



Chapter 1.3 – IPC Classification Code: Models of best practice, choice of sport class for athletes with multiple (eligible) impairments

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International Paralympic Committee

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The impairment and activity limitation of some athletes may fit more than one sport class profiles of a Sport. This is the case if
 - 1.1.1 An Athlete exhibits multiple impairments of different impairment categories, i.e. physical impairment, visual impairment and/or intellectual impairment (referred to as “multiple impairment categories”), or
 - 1.1.2 An athlete in IPC Athletics, IPC Alpine Skiing or IPC Nordic Skiing has a physical impairment which would make him or her eligible for sport classes in different sport class categories (sitting/ standing).

2 Assumptions

- 2.1 Although an athlete may be eligible for two or more sport classes, it is understood from the IPC Classification Code that an Athlete may only hold one sport class at a time in a certain sport. Therefore an athlete who is eligible for more than one sport class is required to choose a sport class.
- 2.2 Moreover, athletes with multiple impairment categories can only be offered a sport class from the existing classification system. As most sports do not offer sport classes that consider more than one impairment category, e.g. a sport class for athletes with impaired muscle power and intellectual impairment, athletes with multiple impairment types are required to make a choice which of their impairments should be considered in classification.
- 2.3 It is also understood that multiple impairment categories need to be assessed separately by Classification panels with the respective expertise.
- 2.4 The discussion on multiple impairment categories refers only to athletes with two or more eligible impairments, as these are defined by the IF. If an athlete has an eligible impairment in combination with a non-eligible impairment, such as an impairment of the hearing function, the athlete will only be assessed on the basis of his or her eligible impairment.



3 Procedure

- 3.1 If an athlete has multiple impairment categories, and is not sure which impairment category he or she should choose to be assessed for, the athlete will be given the opportunity to be assessed in respect of multiple impairment categories.
- 3.2 In such cases, the NPC is required to inform the IF about an athlete's multiple impairment categories at the time of athlete registration and to submit medical diagnostic information for all impairment categories. The athlete and the NPC then choose a competition of the respective sport where classification for all applicable impairment categories is offered. The athlete undergoes athlete evaluation in respect of all applicable impairment categories and is required to choose one of the sport classes allocated to him or her at the end of the Physical and Technical Assessment. The other sport class will not be recognised by the IF.
- 3.3 If following Observation in Competition the Athlete is found Non-Eligible for the Sport Class choice resulting from 3.2, the Athlete will be entitled to consider the other eligible impairment category, but no earlier than at the next classification opportunity.
- 3.4 If an athlete with physical impairment would be eligible for two sport class categories (sitting/standing), the athlete is required to choose a sport class at the end of the Technical Assessment (prior to eventual Observation in Competition).
- 3.5 In the decision-making of choice of sport class, applicable sport-technical rules must be considered and adhered to (e.g. use of equipment, weight of implements, use of guides in classes for athletes with physical impairment).
- 3.6 Once the Athlete has been allocated a sport class, the Athlete may only change to another sport class either
 - Once at the end of the year or season (whichever applicable) after the year or season when the athlete's first classification was conducted or
 - After the close of the Paralympic Summer or Winter Games (whichever applicable), and before the start of the next season hereafter.
- 3.7 In any case a motivated request for choice of a different sport class must be addressed to the IF. The application must be submitted to the IF at the moment of renewal of the annual License (end of first trimester of the season).
- 3.8 Apart from the above opportunities, an athlete may always request a change in sport class by a Medical Review request, if his or her impairment or impairments have changed since the last Athlete Evaluation.



4 Rationale

- 4.1 With this policy the IPC Classification Committee follows the approach of the classification systems that only one impairment type is regarded at a time. Moreover, the Committee seeks to restrict the opportunities of athletes to choose between two or more sport classes, so that a choice of sport class is not done for tactical reasons.
- 4.2 At the same time, it is acknowledged that there may be valid reasons for an athlete to change sport class, for example if one of the impairments is progressive or if the athlete would feel more comfortable competing under the conditions of the other sport class (e.g. in a seated position, with a guide for athletes with visual impairment). There is also a possibility that an athlete has been competing in a certain sport class, and acquires an additional impairment thereafter.

5 Transition rules

- 5.1 For athletes assessed prior to this policy taking effect, such review request (3.4-3.5) is due by the date of renewal of licenses for the season following the date the policy takes effect (deadline is the last day of the first trimester of the new season)