

= Para @-@ Nordic skiing classification =

Para @-@ Nordic skiing classification is the classification system for para @-@ Nordic skiing which includes the biathlon and cross country events . The classifications for Para @-@ Nordic skiing mirrors the classifications for Para @-@ Alpine skiing with some exceptions . A functional mobility and medical classification is in use , with skiers being divided into three groups : standing skiers , sit skiers and visually impaired skiers . International classification is governed by International Paralympic Committee , Nordic Skiing (IPC @-@ NS) . Other classification is handled by national bodies . Before the IPC @-@ NS took over classification , a number of organizations handled classification based on the type of disability .

The first classification system for the sport was developed in Scandinavia and was a medical system for skiers with amputations . At the time , other types of disability were not eligible for classification . In developing a system for use at the first Winter Paralympics , organisers wanted to get away from a medical classification system and use a functional system , but they ended up with a system based on equipment utilised by the skier instead . As the 1970s progressed , equipment improvements made it possible for skiers with spinal cord injuries to participate and a classification system developed for these skiers . By the 1990s , there were over ten Nordic skiing classes and a percentage system was developed to allow skiers with different disabilities inside one of three groups to compete against each other . The skiers time at the end of the race would be multiplied against a percentage to determine a time that allowed for fair cross classification comparisons . While the actual percentages change from time to time , this system to calculate a winner is still in use . Despite repeated efforts to move to a true functional mobility based classification dating back to the 1970s , medical assessment still took place during the classification process in the 2010s .

There are different events and equipment for different Para @-@ Nordic skiing classes . For sit @-@ skiers , they use sit @-@ skis with two skis , unlike Para @-@ Alpine Skiing where sit skiers use one ski . Blind skiers use a guide , with the position of the guide relative to the skier depending on the class of the skier . In the United States , Para @-@ Nordic skiing has events for people with intellectual disability that are run through Special Olympics . The classification process for blind Para @-@ Nordic skiing is handled internationally by the International Blind Sports Association and is a medical assessment . While National Paralympic Committees can classify their skiers for national competitions , this classification is subject to change at international competitions . These classifications have been used at the Winter Paralympics . Intellectual disability skiers were allowed to compete in full medal events at the 1998 Winter Paralympics but were subsequently removed because of cheating problems at the 2000 Summer Olympics .

= = Definition = =

Para @-@ Nordic skiing has two events , the biathlon and cross @-@ country skiing . The classifications for Para @-@ Nordic skiing at the same as classifications for Para @-@ Alpine skiing . Classifications are based on functional mobility . For amputees , this is based on their mobility with the use of an assistive device . Classification for competitors with cerebral palsy is difficult because the levels of spasticity can change as the race progresses . People with cerebral palsy in classifications from CP1 to CP8 are covered by skiing classifications . Skiers from CP5 to CP8 compete standing up with the use of equipment . Since 1995 , the classes are LW2 , LW3 , LW4 , LW5 / 7 , LW6 , LW8 , and LW9 . There are three sit @-@ ski classifications : LW10 , LW11 and LW12 , with LW10 being divided into LW10 and LW10.5 , and LW11 being divided into LW11 and LW11.5. The sport also has three classifications for blind skiers , B1 , B2 , and B3 . These are based solely on medical classification . Research done at the Central Institute on Employment Abilities of the Handicapped in Moscow has found differences in functional capabilities based on differences in visual acuity . This plays a significant role in skiing .

= = Governance = =

Para @-@ Nordic skiing is governed by the International Paralympic Committee , Nordic Skiing . The United States Deaf Ski and Snowboard Association is in charge of deaf classification for competitors in the United States . In the United States , the sport is governed by Disabled Sports USA for skiers with functional mobility , and governed by the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) for skiers with vision impairment , while Special Olympics governs the sport and classification for people with intellectual disabilities . Disabled Sports USA developed its own classification system for sit skiing that is not used internationally . They use a three group classification system , with Group 1 skiers including T5 to T10 spinal cord injuries , Group 2 including all other skiers with disabilities below T10 and Group 3 including all spinal cord disabilities above T10 .

In the sport 's early history , the International Sports Organization for the Disabled (ISOD) , founded in 1964 , governed the sport . In 1980 , there were two governing bodies handling classification , ISOD and the International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee (ISMGC) , which later became the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF) , and still later the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation (ISMWSF) . ISMGC was in charge of classification for athletes with spinal cord related disabilities . In 1981 , the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) was created , and took over governance for skiers with visual impairments . In 2003 , ISMWSF merged with ISOD , and changed its name to the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS) in 2004 . While the Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CP @-@ ISRA) has an interest in the sport because it is open to people with cerebral palsy , it is not governed by them . In 1983 , both the rules for this sport , and classification , was done by the CP @-@ ISRA . By 1984 , there were four organisations governing classification for the sport : ISOD , ISMGF , IBSA and CP @-@ ISRA .

= = Eligibility = =

Currently , people with physical disabilities and vision impairment are eligible for classification . In 1983 , Cerebral Palsy @-@ International Sports and Recreation Association (CP @-@ ISRA) set the eligibility rules for classification for this sport for people with cerebral palsy . They defined cerebral palsy as a non @-@ progressive brain lesion that results in impairment . People with cerebral palsy or non @-@ progressive brain damage were eligible for classification by them . The organisation also dealt with classification for people with similar impairments . For their classification system , people with spina bifida were not eligible unless they also had evidence of upper motor neuron dysfunction , caused by associated hydrocephalus . People with cerebral palsy and epilepsy were eligible provided the condition did not interfere with their ability to compete . People who had strokes were eligible for classification following medical clearance . Competitors with multiple sclerosis , muscular dystrophy and arthrogryposis were not eligible for classification by CP @-@ ISRA , but were eligible for classification by International Sports Organisation for the Disabled for the Games of Les Autres .

= = History = =

Classification for winter sport started out as a medical one before moving to a functional system . The earliest classification systems for the sport were developed in Scandinavia . The original classification system was for people with amputations , with classification based on the type of amputation as determined by a medical expert . Other classes of disability were not eligible to be classified and compete early in the sport 's history .

Going into the first winter Paralympic Games , the 1976 Winter Paralympics , the organisers had a difference of opinion with Paralympic Games founder Ludwig Guttman , because they wanted a functional classification , not medical classification system , from the onset . They largely succeeded , although the system that was developed in Örnsköldsvik , Sweden , that ended up being used was based on equipment utilised by the skier instead of a true functional classification system . During the 1970s , equipment was first being developed for skiers with spinal injuries and a classification

system had yet to become fully developed for the sport .

In 1983 , classification for cerebral palsy competitors in this sport was done by the Cerebral Palsy @-@ International Sports and Recreation Association . The classification used the classification system designed for track events . In 1983 , there were five cerebral palsy classifications . During the 1980s , there were three sit @-@ ski classes and seven other classes . During the 1980s , while not formally part of the para @-@ skiing classification system , intellectual disability Nordic skiing classes did exist as part of the Special Olympics movement . The sport was one sports people with disabilities were more likely to play during the 1990s .

Prior to 1988 , the classification assessment process generally involved a medical exam to determine the classification . The change in winter disability sport classification towards a more formal functional classification system happened more quickly as a result of changes being made in wheelchair basketball classification that started in 1983 . Prior to the 1988 Games , sit skiing was not included on the Paralympic programme . Norway worked to change this by added sit skiing classifications to the World Championships in 1986 .

Functional classification testing was developed in 1989 for Nordic sit skiing , with the same system still being used for the 1998 Winter Paralympics . The tests included hand , arm and shoulder coordination , a sitting balance in the sagittal plane test , a stability sagittal plane test , a sitting balance test in the frontal planes , and a functional sitting ability test of the frontal and sagittal planes with an examination of sideways displacement .

By the 1990s , an integrated classification approach was tried in Nordic skiing had been developed using a percentage system that would allow for multiple classes to compete against each other in the same event using a formula to create a time finish that would enable fair comparisons for skiers of different functional ability . In 1997 / 19998 , this was defined as 84 % for LW10 , 93 % for LW11 and 100 % for LW12 . Their finishing time would then be multiplied against this percentage to determine where they finished . A variant of this system was still in place for the 2010 Winter Paralympics . The Canadian Paralympic Committee explains how this works with the following example : " Athlete A is classified as LW6 with a factor of 91 % finishes the race in 1 minute , their final race time is 54 @.@ 6 seconds . Athlete B is classified as LW5 with a factor of 79 % finishes the race in 1 minute and 2 seconds , their final race time is 48 @.@ 98 seconds . Athlete B wins . Therefore , the athlete who completed the race fastest may not be the winner and gold medalist . " For the 2008 to 2010 ski seasons , the following percentages were used :

The move from a medical classification to a functional classification system continued during the 1990s . There were conversations about whether or not less @-@ disabled wintersport athletes should be competing in disability winter sport and if they should instead be competing against able bodied competitors . At the same time , there were people including IPC first vice president Jens Bromann who entertained discussions about whether or not blind classifications should be combined into a single class like is done in some other disabilities sports . The debate about inclusion of competitors into able @-@ bodied competitions was seen by some disability sport advocates like Horst Strohkendl as a hindrance to the development of an independent classification system not based on the rules for able @-@ bodied sport . These efforts ended by 1993 as the International Paralympic Committee tried to carve out its own identity and largely ceased efforts for inclusion of disability sport on the Olympic programme . Nonetheless , in 2006 , skiers with amputation still had a medical component to their classification assessment .

The International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability was given the task of re @-@ evaluating the classification system for skiers with intellectual disabilities to prevent future abuses following the Spanish basketball team cheating scandal at the 2000 Summer Paralympics using a more reliable system that can be verified to classify competitors .

= = Sport = =

Skiers with physical disabilities may compete on the same team as people with vision impairment in team events . This is the case in cross country relay events , where there needs to be one sit skier , one standing skier and one vision impaired skier . At the 2010 Winter Paralympics , the men 's relay

, named the 1 x 4 km + 2 x 5 km relay , a sit skier led off with a 4 kilometres (2 @. @ 5 mi) leg , with the standing skier going second on a 5 kilometres (3 @. @ 1 mi) leg and the vision impaired skier going last on a 5 kilometres (3 @. @ 1 mi) leg . On the women 's side , the event is called the 3 x 2 @. @ 5 km event . Skiing in the same order , all three skiers ski 2 @. @ 5 kilometres (1 @. @ 6 mi) . Sit skiers sit in a chair with two skis attached to it . Classification percentages for national competitions are not necessarily the same ones used for international competitions .

In the biathlon , sit skiers and standing skiers shot at a target that had a bullseye 1 @. @ 5 centimetres (0 @. @ 59 in) large while vision impairment classifications shot at a bullseye that was 2 @. @ 8 centimetres (1 @. @ 1 in) large . Vision impaired skiers have a sound system that helps them sight for shooting portions in the biathlon . The guide for B1 skiers generally skis behind the skier in order to maximize the ability of the skier to hear the guide . The guide tells the skier things like when weight should be shifted , elements coming up on the course , and how to position themselves to maximize the diagonal run of the course . Guides for B2 and B3 skiers often position themselves differently as the skiers have some vision , which means the things a guide assists with will be different from what is required of a skier who has almost no sight .

= = Process = =

For skiers with a visual impairment , their classification is handled by the International Blind Sports Association . They are tested based on medical classification by an Ophthalmologist . In the 1990s , the classification assessment process for Nordic skiing had several components . One component was a test that looked at the ability of the skier to go up and down a hill . Another was a neurological test . In Canada , classification for blind skiers is handled by Canadian Blind Sports Association . Canadians seeking classification start the process by getting in touch with the organisation . Para @-@ Nordic skiing classification is handled by Canada Cross Country . For Australian competitors in this sport , the sport and classification is managed the national sport federation with support from the Australian Paralympic Committee . There are three types of classification available for Australian competitors : Provisional , national and international . The first is for club level competitions , the second for state and national competitions , and the third for international competitions . While a skier is first classified by their national Paralympic committee , their international classification may take place during their first World Cup event . A competitor may challenge their own classification or that of their fellow competitors .

= = At the Paralympic Games = =

The 1976 Winter Paralympics were the first time classifications other than spinal cord injury classifications competed at the Paralympic Games . At these Games , there were only two classifications for this sport . The 1976 Winter Paralympics were the first time classifications other than spinal cord injury classifications competed at the Paralympic Games . The only event open to a classification for people with spinal paralysis at the 1980 Winter Paralympics was the cross country event . It was one of only two events in the whole Games for people with spinal paralysis .

At the 1998 Winter Paralympics , skiers with intellectual disabilities were eligible to compete as full medal participants in the cross country event despite early initial opposition by the Nagano Organising Committee . The local organizers believed it would be too difficult to separate intellectual disability skiers into different classes . At the same time , there were few eligible skiers from Japan who would have been eligible to compete in these events .

At the 1992 Winter Paralympics , all disability types were eligible to participate , with classification being run through the International Paralympic Committee , with classification being done based on blind , amputee and sitting disability type . The biathlon was open to men with vision impairment classifications for the first time at the 1992 Games . At the 1992 Games , intellectual disability skiers competed in a demonstration event . At the 1992 Games , LW1 to LW9 competed in the short distances in a combined event , with LW 10 and 11 competing in their own short distance event . Blind skiers all skied the short distances in a combined event . The 10 km event was open to LW1 to

LW9 , and H to D. The relay event was open to LW1 to LW9 in one event , and LWX and LWXI in another event , and blind skiing in a third event . The biathlon was open to women in blind classes for the first time at the 1994 Winter Paralympics .

Historically , Nordic skiing was the only skiing discipline open to competitors with intellectual disabilities , but their inclusion was suspended following the 2000 Summer Paralympics cheating scandal and they were not eligible to compete at the 2002 Winter Paralympics . At the 2002 Games , the cross country event had three groups of skiers : vision impaired , standing and sitting . In 2002 , for the Winter Paralympics , the Games Classifiers were Birgitta Blomquist , Anne Lannem and Ted Fay . The Games Classifiers for vision impairment classifications were Roman Tolmatshev , Johan Wirsching and Axel Bolsinger . Classifications for skiers with intellectual disabilities were not included at these Games because of cheating that took place at the Sydney Summer Paralympics two years earlier .

= = Future = =

Going forward , disability sport 's major classification body , the International Paralympic Committee , is working on improving classification to be more of an evidence @-@ based system as opposed to a performance @-@ based system so as not to punish elite athletes whose performance makes them appear in a higher class alongside competitors who train less .