



CLASSIFICATION RULES WHEELCHAIR CURLING

Wheelchair curling should be restricted to individuals with substantial demonstrable impairments in leg/gait function who use a wheelchair for daily mobility and who qualify within eligibility criteria.

The role of classification in wheelchair curling is to determine eligibility to compete.

International classification is undertaken before an Athlete takes part in international competition and is the responsibility of Classification Panel appointed by the World Curling Federation (WCF).

The purpose of classification in Paralympic Sport is to minimise the impact of impairment on the outcome of competition so that the Athletes who succeed in competition are those with the best anthropometry, physiology and psychology and who have enhanced them to best effect, training hard, with quality coaching.

It is intended that the Classification Rules for Wheelchair Curling will be in compliance with the Classification Code to which the World Curling Federation as the governing body was a signatory.

The World Curling Federation will maintain a Classification Master List of Athletes including the Athlete's name, date of birth, country, Sport Class and Sports Class Status.

The Classification Master List is used to identify Athletes that enter international competitions. The WCF makes the Classification Master List available to National Federations and relevant National Paralympic Committees (NPC).

CLASSIFICATION PERSONNEL

Classifiers will be registered medical practitioners or registered accredited physiotherapists/occupational therapist.

The WCF requires to see documentation confirming the professional qualifications of potential classifiers prior to appointment.

Classifiers will work as members of a classification panel which has 2 members so long as the number of classifiers trained for wheelchair curling and their geographical locations allow. There may be an interim requirement for classifiers to work alone at times until the appropriate expansion of classifiers occurs.



A Head of Classification, appointed by the WCF will have overall responsibility for international classification, classifier training and supervision, maintaining secure classification data and regularly updating it and ensuring such records are accurate, and liaising with all relevant external parties such as the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification Committee, IPC Medical and Scientific Department and Organising Committees.

A Chief Classifier is appointed for a specific competition.

This may be the Head of Classification or it may be another fully certified international classifier.

The Chief Classifier will ensure that the classification rules are applied appropriately during a specific competition and that classification facilities are provided at the competition which allow high professional standards to be maintained.

Classifiers will be certified after undergoing training which includes both theoretical and practical aspects and an assessment of required competencies in carrying out classifications and applying the classification rules of wheelchair curling.

CONDUCT OF CLASSIFIERS

The role of the classifier is to act as an impartial evaluator in determining an Athletes eligibility and Sport Class Status. The integrity of Classification in the Paralympic movement rests on the professional conduct and behaviour of each individual classifier. It is important that confidence in the Classification Rules and the Classification Personnel is preserved and developed and that it is based on transparent and agreed standards of practice which define a meaningful set of guidelines for the professional conduct of classification personnel.

Classifiers should value and respect the Athletes and Athlete Support Personnel and treat them with understanding patience and dignity while being courteous, objective, honest and impartial in performing their classification duties.

Classifiers should accept responsibility for all actions and decisions taken and be open to discussion and interaction with Athletes and Athletic Support Personnel in accordance with the International Standards for Athlete Evaluation and the International Standard for Protest and Appeals.

Confidentiality of Athlete information must be maintained whenever possible according to the International Standards for Athlete Evaluation and Protests and Appeals.

Classifiers should respect the Classification Rules.

The Head of Classification shall maintain a list of certified classifiers and the events at which each has undertaken classification duties.



CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE

The Athlete must meet one of the following eligibility criteria to compete in the World Wheelchair Curling Championship, World Wheelchair Curling Qualification events and the Paralympic Winter Games, i.e. to obtain an International Classification.

Athletes with a confirmed classification 'C' prior to the adaption of the 2014 Version of the Classification Rules coming into force will not be require to be re classified.

1. LOSS OF POWER

Loss of power in the lower limbs so that any residual power in the legs is less than a total of 40 out of 80 points. The movements tested are

at the hips – flexion, extension, adduction, abduction

at the knees – flexion, extension

at the ankles – plantar flexion and dorsi flexion

Power will be rated according to the Oxford Scale – 0 - 5. Grade 1 and 2 will be counted as 0.

Examples: Spinal Cord Injury
 Poliomyelitis
 Transverse myelitis
 Spina Bifida
 Polyneuropathy

2. LOWER LIMB DEFICIENCY

Bilateral above ankle amputation

Unilateral hip disarticulation

Unilateral above knee amputation and muscle strength in the other leg of less than 25/40 defined as above

3. HYPERTONIA

Hypertonia in the lower limbs graded using the Ashworth Scale at grade 3 or grade 4 and sufficient to prevent all ambulation or limit it to very short distances indoors

Examples Cerebral Palsy

Hypertonia can be associated with levels of strength in the legs greater than

40/80 even although ambulation is severely limited and therefore it is reasonable to use the level of spasticity as a separate eligibility criterion.



4. INCOORDINATION

Incoordination in the lower limbs, possibly in combination with loss of strength and hypotonia with the objective signs of ataxia so that ambulation is prevented or limited to very short distances indoors.

Example Multiple Sclerosis
 Cerebral Palsy

5. RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT

Severe permanent loss of joint range of 50% or more across 2 or more of the large joints (hip, knee, ankle) in both legs.

Example Arthrogyrosis

6. COMBINATION OF ABOVE IMPAIRMENT

Any combination of above impairment, which is severe enough to confine athlete to wheelchair for daily activity.

THE CLASSIFICATION PATHWAY

When attending for evaluation the Athlete is required to produce:

- Evidence of identity – passport
- Passport sized photograph
- Copies of medical documentation – for instance a report from General Practitioner or hospital giving a summary of the case and where necessary a translation into English.

The WCF may require an Athlete to provide detailed specialist medical documentation and the Chief Classifier has the discretion not to determine eligibility without this documentation. It is the responsibility of the National Federation to ensure that any Athlete whose impairment is the result of a rare or uncommon condition provides supporting specialist documentation in English when presenting the Athlete for evaluation.

Presentation for Evaluation

Athletes must dress appropriately and must bring all equipment including competition or daily use wheelchair, competition or daily use prosthesis or orthoses.

The Athlete may be accompanied by an interpreter and not more than one representative of the Athlete's NPC/National Federation.



If the Athlete has a health condition that produces pain which limits or prohibits full effort during evaluation it may not be appropriate for evaluation to take place at that time. It may be possible to reschedule the evaluation but ultimately the Athlete will not be eligible to compete at international level until such an evaluation is satisfactorily completed.

The Athlete must consent to evaluation by signing a CLASSIFICATION CONSENT FORM to indicate their willingness to be classified and confirm their agreement to provide full effort and cooperation during the classification process.

Physical Assessment

The classification panel should conduct a physical assessment of the Athlete. This will include but is not limited to the examination of motor power, muscle tone, coordination, range of movement and observation of any residual ability to ambulate.

Video footage and/or photography maybe utilised by the classification panel for all classification purposes connected to the competition.

Ineligibility

In circumstances where a Sport Class of Ineligible to compete is allocated by a classification panel the Athlete has the right to be examined again by a second classification panel immediately. If the second classification panel, whose members could not have taken part in the first evaluation confirms the ineligibility the Athlete will not be permitted to compete and will have no further protest option.

Outcome

A member of the Classification Panel will inform the Athlete of the panel's decision. It is expected that this will occur as soon as possible after the decision has been taken.

Written notification must be provided to the Athlete. A WCF Wheelchair Curling Classification Card is completed.

Post competition tasks

The Chief Classifier must complete a post competition report which is forwarded to the Head of Classification. The Head of Classification has the responsibility of updating the Classification Master List after each competition at which classification has taken place.



SPORT CLASS ALLOCATION

In Wheelchair Curling the allocation is either

- Eligible (WC-E)
- Non eligible (WC-NE)

SPORT CLASS STATUS ALLOCATION

Sport class status new (N)

Sport class status new (N) is assigned to an Athlete who has not been previously evaluated by an International Classification Panel.

Sport class status N Athletes include those who have been allocated a sport class by their National Federation for entry purposes.

Sport class N Athletes must complete evaluation prior to competing at World Wheelchair Curling Championships, World Wheelchair Curling Qualification Events or Paralympic Winter Games.

Sport class review (R)

Sport class review (R) status is assigned to an Athlete who has been previously evaluated by an International Classification Panel but for reasons determined by the WCF Head Classifier requires a review of their sport class for example because their condition appears to have changed.

Sport class status R Athletes must complete evaluation prior to competing at World Wheelchair Curling Championships, World Wheelchair Curling Qualification Events or Paralympic Winter Games.

Sport class confirmed (C)

Sport class status of confirmed (C) may only be allocated following evaluation by certified WCF classification panel/classifiers. When a wheelchair curler has confirmed status further evaluation is not required. The status of a confirmed Athlete cannot be protested by another NPC or NF after it comes into effect 24 hours after first appearance at the first international competition following the process of evaluation.



PROTESTS AND APPEALS

Definition – Protest

The procedure by which a formal objection to an Athlete's sports class is made and subsequently resolved.

An Athlete's sports class should generally only be protested once with the exception of Protests in Exceptional Circumstances.

The Chief Classifier may make a Protest in Exceptional Circumstances in respect of any Athlete at any time during or prior to a Competition if the Chief Classifier reasonably believes that an Athlete's Sport Class no longer reflects the Athlete's ability to compete equitably within that Sport Class.

Exceptional circumstances may result from:

- A change in the degrees of impairment of an Athlete;
- An Athlete demonstrating significantly less or greater ability prior to or during Competition which does not reflect the Athlete's current Sport Class;
- An error made by a Classification Panel which has led to the Athlete being allocated a Sport Class which is not keeping with the Athlete's ability; or
- Sport Class allocation criteria having changed since the Athlete's most recent evaluation.

The Chief Classifier shall advise the Athlete and relevant National Federation and/or National Paralympic Committee that a Protest is being made in Exceptional Circumstances.

Athlete Evaluation following a Protest shall follow the same process as described in these regulations. All relevant parties shall be notified of the Protest decision as quickly as possible following Athlete Evaluation.

A protest should not be resolved by the classification panel that was involved in the allocation of the sport class that is being protested.

Protests will generally be submitted during competitions and can be submitted by a designated representative of an NPC or NF or by the Chief Classifier.

Athletes who have undergone evaluation of eligibility either as new (N) or (R) designations can only be the subject of a protest within a period of 24 hours following first appearance at the first International Competition following evaluation. Protests must be submitted to the Chief Classifier within that period otherwise the protest will be void.

Athletes with a confirmed status cannot be the subject of a protest from an NPC/NF but can be the subject of a protest by the Chief Classifier.



DOCUMENTATION

A protest form which should include the following should be submitted in English.

- The name and nation of the Athlete whose eligibility is being protested
- Details of the decision being protested
- The reason for the protest
- Any documents and other evidence to be offered in support of the protest
- The signature of the NPC/NF representative or the Chief Classifier
- A fee of 100 USD which will be returned if the protest is successful.

If the protest has been submitted without all necessary information it shall be dismissed by the Chief Classifier.

PROTEST PANEL

- Appointed by the Chief Classifier
- Minimum of 2 members. There may be an interim requirement for classifiers to work alone at times until the appropriate expansion of classifiers occurs.
- Those members were not involved in the previous evaluation
- All documentation submitted with the Protest Form shall be provided to the Protest Panel
- The Protest Panel should conduct the protest evaluation without reference to the Classification Panel which conducted the initial evaluation
- The Protest Panel may seek medical, sport or scientific expertise in reviewing an Athletes sport class

Communication of outcome

All relevant parties should be notified of the Protest decision in writing and as soon as possible after the Protest Panel have performed their evaluation.

The Classification Master List may require to be updated.



APPEALS

Definition – Appeal

A procedure by which a formal objection to the manner in which classification procedures have been conducted is submitted and subsequently resolved.

The Appeal Body shall have the jurisdiction to review classification decisions in order to

- Ensure all appropriate sports class allocation procedures have been followed
- Ensure all appropriate protest procedures have been followed

BUT no appeal body shall have jurisdiction to review the merits of an allocation of Sport Class or Sport Class Status and under no circumstances shall the appeal body modify a classification decision by allocating a new Sport Class or Sport Class Status.

The Appeal Body shall hear appeals only in cases in which all other available remedies including but not limited to protest procedures have been exhausted. Upon receipt of a notice of appeal the WCF shall conduct a review to determine whether all other available remedies have been exhausted by the party bringing the appeal. If all other remedies have not been exhausted the WCF shall issue a written decision dismissing the appeal.

The Notice of Appeal must

- Specify the party who is requesting the appeal
- Provide the name of the Athlete whose sport class or sport class status is the subject of the appeal
- Identify the decision being appealed by attaching a copy of the decision if written or briefly summarising it.
- Specify the grounds for the appeal
- Identify all documents evidence and witnesses to be put forward in support of the appeal

The appeal body for all appeals submitted during a Paralympic Games is the IPC Board of Appeal of Classification. The WCF has the option to refer all appeals to this body in the period outside Paralympic Games. The Appeal Body members will at no stage have been involved with or have been informed of the dispute brought before the Appeal Body.

APPEAL BODY DECISION

Appeal proceedings are confidential.

The Appeal Body shall issue a written decision resolving any appeal after the hearing.

The decision shall be provided to all parties.

The Appeal decisions are final and not subject to any further appeal.



THE BASIS OF CLASSIFICATION

The WCF and the classifier body will promote and stimulate studies which endeavour to provide a scientific basis to underpin the scheme of classification. Such research would be expected to enhance confidence in the classification system and encourage its future development.

PRINCIPLES OF FAIR PLAY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The WCF Classification Rules set out a consistent policy which puts the Athlete first and ensures fair play and contains mechanisms which protect the rights of all Athletes and of Classifiers in the evaluation of Athletes and a thorough system of Protests and Appeals, should there be any individual breakdown in the process of classification. The risk of such mistake occurring are substantially reduced by the programme of classifier training, assessment and ongoing development outlined above.

CLASSIFICATION RULES FOR WHEELCHAIR CURLING

The Classification Rules are included in the WCF wheelchair curling rules. All participants in the sport of wheelchair curling accept these rules as a condition of participation in wheelchair curling.

CLASSIFICATION DUTIES DURING COMPETITION

During a competition members of a Classification Panel should not have any responsibilities towards or attachment to a National Team/Squad.