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Golf for Athletes with a Disability Classification Frequently Asked Questions

1. The International Golf Federation (IGF) and its Classification Framework

1. Who is the International Golf Federation?

The International Golf Federation (IGF) is the recognised International Federation for golf within the Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

2. How do the IGF Classification Rules align with the IPC Classification Code and International Standards?

The IGF Classification Rules have been drafted to implement the IPC Classification Code and International Standards:

- They adopt the IPC four-stage Classification process
- Identify the Eligible Impairments and Minimum Impairment Criteria (MIC) for golf for athletes with a disability;
- Define roles and responsibilities of Classification Personnel;
- deal with Intentional Misrepresentation and the handling of Classification Data; and
- require education, record-keeping and publication of the Classification Master List.

The written Rules are only one part of compliance. IGF forms, training, event procedures and decisions must also reflect the Code.

3. What is the fundamental rationale for the IPC Classification Code?

Para-sport Classification Systems do not, and are not intended to, facilitate competition opportunities for all persons with all disabilities in all sports. They are designed to provide a framework that enables competitive (rather than participatory) sport for persons with disabilities. This framework is necessarily exclusive as it must define who is and who is not eligible for Parasport.

The IPC acknowledges that separate organisations provide important sport opportunities for persons with disabilities that are not included in this Classification Code. The IPC views each organisation's efforts as an important part of the shared vision for a more inclusive world.

4. What has underpinned the inclusion/exclusion of eligible impairments into the IGF Classification Rules?

Part III of the IPC Classification Code 2025 stipulates the seven (7) Eligible Impairments in the Paralympic Movement (five ‘Physical Impairments', Vision Impairments, and Intellectual Impairments); these are Impaired Muscle Power, Impaired Passive Range of Movement, Limb Deficiency and/or Limb Length Difference, Short Stature, Coordination Impairments, Vision Impairment and Intellectual Impairment.

The IGF Rules and their appendices explain how these impairment pathways apply to golf, including the test and MIC for each pathway.

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5. **How has the IGF set testing methodology in its classification rules?**

IGF Classification depends on tests that are valid, reliable and as objective as possible. The IGF has had its testing measures independently assessed to ensure the most reliable and objective assessments are used in classification. If a test has not been included in the IGF Rules, this is due to a lack of reliable evidence or a failure to meet the objectivity required to underpin inclusion in the IGF Rules.

6. **Does the IPC Set standards on best practice classification and research?**

The IPC Classification Code and international standards, 2025 require International Federations bound by the Code to reflect best practice classification. Best Practice Classification means that the Classification System:

- Adopts the four stages of Classification set out in Article 5.1 (of the IPC Classification Code) and describes the methods used in each of the four stages.
- Focusing on the relationship between the impairment and key performance determinants, where the impairment is the unit of classification and the impairment is classified based on the extent to which they impact the Athlete's ability to execute the sport-specific tasks and activities fundamental to the sport.
- Drawing on reliable assessment results from a range of domains.
- Using assessments that are, as a minimum, evidence-informed (i.e., scientific evidence indicates that the individual assessments that make up the Classification system will provide information that is accurate and reliable).
- Relying on as few assumptions as possible (and, where assumptions are relied on, ensuring that those assumptions are defensible).

Best practice Classification represents the full utilisation of the scientific evidence available today, where evidence-informed assessments are used along with clinical reasons to draw conclusions from assessment results from a range of domains.

2. IGF Classification and the EDGA Player Pass

1. **What is the difference between IGF Classification and EDGA Assessments?**

The IGF Classification Rules expressly state that they do not decide eligibility for other forms of disability golf governed through EDGA G4D or USGA Adaptive Golf event regulations. Those pathways are separate, even where they draw on some of the same medical evidence.

IGF Classification is governed and operated by the International Golf Federation (IGF) who are the Recognised International Federation (RIF) for the sport of golf by the International Paralympic Committee. The IGF Classification rules have been developed to align with the International Paralympic Committee Classification Code and International Standards, 2025.

The IGF Classification Rules govern events run or endorsed by the IGF as IGF Covered Competitions.

The IGF rules do not apply to eligibility for EDGA-approved events / World Ranking for Golfers with a Disability (WR4GD).

In simple terms: IGF Classification determines eligibility, Sport Class and Sport Class Status under the IGF Classification Rules for IGF Covered Competitions and any future Paralympic pathways; EDGA determines eligibility to compete in EDGA/WR4GD events.

Point of comparison	IGF Classification	EDGA Player Pass
Responsible body	International Golf Federation	EDGA
Main purpose	Determines eligibility, Sport Class and Sport Class Status for IGF Covered Competitions and Paralympic Games, if included on the programme.	Determines eligibility for EDGA-approved events and the World Ranking for Golfers with a Disability (WR4GD) pathway
Process	Uses the four-stage process in the IGF Classification Rules	Applies the eligibility requirements for the relevant EDGA pass
Outcome	An IGF Classification outcome	An EDGA Player Pass
Transferability	An EDGA outcome does not automatically establish IGF eligibility	An IGF outcome does not automatically replace an EDGA pass

2. **I currently hold an EDGA WR4GD Pass and Sport Class. Can this eligibility be used for an IGF Classification?**

The medical reports used for an EDGA application may also support an IGF application if they are current, authentic and sufficient for the IGF process. The EDGA pass itself does not determine the IGF outcome. The Athlete must still complete the stages required by the IGF Rules.

3. **Why might an Athlete need to go through both IGF classification and the EDGA Assessment?**

The competition determines the requirement. IGF Classification is needed for IGF Covered Competitions and the developing Paralympic pathway. An EDGA Player Pass may be needed to enter EDGA-approved events or earn WR4GD ranking points.

4. **Do the two systems use the same impairment categories?**

There is overlap, but the two are not identical. IGF Classification applies the impairment pathways, Minimum Impairment Criteria, Sport Class and Sport Class Status set out in the IGF Classification Rules and appendices. EDGA's WR4GD Pass is based on ten eligible impairment categories and minimum impairment requirements used for the WR4GD pathway. Eligibility under one system should never be assumed under the other.

5. **Can a National Federation submit an EDGA Pass as part of an IGF Classification file?**

Yes, it may be useful supporting information, especially as part of the Athlete's classification history. However, it should not replace the Diagnostic information and assessment required under the IGF Classification Rules.

6. **Which athletes should go through the IGF Classification Process?**

The IGF Classification is for both male and female international-level athletes who compete at the highest level of their individual sport classes. The IGF will require the endorsement of National Federations in putting forward athletes for IGF International-level classification.

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3. Classification at a Glance

1. What is classification?

Classification is the process used to decide whether an athlete is eligible to compete in Golf for Athletes with a Disability IGF Covered Competitions, and, if so, the Sport Class they will compete in. The aim is to minimise the impact of impairment on the outcome of competition.

2. Is Classification a general disability assessment?

No. It is a sport-specific eligibility process. An Athlete may have a disability or medical condition but not meet the criteria for an IGF Covered Competition.

3. What does IGF Classification assess?

The process considers four questions:

- Does the Athlete have, or have they had, a medically or clinically diagnosed Underlying Health Condition (UHC)?
- Does that condition result in an Eligible Impairment?
- Does the impairment meet the relevant MIC?
- To what extent does the impairment affect the Athlete's ability to perform the tasks and activities fundamental to Golf for Athletes with a disability?

4. Does Classification assess golf skills or performance?

No. Athletes are not grouped by score, handicap, swing technique or recent form. Better performance within a Sport Class is not, by itself, a reason to change the Athlete's sport class.

5. Which competitions do the IGF Classification Rules apply to?

The Rules apply to IGF Covered Competitions. These include IGF Counting Events, the Paralympic Games if golf is included in the programme, and competitions at which Observation Assessment is authorised as part of Classification.

4. How the Classification Process works

1. What are the four stages of Classification?

1) **UHC Assessment** – Confirms a medically or clinically diagnosed Underlying Health Condition (UHC).
2) **Eligible Impairment Assessment** – determines whether the condition has resulted in an impairment recognised by the IGF Classification Rules.
3) **MIC Assessment** – Checks whether the Eligible Impairment reaches the minimum threshold for the relevant pathway.
4) **Sport Class and Sport Class Status Allocation** – determines the Athlete's competition class and whether future review will be needed.

The UHC Assessment is always completed first. The remaining stages are then conducted in the order set out in the relevant appendix for theAthlete's impairment type.

2. What is the UHC Assessment?

An IGF-appointed UHC Assessor reviews only the Diagnostic Information submitted by the Athlete's National Federation. At this stage, the Assessor is deciding whether the Athlete has, or has had, at least one medically or clinically diagnosed UHC. The Athlete is not examined in person for this assessment.

3. What is Diagnostic Information?

Diagnostic information is the medical, clinical or other supporting information needed to assess the Athlete's Underlying Health Condition and Eligible Impairment. It should be complete, accurate, authentic, relevant, legible, dated and, where required, provided in English translation.

4. Who submits Diagnostic information to IGF?

The Athlete provides the relevant information to their National Federation. The National Federation is responsible for submitting the Diagnostic Information to IGF and ensuring it is complete, accurate, authentic, and relevant.

5. What happens if the UHC Assessment is confirmed?

If the UHC Assessor is satisfied that the Athlete has, or has had, at least one medically and/or clinically diagnosed Underlying Health Condition, IGF will proceed with the next steps. Where required, the Athlete will be scheduled for an Evaluation Session.

6. What happens if the UHC Assessor is not satisfied?

The Athlete will be designated 'Not Eligible – Underlying Health Condition (Re-evaluation)' and a second UHC Assessment will be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable. If the second UHC Assessor is also not satisfied, the Athlete will be designated 'Not Eligible – Underlying Health Condition'.

7. What is an Evaluation Session?

An Evaluation Session covers stages 2, 3, and 4 of Classification: Eligible Impairment Assessment, MIC Assessment, and Sport Class and Sport Class Status allocation.

8. Who conducts the Evaluation Session?

An Evaluation Session is conducted by a Classification Panel appointed by IGF. A Classification Panel normally consists of at least two Classifiers, subject to the exceptions set out in the IGF Classification Rules.

9. Does the Evaluation Session take place in person?

Yes, the Evaluation Session takes place in person. Some parts of the process may be conducted differently where the Rules allow. Such as certain aspects of intellectual impairment assessment.

5. Eligible Impairment and MIC

1. What is an Eligible Impairment?

An Eligible Impairment is an impairment type that is recognised in the IGF Classification Rules for Golf for Athletes with a Disability. The relevant Eligible Impairments are set out in the appendices for Physical Impairment, Vision Impairment and Intellectual Impairment.

2. What if I have a condition or impairment that is not listed?

If the impairment is not listed as an Eligible Impairment in the IGF Classification Rules, it is a Non-Eligible Impairment. An Athlete may still be evaluated on the basis of an Eligible Impairment if they have one, provided any Non-Eligible impairment does not prevent the Classification Panel from Completing the Evaluation Session.

3. What is the MIC Assessment?

MIC means Minimum Impairment Criteria. The MIC Assessment determines whether the Athlete's Eligible Impairment meets the minimum threshold required under the relevant appendix.

4. Is the MIC Assessment based on golf performance?

No. The MIC Assessment is based on the Athlete's Eligible Impairment, using impairment-based testing and/or clinically recognised testing. It is not based on golf performance or on how well the Athlete performs golf tasks.

5. What happens if I do not meet the Minimum Impairment Criteria?

The Athlete will be designated 'Not Eligible – Minimum Impairment Criteria (Re-evaluation) and will be entitled to a second MIC Assessment by a second Classification Panel. If the second Classification Panel is also not satisfied, the Athlete will be designated not Eligible – Minimum Impairment Criteria.

6. Sport Class and Sport Class Status

1. What is a Sport Class?

A Sport Class is the category in which an Athlete competes. It is based on the extent to which the athlete's eligible impairment affects their ability to perform the specific tasks and activities fundamental to Golf for Athletes with a Disability.

2. Who allocates the Sport Class?

A Classification Panel assigned by the IGF for each Classification opportunity allocates the Sport Class after completing the relevant stages of the Evaluation Session.

3. Can I be eligible for multiple Sport Classes?

No, an Athlete may only be allocated one Sport Class within Golf for Athletes with a Disability per Paralympic cycle, even if they meet the criteria to be allocated two or more Sport Classes.

4. **What is Sport Class Status?**

Sport Class Status indicates whether and when an Athlete may be required to undergo Classification again in the future.

5. **What Sport Class Statuses are available?**

The available Sport Class Statuses are:

- Confirmed (C);
- Review at the Next Available Opportunity (R-NAO)
- Review with a Fixed Date (R-FRD);
- Expired (E)

6. **What does Confirmed (C) Status mean?**

The Panel considers the Sport Class unlikely to change. Further Classification may still follow a Protest, a successful Appeal, an accepted Medical Review Request, or a change to the Classification system.

7. **What does Review at the Next Available Opportunity (R-NAO) mean?**

Unless the IGF says otherwise, the Athlete must complete an Evaluation Session before competing in a Covered Competition and within 18 months of receiving the status.

8. **What does Review with a Fixed Review (R-FRD) Date mean?**

The Athlete may compete until the Fixed Review Date. After that date, a new Evaluation Session is required before any further Covered Competition. The date will typically be no more than four years after the previous session.

9. **What does Expired (E) status mean?**

This status applies automatically after retirement, two continuous years without a Covered Competition, failure to complete an R-NAO review within 18 months, or failure to review before a Fixed Review Date. Ordinarily the Athlete cannot compete until reclassified, but a Athlete who previously held Confirmed status may return in the original class with that status.

7. Observation Assessment

1. **What is Observation Assessment?**

Observation Assessment is used when the Classification Panel needs to observe the Athlete in a competitive environment before confirming a final Sport Class.

2. **When can an Observation Assessment be required?**

Observation Assessment may be required where the Classification Panel considers it will assist in allocating a final Sport Class. This may include situations where the Athlete is borderline between Sport Classes, where the panel needs to assess impairment impact during play, or where Adaptive Equipment use needs to be observed. The observation can only be used to assist in confirming a final Sport Class. It can not be used to confirm previous stages of the classification process such as MIC.

3. **What happens if Observation Assessment is required?**

The Athlete receives a provisional Sport Class with the tracking code OA. The Observation Assessment is conducted in person during the Covered Competition where the Athlete is scheduled to compete in the provisional Sport Class for the first time.

4. **What happens after an Observation Assessment?**

During the first round of the Covered Competition, the Classification Panel will either allocate a final Sport Class and Sport Class Status or require the Athlete to redo prior stages and/or undergo further Observation Assessment.

5. **Can the Classification Panel change my Sport Class based only on Observation Assessment?**

No. Observation Assessment alone cannot be used to allocate a Sport Class that is different from the provisional Sport Class. If a different final Sport Class is required, the Rules set out further steps that must be followed.

8. Attending an Evaluation Session

1. **Who may attend an Evaluation Session?**

In addition to the Athlete and the Classification Panel, the following may attend where permitted by the IGF Classification Rules:

- The Athletes National Representative;
- An Interpreter, if required;
- Trainee Classifiers or authorised training personnel;
- IPC appointed observers;
- And experts whose assistance is sought by the Classification Panel.

2. **Can I bring a National Representative?**

Yes. An Athlete may be accompanied by one National Representative, subject to the requirements in the IGF Classification Rules. An Athlete who is a Minor or lacks legal capacity must be accompanied by a National Representative.

3. **Can I use an interpreter?**

Yes, where required. The National Federation is responsible for arranging and paying for the interpreter unless the IGF specifies otherwise.

4. **What should I bring to an Evaluation Session?**

The Athlete should bring the required forms and identification, sport attire, golf equipment, Adaptive Equipment intended for competition, and any medication, medical device, implant, optical correction or prescription requested by IGF or the Classification Panel.

5. **Do I need to bring Adaptive Equipment?**

Yes, if the Athlete intends to use Adaptive Equipment in competition. The Athlete must attend the Evaluation Session with the sports attire and Adaptive Equipment, permitted under the Rules of Golf

and Equipment Rules, that they intend to use in competition, and must disclose that intended use to the Classification Panel.

6. **Can I record or take photos during an Evaluation Session?**

No photography, audio recording, video recording, screenshots or streaming should take place unless permitted under the IGF Classification Rules. Photographs and audiovisual material are subject to the IGF Classification Rules.

9. Adaptive Equipment

1. **How is Adaptive Equipment considered in Classification?**

The Classification Panel must evaluate the Athlete using the Adaptive Equipment they will use in competition, if any, where that equipment is permitted under the Rules of Golf and Equipment Rules. The Panel must also take account of optimal use of such equipment where relevant.

2. **What happens if there is a doubt about equipment compliance?**

Where there is a doubt about whether Adaptive Equipment complies with the Rules of Golf and/or Equipment Rules, the Classification Panel may consult the R&A/USGA Rules of Golf Equipment Standards experts.

3. **What happens if equipment is not compliant?**

If Adaptive Equipment does not comply with the applicable rules, the Athlete may not use it for Sport Class Assessment, and the Classification Panel will not consider its use when determining Sport Class.

4. **What is the AE designation?**

The AE designation is added where the Athlete's choice to use, or not use, Adaptive Equipment affects their allocated Sport Class. Information about the Adaptive Equipment will be recorded so that competition officials can verify the relevant use or non-use during competition.

10. Additional Information, Suspension and CNC

1. **Can IGF or the Classification Panel ask for more information?**

Yes. The UHC Assessor, IGF, or Classification Panel may request additional information where necessary to complete the Classification Process. The Classification Panel may also seek medical, clinical, technical, or scientific expert assistance with IGF's agreement.

2. **What happens if my National Federation does not provide the requested information?**

If the required information is not provided within the specified timeframe, the Evaluation Session may be suspended in accordance with the IGF Classification Rules.

3. **What is Classification Not Completed?**

Classification Not Completed, or CNC, means the Classification process could not be completed. An Athlete designated CNC may not compete in Covered Competitions until they complete an Evaluation Session, unless the Rules allow participation solely for Observation Assessment.

4. **When can CNC apply?**

CNC may apply where the Evaluation Session is suspended, where the Athlete fails to attend without a reasonable explanation, or where the Athlete does not comply with requirements in a way that prevents the Classification Panel from completing the Evaluation Session.

5. **What if I miss my Evaluation Session?**

If an Athlete does not attend an Evaluation Session, IGF will consider whether the Athlete has a reasonable explanation for their failure to attend. If there is no reasonable explanation, the Athlete will be designated CNC.

6. **What are the consequences of being designated CNC?**

An Athlete designated as 'Classification Not Completed (CNC)' may not compete in Covered Competitions until they complete an Evaluation Session. If an Athlete has been designated as 'Classification Not Complete (CNC)' on three or more consecutive occasions, the Athlete is not entitled to undergo any further Evaluation Sessions within the twelve-month period following their last designation as 'Classification Not Complete (CNC)'.

11. Communications, Publication and Data

1. **How will I receive my Classification outcome**

IGF will notify the Athlete and the Athlete's National Federation of the Classification outcome in accordance with the IGF Classification Rules.

2. **Will my Classification information be published?**

IGF publishes a Classification Master List. The list may include Sport Class, Sport Class Status and tracking codes such as OA or AE, and any designation for International Misrepresentation ('IM'), together with the duration and commencement date of the period of ineligibility.

3. **How is my Classification Data handled?**

Classification Data must be processed, stored, disclosed and retained in accordance with the IGF Classification Rules, applicable data protection laws and the relevant IPC International Standards.

4. **Who can see my medical or Classification information?**

Access is limited to people who need the information for Classification, rules administration, competition verification or other permitted purposes. Detailed medical or equipment information should not be shared more widely than necessary.

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12. Changes, Medical Review, Protest and Appeals

1. **What if my medical condition or impairment changes after classification?**

If there is a relevant change in the nature or degree of an Athlete's Eligible Impairment, a reassessment might be required to ensure that the outcome of the Athlete's previous Classification remains correct; this is known as a **Medical Review**.

2. **Can my National Federation request a Medical Review?**

A Medical Review Request must be made by the National Federation on the Athlete's behalf and submitted as soon as possible. If accepted by the IGF, where applicable, the Athlete's Sport Class Status will be changed to 'Review at the Next Available Opportunity (R-NAO)' with immediate effect.

3. **Can a Sport Class decision be challenged?**

Some Sport Class decisions may be challenged through the Protest process set out in the IGF Classification Rules. The Rules specify who may make a protest, when it may be made, and how the Protest process operates.

4. **Can every decision be protested?**

No. Not every decision is subject to a Protest. For example, certain Not Eligible designations are not subject to review or Protest but may be Appealed in accordance with the Appeals provision in the IGF Classification Rules.

5. **Who can make a protest?**

A protest may only be made by a National Federation or the IGF. An Athlete cannot make a Protest themselves and can only be made on behalf of an Athlete by either their National Federation or the IGF.

6. **What is an Appeal?**

An Appeal is a challenge to any aspect of a Classification process.

13. Intentional Misrepresentation

1. **What is Intentional Misrepresentation?**

Intentional Misrepresentation occurs where a person intentionally misleads, or attempts to mislead, IGF or a Classification Panel in relation to Classification.

2. **What are examples of possible Intentional Misrepresentation (with or without limitation)?**

Examples may include deliberately underperforming, providing false or misleading medical information, failing to disclose relevant information, disrupting an Evaluation Session, attending without intended sport attire or Adaptive Equipment where this is intended to mislead, or failing to disclose relevant prior Classification history.

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3. Why is this important

Classification depends on honest and accurate information. Intentional Misrepresentation can undermine fair competition and may lead to serious consequences under the IGF Classification Rules.