Para-Athletics Information Sheet

About the sport

Para-athletics has been contested at the Paralympic Games since the first Paralympic Games in Rome, Italy, in 1960 and is participated by the most athletes around the world.

On the track, athletes race over 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m and 10000m, 4x100m and 4x400m relays, marathons, either in standing events, using race wheelchairs or race running. In the field, standing throwers compete in the discus, shotput and javelin and seated throwers, who throw from a frame, throw the shotput, club, discus or javelin.

Athletes may use assistive devices including prosthetics, rope tethers and acoustic devices. The prosthetics used have been specifically developed to withstand the demands of competition. Rope tethers and other similar devices may be used by runners with a vision impairment to link them to their sighted guides, and acoustic devices (or a sighted 'caller') may be used to indicate throwing targets and take-off in jumping events.

Race Running, also known as frame running, is a new athletics discipline that is for athletes who are unable to run. Athletes use a running bike, a three-wheeled frame with a saddle, body support and most notably, no pedals.

Who can compete?

Para-Athletics is open to athletes with a physical, intellectual or vision impairment. Athletes are required to submit medical reports and meet the minimum impairment criteria in order to compete.

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Loss of limbs	Partial or complete absence of bones or joints due to amputation or deficiency from birth.	**Arm:** loss of one complete hand OR shortened arm of similar length; or complete loss of four fingers OR thumbs on both hands **Leg:** More than ½ loss of one foot or more than ¾ loss on both feet

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Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Muscle weakness/Impaired muscle power	Muscle weakness or paralysis from conditions such as muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, nerve damage, spinal cord injury or other spinal condition.	Loss of strength in a hip, knee, ankle, shoulder, elbow, wrist
Co-ordination impairments - Hypertonia, Ataxia, Athetosis	Impairments from neurological conditions such as acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis that affect co-ordination and smoothness of movement and balance.	Co-ordination or movement difficulties in at least one arm or leg.
Restricted joint movement/Impaired passive range	Restricted movement or tightness in a joint/s from conditions such as joint fusions and other restricting conditions.	Joint movement restriction in at least one shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee or ankle.
Short Stature	Reduced standing height and limb length from conditions such as achondroplasia or other conditions that affect growth.	Standing height less than or equal to 145cm(males) / 137cm(females); and Arm length less than or equal to 66cm(males) / 63cm(females); and Total standing height plus arm length less than or equal to 200cm(males) / 190cm(females).
Leg length difference	Significant difference in leg length due to a deficiency at birth or trauma.	Leg length difference of at least 7cm.
Vision Impairment	Impairment of the eye structure, optic nerves or pathways, or vision area of the brain, resulting in a loss of vision in both eyes. Caused by conditions such as albinism, macular degeneration, macular or cone rod dystrophy and retinitis pigmentosa.	Visual acuity loss in both eyes (how far they can see) with best corrected vision. Vision is less than or equal to 6/60 (log MAR 1.00); or Visual field restriction in both eyes (how wide they can see) of less than 40 degrees diameter with best corrected vision.

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Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Intellectual Impairment	An IQ of 75, and impairments in adaptive behaviour (conceptual, social and practical skills) – that is observed before the athlete is aged 21.	

Para-Athletics Sport Classes (T= Track, F=Field)

Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
Athletes with a **Vision Impairment**	
T/F 11	Athletes who are blind. Athletes must wear blacked out goggles or eyeshades and must use a sighted guide.
T/F 12	Athletes who have very low vision in both eyes either in how far they can see (visual acuity <2/60; LogMAR 1.5-2.6 inclusive) or how wide they can see (visual field <10 degrees diameter). Swimmers have the option to use a sighted guide
T/F 13	Athletes who have low vision in both eyes, but more vision than T/F 12 athletes. Vision is affected either in how far they can see (visual acuity <6/60; LogMAR 1-1.4 inclusive) or how wide they can see (visual field < 40 degrees diameter). Athletes are not eligible to use a guide.
Athletes with an **Intellectual Impairment**	
T/F 20	Athletes with an intellectual impairment. Athletes may find it more difficult to plan event tactics.
Athletes with **Coordination Impairments (compete sitting)**	
F 31	Athletes with the most significant involvement who throw the club in the field.
T/F 32	Athletes with significant coordination impairments, whose whole body is affected. Athletes throw a club instead of a discus and may hold a pole to assist their balance during throws.
T/F 33	Athletes with coordination impairments whose whole body is affected but have more control in one arm than the other. They may have an asymmetrical push during wheelchair track events and use their better arm to throw the shot put, discus and javelin.

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Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
T/F 34	Athletes with coordination impairments who throw seated or use a wheelchair on the track whose impairment is mostly in their legs. They have good strength in their torso and arms to propel their chair on the track or throw the discus, shotput or javelin.
Athletes with **Coordination Impairments (compete Standing)**	
T/F 35	Athletes with coordination impairments who throw seated or use a wheelchair on the track whose disability is mostly in their legs. They have good strength in their torso and arms to propel their chair on the track or throw the discus, shotput or javelin.
T/F 36	Athletes who compete standing and have balance and coordination problems affecting their whole body. Athletes might find it difficult to balance at the start line in track or keep within the throws sector due to poor balance.
T/F 37	Athletes who compete standing who have a coordination impairment down one side of their body. They have an asymmetry of running stride and arm and leg power in the throws.
T/F 38	Athletes who have the mildest forms of impairment of those in class 35, 36 or 37 are grouped in class 38. They have mild asymmetries, with good power, speed and control.
Athletes with **Short Stature**	
T/F 40	Adult standing height less than or equal to 130cm (males)/125cm (females); AND Arm length less than or equal to 59cm (males)/57cm (females); AND Standing height plus arm length less than or equal to 180cm M)/173cm (F).
T/F 41	Adult standing height less than or equal to 145cm (males)/137cm (females); AND Arm length less than or equal to 66cm (males)/63cm (females); AND Standing height plus arm length less than or equal to 200cm (M)/190cm (F).
Athletes with **Limb Loss, Muscle Weakness or Joint Restrictions (compete standing)**	
T/F 42	Athletes with significant limb loss, muscle weakness or restrictions in one leg who don’t use any prosthetics
T/F 43	Athletes with limb loss, muscle weakness or restrictions in both legs who don’t use any prosthetics.

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Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
T/F 44	Athletes with more mild muscle weakness, limb loss or restrictions in the legs who don't use any prosthetics.
T/F 45	Athletes with significant limb loss, muscle weakness or restrictions that affect both arms. Athletes generate drive using their legs without use of their arms.
T/F 46	Athletes with moderate limb loss, muscle weakness or restrictions that affect one arm.
T/F 47	Athletes with mild impairment in one arm. T47 athletes combine with T46 athletes and are only eligible to compete in 100-400m and jumps.
Athletes with **Limb Loss, Muscle Weakness or Joint Restrictions (compete in track chair)**	
T 51	Athletes who have little movement in the legs or torso, and have significant weakness in shoulders, wrists and hands. Due to the weakness in their shoulders and elbows, these athletes pull the wheelchair rims up rather than push them down.
T 52	Athletes who have little or no movement in legs or torso, who have good shoulder strength with some weakness in wrists and fingers.
T 53	Athletes with strong arm movement, who have weakness in their torso and legs. These athletes generate power solely from their arms. They will stop pushing to control the compensator, the device which controls the steering.
T 54	Athletes with strong arm and torso movement, who have an impairment in their legs. Athletes have fast acceleration, can maintain top speeds and maintain their pushing speed while steering.
Athletes with **Limb Loss, Muscle Weakness or Joint Restrictions (compete seated)**	
F 51	Throwers with little to no movement in the legs or torso, and have significant weakness in shoulders, wrists and hands. Throwers throw the club instead of shotput.
F 52	Throwers with good shoulders and elbow strength, with some weakness in wrists and fingers, and little movement in legs/torso. Athletes use a pole to help them balance.
F 53	Throwers with good shoulder, elbow and wrist strength, with weakness in fingers only, and little movement in the legs/torso. Athletes use a pole to help them balance.

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Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
F 54	Throwers with good arm strength, and little to no movement in their torso or legs. Athletes have no sitting balance and hold a pole on their frame while throwing
F 55	Throwers with good arm strength and some torso movement - athletes have no leg movement. Athletes are able to use their torso to generate throwing power
F 56	Throwers with good torso and arms, who have some strength in their hips and knees.
F 57	Throwers with good arm and torso movement who have some weakness in the legs, or equivalent joint restrictions or limb loss in one or both legs.
Athletes with **Limb Loss/Leg length Difference who compete with a prosthesis**	
T/F 61	Have an absence of both legs above the knees and use prosthetic running blades.
T/F 62	Have an absence of both legs below the knee and use prosthetics.
T/F 63	Have an absence of one leg above the knee and use a prosthetic running blade. The prosthetic has an inbuilt knee joint.
T/F 64	Have an absence of one leg below the knee and use a prosthetic running leg
Frame Running - Athletes with **Co-ordination impairments**	
T71	Athletes with the most significant co-ordination impairments that affects both the arms, legs and trunk, who are unable to effectively run. All frame running athletes must compete seated for throws events.
T72	Athletes with the less severe impairments than T71 athletes, who are unable to effectively run. All frame running athletes must compete seated for throws events.

Not Eligible

Not Eligible (NE)	Athlete does not meet the minimum criteria for the Para-sport classes but may still be able to compete. Contact Athletics Australia for more information.

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Find out more

To get involved or for more information contact:

Athletics Australia

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Note: The classification information provided is intended as a guide only. Only authorised classifiers are able to provide a formal classification in accordance with the rules of the sport. Not all classes may have events at the Paralympic Games

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