

Para-Canoe Information Sheet

About the Sport

Para-canoe made its first appearance at the Paralympic Games at the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games.

Para-canoe races are contested by two types of boat, kayak (K) and va'a (V). The kayak is propelled by a double-blade paddle, while the va'a is an outrigger canoe which has an ama (second pontoon) as a support float and is used with a single-blade paddle. Para-canoe races are individual events and are competed at a distance of 200m.

Who can compete?

Para-Canoe is open to athletes with a physical impairment. Athletes are required to submit medical reports and meet the minimum impairment criteria in order to compete.

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Loss of limbs	Partial or complete absence of bones or joints due to amputation or deficiency from birth	Leg: Loss of one leg below the knee or shortened leg of the same length.
Muscle weakness/ Impaired muscle power	Muscle weakness or paralysis from conditions such as muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, nerve damage, spinal cord injury or other spinal condition	Leg: Loss of strength in a hip, knee, ankle that impacts canoeing.
Restricted joint movement/ Impaired passive range	Restricted movement or tightness in a joint/s from conditions such as joint fusions and other restricting conditions.	Joint movement restriction in hi, knee or ankle that impacts canoeing

Para-Canoe Sport Classes

Class	Examples (Guide Only)
Kayak Classes	
KL1	Athletes paddle and balance the boat with their arms and shoulders only. They have minimal control of their torso and legs. Athletes use strapping and high backrests to provide support and stability in the boat.
KL2	Athletes paddle and balance with their arms and torso. They have limited use of their legs.
KL3	Athletes have an impairment in one leg. Athletes are able to sit forward in the Kayak and are able to paddle by driving with their legs and hips.
Va'a Classes	
VL1	Athletes who paddle and balance the boat with their arms and shoulders only. Athletes will typically paddle with a quick release strap around the trunk to secure them in position.
VL2	Athletes have an impairment that affects their torso and legs. Paddlers have decreased balance in the boat and paddle exclusively with their arms and torso.
VL3	Athletes have an impairment in their legs only, and use their torso and arms to drive the paddle.
Not Eligible (NE)	Athlete does not meet the minimum criteria for the Para-sport classes, but may still be able to compete. Contact Paddle Australia for more information.

Find out more

To get involved or for more information contact:

Paddle Australia

W: www.paddle.org.au

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P: +61 2 8116 9727

Note: The classification information provided is intended as a guide only. Only authorised classifiers are able to provide a formal classification in accordance with the rules of the sport. Not all classes have events at the Paralympic Games.