



World Para Swimming

Sue Prasad

Head of Technical Control and Officiating

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Aims of Presentation



To give you all an understanding of:-

- World Para Swimming (WPS)
 - Structure
 - What it does
 - Resources
- Swimmer Classification – a brief overview

About the sport



- Swimming was one of the inaugural sports of the first Paralympic Games in Rome, Italy 1960. It has seen the number of athletes and countries increase every four years since. During the Rio 2016 Games, 593 swimmers from 79 countries competed in 152 medal events, this number is expected to be larger still in Tokyo.
- WPS is committed to ensuring swimming, the second largest para-sport after athletics, remains a core event on the Paralympic Games programme.
- Currently there are 100 nations regularly practising swimming
- In addition to Regional Championships, World Championships are now held every two years. In September 2019, London UK hosted the World Para Swimming Championships with nearly 70 participating nations and 580 athletes competing in 172 medal events.

World Para Swimming (WPS)



- WPS is the governing body for worldwide Para-swimming.
- The sport of swimming is governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) through the WPS Technical Committee as the International Federation (IF) and represents one of ten IPC sports under the umbrella of the IPC.
- WPS is led by the WPS staff team, who work closely with the Sport Technical Committee (STC)

World Para Swimming Vision, Mission and Values



- Provide a platform for para-athletes to regularly practice and to showcase their ability to their full potential and to reach their sporting pinnacle and dreams
- Organise successful competitions as part of a stable calendar while encouraging participation and development at all levels and promoting the core values of the Paralympic Movement

Sport Administration



WPS's roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:-

- sport development
- swimmer classification
- major competition management
- training and accreditation of classifiers and officials
- facilitating coaches education
- maintaining World and Regional Records and Rankings
- resource for NPC's

WPS is headquartered within the IPC in Bonn, Germany

Resources



- Various resources for NPCs, athletes, coaches and individuals are available on our website, this includes:-
 - Rankings and Records
 - Events
 - Classification Database
 - Education opportunities
 - News

www.paralympic.org/swimming

Rules



- Para-swimming provides competition opportunities for athletes to compete in individual or relay events. WPS competitions are open to athletes with a physical, visual or intellectual impairment.
- WPS follow the same rules as its Olympic counterpart, the International Swimming Federation (FINA). Modifications are made only where needed to provide all athletes the opportunity to compete fairly
- All athletes wishing to compete must be classified, either at a National level or Internationally.

WPS Competitions



World Para Swimming categorises competitions based on their scale, size, and nature to determine the applicable requirements at each Competition.

IPC Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paralympic Games• Parapan American Games
IPC Competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• World Para Swimming Championships• World Para Swimming Regional Championships
World Para Swimming Sanctioned Competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• World Para Swimming World Series• World Para Swimming World Cups• Any other World Para Swimming international competitions determined by World Para Swimming (such as Youth Games, IOSD Games)
World Para Swimming Approved Competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• International competitions for the sport of Para swimming• National competitions for the sport of Para swimming• National Federation endorsed competitions• Any other competitions for the sport of Para swimming determined by World Para Swimming

Competitive Opportunities



Athletes can compete in a variety of levels of competition, some of the most accessible are:-

- Local open competitions
- State or Regional competitions
- National competition
- Regional competitions
(such as Asian Para Games)
- International competitions
(such as a WPS World Series)

NPCs and athletes

- Some athletes will compete individually, but at most larger competitions a team of athletes will represent their Nation or NPC
- This will usually comprise of a Team Manager, Coaches, Support Staff and athletes.
- Support Staff are any person designated by an NPC to assist an athlete with logistics or directional instructions

Classification



- To ensure competition is fair and equal, all Paralympic sports have a system in place which ensures that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus, the same factors that account for success in sport for able bodied athletes.
- This process is called classification and its purpose is to minimise the impact of impairments on the sport activity. To be eligible for classification, athletes must have an eligible impairment and this impairment must be severe enough to cause an activity limitation in the sport of para swimming.

- Classification is not exclusively found in Paralympic sports. Some forms of classification are also found in able bodied sports. For example, weight classes in boxing and judo ensure that athletes of similar stature compete against one another.
- Gender and age are further examples of 'classification'. In swimming, individual races must be held as separate gender events. FINA have Masters have swimming exclusively for swimmers with a minimum age of twenty-five years, competing in age grouped events.

Put simply...It's a way to group swimmers with like abilities for the purpose of competing together.

WPS has three Classification Systems

- Athletes with physical impairments (PI) – Sport Classes 1 – 10
- Athletes with visual impairments (VI) – Sport Classes 11 – 13
- Athletes with intellectual impairments (II) – Sport Class 14

Further details on the sport class profiles and classification rules can be found in the WPS Classification Rules and Regulations on the WPS website

Classification Overview

After classification is completed, swimmers are assigned a Sport Class of S, SB, SM or may become Not Eligible (NE)

S Stroke	SB Stroke	SM Stroke
Freestyle Backstroke Butterfly	Breaststroke	Individual Medley
S1 to S10 - PI S11 to S13 - VI S14 - II	SB1 to SB9 - PI SB11 to SB13 - VI SB14 - II	SM1 to SM10 - PI SM11 to SM13 - VI SM14 - II

When an athlete first starts competing he/she undergoes athlete evaluation. This process is conducted by a classification panel, a group of individuals authorised and certified by WPS to determine the sport class of an athlete.

The classification process typically includes:

- The verification of an eligible impairment
- Physical and Technical assessment to examine the degree of activity limitation
- The allocation of a sport class and sport class status
- Observation assessment in competition

During the technical assessment the classifiers are identifying possible rule exceptions for each athlete called 'Codes of Exceptions'

Athlete Evaluation

The Evaluation Process involves three aspects:



**Physical
Assessment**

+



**Technical
Assessment**

+



**Observation
Assessment**

PI Classification

- There are ten different sport classes for athletes with physical impairment, numbered 1-10. A lower number indicates a more severe activity limitation than a higher number.
- Often athletes with different impairments are seen to compete against each other in the same sport class. This is because impact of their impairment on swim performance is similar.
- Physical systems of classification need to be sports-specific. This is because any given impairment may have a significant impact in one sport and a relatively minor impact in another.
- For example: The effect that a below elbow amputation has on an athlete's swim stroke is relatively large whereas the same impairment would have a minor effect on athlete in a running event.

VI Classification



- The VI system is medically (not functionally) based. Identification is made by an ophthalmologist against a set of criteria of visual acuity and visual field, observation assessment is not required for these athletes.
- Athletes with visual impairment compete in the sport classes 11, 12 and 13. With:-
 - S11 athletes have complete or nearly complete loss of sight
 - S12 athletes have a specific range of vision impairment
 - S13 athletes have the minimum eligible visual impairment.
- Athletes in sport class 11 compete with blackened goggles (unless they have prosthetics - glass eyes) and must have require a tapper who indicates to the swimmer that he/she has reached the end of the lane.

II Classification

- Swimmers with intellectual impairment compete in sport class 14.
- Athletes with an intellectual impairment, as defined by INAS and IPC Swimming, have an IQ of 75 or lower and limitations in adaptive behaviour, both of which are diagnosed before the age of 18.
- Although you may not be able to see a physical context to their impairment, they have loss of sport-related cognitive functioning, which puts them in disadvantage to able-bodied elite athletes.
- S14 swimmers are officiated using FINA rules, as there are no rule exceptions for II swimmers.

**Any
Questions?**



Thank you!

