

IWRF Classification Rules 2021

Summary of Changes

The IWRF Classification Rules (January 1st, 2021) represents a complete revision and reformatting of our existing rules, and has been completed in order to achieve the following objectives:

1. Ensure that the IWRF continues to work towards and maintains full compliance with the IPC Classification Code and International Standards.
2. Adopt the IPC Model Rules format which reduces ambiguity and uses consistent language throughout.
3. Incorporate ad hoc procedures that have been developed since the last Rules revision into our current rules.

In early 2021, there will be 2 separate Classification documents governing classification that will come into effect:

1. **The IWRF Classification Rules** – contains rules governing who is eligible to compete in wheelchair rugby and how we perform the athlete evaluation process in order to allocate an athlete's sport class and sport class status. This document will replace the current IWRF Classification Manual. The current draft version of the new Classification Rules is provided for your information along with this summary.
2. **The IWRF Classifier Handbook** – contains the detailed information on processes and procedures regarding how we complete different elements of the athlete evaluation process, convene classification panels, develop and certify classifiers, manage classification during tournaments and other classification management and administration procedures. The current draft version of the new Classification Handbook provided for your information along with this summary.

The remainder of this document aims to summarise the most significant changes to the IWRF Classification Rules, with specific reference to the section of the rules where these changes are described. The IWRF will advise its members in writing of any further additions or changes made to these draft rules prior to the official release of these rules.

This document is intended to be used as a guide to assist you in navigating the new IWRF Classification Rules by highlighting any significant changes in comparison to the outgoing rules. In all instances, the IWRF Classification Rules (January 1st, 2021) will be considered as the definitive document.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the enormous amount of work that has been required to complete these new Rules and is that is continuing through the final stages of completing the Handbook. This would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Anne Hart, supported by the IWRF Classification Committee and a number of other senior IWRF Classifiers. Thank you. This would not have been possible without you.

Greg Ungerer
IWRF Head of Classification
1st October, 2020

Section of Rules	Subject	What is new or changed
1 Page 9	General Provisions	This section covers the scope and application of the Rules. Reference is made to the fact that these rules should be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the IPC Classification Code.
2 Page 11	Roles and Responsibilities	All participants in the athlete evaluation process have responsibilities. This includes the athlete, any athlete support personnel, and classifiers. Please note that failure to comply with requirements of the process can result in sanctions, for any participant in the process.
3 Page 13	Classification Personnel	There are no significant changes here.
4 Page 15	Classifier Competencies, Training and Certification	Provisions for the new Technical Classifier panel members (previously called “athlete classifiers”) is included here. This content is covered in more detail in the Classification Handbook.
5 Page 17	Classifier Code of Conduct	There are no significant changes here. The IWRF Code of Conduct applies to all IWRF Officials.
6 Page 18	General Provisions	There are no significant changes here.
7 Page 18	Eligible Impairment	In early 2018, the IWRF published a list of eligible impairments for Wheelchair Rugby. These now appear in the new Rules and they are listed in Appendix 1.
	7.4 Assessment of Eligible Impairment	Athletes are required to demonstrate that they have an eligible impairment type resulting from an eligible health condition in order to undergo classification. If the athlete cannot demonstrate that they have an eligible impairment type or an eligible health condition (through submission and evaluation of medical diagnostic information), then classification cannot be completed.
	7.5 – 7.9 Medical Diagnostic Information	<p>Athletes will be required to provide medical diagnostic information in order to demonstrate that they have an eligible underlying health condition. This mandatory step will be through the completion of a Medical Diagnostic Information form, which will need to be submitted to the Head of Classification (HoC) a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the tournament where the athlete will make their first appearance, along with any additional medical or supporting evidence they can obtain. Medical Diagnostic Information, in the first instance, will be examined by the HoC. If the HoC is unable to make a decision regarding eligibility, the HoC will refer the information to an Eligibility Assessment Committee (comprising at least 2 experts with appropriate medical qualifications). Athletes cannot proceed to Classification unless they pass this step. We ideally want all of this to occur prior to a tournament, rather than having to manage assessment of medical diagnostic information during a tournament.</p> <p>The Medical Diagnostic Information form will contain prompts regarding the type of medical diagnostic information that is desirable for each impairment type.</p>
8 Page 21	Minimum Impairment Criteria	Please note the provisions contained in 8.8 regarding athletes who have multiple sub-minimal impairments. Athletes must meet the prescribed minimum impairment criteria for at least one eligible impairment type.

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9 Page 23	Sport Class	The IWRF is adopting a number of changes to the way in which we describe sport class status, in order to be consistent with the IPC Classification Code. These are discussed in the following sections.
10 Page 23	Classification Not Completed (CNC)	Classification Not Completed (CNC) will be used in any situation, where a classification panel is unable to complete a classification process on an athlete. Examples could be insufficient medical diagnostic information, failure to attend classification when scheduled, inconsistent presentation of impairment during classification, failure to cooperate fully during any part of the classification process. CNC is not a sport class and is not subject to the provisions of Protests. This will replace NC (not classifiable/non-cooperative), which was used under our previous rules.
11 Page 25	Classification Panels	The significant change to this section is the addition of further provisions for the new Technical Classifier position.
12 Page 25	Classification Panel Responsibilities	There are no significant changes here.
13 Page 26	Evaluation Sessions	Athletes will be required to have an identification document to demonstrate their identity (passport or National identity card). Provision is included here for the Classification Panel to create or use video footage, photographs and/or other records to assist in allocating a sport class.
14 Page 28	Observation in Competition (OA)	During a tournament, when a panel requires an athlete to be observed in competition for the purposes of confirming their sport class, a tracking code of OA will be used to designate this. (our previous practice was to use Review (R) sport class status for this purpose).
	14.5.1 – 14.5.3 First appearance	First appearance refers to an athlete having sufficient court time in order for a panel to confirm the allocated sport class. In general terms, athletes who enter a tournament as a new (N) athlete will need to complete first appearance PRIOR to completion of the preliminary rounds (or by the end of pool play) of a competition. If N athletes do not complete First Appearance prior to this time, then they will not be permitted to compete after the preliminary rounds are completed. This same provision does not apply to athletes who entered the tournament with a previous valid IWRF sport class (for example FRD 1 or FRD 2).
	14.6.4 Changes in Sport Class	Any changes in sport class upon completion of first appearance are effective immediately. This provision may not apply to athletes subject to a protest following allocation of a sport class. See Appendix 1, Section 9.23 for further information regarding timelines for protest decisions taking effect.
15 Page 29	Sport Class Status	The IWRF is adopting new sport class status descriptors in order to better align with the IPC Classification Code. These are described in this section.
	15.3 Sport Class Status New (N)	N sport class status is allocated to athletes prior to the athlete attending their first Evaluation Session. If an N athlete fails to make first appearance at that tournament, then the athlete is allocated CNC and does not have a sport class and sport class status (previously, they would have left with a sport class from bench testing and (R) status)
	15.4 Sport Class Status Confirmed (C)	Confirmed (C) sport class status will replace our current Permanent (P) status. The requirements for achieving (C) sport class status remain unchanged from the criteria for achieving (P) status.

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	15.5 Sport Class Status Review (R)	<p>(R) sport class status will be used when a classification panel believes that further evaluation sessions will be required, due to issues such as athlete inexperience, fluctuating or deteriorating impairments, athlete not yet reached full musculo-skeletal maturity. It is also used when an athlete is due for classification during an event (FRD athlete or protested athlete).</p> <p>NEW RULE: If an athlete enters a tournament with (R) sport class status, and this is not able to be resolved at the tournament for any reason, the athlete will have a 2 year time period to complete the required further evaluation. After 2 years, the (R) status will convert to CNC, and the athlete will no longer have a valid sport class and sport class status. The classification process for these athletes will need to commence from the beginning again.</p>
	15.6 Sport Class Status Review with a Fixed Review Date (FRD)	FRD 1 and FRD 2 will replace our current I(1) and I(2) sport class statuses. The time period of no less than 11 months between evaluations still applies. However, we have included a clause in 15.6.2 that gives the IWRF some discretion in being a flexible with dates in certain circumstances, to accommodate requirements for certain events (for example to ensure consistency is applied across all Zonal Championships).
16 Page 33	Multiple Sport Classes	Does not apply to the IWRF
17 Page 33	Notification	There are no significant changes here.
18 Page 34	Sport Class Not Eligible (NE)	<p>There are 2 scenarios where sport class NE will be used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Absence of Eligible Impairment (we call this the big NE) – the athlete does not have an eligible impairment, or an eligible underlying health condition. No further action is possible in this situation. There is no protest opportunity. 2. Athlete does not meet the minimum impairment criteria for their eligible impairment type (we call this the little NE). Athletes who fail to meet the minimum impairment criteria will be offered an automatic evaluation by a second panel at the first available opportunity.
19 Page 36	Scope of a Protest	There are no significant changes here.
20 Page 36	Protests	<p>There are significant changes detailed in this section regarding how protests are managed. Please read this section carefully. A protest may only be made by either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A National Member Organisation (NMO) 2. IWRF <p>Protests can be made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Out of competition 2. During competition <p>Acceptance of any protest is at the discretion of the IWRF HoC or the Chief Classifier at a tournament. Acceptance is based on the merit of the protest given the reasons and evidence submitted (this is NOT a fundamental change to current practice). Protest fees are payable for all protests.</p>

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		<p>Protest panels can access any and all written documentation from previous athlete evaluations (previous classifications) of the athlete (this is a change from current practice). Regardless, protest panel members are still not permitted to discuss the protest with other classifiers who were part of a panel that allocated a previous sport class.</p> <p>The 3 protest limit (per athlete) has been removed.</p> <p>Protests can be initiated following the athlete's technical assessment (this is a change – previously, athletes had to wait until observation assessment was complete and the sport class was posted). However, there are risks associated with doing this, including a risk that an N athlete may not have time to make first appearance for the new evaluation in the preliminary rounds of competition.</p>
21 - 22 Page 36	National Protests	<p>A NMO may only protest athletes that are under their jurisdiction (athletes from their own country). To be dealt with during the same competition where the protested class is awarded, protests made during competition must be submitted within 1 hour of publication of classification results.</p> <p>We have discretion to alter these timelines at tournaments where communication may be more challenging (see section 28) NMO may not directly protest athletes from other Nations. They must request an IWRF Protest (see below).</p>
23 – 24 Page 39	IWRF Protests	<p>The IWRF may protest any athlete under its jurisdiction at any time if it believes, for whatever reason, that the athlete has been allocated an incorrect sport class.</p> <p>An NMO can also request that the IWRF launch an IWRF protest on an athlete who is not under the jurisdiction of that NMO (athlete from another country). Requesting an IWRF protest does not mean the IWRF must proceed with a protest if there is not compelling evidence presented.</p> <p>This procedure also replaces the current Protest Under Exceptional Circumstances, that is required for athletes who have P sport class status (C sport class status in the new rules).</p>
25 Page 41	Protest Panel	<p>In general terms, no more than one protest on an athlete will be permitted at the same competition (this is a change) – but there is one exception to this detailed in 25.7.1</p>
26 Page 42	Provisions Where No Protest Panel is Available	<p>There are no significant changes here.</p>
27 Page 42	Special Provisions for Protests	<p>We have added provisions to allow certain athletes to be classified at an event where they are not competing. This will only apply to athletes who are NE (R) – these are athletes who have been seen by one panel and made NE (due to failure to meet the minimum impairment criteria) and are awaiting automatic review by a second panel. The intent of this provision is that an NE athlete wanting to pursue their right to an automatic evaluation by a second panel could travel to a location where an IWRF panel is present in order to have this second evaluation completed. Logistically, this may be at a competition where the athlete is not rostered to compete.</p>
28 Page 43	Ad Hoc Provisions Relating to Protests	<p>There are no significant changes here. This section deals with the timeframes for protest submission within a tournament, and includes provisions for a variety of tournament formats.</p>

Section of Rules	Subject	What is new or changed
29 Page 44	Failure to Attend Evaluation Session	There are no significant changes here.
30 Page 44	Suspension of Evaluation Session	The provisions of this article apply to situations where the athlete is unable or unwilling to comply with the requirements of the classification panel. If the athlete is New, they will not be allocated a sport class. If the athlete has an existing sport class, it will be removed, and the athlete designated CNC. Sanctions may apply in certain situations.
31 Page 46	Medical Review	The Medical Review is for athletes who have a change in the degree or nature of their impairment that impacts on their ability to perform the activities characteristic of their current sport class. This replaces the current Protest Under Exceptional Circumstances. Medical Review requires submission of medical diagnostic information and will be assessed in the same way as previously described. This does not apply to the effects of aging. A Medical Review may also be required if an athlete has a procedure that is designed to improve performance (for example botulinum toxin injections, surgeries such as tendon or nerve transfers) Failure to notify regarding these types of procedures could result in a charge of intentional misrepresentation and subsequent sanctions.
32 Page 48	Intentional Misrepresentation	It is important to note that charges of intentional misrepresentation may apply to both athletes and support personnel. Sanctions apply to these charges if successfully proven.
33 Page 50	Classification Data	There are no significant changes here.
34 Page 50	Consent and Processing	There are no significant changes here.
35 Page 50	Classification Research	Now included in the Athlete Evaluation Agreement (consent form).
36 Page 51	Notification to Athletes	There are no significant changes here.
37 Page 51	Classification Data Security	There are no significant changes here.
38 Page 51	Disclosures of Classification Data	There are no significant changes here.
39 Page 52	Retaining Classification Data	There are no significant changes here.
40 Page 52	Access Rights to Classification Data	There are no significant changes here.

Section of Rules	Subject	What is new or changed
41 Page 53	Classification Master Lists	There are no significant changes here.
42 Page 54	Appeal	There are no significant changes here.
43 Page 54	Parties Permitted to Make and Appeal	There are no significant changes here.
44 Page 54	Appeals	There are no significant changes here. The outcome of an appeal process cannot be a change in an athlete's sport class. Appeals only deal with procedural issues relating to the allocation of a sport class (see Comment Article 44 for more detail)
45 Page 55	Appeal Decision	There are no significant changes here.
46 Page 55	Confidentiality	There are no significant changes here.
47 Page 55	Application During Major Competitions	There are no significant changes here.
Appendix 1 Page 66	Figure 1 Athlete Evaluation Process	Pictorial representation of the assessment process for athletes (new)
	Section 1 Page 68 Eligible Impairment Types	This section describes the IWRF's eligible impairment types with examples of common underlying health conditions.
	Figure 2 Page 70 Minimum Impairment Criteria and Athlete Evaluation	Flow chart representation of assessment of minimum impairment criteria and athlete evaluation (unchanged from current rules). Added new descriptions and photos of different grasp types which are described Added detailed explanations of each part of the process in determining whether an athlete meets the minimum impairment criteria.
	Figure 3 Page 74 Athlete Evaluation Pathway	Pictorial representation of the IWRF Athlete Evaluation Pathway
	Section 2 Minimum impairment criteria	We still have impairment types where we have not yet described the minimum impairment criteria: Athetosis/Ataxia/Hypertonia (HAA) – research underway, minimum impairment test has been developed. In the meantime, we will continue to use the major/minor criteria to assist in determining eligibility for this athlete population.

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	Page 75	Impaired Passive Range of Movement – not developed yet, and we are yet to scope this further. In the meantime, we will continue to use the major/minor criteria to assist in determining eligibility for this athlete population.
	2.11 Assessment Methodology – Impaired Muscle Power Page 77	There are no significant changes here.
	Table 1 Page 79 Impaired Muscle Power Upper Limb	There are no significant changes here.
	Table 2 Page 80 Impaired motor power upper limb – Polyneuropathies or Distal Myopathies	Our current sport class muscle power profiles were developed many years ago for athletes with spinal cord injury. In recent years, we have seen an increasing number of athletes who have hereditary degenerative polyneuropathies such as Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease (CMT). These athletes present with subtle differences in the patterns of muscle weakness, so based on reviews of all of these athletes in the database, we have developed a modified version of the muscle power profiles for this athlete group. This does not present a fundamental change to our system, rather it is a clarification for classifiers, so there is better guidance and less ambiguity for this group of athletes.
	2.13 Page 81 Trunk tests	There are no significant changes here.
	Figure 4 Page 92 Trunk impairment score flow chart	Added explanatory notes to this flow chart that makes it less ambiguous and open to interpretation by classifiers.
	Table 3 Page 82 Trunk Tests and Assessment	There are no significant changes here.
	2.14 Page 94 Limb deficiency	This section is a placeholder for the Limb Deficiency impairment measurement procedure, to be implemented after the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021 (draft circulated as a separate document)
	2.15 Page 95 Co-ordination – HAA	This section is a placeholder for the future HAA impairment measurement procedure, yet to be developed.

Section of Rules	Subject	What is new or changed
	2.16 Page 96 Passive Range of Movement	This section is a placeholder for the future HAA impairment measurement procedure, yet to be developed.
	Section 3 Page 97 Assessment for Allocation of Sport Class and Sport Class Status	There are no significant changes here.
	Table 4 Page 100 Sport Specific Activities in Technical and Observation Assessment	List of activities that are used during the technical and observation assessments.
	Table 5 Page 101 Major and Minor Criteria Description and Scoring	There are no significant changes here.
	Section 4 Page 102 Observation Assessments – Descriptions and Scoring of Sport Specific Activities	This is a new addition to the Rules and Handbook, that contains greater detail regarding the observation of sport-specific activities when performing player evaluations. There are separate sections for Wheelchair Activities and Ball Activities.
	Section 5 Page 113 Sport Class Characteristics	References other Appendix sections
	Section 6 Page 114 Classification of Athletes with previous IWRF sport classes	This was previously a published procedure but was has not been included in our rules until now. The purpose of this section is to ensure that an athlete's sport class does not unnecessarily change within a tournament.

Section of Rules	Subject	What is new or changed
	Section 7 Page 115 Procedure for athlete who are NE due to not meeting minimum impairment criteria	<p>This is the detailed procedure for managing athletes who are not eligible due to not meeting the minimum impairment criteria. There are different procedures for athletes who have been allocated an NE sport class by a Type A or a Type B panel. It expands on the procedures described in article 18.</p> <p>Please note we have included provisions for these athletes to be included on a team roster for a competition in order to facilitate the automatic review (7.1.11). This evaluation can also occur at another location (7.1.12).</p> <p>This does not mean that the athlete can compete or take the court at any time during a competition while their sport class is NE. See the rest of this section for details of reinstating the previous sport class if the NE decision is overturned (7.4 and 7.5)</p>
	Section 8 Page 121 Classification Panels and Panel Types	<p>There are changes planned for panel composition rules as follows:</p> <p>Type B International Panels will be permitted to classify any athletes eligible for classification at an event (currently, Type B panels can only classify N status athletes).</p> <p>N status athletes will remain the highest priority for this panel type. FRD 2 athletes will be the lowest priority for this panel type.</p> <p>Type B panels cannot deal with protests lodged during a tournament (for example, the protest of a sport class allocated by that panel).</p> <p>For athletes who are awarded NE sport class by a Type B panel, the automatic review cannot be dealt with at the same tournament.</p>
	Section 9 Page 124 Management of Protests Protest Panels Resolving a protest	<p>There are no planned significant changes to our current panel composition requirements for protest panels or the management and resolution of protests during a tournament, other than those changes mentioned previously.</p> <p>Please read this appendix in detail.</p>
Appendix 2	Section 1 Page 133 Non-eligible impairment types	<p>This is a list (not all inclusive) of health conditions that we cannot take into consideration when allocating a sport class.</p>
	Section 4 Page 134 Non-eligible health conditions	<p>This is a list (not all inclusive) of health conditions that are not eligible underlying health conditions. Of note: pain syndromes (we have seen these in some athletes), conversion disorders, psychiatric conditions.</p>