

Para-Alpine Skiing Information Sheet

About the Sport

Athletes in alpine skiing events must combine speed and agility while racing down the slopes at speeds of approximately 100km/h. Alpine skiing events were introduced at the first Paralympic Winter Games in Sweden, in 1976 and today, there are five events on the program.

The rules of the International Ski Federation (FIS) are used with only a few modifications. Skiers with a vision impairment are guided through the course by sighted guides using voice signals to indicate the course to follow. Athletes with a physical impairment use equipment that is adapted to their needs including single skis, sit-skis or orthopaedic aids.

The traditional ski- disciplines are held including the Downhill, Super-G, Slalom, Giant Slalom and Super Combined.

Who can compete?

Para-alpine Skiing is open to athletes with a physical or vision 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.	Arm: Loss of fingers to the extent that the athlete is unable to hold a ski pole. Leg: Loss of one foot through the ankle.
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. Arm: Loss of strength in a shoulder or elbow.
Co-ordination impairments - Hypertonia, Ataxia, Athetosis	Impairments from neurological conditions such as acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis that affect co-ordination and smoothness of movement and balance.	Co-ordination or movement difficulties in at least one arm or leg.

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 at least one shoulder, elbow, hip, knee or ankle.
Leg length difference	Significant difference in leg length due to a deficiency at birth or trauma.	The difference must be at least 7cm between both legs.
Vision Impairment	Impairment of the eye structure, optic nerves or pathways, or vision area of the brain, resulting in a loss of vision in both eyes. Caused by conditions such as albinism, macular degeneration, macular or cone rod dystrophy and retinitis pigmentosa.	Visual acuity loss in both eyes (how far they can see) with best corrected vision. Vision is less than or equal to 6/60 (log MAR 1.00); or Visual field restriction in both eyes (how wide they can see) of less than 40 degrees diameter with best corrected vision.

Para-alpine Skiing Sport Classes

Sport Classes	Description (Guide Only)
Athletes with Vision Impairment - All athletes use a sighted guide	
B1	Skiers who are blind.
B2	Skiers who have very low vision in both eyes either in how far they can see (visual acuity <2/60; LogMAR 1.5-2.6 inclusive) or how wide they can see (visual field <10 degrees diameter).
B3	Skiers who have low vision in both eyes, but more vision than B2 athletes. Vision is affected either in how far they can see (visual acuity <6/60; LogMAR 1-1.4 inclusive) or how wide they can see (visual field < 40 degrees diameter).
Athletes with a Physical Impairment – Standing classes (LW=Locomotor Winter)	
LW1	Skiers with a significant impairment in both legs, such as double above-knee limb deficiency. Most skiers in this class use two skis, and two outrigger ski poles for balance. Skiers used two skis, 2 poles/outriggers.
LW2	Skiers with a significant impairment in one leg. They use only one ski and two outrigger ski poles.
LW3	Similar to skiers in LW1, these skiers have an impairment in both legs but to a lesser degree, such as double below-knee limb loss. Athletes use two skis and two poles.
LW4	Similar to skiers in LW2, LW skiers have an impairment in one leg. However, they are able to use two skis and two poles.

LW5/7	Skiers have an impairment in both arms, some athletes have amputations and others have limited muscle power or co-ordination. They race without using any ski poles and use their torso and legs to assist them to turn and balance.
LW6/8	Skiers with an impairment in one arm. They race with one ski pole.
LW9	Skiers with an impairment in at least one arm and one leg. Skiers use either one or two skis and one or two ski poles or outriggers, depending on their preference.
Athletes with a Physical Impairment – Athletes who compete in sit-skis	
LW10	Skiers with minimal or no stability in their torso, who use their arms and shoulders to maneuver and balance their ski.
LW11	Sit skiers with good control in their upper torso, but with limitations in their lower trunk and hips. Skiers are able to balance without their outriggers when upright and use their arms and upper torso to lean hard in to the course turns.
LW12	Sit skiers with good control of their full torso who have an impairment in one or both of their legs. Skiers have good balance in their sit ski and can use their torso to drive hard and fast turns, and manage the changes in terrain in the course well. Skiers with leg impairments in classes LW1 to LW4 may also be eligible to compete as LW12 athletes.
Not Eligible	
Not Eligible (NE)	Skier does not meet the minimum criteria for the Para-sport classes but may still be able to compete. Contact Snow Australia for more information.

Find out more

To get involved or for more information contact:

Snow Australia

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P: 03 9696 2344

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 may have events at the Paralympic Games.