



## INTERNATIONAL PARA PICKLEBALL ASSOCIATION (IPPA)

Classification Handbook for Standing Para Pickleball Players

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### STANDING PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION HANDBOOK

*For Athletes with Lower Limb Impairments (Classes PP42 – PP43 – PP44) & PP-SLA*

Issued by:

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#### FOREWORD

The International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA) is committed to promoting inclusivity, integrity, and equality within the sport of Para Pickleball across all continents. Classification is the foundation of fair competition. It ensures that an athlete's performance reflects their sporting ability rather than the degree of impairment.

The *Standing Para Pickleball Classification Handbook (PP42–PP44-PPSLA)* defines the international classification structure for para pickleball players with lower limb impairments who compete in a standing position. It serves as a global reference for classifiers, technical officials, coaches, and athletes in all IPPA-sanctioned competitions.

Standing Para Pickleball encompasses athletes with a range of lower limb impairments who compete in an upright position, demonstrating agility, balance, and high-level skill. Within this division, particular emphasis is placed on the **PP-SLA (Single Leg Amputee) category**, which is recognized as a distinct and important classification. This category is designed specifically for athletes with a unilateral lower limb amputation, ensuring

fair competition by grouping players with similar functional abilities. By establishing PP-SLA as a separate category, Para Pickleball promotes equity, acknowledges the unique biomechanical challenges faced by single leg amputees, and provides a platform for these athletes to showcase their athletic excellence at a competitive level. Note: Double Leg Amputees (PP-DLA) Play sitting on a sports wheelchair hence they are classified under Wheelchair Para Pickleball.

This handbook has been developed in accordance with the principles of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification Code and aligned with the standards of the World Ability Sports Federation. It establishes consistent methods for functional assessment, class allocation, and athlete evaluation, ensuring transparency and athlete protection.

The IPPA aims to unify Para Pickleball classification practices worldwide through standardized criteria, scientifically based evaluation, and professional training of classifiers. This document represents the first comprehensive framework for Standing Para Pickleball classification and forms part of IPPA's ongoing commitment to advancing global para sport excellence.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The Standing Para Pickleball Classification Handbook provides the official framework for evaluating and assigning sport classes to athletes with lower limb impairments (PP42, PP43, PP44 and PP-SLA). The objective is to ensure fair, credible, and transparent competition by grouping athletes based on the functional impact of their impairment on pickleball performance.

### **1.2 Scope**

This handbook applies to all athletes competing in Standing Para Pickleball events at international, continental, and national levels conducted under IPPA sanction. It focuses exclusively on lower limb impairments and excludes para pickleball players requiring a wheelchair for competition.

### **1.3 Principles**

The classification process upholds the following principles:

- Equity: Equal opportunity for para pickleball players through function-based class assignment.
- Evidence-Based Evaluation: Medical and functional data drive classification decisions.
- Transparency and Consistency: Standardized global procedures.
- Athlete Welfare: Respect, dignity, and safety are maintained throughout assessment.

## **CHAPTER 2: ELIGIBILITY AND IMPAIRMENT TYPES**

### **2.1 Minimum Disability Criteria (MDC)**

A para pickleball player must demonstrate a permanent and verifiable physical impairment that significantly affects lower limb function and directly impacts performance in pickleball-specific movements, including:

- ✓ Mobility and directional changes.
- ✓ Balance and postural control during stroke execution.
- ✓ Propulsion, acceleration, and recovery on court.

Athletes not meeting the MDC shall be designated Not Eligible (NE).

### **2.2 Eligible Impairment Types**

IPPA recognizes the following impairment types for Standing Para Pickleball:

- ✓ Limb Deficiency Congenital or acquired absence of limb segments.
- ✓ Impaired Muscle Power – Reduced voluntary contraction (e.g., spinal cord injury, polio).
- ✓ Impaired Passive Range of Motion – Permanent joint limitation reducing movement.
- ✓ Leg Length Difference Bone length discrepancy of 7 cm or more.
- ✓ Hypertonia, Ataxia, or Athetosis – Neurological conditions affecting tone or coordination.

### **2.3 Non-Eligible Impairments**

- ✓ Temporary injuries or post-surgical conditions.
- ✓ Minor asymmetries without measurable impact.
- ✓ Pain-related or psychological limitations without structural impairment.

## CHAPTER 3: CLASSIFICATION STRUCTURE AND CLASS DEFINITIONS

The Standing Para Pickleball classes PP42–PP44 and PP-SLA represent a spectrum of functional ability. Each class reflects the athlete’s capacity for balance, movement, and technical execution during play.

### PP42 – Severe Lower Limb Impairment

Athletes with severe impairment affecting both lower limbs, or one limb with substantial functional loss.

Functional Profile:

- ✓ Significantly reduced dynamic balance and propulsion.
- ✓ Limited directional movement and slow recovery between rallies.
- ✓ May use prosthetic or orthotic support.  
Examples: Bilateral above-knee amputation, hip disarticulation, or bilateral paralysis.

### PP43 – Moderate Lower Limb Impairment

Para Pickleball Players with moderate impairment in one or both legs who maintain functional standing balance and controlled movement.

Functional Profile:

- ✓ Capable of active play with moderate asymmetry or imbalance.
- ✓ Stable stroke execution with slightly reduced agility or step range.
- ✓ Minor dependence on prosthetics or orthotic stabilization.  
Examples: Unilateral above-knee or bilateral below-knee amputations, moderate muscle weakness, or joint fusion.

### PP44 – Mild Lower Limb Impairment

Para Pickleball Players with minimal impairment who exhibit near-normal mobility and coordination but measurable asymmetry or strength deficit.

Functional Profile:

- ✓ Efficient mobility with slight restriction in lunge or recovery.
- ✓ Balanced strokes with minor stability variation.

- ✓ No assistive device required during play.  
Examples: Unilateral below-knee amputation, mild joint restriction, or leg length discrepancy ( $\geq 7$  cm).

## **PP-SLA – Single Leg Amputees (Prosthesis Users)**

### **Classification Definition:**

Athletes with a unilateral lower limb amputation who compete in a standing position using a functional prosthetic limb. This category is exclusively for prosthesis-dependent players.

### **Functional Profile:**

Prosthetic-assisted ambulation with observable asymmetry in gait mechanics. Altered ground reaction force distribution and reduced proprioceptive feedback from the prosthetic side.

Decreased push-off power and energy return on the affected limb. Increased reliance on the intact limb for propulsion, braking, and lateral stabilization. Modified center-of-mass control, particularly during rapid directional changes and recovery movements.

Functional limitations in agility tasks such as split-step execution, quick pivots, and multidirectional court coverage. Maintains effective upper body coordination and stroke production despite lower limb constraints.

### **Classification Rationale:**

This classification ensures fair and consistent competition by grouping athletes with comparable prosthetic-dependent biomechanical and neuromuscular profiles, reflecting the specific performance impact of single limb amputation with prosthesis use.

## **CHAPTER 4: FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 Classification Process**

Classification is conducted by a certified IPPA Classification Panel and includes:

1. Medical Documentation Review
2. Physical and Functional Testing
3. On-Court Technical Assessment
4. Observation in Competition

### **4.2 Physical and Functional Testing**

Evaluations are conducted under controlled conditions and assess:

- ✓ Static and dynamic balance.
- ✓ Lower limb range of motion.
- ✓ Muscle power, control, and endurance.
- ✓ Weight transfer and postural symmetry.

#### 4.3 On-Court Technical Evaluation

Athletes perform sport-specific drills to assess:

- ✓ Starting, stopping, and directional change efficiency.
- ✓ Stability during stroke execution (forehand, backhand, overhead).
- ✓ Recovery speed and balance following play actions.

#### 4.4 Observation in Competition

The final phase verifies that observed performance aligns with the assigned class. Classifiers may designate *Review with Observation (RWO)* status if further validation is needed during official matches.

## **CHAPTER 5: EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORTS**

### 5.1 Prosthetics and Orthotics

Prosthetic or orthotic devices are permitted if they:

- Do not confer a competitive advantage.
- Are safe and securely fitted.
- Are consistent throughout the event.

### 5.2 Non-Permitted Equipment

Crutches, walking aids, or wheelchairs are not allowed in Standing events.

### 5.3 Equipment Compliance

All devices are inspected by technical officials before competition to ensure conformity with IPPA safety standards.

## **CHAPTER 6: CLASS STATUS AND REVIEW**

### 6.1 Status Categories

- Confirmed (C): Full assessment completed; class permanent.

- Review (R): Further evaluation required due to medical or performance changes.
- Review with Observation (RWO): Temporary class pending match validation.

## 6.2 Reassessment and Appeal

Athletes may be re-evaluated if medical condition, performance, or prosthetic configuration changes. Protests and appeals follow the official IPPA Classification Regulations.

## CHAPTER 7: ETHICAL STANDARDS

### 7.1 Classifier Conduct

Classifiers must maintain neutrality, confidentiality, and professionalism. No classifier may assess an athlete with whom they have a coaching or personal relationship.

### 7.2 Para Pickleball Players Rights

Para Pickleball Players are entitled to:

- ✓ Respectful and transparent classification procedures.
- ✓ Clear communication of outcomes.
- ✓ The right to appeal in accordance with IPPA policies.

## CHAPTER 8: FUNCTIONAL PROFILE SUMMARY

Class	Functional Description	Typical Impairments	Court Mobility and Performance
PP42	Severe impairment, limited dynamic balance and propulsion	Bilateral above-knee amputation, hip disarticulation, or severe paralysis	Restricted movement, slow recovery, reliance on supports
PP43	Moderate impairment with partial mobility and balance control	Unilateral above-knee or bilateral below-knee amputations, moderate weakness	Controlled movement, reduced agility, consistent stroke stability
PP44	Mild impairment, near-normal mobility	Unilateral below-knee amputation, mild leg length difference, minor joint limitation	Smooth movement, minor asymmetry, full game coverage

## **CHAPTER 9: ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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Raghu Kumar Raghavelu is a dedicated advocate for inclusion, equality, and accessibility in sports. As the Secretary General of the International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA), he has played a pivotal role in developing Para Pickleball both nationally and internationally.

With extensive experience in organizing championships, promoting adaptive sports, and fostering collaboration across federations, Raghu Kumar's vision is to ensure that every athlete regardless of physical ability has the opportunity to participate, compete, and achieve excellence.

This Classification Handbook for Standing Para Pickleball is part of his continuing commitment to building a structured, fair, and globally recognized framework for Para Pickleball under IPPA standards.

### **End Note**

This handbook is an official publication of the International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA). All classification procedures, criteria, and class codes are governed by IPPA regulations in alignment with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification Code (2021-23). Unauthorized reproduction or modification without written consent from IPPA is prohibited.

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