SM1**) to those with minimal impairments (**S10, SB9, SM10**).

In any one class swimmers may start with a dive, or in the water. This is taken into account when classifying an athlete.

Swimmers may have a classification which varies according to their event - for example, it may change between breaststroke and backstroke, according to the effect of their impairment on the event in question.

Volleyball is contested by athletes with a physical impairment and has both a sitting and standing event.

In **sitting** volleyball the court is smaller than standard and has a lower net. Games are contested by athletes with a minimal impairment that prevents them from competing with non-disabled athletes.

Standing volleyball uses a full-sized court and normal height net, and is played by athletes split into three classes according to their impairments.

Basketball is open to wheelchair athletes, whose impairments may include paraplegia, lower limb amputation, cerebral palsy and polio.

Athletes are classified according to physical impairment and are given a points rating **between 1 and 4.5**. **1** equates to the most severe impairment, **4.5** to the least.

Each team fields five players but may not exceed a **total of 14 points** at any given time.

Wheelchair Fencing is open to wheelchair athletes, whose impairments may include spinal cord injuries, lower limb amputation and cerebral palsy.

Athletes competing in this event are split into two classes:

A: Athletes with good balance and recovery, and full trunk movement.

B: Athletes with poor balance and recovery, but full use of one or both upper limbs.

Wheelchair Rugby athletes are classified using a points system, with the most severely impaired athletes being graded at **0.5 points**, rising to **3.5 points** for the least impaired.

Each team is comprised of four players and is allowed a maximum of eight points on court at any one time.

Wheelchair Tennis is played from a wheelchair with two classes: open and quad (impairment in all four limbs). In wheelchair tennis competitions, players are allowed two bounces of the ball, the first bounce being within the bounds of the court.

For more information on the IPC Classification System, please visit the website at

www.paralympic.org/IPC/

If you require information on the DSE 'profiling' system for grassroots sport, please visit the website at www.disabilitysport.org.uk