



Para athletes with Vision Impairment Classification Fact Sheet

What is Classification?

Classification provides a structure for competition.

Athletes competing in Paralympic sports have an impairment that leads to a competitive disadvantage in sport. Consequently, a system is in place to minimize the impact of impairments on sport performance and to ensure the success of an athlete is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus.

In Paralympic sport, the grouping of athletes by the degree of their activity limitation resulting from impairment is called “classification”. Through classification, it is determined which athletes are eligible to compete in a sport and what class an athlete is grouped together for competition.

Who is Eligible to be a Para- Athlete with Vision Impairment?

Athletes must have a condition that leads to one or more of the following impairment:

- Impairment of the eye structure/receptors
- Impairment of the optic nerve/optic pathways
- Impairment of the visual cortex

The athlete’s impairment must be in both eyes and measured with the best eye with best corrected vision and must meet the following minimal eligibility criteria:

- Visual acuity is less than or equal to LogMAR 1.00 (6/60 vision) and/or
- Visual field that is less than a diameter of 40 degrees (20 degree radius)

Which Paralympic Sports include Athletes with Vision Impairment?

Paralympic Summer Sports

Athletics
Cycling
Equestrian
Football 5 aside
Goalball
Judo
Paratriathlon
Rowing
Sailing
Swimming

Paralympic Winter Sports

Alpine Skiing
Nordic Skiing

When is an Athlete Classified?

Classification takes place before competitions by a panel of classifiers specializing in visual impairment assessment. During the evaluation process, classifiers follow the Classification Rules of the specific International Sport Federation.



Levels of Classification:

Provisional Classification

Provisional classifications are temporary classifications allocated to an athlete and are valid until such time the athlete can be classified by a classification panel (National Classification).

Provisional classifications may be allocated to an athlete for a specific sport in one of, but not limited to, the following situations:

- At a national event where a classification panel is not available
- As a national entry level for athletes new to the sport to give a guideline as to their eligibility for Para sport.

Provisional classifications are allocated by a classifier on receipt of a Visual Impairment Medical Diagnostic Form which is obtained off the PNZ website: www.paralympics.org.nz

A provisional classification may be subject to change upon formal classification assessment by the sports specific classification panel.

Athletes may be eligible for medals but will not be eligible for records.

National Classification

A national classification is a sport specific classification carried out by a trained national classification panel. The classification process is the same process administered by the International Federation and outlined in the section below: "How is an Athlete Classified".

A national classification is generally offered at national sport events where medals and records can be allocated to those athletes with a national classification.

International Classification

An International Classification is allocated to all athletes reporting to an International Competition for the first time. Once an athlete has received a confirmed international classification they will not need to be classified again unless there is a change of medical condition.

How is an Athlete Classified?

An athlete is classified by a formal evaluation process by trained sport specific classifiers. Classifiers for athletes with vision impairment are vision specialists and may include those who are an Ophthalmologist, Optometrist or Orthoptist.

Prior to the commencement of classification evaluation an athlete must sign a consent form. The athlete will then undergo a variety of assessments of the eyes and the appropriate competition sport class will be allocated according to the extent of the activity limitation resulting from the impairment.

There is no cost to a classification

Each Para sport that is inclusive of athletes with a visual impairment may have just one class for visual impairment or three, as below.

Competition Classes for Athletes with a Visual impairment

<input type="checkbox"/> B1	Visual Acuity is poorer than LogMAR 2.60. May have some light perception but unable to see shape of hand at any distance
<input type="checkbox"/> B2	Visual Acuity ranges from LogMAR 1.50 to 2.60 inclusive; and/or a Visual Field that is constricted to a radius of 5 degrees. (up to 2/60 vision)
<input type="checkbox"/> B3	Visual Acuity ranges from LogMAR 1.40 to 1.0 inclusive; and/or a Visual Field constricted to a radius of 20 degrees, (2/60 to 6/60 vision)
<input type="checkbox"/> NE	Visual Acuity less than LogMAR 1.0; and/or Visual Field greater than or equal to 40 degrees diameter.

What Does an Athlete Need to Bring to Classification?

- An athlete must present to the classification venue at least 10 minutes before the scheduled time
- An athlete can be accompanied by one support person; a coach, parent or other.
- Appropriate sports gear must be worn to classification
- Athletes must bring all best optical correction equipment
- A copy of the Medical Diagnostic Form and recent and relevant medical documentation will be required to verify eligible impairment.

Code of Conduct

Athlete

All athletes will sign a consent form prior to classification to indicate their willingness to be classified and confirm their agreement to provide full cooperation throughout the classification process.

Support Personnel

Athletes are entitled to have a support person attend classification and on occasion, where appropriate may be asked for information by a classifier. They shall not disrupt the classification process in any way.

Classifier

All classifiers will comply with the Code of Conduct outlined in the International Sport Federation Rules and Regulations.

For further information on classification contact:

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