



# PARA SWIMMING CATEGORY

*CLASSIFICATION RULES & PROCESS*

*FOR SAFETY AND INTEGRITY IN THE ICE*

In force from 1 July 2024

# 1. SWIMMER CLASSIFICATIONS

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. With the growth of Ice Swimming and especially the increasing popularity and appeal of competitions, IISA needs to install a transparent process for identifying athletes with an impairment and classifying them into an impairment category.
- 1.1.2. IISA will use World Para Swimming: <https://www.paralympic.org/swimming/classification> as a guideline for evaluating and classifying PARA category swimmers. However, IISA reserves the right to create its own processes or categories, considering the ice swimming conditions, safety, and size of its PARA swimmer community.

## 1.2. BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1. To safeguard the integrity of fair competition, all Para sports have a system that aims to ensure that winning is determined by sporting factors such as skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability, and mental focus. The same factors that account for success in sports for able-bodied athletes. This system is called classification.
- 1.2.2. The process objective is to determine which athletes are eligible to compete in the sport in the PARA category and how those athletes are then grouped for competition to minimise the impact of their impairments on sports performance.
- 1.2.3. Classification is sport-specific because impairments affect the ability to perform in different sports to a different extent. Therefore, an athlete may meet the criteria to compete in one sport but may not meet the criteria in another sport. An impairment is thus insufficient for an athlete to compete in the PARA category.
- 1.2.4. If IISA does not qualify an athlete as a PARA category, this does not question the presence of a genuine impairment. It is only a ruling on the Athlete's eligibility to compete in the IISA PARA category.
- 1.2.5. To be eligible to compete in the IISA Para category, a person must have an eligible impairment and meet the minimum impairment criteria set out in the World Para Swimming Classification Rules and Regulations.

## 1.3. IISA PARA CLASSIFICATIONS

- 1.3.1. An athlete qualified by IISA to participate under the PARA category will be referred to as "IISA PARA Category."
- 1.3.2. Any athlete wishing to participate in an IISA competition in the IISA PARA Category must have an underlying health condition that leads to one of the following permanent eligible Impairments:
  - **Visually Impaired "PARA VI"** - Athletes with Vision Impairment have reduced or no vision caused by damage to the eye structure, optical nerves or optical pathways, or visual cortex of the brain. Examples of Underlying Health Conditions that may lead to Vision Impairment include retinitis pigmentosa and diabetic retinopathy.
  - **Intellectually Impaired "PARA II"** - Athletes with an Intellectual Impairment have a restriction in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour, which affects conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills required for everyday life. This Impairment must be present before the age of 18

- **Hearing Impaired “PARA HI”**- Athletes who have a recognised, according to international standards, minimum hearing loss of 55db averaged over 500/100/2000 hertz in the better ear (without a hearing aid). Any hearing aid is prohibited at all times while swimming.
- **Physically Impaired “PARA PI”**- Athletes with Impaired muscle power, impaired passive range of movement, limb deficiency, leg length difference, short stature, ataxia, and athetosis.

- 1.3.3. The groupings of athletes by the degree of activity limitation resulting from their impairments are called ‘Sport Classes’ and are like grouping athletes by age or gender for competition purposes.
- 1.3.4. The Classification is carried out through “athlete evaluation,” which comprises procedures for assessing athletes and allocating Sport Class and Sport Class Status.
- 1.3.5. IISA will refer to Sport Class as PARA in that case and PARA Classification as Sport Class Status.
- 1.3.6. The IISA Classification status and its validity period will be decided on the day of confirmation by the IISA Para Committee.
- 1.3.7. As of **01.09.2024**, all Para swimmers must submit documentation to affirm their IISA Para classification.

## 1.4. CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

- 1.4.1. IISA Members requesting PARA classification with an impairment with classification status must email the required medical diagnostics form to the IISA Para Committee with the relevant medical documentation in English.
- 1.4.2. IISA Members requesting classification for IISA PARA Swimmer) must send the Medical Diagnostics Form to the IISA Para Committee via email at least eight weeks before the start of the competition
- 1.4.3. The IISA PARA Athletes Evaluation form is on the IISA Website under Rules Documents. [LINK](#)
- 1.4.4. Requests **must have supportive documents to** be considered.

## 1.5. CLASSIFICATION PROCESS- CLASSIFICATION

- 1.5.1. The committee will email an acknowledgement of receipt of the application and confirm they have sent the required accompanying proof for them to be considered for classification.
- 1.5.2. If a swimmer has completed a full para classification process to compete in World Para Swimming or Paralympics competitions (no other sport classification process will apply), and the committee agrees all forms are genuine, the swimmer will be approved at the classification stated.
- 1.5.3. The IISA PARA Committee will initially review and recommend to the committee whether the application should be approved and, if so, which of the four classifications should be approved.
- 1.5.4. The committee will discuss applications and agree on one of three outcomes: ‘Approved’, ‘Requires more information’, or ‘Not qualifying’.
- 1.5.5. Once done, the committee will inform the swimmer of receipt of the committee's decision.
- 1.5.6. The committee will all inform IISA Global to ensure the swimmer’s IISA profile reflects the committee's decision.

## 1.6. APPEALS



1.6.1. If the committee decides that a swimmer is ‘not qualifying’, the swimmer can appeal the ruling within two weeks of receiving notification. The appeals process is as follows:

- Swimmers must inform the IISA Para Committee if they wish to appeal the decision in writing with motivation for the appeal.
- The swimmer will then have the chance to present additional proof and medical documentation to the Para committee within two weeks.
- The IISA Para Committee will review the documents and report their decision to the IISA Global Board, which will decide independently on the appeal.

## 1.7. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PARA ICE SWIMMING

1.7.1. The rules and regulations in detail (eg. exceptions or required assistance etc.) for each sport class and impairment are regulated in the menu “IISA Safety and Swimming Rules” on the IISA homepage: <https://internationaliceswimming.com/iisa-rules/>