

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>Governance</b>
TITLE:	Athlete Classification Policy
AREA:	Paracanoe
RESPONSIBILITY:	
RELATED POLICIES:	
DRAFTED BY:	
DATE APPROVED:	
APPROVED BY:	Paddle Australia
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## PREFACE

Athlete Classification is a defining feature of Para-sport, which forms the competitive structure of Para-Sport competition from entry level competition through to the Paralympic Games. The International Paralympic Committee (**IPC**) Athlete Classification Code and IPC Classification Standards (collectively referred to as the “**IPC Code**”) is the fundamental document on which classification in the Paralympic movement is based.

In accordance with the IPC Code, classification in Para-sport:

1. defines who is eligible to compete in Para-sport; and
2. groups athletes into sport classes according to how much their impairment affects fundamental activities in each specific sport or discipline.

The classification processes of each Para-sport share common features, however, the classification process is sport-specific.

A list of definitions and abbreviations is provided at the end of this policy.

## 1. POLICY PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Paddle Australia Athlete Classification Policy (Classification Policy) is to:
  - Provide a clear statement on the purpose of Classification in Paracanoe
  - Set out the position, role and responsibilities of Paddle Australia with regards to classification, as the member of the International Canoe Federation (**ICF**) and in accordance with the IPC Code, the IPC Model of Best Practice for National Classification and Paralympics Australia Athlete Classification Policy;
  - Set out the requirements of Paddle Australia members and other organisations and individuals engaged by Paddle Australia for classification purposes;
  - Promote and uphold the integrity of Paralympic sport.
- 1.2 This document shall be read in conjunction with the IPC Code, IPC Code of Ethics, PA Classification Policy and Classification Standards and any other relevant NSO/NSOD Policy.
- 1.3 In the event that this policy fails to provide for a matter covered by a provision in the IPC Code, the provision appearing in the IPC Code shall apply and be regarded as being part of this Classification Policy.

## 2. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
  - Paddle Australia employees, contractors and volunteers
  - Selected Athletes and Appointed Officials of Paddle Australia Teams

- Paddle Australia Member and state organisations, the Paralympics Australia members state organisations, Paddle Australia athletes and athlete support personnel
  - Any other organisations or individuals engaged by Paddle Australia for Classification purposes.
- 2.2 Paddle Australia will only recognise classification activities that are conducted within the scope of this Classification Policy. This Classification Policy does not apply to events offered by Paddle Australia athletes with impairments that sit outside of the IPC Code and the ICF rules.

### 3. PARALYMPIC CLASSIFICATION GOVERNANCE

- 3.1 The IPC is the global governing body of the Paralympic movement, responsible for the IPC Code, models of best practice and monitoring the IPC Code compliance of its members.
- 3.2 Paralympics Australia is the National Paralympic Committee (**NPC**) for Australia and the NPC member of the IPC. Paralympics Australia is required, as a condition of its membership of the IPC, to comply with the IPC Code and to ensure that national classification rules conform with the IPC Code.
- 3.3 The ICF, as a member of the IPC is required to comply with the IPC Code and to recommend that its national bodies comply with the applicable provisions of the Code.
- 3.4 The ICF is responsible for the development and implementation of classification systems in Paracanoe including:
- Selecting the IPC eligible impairments that are included in their sport;
  - Setting processes and procedures for assessing whether an Athlete has an Eligible Impairment;
  - Setting Minimum Impairment Criteria for each Eligible Impairment;
  - Determining Sport Classes based on the extent to which Athletes are able to execute the specific tasks and activities fundamental to Paracanoe;
  - Setting relevant procedures for International Level Classification Personnel and Training;
  - Defining processes for the management of International Level Protests and Appeals;
  - Outlining International Federation related Data Protection procedures;
  - Managing international level investigations, of alleged misconduct and allegations of Intentional Misrepresentation.
- 3.5 Paddle Australia as a condition of its membership of Paralympics Australia is required to:

- Abide by the Paralympics Australia Athlete Classification Policy and promote its adoption through its network, to support classification governance and compliance with the IPC Code;
  - Take such actions and provide all reasonable support and assistance as PA requires in order to comply with its obligations under the IPC Code, and to support integrity in classification.
- 3.6 The delivery of classification services for Paracanoe in Australia is the responsibility of Paddle Australia unless otherwise agreed by the ICF, Paralympics Australia, Paddle Australia and Sport Australia.

## 4. CLASSIFICATION INTEGRITY AND SAFEGUARDS

- 4.1 Paddle Australia adopts an inclusive approach and equally recognises Paracanoe within its structure, systems, people and pathways.
- 4.2 Participation in Paracanoe should be safe and inclusive for all. Paddle Australia is committed to ensuring that all people in Paracanoe, and more specifically in classification, are treated with respect and dignity and are protected from bullying, discrimination, harassment, abuse or physical or psychological injury.
- 4.3 Classification is an athlete-centred process and is to be conducted by all involved parties in a manner that protects and supports each Athlete's physical and psychological wellbeing.
- 4.4 Classification works best when Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel and Classification Personnel work cooperatively towards a common outcome of determining the most accurate Sports Class for all athletes.
- 4.5 Paddle Australia is committed to an Australian classification system that is safe, supportive, and friendly for children and young people. Paddle Australia adopts state and territory child protection legislation (including mandatory reporting obligations) and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in its classification policies and procedures.
- 4.6 Athletes have the right, and are encouraged, to choose one person to support and accompany them through any classification process (**Athlete representative**). If the Athlete is under 18 years or has a legally appointed guardian this is mandatory. If the Athlete requires an interpreter (eg language other than English or Auslan), the interpreter will be permitted to accompany the Athlete in addition to the Athlete representative.
- 4.7 As with the delivery of any sport operation, classification carries with it an inherent level of risk. Paddle Australia is committed to a national classification system that proactively identifies, assesses and minimises risks that could negatively impact the National classification strategy, reputation, compliance, finances and/or people.
- 4.8 Intentional Misrepresentation

- 4.8.1 Intentional Misrepresentation (**IM**) is a deliberate attempt by an Athlete or Athlete Support Personnel (either by deed or omission) to mislead a Para-sport organisation or anyone else regarding the existence or extent of the Athlete's skills and/or the nature of their eligible impairment. Intentional Misrepresentation may occur prior to or during Athlete Evaluation and/or at any point after the allocation of Sport Class.
- 4.8.2 IM includes circumstances where an Athlete or Athlete support person:
- submits false and/or fraudulent medical diagnostic information as a part of the classification process, or withholds relevant medical documentation that may have an impact on the classification process;
  - attempts to deceive the classification panel during Athlete evaluation by misrepresenting the Athlete's skills and/or abilities and/or the degree or nature of impairment;
  - deliberately presents at Athlete evaluation in a way that is inconsistent with their usual presentation in competition;
  - fails to make a medical notification as to a change in circumstances that may impact upon sport class allocation;
  - knowingly assists, covers up, is involved in any type of complicity involving IM or disrupts the Athlete evaluation process with the intention of deceiving or misleading the classification panel.
- 4.8.3 Athletes and/or Athlete support personnel may be subject to disciplinary actions if found guilty of IM offenses under the IPC Code, IF classification rules, Paralympics Australia Athlete Classification Policy; Paddle Australia Classification Rules and/or Paddle Australia Competition Manipulation and Sports Wagering Policy. Investigations and any subsequent disciplinary and reporting procedures follow the Paralympics Australia Classification Standard: Intentional Misrepresentation.
- 4.8.4 Any sanctions that are applied to Athletes or Athlete Support Personnel in relation to IM by the IPC, ICF or Paralympics Australia are recognised by Paddle Australia across all levels of Paracanoe.

## 5. PARALYMPICS AUSTRALIA ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Paralympics Australia is expected to:

- 5.1 Lead Australia with integrity and represent national classification interests to the IPC, IFs and Oceania Paralympic Committee;
- 5.2 Collaborate with other NPCs in the best interests of the development of global classification strategy;
- 5.3 Develop and support the implementation of an inclusive national classification system in accordance with the IPC Code. Paralympics Australia is expected to modify the

- specifications in the IPC Code where these are not practical in an Australian sporting environment;
- 5.4 Develop policy for and provide support to Paddle Australia to comply with the IPC Code;
  - 5.5 Monitor compliance, and address non-compliance, of its members with the Paralympics Australia Athlete Classification Policy;
  - 5.6 Develop policies and procedures with respect to classification for Selected Athletes and Appointed Officials of Paralympic Teams;
  - 5.7 Develop generic classification resources and education to support its members in the delivery of any classification systems;
  - 5.8 Cooperate with any classification investigations initiated by the IPC or any IF; and
  - 5.9 Initiate classification investigations based on sound evidence and support its Members with the management of such processes.

## **6. PADDLE AUSTRALIA ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Classification is integral to the delivery of Paracanoe competition. Paddle Australia will conform with the ICF Classification Rules as much as is practical. Paddle Australia adopts an inclusive approach and adheres to its roles and responsibilities in Paracanoe classification by way of:

### **6.1 Governance**

- 6.1.1 Recognising Paralympics Australia in its role of leading the strategic objectives and national governance of Classification for Para-sports in Australia;
- 6.1.2 Developing and implementing Paddle Australia specific Classification Rules, an athlete classification pathway, other classification policies and procedures relevant to Paracanoe that align with Paralympics Australia Athlete Classification Policy;
- 6.1.3 Clearly outlining the expectations of Paddle Australia members, athletes, athlete support personnel, classification personnel and any other persons or organisations engaged by Paddle Australia;
- 6.1.4 Report on Paddle Australia classification program activities and acquit any funding provided by Paralympics Australia on request; and
- 6.1.5 Consider risks associated with Classification within the Paddle Australia risk management framework.

### **6.2 Classification System**

- 6.2.1 Implementing, as closely as possible, the classification system that is defined by the ICF, including the adoption of:
  - The eligible impairments permitted to compete in Paracanoe;
  - The processes and procedures for assessing whether an Athlete has an eligible impairment (Eligibility Assessment);
  - The Minimum Impairment Criteria and assessment methods;

- The Sport Classes and Sport Class Status; and
- The Athlete Evaluation processes and assessment methods.

### 6.3 Delivery of Classification Opportunities

6.3.1 Establishing a classification pathway that is appropriate to the standard of competition at which an Athlete competes and deliver classification opportunities accordingly.

### 6.4 Classification Personnel and Training

6.4.1 Appointing a number of key Classification Personnel, including but not limited to classification administrators and classifiers, in accordance with the Paralympics Australia Classification Standard: Classification Personnel and Training. Classification Personnel have a key role in the organisation, administration and delivery of Classification for Paddle Australia and their members,

6.4.2 Establishing and delivering a transparent system for the recruitment, education, training, certification and re-certification of Paracanoe Classifiers.

6.4.3 Classifiers are recognised as part of the Paddle Australia officials program ensuring that provisions, insurances, training opportunities and terms of engagement exist for classifiers as they do for other Paddle Australia officials.

6.4.4 Professional conduct standards that all Classification Personnel must comply with are outlined in the Paddle Australia Classification Rules. These standards comply with the IPC Code of Ethics and are in accordance with the Paralympics Australia Classification Standard: Classification Personnel and Training.

6.4.5 Paddle Australia has within its Classification Rules (and/or other relevant rules) procedures for reporting, investigating and subsequent disciplinary action as a result of violation with the standards outlined in Article 6.4.4.

### 6.5 Safeguards and Integrity

6.5.1 Safeguards specific to child safety practices and legislation requirements are adopted in Paddle Australia classification policies and procedures and are expected to be understood and practised at all levels of the sport. Any Paddle Australia classifier or classification personnel who interact with children under 18 years must hold a valid Working with Children Check.

6.5.2 Informed and appropriate measures are taken to ensure that all classification activities are practiced in a manner that protects the physical and psychological health of Athletes and all of the parties to Paddle Australia Classification activities.

6.5.3 Paddle Australia will comply with local public health advice and review any health risks associated with the delivery of classification activities. Classification will be implemented in accordance with standard infection control procedures and relevant state and national work health and safety legislation.

6.5.4 Systems and safeguards are in place to protect all people involved in classification services. Any classification related disputes or member protection issues are managed through the Paddle Australia Member Protection Program.

#### 6.5.5 Protests and Appeals

- (a) Protest processes are outlined in the Paddle Australia Classification rules in accordance with the Paralympics Australia Classification Standard: Protests and Appeals. A protest is the procedure by which a reasoned objection to an Athlete's Sport Class is submitted and subsequently resolved.
- (b) Appeal processes are outlined in the Paddle Australia Classification rules, in accordance with the Paralympics Australia Classification Standard: Protests and Appeals. An Appeal is the process to resolve Classification procedural disputes.
- (c) National Level Classification Appeals are referred to the National Sports Tribunal in accordance with National Sports Tribunal legislation.

#### 6.5.6 Intentional Misrepresentation

- (a) Procedures on the management of Intentional Misrepresentation are outlined in the Paddle Australia Classification rules in accordance with the Paralympics Australia Classification Standard: Intentional Misrepresentation.
- (b) In accordance with the PA Classification Standard: Intentional Misrepresentation:
  - a. Classification intelligence, allegations, investigations and disciplinary proceedings relating to athletes competing in International Level competitions follow the processes outlined by ICF.
  - b. National Level Intentional Misrepresentation is deemed to be Competition Manipulation under the National Integrity Framework and will be managed by Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) in accordance with Paddle Australia's Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy.
- (b) Paddle Australia recognises, respects and enforces any sanction imposed on an Athlete or Athlete support person for IM as notified by the IPC, an IF, SIA or any other authorised body in accordance with the Paddle Australia Classification Rules.

#### 6.5.7 Classification Intelligence Gathering and Investigations

- (a) Procedures regarding the management Classification intelligence, are outlined in the Paralympics Australia Classification Standards: Intentional Misrepresentation and Classification Data Protection. All sources of classification intelligence are protected.
- (b) Paddle Australia will cooperate and encourages the cooperation of all of its members with any classification investigative process.

### 6.6 Paddle Australia High Performance program

Paddle Australia:

- 6.6.1 Expects all High Performance Athletes and Personnel will abide by the ICF classification rules and the requirements for the participation of Athletes in international level competition;
  - 6.6.2 Will conduct screening and proactively plan for international classification opportunities for Athletes once they are nominated to high performance and talent programs and as required for the qualification for Paralympic Games and other benchmark events;
  - 6.6.3 Will provide education for all team members on their classification roles and responsibilities including, but not limited to, any applicable Codes of Conduct; and
  - 6.6.4 Provide proactive support structures and processes to minimise risk and support the maintenance of wellbeing for Athletes and staff undertaking International level classification.
- 6.7 Data Storage and protection
- Paddle Australia ensures that lawful processes are in place for collection, processing, storage, use and retention of personal and classification data. These processes and procedures are in accordance with the Paralympics Australia Classification Standard: Classification Data Protection.
- 6.8 Classification Masterlist
- The Classification masterlist of all Australian athletes who have been classified for Paracanoe at a national and international level, including the athlete's name, sex, year of birth, state, sport class and sport class status is published on the Paddle Australia website.
- 6.9 Classification Education and Awareness
- 6.9.1 Paddle Australia will provide Classification resources and education activities for Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel, Paddle Australia member organisations and any other relevant stakeholders (media, spectators) for all levels of their sport pathway including:
    - Classification pathway and processes for their sport;
    - Eligible impairment types for their Para-sport;
    - The IPC Code, Paralympics Australia Classification Policy and Standards and relevant ICF and/or Paddle Australia Classification rules;
    - Athlete, athlete support personnel and classification personnel rights and responsibilities; and
    - Classification integrity and intentional misrepresentation information.
  - 6.9.2 Paddle Australia is committed to the involvement of Athletes in the development and delivery of such education and awareness programs.
- 6.10 Classification Research and Innovation

- 6.10.1 Paddle Australia will support the ICF, and promotes active contribution from Paddle Australia members, in the development of the ICF classification system.
  - 6.10.2 Any research conducted or participated in by Paddle Australia must comply with nationally recognised ethical standards and research practices.
  - 6.10.3 Paddle Australia will work collaboratively with Paralympics Australia for the continuous improvement of classification activities in their sport.
- 6.11 Changes to Classification Systems
- 6.11.1 Paddle Australia will integrate changes made to the ICF classification systems as soon as possible after the change is made and will align any changes as closely to the IF system as is practical.
  - 6.11.2 Paddle Australia will provide appropriate notice to Athletes and other stakeholders of anticipated changes to the classification system and any other change(s) that might impact on Sport Class allocation. Notice will include a rationale for change, the proposed timelines for implementation, any transition rules and processes for feedback as applicable.
  - 6.11.3 Paddle Australia will notify Paralympics Australia of classification system changes and any other change(s) that might impact on Sport Class allocation with the details of the changes proposed, the proposed timelines for implementation and transition rules. Paralympics Australia will be provided an opportunity to submit feedback, prior to implementation of any changes.
  - 6.11.4 Education and wellbeing supports are available to Athletes and athlete support personnel who are affected by changes in Classification rules.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATHLETES AND OFFICIALS OF PADDLE AUSTRALIA TEAMS**

The roles and responsibilities of Paddle Australia Team members include:

- 7.1 Conducting themselves in a manner that is consistent with the Paralympics Australia Classification Policy, Paddle Australia Code of Conduct, IPC Code and IPC Code of Ethics;
- 7.2 Adhering to their responsibilities outlined in the ICF and Paddle Australia Classification Rules; and
- 7.3 Participating in Team member training or education as required by Paddle Australia.

## **8. CONDITIONS**

- 8.1 Paddle Australia will support and monitor the compliance of its members to meet the conditions of the Paralympics Australia Classification Policy and Standards.

- 8.2 On request by Paddle Australia, Paddle Australia members must report on compliance with this Classification Policy. Explanations for any non-compliance must be included.
- 8.3 Subject to the approval of the Paddle Australia Board, the following sanctions may be applied to Paddle Australia members who are non-compliant with this Classification Policy:
- Withholding some or all funding or support;
  - Suspension of Paddle Australia membership;
  - Exclusion from Paddle Australia events; and/or
  - Reporting the Paddle Australia member to Sport Australia (where the organisation is recognised by Sport Australia).
- 8.4 Disciplinary action may be taken against individuals who breach the terms of this Policy.

## 9. PROVISION

- 9.1 Paddle Australia will appoint a person who will be responsible for monitoring progress, implementing this Policy and for providing advice to the CEO, Paddle Australia Board and Paddle Australia's Members on its implementation.

## 10. DEFINITIONS

<b>Appeal:</b>	The means by which a complaint that a sports federation has made an unfair decision during the Classification process is resolved.
<b>Athlete:</b>	A person who participates in Para-sport at the international, national or local level.
<b>Athlete Evaluation:</b>	The process by which an athlete is assessed in accordance with the classification rules, so that they may be allocated a sport class and sport class status.
<b>Athlete Support Personnel:</b>	Any individual who supports an athlete, including but not limited to coaches, team staff, medical or para-medical specialists, interpreters, administrators, carers and parents/legal guardians.
<b>Classification:</b>	Grouping athletes into sport classes according to the extent to which their impairment affects the fundamental activities in each specific sport or discipline.
<b>Classification Personnel:</b>	Any individuals who act with the authority of Paddle Australia for any component of the classification program in their sport.

<b>Classifier:</b>	A person authorised as an official by an IF or NSO/NSOD to evaluate Athletes as part of a classification panel.
<b>Eligible Impairment:</b>	A physical, intellectual or vision impairment, designated as being a prerequisite for competing in Para-sport, as designated by the IPC Code.
<b>International Sport Federation (IF):</b>	The International Sport Federation (IF) recognised by the IPC as the sole world-wide representative of a sport for athletes with an impairment that has been granted the status of a Para-sport by the IPC.
<b>IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards (IPC Code):</b>	The IPC Code is the document which details the purpose of classification, policies and procedures that should be common to all sport's classification systems and sets principles to be applied by all sports within the Paralympic Movement. The IPC Code is supplemented by the International Standards.
<b>National Integrity Framework:</b>	A suite of integrity-related policies promulgated by Sport Integrity Australia which include the National Integrity Framework, the Competition Manipulation and Sports Wagering Policy, and the Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy.
<b>National Sport Organisation (NSO)/National Sport Organisations for people with Disability (NSOD):</b>	The national sporting organisation recognised by PA and Sport Australia for the delivery of Para-sport within Australia.
<b>National Sports Tribunal (NST):</b>	The National Sports Tribunal established by the <i>National Sports Tribunal Act 2019 (Cth)</i> .
<b>National Sports Tribunal legislation:</b>	The <i>National Sports Tribunal Act 2019 (Cth)</i> , the <i>National Sports Tribunal Rule 2020 (Cth)</i> and the <i>National Sports Tribunal (Practice and Procedure) Determination 2021 (Cth)</i> .
<b>Paralympics Australia Classification Standards:</b>	The Paralympics Australia Classification Standard published by Paralympics Australia from time to time.
<b>Paralympics Australia Member:</b>	Member organisations of Paralympics Australia (who pay an annual membership fee and have a right to vote at the Paralympics Australia Annual General Meeting) under the Company's constitution.
<b>Para-sports:</b>	All sports for athletes with a physical, intellectual or vision impairment, on a Paralympic Games program, or recognised by the IPC.

<b>Protest:</b>	The procedure by which a reasoned objection to an Athlete's sport class is submitted and subsequently resolved.
<b>Sport Integrity Australia:</b>	Sport Integrity Australia, a non-corporate Commonwealth entity established by the <i>Sport Integrity Act 2020 (Cth)</i>

## 11. RELEVANT POLICIES, CODES AND STANDARDS

- [IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards](#)
- [IPC Classification Code Model of Best Practice - National Classification](#)
- [IPC Code of Ethics](#)
- [PA Classification Standard - Eligible Impairments](#)
- [PA Classification Standard - Athlete Evaluation](#)
- [PA Classification Standard - Protests and Appeals](#)
- [PA Classification Standard - Classification Personnel and Training](#)
- [PA Classification Standard – Classification Data Protection](#)
- [PA Classification Standard – Intentional Misrepresentation](#)
- [Paddle Australia Code of Conduct](#)
- [Paddle Australia Privacy Policy](#)
- [Paddle Australia Member Protection Policy](#)

To view all Paddle Australia policies, including those relating to Classification, please visit Policies and Bylaws page on the [Paddle Australia Website](#).

To view all Paralympics Australia Classification policies, please visit the [Paralympics Australia Website](#).