

Understanding Para for Obstacle Sports

In Para Ninja and OCR there are four different sport classes for athletes with physical impairment (PO1-PO4), and a fifth sport class for athletes with vision impairment (PO5).

Athletes with different impairment types are found in each sport class. The impact of impairment on the performance within each class is similar.

Classifiers assess all functional body structures through a physical and technical assessment using a point system and a weighing factor for each aspect of the sport (obstacles and running). The total score determines the athlete's sport class.

PO1 (wheelchair user athletes)

Para athletes in this class use a handbike or racing wheelchair for run sections. This class includes athletes with, but not limited to impairments of muscle power, range of movement, limb deficiency such as unilateral or double leg amputation, spinal cord injuries resulting in paraplegia, or tetraplegia.

PO2 - PO4 (ambulant athletes)

Athletes in this sport class run with or without the use of an approved prosthesis and/or supportive devices. They fall into one of three sport classes which include but are not limited to: impairment of muscle power, range of movement, limb deficiency, hypertonia, ataxia and athetosis.

PO2

This sport class includes athletes with a severe degree of activity limitation such as, but not limited to: unilateral above knee amputees, double below knee amputee, athletes with a significant combined upper, and lower limb muscle power limitation or severe neurological impairment such as congenital hemiplegia and severe cerebral palsy.

PO3

This sport class includes athletes with a moderate degree of activity limitation such as athletes with, but not limited to: through-the-shoulder amputation, complete loss of range of motion in one arm, athletes with a moderate combined upper, and lower limb loss of muscle power, or moderate neurological impairments.

PO4

This sport class includes athletes with a mild degree of activity limitation such as athletes with, but not limited to: below-the-elbow arm amputation, below-the-knee amputation, partial loss of arm muscle power, lower limb deficiency, or mild neurological impairments such as ataxia or athetosis.

PO5 (athletes with visual impairment)

Para triathletes in this sport class run and complete obstacles with a guide.

Condensed Para Obstacle Classes

In events with a limited number of Para Athletes, three (3) sport classes may be used, PO1, PO2-4 and PO5. These classes represent non-ambulatory, ambulatory and vision impaired athletes respectively. There is no distinction between PO2, PO3 and PO4 classes in the Condensed Classification. Athletes in PO5 who have partial vision are required to wear opaque eye patches with complete coverage.