

# Classification Policy



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## **Classification System Overview**

The Paddle Australia Paracanoe classification system provides a structure for competition for paddlers with disability. Classification groups athletes according to the impact of their impairment on their ability to compete in the sport of paracanoe. The purpose of classification in paracanoe is to minimize the impact of eligible impairment types on the outcome of competition so that athletes who succeed in competition are those with the best anthropometry, physiology and psychology and who have enhanced them to the best effect. Classification is designed to ensure a fair competition environment at all levels from club through to National Championships.

Paddle Australia, together with its National Classification Partners, will promote and support the implementation of this policy through the sport of paracanoe, ensuring opportunities, development of resources and eligibility requirements are available to the paddling community.

## **Stakeholders in the Classification Policy and their Roles**

### Paddle Australia (PA)

Paddle Australia as the national governing body is responsible for the sport of paracanoe in Australia. PA promotes opportunities for athletes with impairment to participate in paracanoe and supports the paracanoe pathway.

PA supports access to classification for athletes to compete in the paracanoe pathway and manages the classification process for athletes with a physical impairment in Australia.

PA recognizes the following national classification partners with a responsibility for the management of classification in Australia.

### Australian Paralympic Committee (APC)

The APC is the peak body representing Paralympic sport in Australia. As a signatory to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the APC is responsible for supporting classification activities in Paralympic sports and ensuring national classification activities comply to the IPC Classification Code "The Code" and International Standards. Paralympic classification includes athletes with a physical, visual and intellectual impairment where it applies to Paralympic sports.

### State and Territory Associations

State and Territory Associations play a key role in the development and implementation of the Classification Policy at a State and Territory level. Providing information and facilitating access to classification opportunities through State and Territory competition pathways.

## Who this Policy Applies to

This policy applies to all paracanoe athletes internationally and within Australia with a physical impairment and who intend to compete in regattas sanctioned by Paddle Australia.

## Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of the classification policy is to clearly define the procedures of classification adopted by PA and recognizes the role of classification partners. It will ensure the ongoing provision of consistent and sustainable classification within paracanoe nationally.

This policy may be amended from time to time by the decision and endorsement of the PA Board of Directors.

## Classification Policy

1. All Australian paracanoe athletes with a physical, visual, intellectual or hearing impairment should have access to classification opportunities appropriate to their level of competition. (Appendix 1)
2. PA accepts its role in ensuring paracanoe classification is enforced in accordance with national and international standards, as determined by the rules and regulations of the relevant International Federation and national classification partners.
  - 2.1 Paralympic Classification
    - 2.1.1 PA adopts and adheres to the ICF Paracanoe Classification Rules and Regulations for paddlers with physical impairment.
    - 2.1.2 PA acknowledges the APC Classification Policy where it relates to physical impairment classification and agrees to cooperate with the APC in delivery of classification services under the terms of that policy.
    - 2.1.3 PA will only recognize classifications of athletes with a physical impairment that have been conducted by APC certified classifiers in line with the PA classification policy and APC classification policy.
  - 2.2 Other Classifications

### 3. Sport Class Status

- 3.1 Athletes undergo classification at a level suitable for their competition, National or International
- 3.2 In Paracanoe classifications a Provisional classification is also recognized in Australia
- 3.3 The levels of classifications are detailed below

Level	Validity for Competition	Evaluation Process	Conditions
<b>Provisional</b>	Club/Regional/State	Provisional athlete evaluation either remote or where a full classification panel is not present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indication of class only</li> <li>• Valid for 12 months only</li> <li>• Not eligible for records, rankings and team selection</li> </ul>
<b>National</b>	National/Regional/State	Assessment with a recognized assessment panel or classifier recognized by PA or its system partners	Supersedes a Provisional level classification
<b>International</b>	International Competition	Assessment with an international classification panel or process as recognized by the International governing body/Federation	Supersedes a National level classification

### 4. Sport Class Status

- 4.1 A sport class status is allocated to each athlete's classification, which defines the status of his or her sport class.
- 4.2 The following sport class status will apply

Status	Conditions
New	Applies to new athletes that have not been classified t that level of competition

Review	<p>Applies to athletes that have been previously classified by a classification panel but the classification panel requires further review of their class in the future.</p> <p>Athletes may be allocated a review year, which means that the athlete does not need to present for classification until the review year.</p>
Confirmed	<p>Athletes are not required to undergo Athlete Evaluation in the future, except in the case of 1) Change in medical condition of the athlete, 2) Changes in the classification system, 3) Protest by Head of Classification</p>

## 5. National Paracanoe Classification Master List and confidentiality of classification data

- 5.1 PA manages the official master list of paracanoe classifications that have been documented in accordance with this policy. PA is responsible for making public and providing certain classification information to relevant parties such as state canoeing bodies and national classification partners as appropriate for the effective conduct of competition.
- 5.2 Classification data will be stored confidentially, with paper copies kept in locked cupboard and electronic copies stored with a password protection. Classification data may be released to the athlete upon their request. Classification data may not be released to any other party.

## 6. International Classification

- 6.1 International classification is a process carried out by authorized international classifiers in accordance with the rules of the respective International Federation
- 6.2 PA in cooperation with the APC will manage all aspects of the ICF Classification requirements for identified athletes in paracanoe sport classes (athletes with a physical impairment)
- 6.3 PA in cooperation with the APC will support the preparation of international classification for identified athletes in the paracanoe sport classes (athletes with a physical impairment)

## 7. Dispute Resolution Process

- 7.1 PA will facilitate resolution of disputes relating to classification outcome and/or the evaluation process in consultation with classification partners and in accordance with the relevant classification policy, rules and regulations described in this policy for ICF sport classes.
- 7.2 A protest is a formal objection to an athlete's sport class and/or sport class status. Protests can only be considered when formally lodged in writing in accordance with the appropriate eligibility guidelines or regulations.
- 7.3 An appeal refers to a procedure by which a formal objection to the manner or process in which classification procedures has been conducted. Appeals will only be considered where this is formally lodged in writing to PA and the classification partner.
- 7.4 PA adopts and adheres to the APC Classification Standard (Protests and Appeals) for athletes with a physical impairment.
- 7.5 All disputes directed to PA will be treated as confidential; parties to the dispute will not disclose information relating to dispute or the proceedings to any person or entity outside those directly required to assist in the resolution which may include but is not limited to:
  - Athlete and their appointed representative
  - Certified Classifiers
  - PA employees
  - Classification Partner representatives
  - Sport, medical or scientific consultant engaged for the purpose of the dispute resolution
  - Legal counsel

**APPENDIX 1**

**Classification Pathway**

