

# ICF PARACANOE CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

## **INTRODUCTION**

The ICF's objective for Paracanoe is inclusion: to provide the opportunity for paddlers with a disability to compete at World Canoe Sprint Championships and international Regattas. ICF is responsible for the classification of Paracanoe Athletes who wish to compete at an international level and has established classification criteria which define the minimum disability of a paddler permitted to compete in each of the designated event classes. Before a paddler can compete in a World Canoe Sprint Championship or an international regatta, Sport Class and Sport status of the paddler must be approved by ICF.

Classification places paddlers in groupings with other paddlers of similar levels of functional ability to provide competition which is as fair as possible. The ICF recognizes and accepts the respective classifications encompass a range of disabilities and there will be paddlers with disabilities which may be greater than the minimum and who may therefore be at a disadvantage competing in their adaptive boat class.

The purpose of this classification system is to minimize the impact which eligible impairment types have on the outcome of competition. The ICF system of classification aims to place athletes into classes according to how much their impairment impacts on the core determinants of success in canoeing.

These guidelines will continue to be revised as the ICF works to improve its classification procedures through research and study. ICF is committed to harmonize its classification procedures with the evidence-based International Standards set out in the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification Code.

The ICF acknowledges and is working with the International Va'a Federation (IVF) classification system which ICF recognizes as in the interest of all Paracanoe athletes worldwide.

## **ICF PARACANOE CLASSIFIERS**

An ICF classifier is one who has been approved as such by ICF. There are two types of ICF Classifiers:

- (1) ICF Medical Classifier: a medical doctor, doctor of osteopathic medicine, or physiotherapist
- (2) ICF Technical Classifier: a person with extensive practical knowledge of paddling, such as a paddling coach, sport scientist, former paddler, physical educator or similarly qualified person.

### **Organization of Classifiers**

The Head of Classification shall be appointed by the ICF Canoeing for ALL Committee from amongst the ICF International Classifiers, with responsibility for the overall direction, administration, coordination, and implementation of Classification matters for ICF.

The Canoeing for ALL Committee, in consultation with the Head of Classification, shall appoint an ICF International Classifier as Chief Classifier for each ICF event where Paracanoe events are held. The Chief Classifier shall be responsible for the direction, administration, coordination, and implementation of Classification matters at the event for

which they are appointed.

An ICF Classification Panel shall be appointed for the purpose of classification of paddlers, and shall comprise two (2) ICF Classifiers, one Medical Classifier, and one Technical Classifier. For international classification, this panel shall be appointed by the ICF Canoeing for ALL Commission and be comprised of international classifiers

ICF Classifiers appointed to ICF competitions shall not be engaged in any activities in support of any team of a National Federation at the competition.

All information received and discussions held which pertain to the classification of identifiable individuals is considered confidential in nature and shall not be discussed with individuals not identified as ICF Paracanoe Classifiers.

### **Levels of Classifiers**

An **ICF International Classifier** is a National Classifier who has participated in a ICF International Classification Workshop, shown competence in performing all of the classification tasks and has classified paddlers at the international level alongside International Classifiers. An ICF International Classifier may be appointed to serve on an ICF Classification Panel and a Classification Protest Panel, and is qualified to determine the sport class and sport class status of a paddler wishing to compete at an ICF competition.

A **National Classifier** is a person who has participated in an International Classification Workshop and has demonstrated a working competency of the classification process as determined by the International classifier(s) delivering the workshop. Subject to the rules of the national federation concerned, a National Classifier may serve on a National Classification Panel within their own federation, and determine the sport class and sport class status of a paddler wishing to compete in a national event.

A **Trainee Classifier** is a person who has attended an International Classification Workshop, but who needs supervision by a National or International Classifier to classify paddlers correctly. A Trainee Classifier may serve on a National Classification Panel with the supervision of a National or International Classifier and determine the sport class and sport class status of a paddler wishing to compete in a national event.

A **Workshop Participant** is a person who does not meet the pre-requisites to be a classifier and attends the workshop to further their personal knowledge of Paracanoeing.

The Canoeing for ALL Committee shall organize Classification Workshops and establish qualification criteria for the training and appointment of ICF International Classifiers. The Committee shall consult the Head of Classification and the Canoeing for ALL Committee in making regulations regarding the qualification process and the appointment of Classifiers.

## **SPORT CLASS STATUS:**

### **New (N) Status**

A sport class status of "N" shall be allocated to a paddler who has been classified by an ICF International Classification Panel for the first time or who has been classified by two National Classifiers (one Medical and one Technical) within their own federation or region. A paddler with a sport class status of "N" may compete at an ICF event.

A second classification by an ICF International Classification Panel is required to achieve either a **Confirmed “C”** or a **Review “R”** status

### **Confirmed (C) Status**

A sport class status of “C” may only be allocated by an ICF International Classification Panel. A paddler with “C” status is confirmed for international competition and may compete in all ICF events permitted by their classification.

### **Review (R) Status**

A sport class status of “R” shall be allocated by an ICF International Classification Panel to a paddler where the Panel considers the paddler’s sport class status might change (due to a change in disability or orthotic / prosthetic use), or for reasons determined by ICF (for example; a change in the classification process). Paddlers with an “R” status may be required to undergo a further classification evaluation once a year prior to competing at a ICF event, The time frame for review may vary.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PADDLERS SEEKING ICF INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

Before the classification process can commence, all applicants shall submit complete, sign, and submit to the ICF:

- *Consent for ICF Paracanoe Classification Form*
- *Declaration of Medical Conditions that may require Emergency Measures Form*
- *ICF Paracanoe Classification Application Form*
- *ICF Paracanoe Athlete Certificate of Diagnosis* completed by a medical doctor, written clearly in English.

## **PROCESS FOR CLASSIFICATION OF PARACANOE ATHLETES**

A Classification Panel will assess paddlers with a physical disability according to the process described in the *ICF Paracanoe Classification Instruction Manual*.

The process involves three parts:

- (1) Medical Examination Benchmark Test – directed by the Medical Classifier with the Technical Classifier in attendance.
- (2) On Water Observation- directed by both the Medical Classifier and the Technical Classifier during training and/or competition.
- (3) Ergometer Test ( if necessary)- directed by the Technical Classifier with the Medical Classifier in attendance.

If a paddler in any class with an amputation is classified with a prosthesis or orthosis on, that paddler must compete with the same prosthesis or orthosis, or be re-classified.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

An athlete must be determined as eligible to compete in Paracanoe events by meeting the minimum requirement for disability which includes:

- Physical disabilities which lead to sufficient loss determined during the Functional Classification test

### **Changing Sport Classifications**

Sport Classifications can only change due to changes in medical conditions or the change in the use of a prostheses/orthotic. Improvements in stroke technique will not result in the changing of a classification

### **Paddling Outside of Assigned Sport Class:**

Paddlers may compete in a more functional sport class than their assigned sport class, but not a less functional sport class. For example, a paddler classified as TA may compete in LTA events, but may not compete in A events.

### **SPORT CLASSIFICATIONS**

ICF recognizes three (3) sport classes for Paracanoe: LTA, TA, A. The International Va'a Federation (IVF) recognizes six (6) sport classes. The following classifications blend the two classification systems.

#### **LTA (IVF 5 & 6 Point Paddler)**

The LTA class is for paddlers with a disability who have functional use of their legs, trunk and arms for paddling, and who can apply force to the foot board or the seat to propel the boat.

Eligible LTA paddlers may typically have a minimum disability equivalent to one of the following:

- Amputee
- Neurological Impairment equivalent to incomplete lesion at S1
- Cerebral Palsy Class 8 (CPISRA)

LTA paddlers must meet minimum disability requirements:

LTA - The minimum physical disability is a full loss of three fingers on one hand, or at least a tarsal metatarsal amputation of the foot, or the permanent loss of at least ten points on one limb or fifteen points across two limbs when assessed using the Functional Classification Test as set out in the *Classification Application Form for Physical Disabilities* and the *ICF Classifiers Instructors Manual*.

#### **TA (IVF 4 Point Paddler)**

The TA class is for paddlers who have functional use of the trunk and arms. They are unable to apply continuous and controlled force to the footboard or seat to propel the boat due to significantly weakened function of the lower limbs.

Eligible TA paddlers may typically have a minimum disability equivalent to at least one of the following:

- Bilateral around knee amputation, or significantly impaired quadriceps, or
- Neurological impairment equivalent to a complete lesion at L3 level, or an incomplete lesion at L1, or
- Combination of the above such as one leg with around knee amputation and one leg with significant quadriceps impairment; or
- Classification by the international sports federation for paddlers with cerebral palsy (CPISRA) as eligible to be in CP Class 5.

#### **A (IVF 1 – 3 Point Paddler)**

The A class is for paddlers who have no trunk function (i.e. shoulder function only). An A class paddler is able to apply force predominantly using the arms and/or

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shoulders. These athletes will likely also have poor sitting balance.

Eligible paddlers may typically have a minimum disability equivalent to at least one of the following:

- Cerebral Palsy Class 4 (CP-ISRA); or
- Neurological Impairment with a complete lesion at T12 level, or an incomplete lesion at T10.

### **ATHLETE FAILURE TO ATTEND EVALUATION**

If an Athlete fails to attend evaluation, the Athlete will not be allocated a Sport Class or Sport Class Status, and will not be permitted to compete at that Competition in that sport.

Should the Chief Classifier be satisfied a reasonable explanation exists for the failure to attend the evaluation an Athlete may be given a second and final chance to attend the evaluation.

Failure to attend evaluation includes:

- Not attending the evaluation at the specified time or place
- Not attending the evaluation with the appropriate equipment/clothing and/or documentation
- Not attending evaluation accompanied by the required Athlete Support Personnel.

### **NON-CO-OPERATION DURING EVALUATION**

An Athlete who, in the opinion of the Classification Panel, is unable or unwilling to participate in Athlete Evaluation shall be considered Non-Cooperative during evaluation.

If the Athlete fails to co-operate during Athlete Evaluation, the Athlete will not be allocated a Sport Class or Sport Class Status, and will not be permitted to compete at the respective Competition in the respective Sport.

Should the Chief Classifier be satisfied a reasonable explanation exists for the failure to co-operate during the evaluation, an Athlete may be given a second and final opportunity to attend and co-operate.

The ICF will not permit any Athlete found to have been Non Cooperative during an evaluation to undergo any further Evaluation for that Sport for a minimum of three months, starting from the date upon which the Athlete failed to co-operate.

### **INTENTIONAL MISREPRESENTATION OF SKILLS AND/OR ABILITIES**

An Athlete who, in the opinion of the Classification Panel, is intentionally misrepresenting skills and/or abilities shall be considered in violation of the Classification Rules.

If the Athlete intentionally misrepresents skills and/or abilities, the Athlete will not be allocated a Sport Class or Sport Class Status, and will not be permitted to compete at that Competition in that Sport.

In addition, the ICF will:

- Not allow the Athlete to undergo any further evaluation for that sport for a minimum of two years from the date upon which the Athlete intentionally misrepresented skills and/or abilities
- Remove any Sport Class or Sport Class Status allocated to the Athlete from its Classification Master List
- Designate the Athlete as IM (intentional misrepresentation) in its Classification Master List

- Not allow the Athlete to undergo any further evaluation for any Sport Discipline within the ICF for a period of two years from the date upon which the Athlete intentionally misrepresented skills and/or abilities.

An Athlete who, on a second separate occasion, intentionally misrepresents skills and/or abilities will receive a lifetime ban from the ICF.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR ATHLETE SUPPORT PERSONNEL**

The ICF will enforce sanctions on Athlete Support Personnel who assist or encourage an Athlete to fail to attend Athlete Evaluation, to fail to cooperate, intentionally misrepresent skills and/or abilities or disrupt the evaluation process in any other way.

Those who are involved in advising Athletes to intentionally misrepresent skills and/or abilities will be subject to sanctions, which are at least as severe as the sanctions imposed on the Athlete.

## **PROTESTS & APPEALS OF CLASSIFICATION**

### **PROTESTS**

The term "Protest" as used in this International Standard refers to the procedure by which a formal objection to an Athlete's Sport Class is made and subsequently resolved.

A formal protest may only be filed by a National Federation Team Leader and/or by the appointed Chief Classifier of the competition. A National Federation may Protest the Sport Class of an Athlete from their own or another nation, in accordance with the provisions of this International Standard

Protests will generally be submitted during Competitions, but may also be submitted at other times in accordance with

The identity of Athletes whose Sport Class has been protested may not be publicly disclosed by the ICF before completion of the Protest.

Protests must be on the ICF Paracanoe Classification Protest Form and submitted to the Chief Classifier of the competition no later than three hours after the athlete is informed of their classification and status. If it appears to the Chief Classifier that the Protest Form has been submitted without all necessary information, the Chief Classifier shall dismiss the Protest and notify all relevant parties. If the Protest is accepted, the Chief Classifier shall appoint a Protest Panel and shall notify all relevant parties of the time and date for any subsequent protest evaluation.

Protests permitted during competition shall be in accordance with Table 1.

Table 1

<b>Athlete Sport Class Status</b>	<b>Can be Protested by Athlete's NF and/or another NF</b>	<b>Can be Protested by Chief Classifier</b>
NEW (N)	YES	YES
REVIEW (R)	YES	YES
CONFIRMED (C)	NO	NO*

\*Protest lodged under exceptional circumstances

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

Exceptional circumstances, for the purpose of this International Standard, will arise if a Chief Classifier believes that an Athlete's Confirmed Sport Class no longer reflects that Athlete's Ability to compete equitably within that Sport Class. Exceptional circumstances may result from:

- A change in the degree 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 in keeping with the Athlete's ability.
- Sport Class allocation criteria having changed since the Athlete's most recent Evaluation

### **Protest Panel During Competition**

The Chief Classifier shall appoint a Protest Panel to conduct an Evaluation of the Athlete, referred to in this International Standard as the "Protest Evaluation". The Protest Panel shall consist of at minimum the same number of Classifiers, of equal or greater level of certification, as those involved in the most recent allocation of the Athlete's Sport Class.

- Members of the Protest Panel should have had no direct involvement in the Evaluation which led to the most recent allocation of the Athlete's Sport Class, unless the most recent Evaluation took place more than 18 (eighteen) months prior to the Protest being submitted
- All documentation submitted with the Protest Form shall be provided to the Protest Panel. Protest Panels should conduct the protest evaluation without reference to the Classification Panel, which allocated the Athlete's most recent Sport Class.
- The Protest Panel may seek medical, sport or scientific expertise in reviewing an Athlete's Sport Class.
- All relevant parties shall be notified of the Protest decision in accordance with the IPC International Standard for Athlete Evaluation.

### **Out-of-Competition Protests**

Protests shall be submitted to the ICF Paracanoe Head of Classification within 60 days of the finish of the World Canoe Sprint Championships.

- Upon receipt of the official Protest form, the Head of Classification of the ICF shall conduct a review to determine if there has been compliance with all relevant rules concerning the submission of a Protest.
- If the relevant rules have not been complied with, the ICF Paracanoe Head of Classification shall dismiss the Protest and return the Protest Form.
- If the relevant rules have been complied with, the Head of Classification shall appoint a protest panel in accordance with the Protest Panel rules noted above. The Protest Panel shall notify all parties within 28 (twenty eight) calendar days of the time and date for the Protest Evaluation, which, following consultation with all relevant parties, may take place at an agreed Event.

### **APPEALS**

The term "Appeal" as used in this International Standard refers to a procedure by which a formal objection to the manner in which Classification procedures have been conducted is submitted and subsequently resolved.

The identity of Athletes whose Sport Class has been appealed may not be publicly disclosed by the ICF before completion of the Appeal.

### **APPEAL JURISDICTION**

The Appeal Body shall have jurisdiction to review Classification decisions in order to:

- Ensure all appropriate Sport Class allocation procedures have been followed
- Ensure all appropriate Protest procedures have been followed.

No Appeal Body shall have jurisdiction to review the merits of an allocation of Sport Class or Sport Class Status. Under no circumstances shall the Appeal Body modify a Classification decision by allocating an Athlete a new Sport Class and/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.

### **APPEAL SUBMISSION**

Appeals may be commenced at any time, by submitting a Notice of Appeal to the ICF Head Quarters. The ICF shall promptly transmit a copy of the Notice of Appeal to the opposing party.

Only a National Federation has the right to submit an Appeal.

A Notice of Appeal must:

- Specify the party who is requesting the Appeal
- Provide the name, nation and sport of the Athlete whose Sport Class and/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 summarizing it
- Specify the grounds for the Appeal
- Identify all documents, evidence and witnesses to be put forward in support of the Appeal.

Appeals must be accompanied by a fee, as determined by the ICF. Proof of payment must be included in the Notice of Appeal.

Upon receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the ICF shall conduct a review to determine whether all other available remedies have been exhausted by the party bringing the Appeal. If all other available remedies have not been exhausted, the ICF shall issue a written decision dismissing the Appeal.

### **APPEAL PROCEDURES**

If all other available remedies have been exhausted, the ICF shall:

- Advise all relevant parties that an Appeal Body will be constituted for the purposes of hearing the Appeal
- Send a copy of the Notice of Appeal, and all documents, evidence and details of witnesses to the party named in the Notice of Appeal (the Opposing Party)
- Advise the Opposing Party that it must, within 28 calendar days of receiving a Notice of Appeal (or within such other period required by the IF) submit to the Appeal Body a list of all documents, evidence and expert witnesses to be offered by the Opposing Party in relation to the Appeal
- Set a Hearing location and date: the Appeal Body shall have the right, in its sole discretion, to conduct a Hearing live, by telephone conference or by video conference.

### **APPEAL BODY & HEARING**

The Appeal Body, all of whose members shall comply with and have signed a conflict of interest agreement, will comprise of no less than three individuals who have at no stage been involved with or informed of the dispute brought before the Appeal Body.



In order to ensure a level of independence of decisions, a majority of the members of the Appeal Body should not have any official responsibility in the ICF.

The Appeal Body may designate counsel to assist it in the Hearing.

The ICF and the applicable NF shall have the right to be represented by counsel and, if necessary, to engage an interpreter approved by the Appeal Body. Not more than two representatives of any party, excluding the Athlete and any interpreter, shall be entitled to participate in the Hearing.

Each party shall have the right to offer documentary evidence, to submit a hearing memorandum or brief, and (subject to the Appeal Body's discretion) to call witnesses.

#### **APPEAL DECISION**

The Appeal Body shall issue a written decision resolving any Appeal after the Hearing. The decision shall be provided to all parties within 28 days of the Hearing.

The Appeal Body shall either affirm the decision appealed from or overrule the decision. If the decision is overruled, the Appeal Body's written opinion shall specify the procedural error committed and shall direct the appropriate party to reconsider the decision in a manner consistent with the Appeal Body's instructions.

The ICF shall be responsible for ensuring the Appeal Body's directives are followed in a timely manner.

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

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Appeal proceedings are confidential. The parties and the Appeal Body shall not disclose facts or other information relating to the dispute or the proceedings to any person or entity excluding, to the extent necessary to prosecute or defend the Appeal:

- Employees or agents of a party
- Witnesses whose testimony may be offered on Appeal
- Counsel, consultants or interpreters engaged for purposes of the Appeal.

The Appeal Body may, in its sole discretion, require all persons who attend a Hearing to sign a statement agreeing to maintain the confidentiality of facts or information disclosed during the Hearing. Any individual refusing to sign such a statement may be excluded from the Hearing.