

INTRODUCTION TO CLASSIFICATION IN BOWLS

Why classify Bowlers with a disability?

In order to compete in International Competition i.e.; **IBD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, COMMONWEALTH GAMES and HOME NATIONS EVENTS** a Classification system is essential. These events at which bowlers with disability compete, are governed by the rules of IBD (International Bowls for the Disabled) who in turn are affiliated to The IPC (International Paralympic Committee) both organisations have Sports Specific Classification Systems which are aimed at making the competition as fair as possible for all competitors. The goal is to create a “level playing field”.

History of classification in disabled sport

Each disability group had their own competitions and classification system:

- CPISRA for cerebral palsy and head injuries
- ISMWSF for spinal cord injuries
- ISOD for orthopaedic conditions and amputees
- IBSA for blind athletes

This resulted in lots of small competitions, with low numbers of entrants. Competition was of a low standard and not very meaningful.

Development of a sport specific classification system

Emphasis has been taken away from the medical diagnosis and placed directly onto the function a person needs to deliver a bowl.

Bowlers are put into classes according to their level of function, rather than according to their diagnosis.

Athletes are assessed using measures of:

- Muscle strength
- Range of joint movement (ROM)
- Co-ordination
- Amputation
- Balance

In the sport specific classification system, a class will usually include a variety of different medical diagnoses with a mixture of ambulant and wheelchair athletes in each.

Bowls Classification is split into two sections;

B1 – B4 being for bowlers with a visual disability. These have their own classification procedure that is governed by IBBA. (International Blind Bowls Association)

B5 – B8 is for bowlers with a physical disability.

Disabilities eligible for classification in the physical disability category

- Spinal cord injuries
- Polio
- Amputations
- Cerebral palsy
- Head injuries
- Progressive disorders, eg. multiple sclerosis
- Les autres ie achondroplasia, arthrogyposis
- Any locomotor disability

The disability **MUST** be permanent and irreversible

Disabilities not included in the physical system

When they exist with no other physical impairment, the following conditions do not make a person eligible for IBD classification:

- Transplants
- Deaf
- Visual impairment

- Mental handicap
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Wear and tear due to advancing age
- General debilitating disease
- Obesity
- Osteochondritis
- Psychiatric conditions (including conversion disorder)
- Skin diseases
- Haemophilia
- Cystic fibrosis
- Fibromyalgia
- Ehlos Danlos
- Myalgic encephalitis
- Internal organ dysfunction or absence
- Complex regional pain syndrome

If your condition is not listed or you have any queries regarding your diagnosis and eligibility for medical classification you can email Gill Allibone, (Physiotherapist and International Medical Classifier) at gt.allibone@hotmail.co.uk"

Minimal Disability

- Bowlers are eligible to compete in IBD sanctioned events if they have a *physical disability* that causes or ought to cause a *noticeable impairment of function* while bowling.
- *Physical Disability* is any birth defect, injury, surgery, or disease process, which causes a medically evident permanent impairment of physical function
- Disability solely due to mental or psychological causes, or to disorders which could be corrected by the bowler, such as obesity, is not considered eligible for competition, even if it causes noticeable impairment of function while bowling

Bowler's and NPC's responsibility for classification

It is the bowler's responsibility to be sure that they are officially classified before competing in an IBD sanctioned event,

They must either produce a current and valid classification card on registering for an event, or, if they have not been classified, be sure their name is on the schedule for classification at the event.

Bowlers with an R or an N status classification must also ensure that they are on the list to obtain a P classification by an International classifier.

NB

N = new classification, not performed by an international classifier

R = review classification, for bowler's whose condition is likely to change

Eg multiple sclerosis

P = permanent classification, performed by an international classifier

NB

Once a bowler has been classified by an International Classifier, a classification card will be posted out to him/her by the IBD Bowls Classifier.

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