

IWBF NEW CLASSIFICATION RULES

Frequently Asked Questions

General

What is a Classification?

Classification is the cornerstone of the Paralympic Movement, it determines which athletes are eligible to compete in a sport and how athletes are grouped together for competition.

In Para sports, athletes are grouped by the degree of activity limitation resulting from the impairment. (This, to a certain extent, is similar to grouping athletes by age, gender or weight). The groupings are then allocated points, wheelchair basketball's classification system is based on this points system and ensures all players have an equal right and opportunity to be an integral member of a team.

Why is it important that IWBF complies with the IPC classification code?

In 2015 the IPC issued the Athlete Classification Code and International Standards, which aim to ensure Classification processes across all para-sports are fair, transparent and consistent, to be part of the Paralympic movement sports must sign up to this Code and make sure their rules are aligned to the IPC's.

The creation of new rules and the sport to remain as part of the Paralympic movement.

It is the responsibility of IWBF to ensure that high standards of classification remain for the sport of wheelchair basketball with a fair and transparent Classification system that meets the IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards.

The review of the Classification Rules is not only to make sure IWBF align with the Code and become compliant, but also to strengthen Classification System, by introducing further robust regulations, research and new effective processes to ensure the integrity throughout the Classification in the sport is maintained

When do the new rules take effect?

The new IPC compliant rules take effect on the 1st October 2021

What changes have been made to the Classification Rules?

The new Classification Rules have been modified to align to the 2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards therefore a number of new processes and procedures have been added to ensure compliance.

All Players must be assessed to have an Eligible Impairment for Wheelchair Basketball according to the 2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code and the IPC's International Standard for Eligible Impairments.

A new Minimum Impairment Criteria has been created that now covers all 7 Eligible Impairments.

What will change immediately when the new rules take effect?

All Players with a current IWBF assessed compliant underlying health condition with move to Transition Review, and will undergo the new stage 2 and 3 assessments when they travel to their next IWBF sanctioned competition.

All new players will be required to go through the new 3 stage assessment process and pass, before they can compete an IWBF sanctions event.

Why are people allowed to still compete until December 2022, if they don't meet the MIC?

We wanted to ensure that a transition plan was in place to complete the MIC assessment process of all international players in a timely manner and to ensure there was time for players to have transitional plans in place through their NOWB, if they do not meet the MIC.

The transition provision is until 31 December 2022 to allow that the integrity of the qualification process for the 2022 World Championships was maintained and that it did not impact the qualification zonal tournaments for Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

How was the MIC developed and why is it necessary?

IWBF commissioned the Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport at Loughborough University, who are world renowned for their work in Paralympic sport and classification, to undertake a research project to develop an evidence base for the MIC.

To be compliant with the IPC Code, a sport has to have a set of Minimum Impairment Criteria in their classification rules which describe how severe an Eligible Impairment must be for an athlete to be considered eligible to compete in their chosen sport. These are defined on the basis of scientific research, which assess the impact of impairments on the sport's activities. As sports require different activities, the minimum impairment criteria are therefore specific to each sport.

The research project, whose aim is to validate a new set of MIC's for wheelchair basketball, saw the highest ever response rate in a study regarding para-sport classification in the first round of the Delphi Study, a response rate which has continued to remain high throughout the process. The members on the Expert Panel range across wheelchair basketball, sport science, medicine, players across all classifications, Para sport Classifiers, well as covering all four zones.

What is the new assessment process to determine eligibility and sports class allocation?

In the future Player Classification will take place in three stages:

Stage 1 – A player is assessed to have an Eligible Impairment for wheelchair basketball by submitting medical evidence to a panel ahead of attending a IWBF Competition and proceeding to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – A player must be assessed against the MIC and undergo functional tests in a non-competitive environment to allocate a Sport Class.

Stage 3 – A player will be observed in training and competition to confirm an allocated a Sport Class.

If I have been re-assessed by a Classification panel and my sports class changes, when will it take effect?

If your sport class is changed in the evaluation process this will change immediately at the end of the competition

Do these new rules apply to Commonwealth Games too?

Yes, the IWBF rules apply to all sanctioned competition.

Does that mean all nations across the world will need to develop the same system domestically?

No not necessarily, as all NOWB's sanction their own domestic competitions and can create their own rules and polices for their competitions.

When will this be reviewed, and how can I be involved in the future development of MIC?

The new MIC, is based on the scientific evidence and the research available, it is a starting point for IWBF. IWBF are committed to further research over the next 5-10 years to review and refine the development of the MIC used to determine player eligibility, as well as proactively ensuring that the Classification Rules reflect the latest scientific research.

Player**If I have already been assessed by the IWBF eligible panel, and received confirmation that I have an eligible impairment what happens to me now?**

From 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2022 if you are a named player at an IWBF sanctioned competition usually 3 days before event starts you will undergo a Classification Player Evaluation Assessment. The process is of the Player Evaluation is detailed in the IWBF Classification Manual.

What happens if I don't meet the Minimum Impairment Criteria (MIC) during my Classification Player Evaluation assessment?

At the end of the assessment the Classifiers will explain their decision. You then have the right to request a second panel to conduct a second MIC assessment.

If the second Classification Panel also find you do not meet the MIC, your Sport Class Status will change to Sport Class Status Confirmed (Transition) (CT), and you will be able to complete in IWBF sanctioned competitions up until December 2022. From the 1st January 2023 onwards you will be no longer allowed the complete in IWBF sanctioned competitions and will move to Sports Class Non-Eligible.

Were Players consulted when developing the MIC?

Yes, as part of the Delphi study conducted by Loughborough University a number of players across different classifications were a part of the expert panel of 48.

In addition to this Erica Gavel, member of the IWBF Athlete Steering Committee, was a part of the Steering Group for the Delphi study.

If I have already had my eligibility impairment confirmed, when will I undergo the second part of the Player Evaluation Process (Stage 2 & 3)?

All international wheelchair basketball players will be required to be reassessed against the new MICs at international wheelchair basketball competitions that take place after the 1st October 2021.

To ensure all players are reassessed in this time period, IWBF are committed to increasing the number of Classifiers and Classification Panels at all competitions to allow for all players to have the opportunity to be re-assessed in the transition period that ends on 31 December 2022.

Classifiers and Classification Panels**What are the plans to re-train international classifiers to ensure that new assessment process is applied consistently?**

IWBF have created and invested in a new online training platform for International Classifiers, to ensure that all Classifiers are able to complete distance learning of modules that can be done remotely on the changes to Classification.

This will be supplemented by face-to-face practical training ahead to ensure that all are capable and understand

The practical training will be rolled out in a systematic manner and further information regarding the opportunities for the reorientation training will be made available to all NOWBs.

What is the pathway to becoming an international IWBF Classification?

To become an International Classifier for IWBF you must be proposed by your NOWB and meet a number of criteria as specified in the How to Become an International Classifier on the IWBF website.