

VI Climber Requests - Event Commission Rule Changes

Date: December 3, 2025

Prepared by: Frederik Leys, Athlete Representatives

Target Document: IFSC Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025

Overview

This document consolidates rule change requests from VI (Visually Impaired) athletes that specifically impact the **IFSC Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025**. These requests are submitted for consideration by the Event Commission.

Note on Sight Guide Requests

All requests concerning Sight Guides (finalist presentation including guides, guide registration and pairing requirements) have been consolidated in a separate document:

VI_Guide_statute.md

Request 1: Route Preview Video Timing for Para Climbing Events

Current State

Document: Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025, Annex B, Section 4.7

"If route is to be attempted flash, a route demonstration will be made available at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled Start of Play either as a video recording made available for individual download/streaming (or as an alternative, continuously played back in the warm-up area) or where video recordings cannot be provided, as a live demonstration."

Problem

The route reading videos often come out late in the evening or night before qualifications. While these videos allow climbers to study the climbing route, this is particularly challenging for VI athletes who must review routes together with their callers/guides. This coordination requires additional time and is difficult to arrange when videos are only released late at night.

Specific challenges include:

1. **Early morning starts:** Para climbing qualification rounds are often scheduled in the morning
2. **Partnership preparation:** VI athletes need to review routes together with their guides, which requires coordinating schedules and is impractical late at night
3. **Inconsistent timing:** Videos released at random times create uncertainty for all athletes and make preparation difficult

The current 60-minute minimum prior to Start of Play is insufficient, particularly for VI athletes who need to coordinate with their guides.

Required Update

Amend Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025, Annex B, Section 4.7:

4.7 *If route is to be attempted flash, a route demonstration will be made available either as a video recording made available for individual download/streaming (or as an alternative, continuously played back in the warm-up area) or where video recordings cannot be provided, as a live demonstration.*

4.7.1 *Route preview videos shall be made available: - **For rounds with a scheduled Start of Play before 12:00, route preview videos shall be made available no***

later than 22:00 (10pm) on the evening prior to competition. - For rounds with a scheduled Start of Play at 12:00 or later, route preview videos shall be made available at least 2 hours prior to the scheduled Start of Play.

Request 2: Clock Positioning for VI Guides

Current State

Document: Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025, Annex B, Section 6.1

"A timing system should be used in the final rounds to display, for both the public and competitors, the remaining time in the collective or individual observation/preparation periods, as well as the remaining climbing time."

Problem

Clock positioning only mentions "public and competitors." VI guides need to see timing while guiding but current clocks face the wall (for sighted climbers looking down). No provision for guide visibility.

Required Update

Amend Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025, Annex B, Section 6 - Add new section 6.2:

6.2 *For events including B1, B2 or B3 Sport Classes, a secondary timing display shall be positioned at the base of the climbing wall, oriented toward the competition floor, allowing sight guides to monitor remaining climbing time from their guiding position. This display must be synchronized with the primary timing system.*

Request 3: Accessible Document Formats for VI Athletes

Current State

Document: Various IFSC Official Documents (Rules, Regulations, Guidelines)

All official IFSC documents are distributed exclusively in PDF format via the IFSC website.

Problem

PDF documents are not optimized for screen readers, which are the primary tool VI climbers use to access written information. Current PDFs often lack proper heading structure, alt text for images, tagged content, and reading order—making them difficult or impossible for athletes in B1, B2, and B3 Sport Classes to independently review competition rules, classification requirements, and event information.

Required Update

Amend IFSC Communications/Publications Policy - Add accessibility requirement:

All official IFSC documents intended for athlete use shall be made available in accessible formats alongside the standard PDF version. This includes: - Tagged PDF documents with proper reading order and heading structure - Alternative formats such as accessible HTML or plain text versions - Images and diagrams shall include descriptive alt text

The IFSC shall ensure that new documents meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility standards prior to publication.

Note: This request may fall under IFSC Office (Secretary General) + Communications rather than Event Commission, but is included here as it directly impacts VI athlete preparation for events.

Request 4: Bolt Covers or Modified Bolt Contact Rules for VI Athletes

Current State

Document: IFSC Rules 2025, Section 8.1.E

"An attempt will be ruled unsuccessful if a climber... has gained an advantage by using the climbing rope/lanyard or other safety equipment (including quickdraws or bolt hangars), any open edges to the climbing surface, any placards on the climbing surface, or (with the hands) any unused/unplugged T-Nut emplacements."

Problem

On most climbing walls, bolts (used to attach quickdraws) remain in place even when quickdraws are removed during competitions. Climbers are not allowed to touch or use these bolts. However, this is particularly difficult for VI athletes (visually impaired) who cannot see the bolts and may inadvertently touch them while climbing.

A solution currently applied at some events—for all climbers, not just para climbers—is the use of "bolt covers." These are placed over the bolts to prevent any climber from gaining an advantage by touching or using a bolt. However, bolt covers are not always available or required.

Required Update

Two alternative solutions are proposed:

Option A: Mandatory Bolt Covers (Preferred)

Amend IFSC Rules 2025, Section 1 (Route Setting) or Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025, Annex B - Add new requirement:

For all Para Climbing events, bolt covers shall be installed on all bolt hangars on competition routes. Bolt covers must fully obscure the bolt hangar to prevent any

advantage being gained from contact.

Option B: Modified Contact Rules for VI Athletes

Amend IFSC Rules 2025, Section 8.1.E - Add clarification for VI Sport Classes:

For athletes competing in B1, B2 or B3 Sport Classes, incidental contact with bolt hangars shall not be ruled as gaining an advantage. Only deliberate use of bolt hangars with the hands (e.g., gripping, pulling, or resting on a bolt hangar) shall result in the attempt being ruled unsuccessful.

Note: Option A (mandatory bolt covers) is preferred as it provides a consistent solution for all athletes and removes any ambiguity in judging. This request may fall under Rules Commission jurisdiction but has significant Event Commission implications for venue requirements.

Request 5: Route Image Size and Quality in Isolation/Warm-Up Area

Current State

Document: Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025, Annex B, Section 4.10

"The Jury President will arrange for images of the route to be placed in the warm-up area when it opens. Only images of the route provided by the event organiser and approved by the Jury President may be brought into the warm-up area."

Problem

In final rounds, a picture of the route is displayed in isolation for finalists to study. These images are often printed in poor quality on A4 paper. While this creates equal (albeit suboptimal) conditions for sighted athletes, it creates an unfair disadvantage for VI athletes

with partial sight (B2 and B3 Sport Classes) who may have sufficient vision to study a larger, clearer image but cannot effectively use a small, low-quality A4 print.

Required Update

Amend Competition Regulations Para Climbing Events 2025, Annex B, Section 4.10:

4.10 *The Jury President will arrange for images of the route to be placed in the warm-up area when it opens. Only images of the route provided by the event organiser and approved by the Jury President may be brought into the warm-up area.*

4.10.1 *Route images displayed in the warm-up area shall be printed at a minimum size of A3 (or two A4 sheets joined together) and produced at high print quality to ensure clarity of holds and route features. This requirement applies to all Para Climbing events.*

Summary Table

Request	Current Section	Proposed Amendment	Change Type
1. Route Preview Video Timing	Annex B §4.7	Amend existing + add §4.7.1	Amendment + New subsection
2. Clock Position for VI Guides	Annex B §6.1	Add new §6.2	New section
3. Accessible Document Formats	N/A (New Policy)	Add accessibility requirement	New requirement
4. Bolt Covers / Contact Rules	IFSC Rules §8.1.E	Mandatory bolt covers OR modified contact rules	New requirement OR Amendment

Request	Current Section	Proposed Amendment	Change Type
5. Route Image Size and Quality	Annex B §4.10	Add §4.10.1	New subsection

Contact

For questions regarding these requests, please contact: - **Frederik (Fré) Leys** - Para Climbing Athletes Representative and Athletes Representative