

CLASSIFICATION

Information for Athletes

What is Classification?

In sport, classification exists so that athletes compete in fair and equal competition. Most sports have simple classification systems that group athletes according to age, gender or weight. In Paralympic Sport, the wide range of disabilities and different sports available creates unique classification systems.

Paralympic classification is an assessment process that groups athletes according to how their disability impacts on their sport. Athletes compete against others with similar disabilities, so that the athletes who succeed do so on the basis of athletic performance

Classification is not required for general participation in sport and recreation.

Do I need to get classified?

If you are competing against others with a disability in para-sport you will generally need to hold some form of classification. Each event will advise of what level of classification is required as part of the event entry process.

How do I get classified in Australia?

In Australia, there are many opportunities available for athletes to access Australian National Classification. Early classification assists athletes to **set goals** and **assess their own performance** against standards or records set by other athletes of the same class.

Classification in Australia is conducted in line with International Classification Rules and aims to give athletes as accurate an opinion as possible of their international classification. Classification must be a formal assessment process in order to ensure accuracy and fairness to all.

There are **two levels** of National classification that can occur in Australia:

Australian National Classification. National Classification is a sport specific face to face assessment identical to the one used at International competition. This may involve physical testing, testing of sport specific skills, and often observation of sport performance.

Australian Provisional Classification. This process has been designed for those athletes who live in remote areas, or do not have access to a full sport specific classification panel. It provides athletes with an indication of their classification for their sport. This process may occur where a local health professional provides the required assessments for a certified classifier to allocate a provisional classification. All provisional classifications are an indication only, valid for 12 months. A Provisional Classification should only be allocated where a face to face classification cannot be done.

An athlete may generally participate at club, school level or local competition with a provisional classification. A provisional class is generally not valid for state or national competition. Athletes with provisional classification are not eligible for national rankings and records or national team selections.

What happens during classification evaluation?

Prior to commencement of any classification process, you will be required to read and sign an Athlete Consent Form.

Classification generally includes the following steps:

- **Examination** – Assessment of impairment (physical, intellectual or vision)
- **Pre-competition assessment** – Assessment of event specific skills. eg running & jumping, swimming strokes, ball skills, snow-skiing (Physical impairment only)
- **Review in competition** – Observation and Assessment of sports specific movement in competition. (Physical impairment only)

What do I need to bring?

All Athletes:

- Must present themselves at the Classification Centre **at least 15 minutes before** the allocated time on the classification schedule.
- Can be accompanied by one **athlete representative (parent, coach or other)**.
- Must be appropriately **dressed in clothing worn for training for their sport**. Swimmers need to wear their swimwear.
- Must bring **Assistive devices** needed for competition. This includes sport prostheses, splints, strapping and performance equipment eg competition chairs/frames. Athletes with a vision impairment must bring visual aids (eg glasses, sunglasses) whether used in competition or not.
- Must bring any **medical documentation** relevant to the classification.
 - -For those with a **vision impairment** you will need to bring a letter from your treating ophthalmologist confirming your diagnosis and a copy of your last vision assessment results. If you have previously received an IBSA card you should also bring this with you
 - -If you have a **physical impairment** (mild Cerebral Palsy; brain injury; incomplete spinal cord injury, mild spina bifida or an uncommon medical condition) you will need to bring a letter from your specialist stating your diagnosis, and what the physical signs are.

What does it cost?

There is no cost for classification.

What is expected of athletes?

Athletes must cooperate at all times to the best of their ability with the classification process. You are expected to behave in an honest, courteous and sportsman-like manner at all times. If you fail to do so, you will not be allowed to compete in para-sport.

Athletes should well informed about all elements related to classification procedures, as well as the **Codes of Conduct**, outlined in the Classification Rules relevant to your sport.

What is expected of the parent / coach / supporter?

Parents or sports staff who attend classification with an athlete:

- Are expected to behave in a courteous manner at all times and to respect the decision of the classifiers
- Are able to observe, but not participate in the classification evaluation
- Are welcome to ask appropriate questions

What should be expected of classifiers?

Classifiers should treat you in a manner that is professional, courteous and safe at all times. Classifiers must treat athletes and coaches with respect at all times, to support a cooperative and courteous classification process. They should provide you with sufficient information to understand the process, the decision, and the opportunities for protest or clarification. All information obtained during classification will be kept confidential.

What if I do not agree with my classification?

If you disagree with a National Classification, the usual process would be to contact Paralympics Australia or your national Sports federation who will work with the Australian Head Classifier for the Sport. Any classification reviews would usually be done at the next classification event.

If you disagree with a Provisional Classification, the usual process would be to present for a face to face classification assessment. Provisional classification, while endeavouring to be an accurate indication of class, is a general guide only and may change upon face to face assessment by a full classification panel

Where do I go for further information?

Organisation	Contact Details
Paralympics Australia	Website: www.paralympic.org.au Phone: + 61 2 9704 0500 Email: classification@paralympic.org.au