

Framework for Classifier Recruitment, Training & Retention in Golf for Athletes with a Disability

An effective and sustainable classification workforce is essential for fair competition in golf for athletes with disabilities. This Framework establishes a comprehensive, transparent, and enforceable framework for the recruitment, education, training, certification, and retention of Classification Personnel in Golf for athletes with a disability. It is fully aligned with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) International Standard for Classification Personnel and Training, effective from January 2025.

This framework aims to ensure that the Classification system in Golf is administered by competent, impartial, and ethically responsible personnel who uphold the highest standards of fairness, consistency, and athlete welfare. It applies to all levels of Classification Personnel, including the Head of Classification, Chief Classifiers, Classifiers, Trainee Classifiers, UHC Assessors, and supporting staff.

Recognising these effective practices, the International Golf Federation aims to develop a classifier pathway that:

- Makes entry routes accessible and inclusive for candidates from various medical backgrounds.
- Incorporates clear appointment processes and succession planning to maintain quality and neutrality.
- Supports classifier wellbeing, professional growth, and recognition.
- Reconnects and engages inactive classifiers, appreciating their experience to keep the classifier community strong.

By following international standards and utilising proven methods from other parasports, this framework will enable the IGF to continue providing fair, athlete-centred competition with a skilled, motivated, and diverse team of classifiers.

1. Classification Personnel Competencies

The IGF requires all Classification Personnel to meet clearly defined competencies as outlined in this framework and further detailed in the IGF Classification Code:

1.1. UHC Assessor Competencies

UHC Assessors must have:

- A thorough understanding of Golf for Athletes with a Disability and its applicable rules, including the Rules of Golf, Equipment Rules, and the IGF Classification Rules.
- Knowledge of the IPC Classification Code and International Standards.
- Familiarity with the IGF's Classification Personnel Code of Conduct and the principles of conflict of interest management.
- Qualifications enabling assessment of diagnostic information, medical documents, and diagnostic tests.
- Expertise regarding Health Conditions and their effect on physical, intellectual, or vision abilities relevant to golf.

- Skills to evaluate complex medical data, identify necessary supporting documentation, consult with fellow assessors when needed, and prepare written reports summarising assessment outcomes.

1.2. Classifier Competencies

All classifiers must demonstrate:

- Demonstrated competencies to interpret and apply Golf for Athletes with a Disability Rules, Equipment Rules, and other Classification Rules, IPC Classification Code, International Standards, and the IGF Classification Personnel Code of Conduct.
- Appropriate professional qualifications and skills determined by the IGF.
- Proficiency in English sufficient to conduct classification internationally.
- Effective interpersonal, teamwork, and decision-making skills.

1.3. Medical Classifier Competencies

In addition to the above, Medical Classifiers must hold:

- Registered medical practitioner experienced in underlying health conditions that lead to eligible impairments in golf, or
- A physiotherapy or related qualification with clinical experience of eligible impairments relevant to Para Golf.

1.4. Technical Classifier Competencies

Technical Classifiers must have:

- Knowledge of how eligible impairments affect golf skills.
- At least three years' experience in Para sport and/or Golf for Athletes with a disability, working with athletes.
- A minimum of three years' coaching experience or equivalent qualification in sport sciences, biomechanics, kinesiology, or related fields.

1.5. Chief Classifier Competencies

Chief Classifiers must possess:

- At least two years' experience as a classifier in Para Golf.
- Knowledge of all stages of the classification process.
- Effective communication in English, mentoring ability, management and organisational skills.

1.6. Head of Classification Competencies

The Head of Classification must demonstrate:

- At least two years' classifier experience (ideally in Golf for athletes with a disability); if co-appointed, only one must meet this requirement.
- The Chief Classifier competencies.
- Leadership skills, experience in classification administration, rule development, research, and education.
- Active participation in classifier training and mentoring activities.

2. Recruitment – Building the pipeline

Principles of inclusivity, competence, transparency, and athlete-centred service will guide the recruitment of Classification Personnel as outlined in the Strategy for Identifying Prospective Trainee Classifiers. The process will actively target qualified individuals with diverse backgrounds in medicine, physiotherapy, biomechanics, sports coaching, and Golf for Athletes with a Disability.

The International Golf Federation, through the IGF Classification Rules, has clear criteria for entry into the classification pathway, detailing required qualifications, competencies, and prior experience. Recruitment efforts will include open calls, targeted outreach to golf clubs, rehabilitation centres, universities, and collaboration with national golf federations.

Goal	Actions	Examples / Rationale
Raise awareness of classifier roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create short “What is a classifier?” videos & infographics, highlighting golf’s unique impairment profiles (e.g., limb deficiency, neurological impairment). • Share via PGA, R&A, USGA, national golf federations, adaptive golf groups, sports medicine networks, and national professional associations. 	Leverage golf’s large volunteer & medical community.
Define clear pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an entry-level “Golf Classifier Assistant” role for volunteers with medical, therapy, or sport science backgrounds. 	Lowers the barrier to entry.
Partner with universities & professional bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present classifier opportunities at medical & sports science conferences. • Offer internships or placement opportunities in golf events. • Create honours/master’s project themes (reliability studies, task relevance, MIC thresholds) 	Taps into motivated students / early-career clinicians.
Recruit within golf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target retired players, coaches, or referees for functional classifier roles. 	Brings golf-specific insight into classification.

3. Training & certification – Building competence and credibility

3.1. Training for Trainee Classifiers

Trainee Classifiers must:

- Complete the IGF’s Classifier Training Package covering the classification process, use of IGF’s online systems, Safeguarding, the Classification Personnel Code of Conduct, and procedures for staying updated.
- Observe and assist experienced classifiers in at least three evaluation sessions.
- Carry out a Classification using bench test, functional tests and observation skills, supervised by a Classification Panel and/or an authorised educator/mentor.

3.2. Ongoing Training

All classifiers will:

- Meet with the Head of Classification at least twice annually to review performance and identify further development needs.
- Participate in biannual IGF classification meetings and regular webinars.

3.3. Support to National Federations

Where practicable, the IGF will:

- Share training materials with National Federations and NPCs.
- Cooperate to create pathways for National Classifiers to progress internationally.
- Publish schedules for classifier training sessions with adequate notice.

Goal	Actions	Examples / Rationale
Standardised learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a modular training curriculum aligned to IPC & IGF Classification Code: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fundamentals (IPC Code & ethics) - Golf-specific impairment impact (e.g., kinematic sequencing of the swing, swing mechanics, distal segment control/clubface stability) - Observation & testing protocols. 	Custom content contextualised to golf.
Multilevel certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trainee classifier - IGF classifier (IGF Covered Competitions) 	Clear progression & motivation.
Blended delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine e-learning modules, live webinars, and practical field assessments during tournaments. 	Flexible & cost effective; supports classifiers from different regions.
Develop shared resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with national golf bodies and parasport experts to produce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video libraries of golf performances by players from Sport Classes - Case studies by Sport Class 	Helps classifiers benchmark decisions consistently.

4. Retention & engagement – Keeping classifiers active & valued

Retention of Classification Personnel will be supported by continuous professional engagement, recognition of service, access to development opportunities, and safeguarding measures to protect classifiers from harassment, abuse, and undue pressure. The Federation will also establish

procedures to re-engage previously inactive classifiers, providing refresher courses and tailored mentorship to restore their competencies and certifications.

Goal	Actions	Examples / Rationale
Community & recognition	• Establish an International Classifier Panel for Golf: annual online meetups, mentoring circles, community and forum, and recognition awards.	Builds loyalty & identity.
Continuous learning	• Offer refresher modules & updates on rule changes, medical evidence, or adapted equipment advances.	Keeps skills current; encourages reflection.
Athlete feedback loops	• Organise feedback sessions post-event where classifiers, athletes & coaches share perspectives.	Supports professional growth & transparency.
Diverse engagement	• Allow classifiers to volunteer across roles: education, research, and technical officiating.	Avoids burnout; offers variety.

5. Governance & continuous improvement – Embedding sustainability

The IGF will strengthen governance of its classification system by establishing a transparent and accountable structure aligned with the IPC Classification Code 2025, the ISCPT, and the IGF Classification Rules. Oversight by the Head of Classification and the IGF Integrity Unit will ensure consistent classifier recruitment, training, appointment, performance monitoring, and conflict-of-interest management.

A formal quality-assurance programme, including audits, recertification, supervision of trainees, and event debriefs, will support accuracy and consistency in Athlete Evaluation. Continuous improvement will be driven by feedback from classifiers, athletes, National Federations, and event organisers, as well as insights from protests, appeals, and data reviews. This will inform updates to rules, training resources, and assessment procedures. Long-term sustainability will be supported through structured classifier development pathways, succession planning, and global capacity-building, ensuring a qualified and impartial workforce across all IGF events. The overall framework ensures the classification system remains transparent, evidence-based, and aligned with international best practice.

Goal	Actions	Examples / Rationale
Quality & ethics oversight	• Establish a Classification Advisory Group including classifiers, athletes, medical experts, and federation reps.	Ensures accountability & balanced perspectives.
Data-driven refinement	• Track classifier decisions, appeals, and athlete outcomes to identify training gaps or consistency issues.	Evidence-based improvements.
Shared resource network	• Collaborate with other IFs to share education materials & best practices.	Cost-effective; improves standardisation.

Goal	Actions	Examples / Rationale
Strategic succession planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Classifiers to mentor trainee Classifiers to ensure succession planning and continuity. 	Succession planning / Long Term Sustainability

6. Continuous Development and Research

The IGF is committed to supporting lifelong learning and continuous improvement. Classifiers shall be encouraged to participate in research on classification methodologies, technological advances, and sport-specific issues. Results will be integrated into training and keeping practices evidence-based and athlete-focused.

Collaboration with National Federations and National Paralympic Committees will be prioritised to create a sustainable pathway for classifiers, ensuring consistency across all levels.

7. Implementation Plan (Summary)

Phase	Timeline	Key Actions
Phase 1: Foundation	0–6 months	Develop training materials; form classifier committee; identify recruitment partners.
Phase 2: Launch	6–12 months	Run first workshops; start observer programme; establish online community.
Phase 3: Growth	1–3 years	Expand trainer classifier pool; run international seminars; formalise recognition programme.
Phase 4: Sustain & Improve	Ongoing	Evaluate outcomes; refresh content; adapt to changes in IPC Classification Code

8. Classifier Pathway

The IGF recognises the importance of a clear, structured, and competency-based pathway for the development and certification of classifiers in Golf for Athletes with a Disability. Certification will be governed by the IGF Classification Rules and aligned with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) International Standard for Classification Personnel and Training.

8.1. Classifier Trainee

To be considered for appointment as an IGF Classifier Trainee, recruits must have:

- Completed IGF-approved classifier training, including theoretical instruction, supervised practice, and assessment components.
- Passed the written examination with a minimum grade of 80%.
- Successfully completed a practical assessment, demonstrating proficiency in applying the IGF Classification Rules and ethical practice.

8.2. International Classifier

To be considered as an IGF Classifier, a Trainee Classifier must have:

- Demonstrated consistent availability and engagement in classification panels over a minimum of one (1) year.
- Received positive evaluation reports from the Chief Classifiers of the panels on which they served, confirming competence, professionalism, and adherence to the IGF Classification Rules.
- Participated in IGF classifier e-learning modules, live webinars, and practical field assessments as organised by the Classification Committee.
- Passed a re-certification examination with a minimum grade of 85%.
- Completed at least one (1) year of service as an IGF Classifier Trainee.

8.3. Chief Classifier

To be considered for appointment as a Chief Classifier, an IGF Classifier must have:

- Received a positive performance assessment from the Head of Classification and the Classification Committee.
- Served as a Deputy Chief Classifier or equivalent role at an IGF Covered Competition.
- Obtained a satisfactory Chief Classifier assessment report, confirming their leadership, decision-making, and mentoring capabilities.

8.4. Classifier Re-Certification

Each Classifier's Certification must be reviewed at least once every four (4) years. The purpose of such a review will be to ensure that the Classifier has retained the relevant competencies.

As part of the Re-Certification process, the Classifier will be required to:

- Complete any new Classification training courses for Trainee Classifiers introduced by the IGF since the Classifier's previous Certification, as well as any further/ongoing training recommended for them by the Head of Classification, in accordance with Article 62.3.1 of the IGF Classification Rules.
- Complete all mandatory case studies and reflective learning assignments provided through the IGF education platforms within the four (4) year re-certification period.
- Conduct at least one Evaluation Session under the observation of a Chief Classifier. The Chief Classifier may require the Classifier to conduct further Evaluation Sessions under their supervision at their discretion.
- Receive satisfactory assessment reports from the Chief Classifiers or Head of Classification confirming sustained competence and ethical practice.
- Remain in good standing with their National Federation and be endorsed for continued service.
- Apply for re-certification every four (4) years, as outlined in the IGF Classification Rules.

8.5. Withdrawal of IGF Classifier Status due to inactivity

Should a classifier fail to meet the ongoing requirements outlined in Article 8.4 during their re-certification cycle, the Head of Classification will issue a Notice of Inactivity. This notice will invite

the classifier to provide a written explanation for their limited participation and to confirm their intention to remain active within the IGF International Classifier Panel.

The Classification Committee will review the case within ninety (90) days of the notice being issued, taking into account any documentation or correspondence submitted by the classifier.

If, following this review, the Committee determines that the classifier has not demonstrated sufficient engagement or fails to satisfy the re-certification requirements, the classifier's accreditation will be withdrawn with immediate effect. Formal written notification will be provided to the classifier, with copies sent to their National Federation and Continental Federation.

9. Conclusion

A sustainable and skilled classifier workforce is at the heart of credible and inclusive golf competitions for golf athletes with a disability. The effectiveness of any classification system directly depends on the expertise, consistency, and ethical commitment of its classifiers. This strategy, therefore, is not just about building numbers — it is about cultivating a professional, motivated, and resilient community of classifiers who can uphold the spirit and standards of Para sport.

In developing this strategy, we have aligned closely with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) International Standards for Classifiers, which emphasise three critical pillars:

- Recruitment: attracting appropriately qualified individuals with medical, sport science, or sport-specific expertise, and ensuring the process is inclusive and transparent;
- Training: providing standardised, sport-specific education and practical experience so that classifiers can reliably and fairly apply classification rules;
- Retention: supporting classifiers through recognition, ongoing professional development, mentorship, and clear pathways for progression.

By embedding these international standards into every stage of our approach, we ensure that classifiers are not only technically competent but also deeply connected to the values of fairness, athlete-centred service, and ethical responsibility that underpin both the IPC and the IGF classification code.

This strategy recognises that classifiers are volunteers or professionals who give significant time and energy to support athletes. Therefore, beyond technical training, it prioritises building a sense of community, offering meaningful recognition, and ensuring ongoing learning — factors that research and practice show are key to long-term retention.

In summary, through:

- Targeted and inclusive recruitment that engages both experienced professionals and emerging talent,
- Structured, high-quality training and accreditation pathways grounded in international standards, and
- A retention plan that values, supports, and develops classifiers as people and professionals,

We can establish a credible, sustainable, and ethically robust classifier workforce. This will enhance trust in the classification process, improve the athlete experience, and support the long-term growth and integrity of golf for athletes with a disability.



By continually reviewing and evolving this strategy in line with global best practices and IPC updates, we reaffirm our commitment to fair, inclusive, and athlete-centred sport — ensuring that every golfer, regardless of impairment, has the opportunity to compete on a level playing field.