



Guide to Paracycling Classification

What is Paracycling?

Paracycling is the para sport to cycling. There are many versions of adaptive cycling, but not all are considered paracycling as defined by USA Cycling, the national governing body and the UCI, the international governing body.

There are two disciplines within paracycling to compete competitively within USA Cycling and the UCI, Road and Track.





Road Events

On the road athletes have the following events to compete in:

Road Race

Individual Time Trial

Handcycling Team Relay





Track Events

On the Track athletes have the following events to compete in:

Kilo Time Trial

Sprint (individual and team)

Elimination Race

Scratch Race

Individual Pursuit





What is Classification?

The UCI put together a good introduction as to what classification is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlpuptkly3M&t=142s>

Classification systems prioritize and focus on the functional abilities of an athlete's impairment, and how it impacts their participation in a specific sport.

The purpose of classification:

1. Determine an athletes' eligibility to compete
2. Group eligible athletes together for competition based on the extent to which their impairments impact the ability to execute the specific tasks and activities fundamental to the relevant sport.



Paracycling Sport Classes

- Sport Class is defined by the impact of an athlete's impairment their ability to compete in a sport
- Determines sport class and equipment
 - Higher classification number, least impaired class
 - Lower classification number, most impaired class

Handcycle

H1
H2
H3
H4
H5

Tricycle

T1
T2

Cycle

C1
C2
C3
C4
C5

Tandem

B

Division Differences:

- Handcycle (H1-H5)
 - Athletes in H1- 4 compete using an arm powered or arm trunk power handcycle with a mandatory recumbent position.
 - H5 athletes compete from a kneeling or sitting position.
- Tricycle (T1-T2)
 - Athletes in this division are unable to ride a two-wheeled bicycle due to significant balance impairments or severe restrictions in pedaling.
 - Athletes may have a mixed pattern of locomotor dysfunction.
 - Athletes compete on a 3-wheeled tricycle.
- Cycle (C1-C5)
 - Athletes in this division compete on upright, 2-wheeled bicycles.
 - Classification is based on the severity of impairment, with lower numbers indicating greater sport-related impairment.
- Tandem (B)
 - This classification is for athletes with a vision impairment (VI) who meet the Minimum Impairment Criteria.
 - Athletes compete on a tandem bicycle with a sighted pilot at the front.
 - While there is only one sports class, VI athletes are further categorized as B1, B2, or B3, depending on the severity of their visual impairment.



Eligible Impairments – Physical Impairments

1. Impaired Muscle Power

- Examples of an UHC that may lead to Impaired Muscle Power include spinal cord injury (complete or incomplete, tetra-or paraplegia or paraparesis), muscular dystrophy, post-polio syndrome and spina bifida.

2. Impaired Passive Range of Motion

- Examples of an UHC that may lead to Impaired Passive ROM include arthrogyrosis and contracture resulting from chronic joint immobilization or trauma affecting a joint.

3. Limb Deficiency and/ or Limb Length Difference

- Athletes will have total or partial absence of a limb or difference in length of their limbs as a consequence of trauma (for example traumatic amputation), illness (for example amputation due to bone cancer) or congenital limb deficiency (for example dysmelia).

4. Coordination Impairment

- Examples of an Underlying Health Condition (UHC) that may lead to one of the following three movement disorders: Motor Ataxia, Hypertonia/Spasticity, Dyskinesia (athetosis, dystonia, or chorea).



Eligible Impairments – Visual Impairments

- Paralympic Sport Class Profiles:

- B1: No light perception in either eye up to light perception, and an inability to recognize the shape of a hand at any distance or in any direction.
- B2: From ability to recognize the shape of a hand up to visual acuity of 20/600 and/or a visual field of less than 5 degrees in the best eye with the best practical eye correction.
- B3: From visual acuity above 20/600 and up to visual acuity of 20/200 and/or a visual field of less than 20 degrees and more than 5 degrees in the best eye with the best practical eye correction.



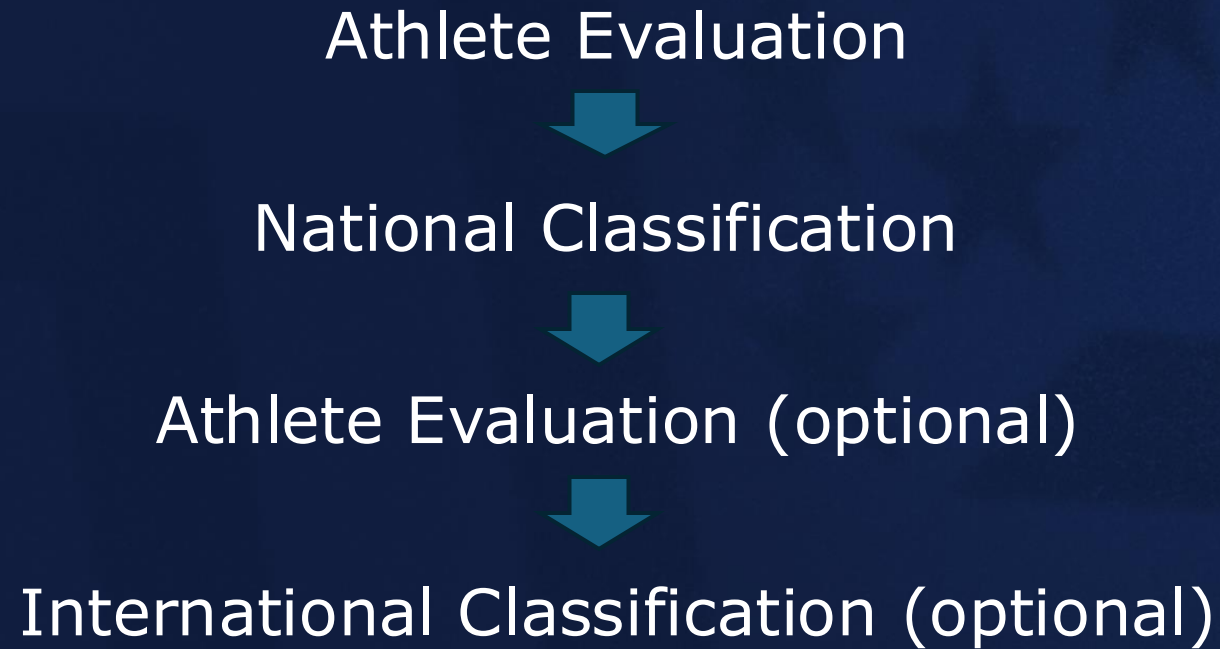
Non-eligible Impairments

Any athlete who has a Non-Eligible Impairment and does not have an Eligible Impairment will not be eligible to compete in Para sport.

- Examples of non-eligible impairments include:
 - Pain
 - Hearing impairment
 - Low muscle tone
 - Hypermobility of joints
 - Joint instability, such as unstable shoulder joint, recurrent dislocation of a joint
- Examples of Health Conditions that primarily cause pain include myofascial pain-dysfunction syndrome, fibromyalgia or complex regional pain syndrome.
 - An example of a Health Condition that primarily causes fatigue is chronic fatigue syndrome.
 - An example of a Health Condition that primarily causes hypermobility or hypotonia is Ehlers-Danlos syndrome.
- Examples of Health Conditions that are primarily psychological or psychosomatic in nature include conversion disorders or post-traumatic stress disorder.



CLASSIFICATION PROCESS





CLASSIFICATION AT AN EVENT

Classification is generally held the day before the first day of competition. As classification schedules are subject to change, please be flexible the entire day, as your initial classification time slot might be changed.

Once you've been notified of your classification time slot it is the responsibility of the athlete for the following:

- To attend classification evaluation [as scheduled] at a specific time or place
- To attend classification evaluation with the appropriate equipment/clothing and/or documentation
- To co-operate during the classification evaluation
- To represent skills and/or abilities during the classification evaluation to the best of their abilities



Athlete Evaluation

The evaluation process is conducted by a classification panel, which is composed of individuals authorized and certified by a sport federation to determine an athlete's sport class.

- The process (typically) includes:
 - Verification of the presence of an eligible impairment for that sport;
 - Physical and technical assessments to examine the degree of activity limitation;
 - Allocation of sport class(es); and
 - Observation in competition.
- After the Evaluation Process
 - At the conclusion of the evaluation process, athletes are assigned a sport class and sport class status. All athletes who have undergone classification evaluation will appear on the classification master list (international) or in the classification database (national).



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

1. Athlete Identifies as Having an Eligible Impairment

An athlete with a permanent physical or visual impairment (e.g., limb deficiency, spinal cord injury, neurological condition, vision impairment) decides to compete in paracycling events.

They learn that to be eligible for:

- USA Cycling Para events, and
- UCI-sanctioned para events

they must hold a **national classification** (and later, an international classification if compete internationally).



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

2. Athlete Joins USA Cycling & Obtains a Race License

The athlete:

- Becomes a **USA Cycling member**
- Purchases the **race license** (paracycling-eligible)



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

3. Athlete Applies for National Classification

The athlete submits a **National Classification Application** through USA Cycling.

This typically includes:

- National or UCI MDF Form
- Medical documentation from a licensed healthcare provider
- Consent forms and athlete agreement

Once submitted, USA Cycling reviews the paperwork for completeness and eligibility.



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

4. Classification Appointment Is Scheduled

USA Cycling schedules the athlete for a **national classification evaluation**, usually at:

- A USA Cycling Para event, with in person classification

The athlete is notified of:

- Date, time, and location
- Their race equipment (bike or bikes, plus adaptations)
- Their clothing that they compete in (to allow physical assessment)



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

5. Athlete Reports to Classification Panel

On the day of classification, the athlete reports to the classification area and checks in.

A **national classification panel** (typically two trained classifiers) conducts the evaluation.



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

6. Physical and Functional Assessment

The classifiers assess the athlete through:

- Medical history review
- Physical examination (range of motion, strength, coordination)
- Functional tests relevant to cycling
- Observation of impairment effects on cycling performance
(For visually impaired athletes, vision testing is conducted according to standards.)



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

7. Technical Assessment on the Bike

The athlete may be observed:

- Riding in a controlled environment, and
- During competition

Classifiers evaluate how the impairment impacts cycling mechanics, balance, power, and control.



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

8. Sport Class Is Assigned

Based on the assessment, the panel assigns:

- A **sport class** (e.g., C1–C5, T1–T2, H1–H5, B)
- A **classification status**, such as:
 - **Confirmed (C)**
 - **Review (R)** (re-evaluation required in the future)



CLASSIFICATION SCENARIO

9. Classification Is Entered and Athlete Is Officially Nationally Classified

USA Cycling records the classification in:

- The athlete's USA Cycling profile
- Official classification records

At this point, the athlete is:

Nationally classified

Eligible to compete in para categories at USA Cycling events

Able to appear in official paracycling results



Sport Class Status - National

The following sport class status designations will be used for national classification.

- All nationally classified athletes, regardless of their National Sport Class Status, may be considered New (N) athletes for purposes of international classification after being evaluated by a national panel.
 - NP – National Provisional
 - NN – National Classified
 - NR – National Review
 - NC – National Confirmed



Sport Class Status - International

- The Code defines three (3) international sport class statuses for assignment following athlete evaluation. A sport class status is assigned to each athlete to indicate evaluation requirements and protest opportunities. The Code specifies sport class status in accordance with the classification rules of the IF for the respective sport.
- **Confirmed (C)**
 - An athlete with sport class status Confirmed is not required to undergo any further evaluation.
- **Review at the Next Available Opportunity (R-NAO)**
 - An athlete with sport class status review next available opportunity must complete evaluation prior to competing at any international competition unless the relevant IF specifies otherwise.
- **Review with a fixed review date (FRD)**
 - An athlete with sport class status review with a fixed review date is required to complete evaluation at the first opportunity after the relevant fixed date.



National vs. International Classification

National Classification

- Each National Paralympic Committee (NPC) is to ensure that national classification policies and procedures follow the Code and alignment with the respective Para-sport International Federations (IFs) where relevant and applicable.
- National sport class status pertains to national classifications only.
- National classification evaluation must follow the same evaluative criteria and sport class system [as per the Code] from the respective sport IF.

International Classification

- Any international classification outcome supersedes a national classification outcome.
- Once an athlete has undergone international classification evaluation, they may NOT undergo national classification evaluation for their respective sport.
- International classification evaluation requires that the Medical Diagnosis Form (MDF) be completed by a physician and submitted along with adequate supporting documentation.
- International classification evaluation requests must be made by the respective national federation.



Next Steps

If you think you have an underlying health condition that would meet the minimal impairment criteria for paracycling please fill out a Medical Diagnosis Form (MDF) and send to USA Cycling for review.

MDF for Physical Impairment:

https://assets.usacycling.org/prod/documents/Forms/USAC_National_MDF_FINAL.pdf

MDF for Visual Impairment:

https://assets.usacycling.org/prod/documents/Forms/USAC_National_Visual_Impairment_MDF_Final_eqdx.pdf



Resources

- [IPC Classification Code](#)
- [UCI Paracycling Classification](#)
- [USA Cycling Paracycling Classification](#)

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