



**IPPA PARA PICKLEBALL**  
**CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM MANUAL**

**By**  
**Raghu Kumar Raghavelu**

*A Professional Training, Official Classifier Education, Assessment and Decision-Making Manual for Para Pickleball Classifiers*

For International Para Pickleball Association Certified Classifiers, Classification Panels and Authorized National Classification Personnel

**PLAYER → CLASSIFIER → CLASSIFICATION → SPORT CLASS**

## **PREFACE**

The development of Para Pickleball is founded on the principle that sport should provide equitable opportunity, dignity, inclusion, equality and meaningful competition for every player with an eligible impairment. As Para Pickleball expands internationally, participation alone is insufficient to establish a credible and sustainable competitive sport. Players must have confidence that competition is conducted under fair, consistent and transparent conditions, and that classification decisions are determined through a standardized, evidence-based and professionally administered process.

With this vision, I present the International Para Pickleball Association-Para Pickleball Classification System Manual, a pioneering framework that brings science, functional assessment, sport-specific evidence and competitive observation together to establish a new standard for fair, consistent and meaningful classification in Para Pickleball worldwide. Its fundamental purpose is to determine the extent to which an eligible impairment produces relevant functional limitations in the performance of Para Pickleball activities. Classification therefore does not rely solely upon a medical diagnosis; rather, it requires the systematic consideration of eligibility, functional ability, sport-specific performance and, where applicable, observation during competition. Para Pickleball Players must also have confidence that competition is conducted fairly and that classification is applied consistently, professionally and transparently.

**SCIENCE → ASSESSMENT → SPORT-SPECIFIC FUNCTION → OBSERVATION → EVIDENCE → CLASSIFICATION DECISION**

As the Founder of the International Para Pickleball Association, and the Founder of Intellectual Disabilities Para Pickleball, Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball, Dwarf / Short Stature Para Pickleball and Standing Para Pickleball, I have had the privilege and responsibility of contributing to the development of these areas of Para Pickleball.

This Manual has been prepared specifically as a textbook and professional training reference for IPPA Classifiers. It is intended to help candidates understand the classification system established in the IPPA Book of Rules and to develop the knowledge and practical competencies necessary to apply that system responsibly.

The Manual is structured around three fundamental components of classification assessment:

1. Medical Assessment
2. Functional Assessment
3. Observation During Matches

Medical assessment enables the classifier to understand the player's underlying health condition, eligible impairment and relevant supporting evidence. Functional assessment considers the player's functional abilities and limitations relevant to Para Pickleball. Observation during matches provides an opportunity to understand how the athlete's impairment and functional limitations are expressed during actual competition.

These three components must be considered carefully and objectively. A classifier must learn to distinguish between medical diagnosis, impairment, functional limitation and the sport-specific impact of impairment. The ultimate purpose is to arrive at a fair and evidence-based classification decision within the IPPA Classification System.

The development of this Manual also takes into consideration internationally recognized classification principles, including the principles and framework of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), while maintaining the specific sport requirements and classification provisions established by IPPA. The IPPA Book of Rules remains the governing reference for the IPPA Para Pickleball Classification System.

The IPPA Classifier education programme has been designed as a progressive professional pathway with two levels.

### **LEVEL 1 — IPPA CLASSIFIER CERTIFICATE**

The Level 1 IPPA Classifier Certificate Course provides the foundation for understanding Para Pickleball classification. Candidates study the philosophy and principles of classification, eligibility, impairment and minimum impairment criteria, IPPA sport classes, medical assessment, functional assessment, observation during matches, classification documentation, ethics and professional responsibilities.

The purpose of Level 1 is to establish a strong foundation of knowledge and understanding before the classifier progresses to advanced practical experience.

## **LEVEL 2 — IPPA CLASSIFIER DIPLOMA**

The Level 2 IPPA Classifier Diploma is an advanced nine-month professional program. It is designed to take the classifier beyond theoretical knowledge and into supervised practical classification experience.

During the Diploma programme, the candidate is required to make a thesis after participating in at least five classification experiences at events and through personal assessments, with practical exposure to different Para Pickleball classification categories.

The candidate should gain experience across the major classification areas, including:

- 🏳️ Wheelchair Para Pickleball
- 🏳️ Standing Para Pickleball
- 🏳️ Dwarf / Short Stature Para Pickleball
- 🏳️ Intellectual Disabilities Para Pickleball
- 🏳️ Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball

The candidate's development is documented through classification experience reports, assessment records and practical observations. The purpose is to ensure that a Diploma holder does not merely know the classification system but has developed the ability to observe, assess, analyse, document and contribute to classification decisions in real sporting environments.

The Level 2 Diploma therefore represents a significant progression from knowledge to professional competency.

The Responsibility of a Classifier

Classification is a position of trust.

An IPPA Classifier must approach every player without prejudice or preconceived conclusions. The classifier must listen, observe, assess evidence and apply the established criteria objectively. Personal opinions, reputation, sporting

performance, nationality, medal potential or any other irrelevant consideration must never influence a classification decision.

The classifier must also understand that players may have different experiences of impairment and that two athletes with a similar medical diagnosis may not necessarily have the same functional impact within Para Pickleball. The responsibility of the classifier is therefore to apply the IPPA Classification System consistently, respectfully and professionally.

It is my hope that this publication will become a valuable educational resource for IPPA Classifiers, national federations, coaches, technical officials, universities, rehabilitation institutions, disability-sport organizations and Para Pickleball administrators seeking to understand and develop the IPPA Classification System.

The growth of Para Pickleball will depend not only on para pickleball players, coaches and competitions, but also on the development of competent and ethical classification professionals who can protect the integrity of the sport.

I invite every classifier who studies this Manual to approach classification with knowledge, fairness, humility, integrity and respect for the athlete.

Our objective is simple: Fair Classification, Meaningful Competition, Equal Opportunity and Dignity for Every Athlete.

This is the spirit in which the IPPA Para Pickleball Classification System has been developed, and it is the spirit in which I present this Manual to the Para Pickleball community around the world.

**Raghu Kumar Raghavelu**

Author & Founder

International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA)

Founder of Standing Para Pickleball

Founder of Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball

Founder Para Pickleball World Ranking System

Founder of Dwarf / Short Stature Para Pickleball

Founder of Intellectual Disabilities Para Pickleball

Founder Wheelchair Pickleball Federation of India

## **HISTORY OF PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION**

The history of Para Pickleball classification begins with an important distinction between playing Para Pickleball with a disability or impairment and having a formal, sport-specific classification system for Para Pickleball.

Before the development of the International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA) Classification System, wheelchair players participated in wheelchair pickleball through rules and competition formats developed by various pickleball groups and non-government organizations. These initiatives created opportunities for wheelchair players to participate in the sport; however, there was no comprehensive international Para Pickleball classification framework covering multiple impairment groups and establishing standardized principles for eligibility, functional assessment, sport-specific classification and competition observation.

The development of a comprehensive Para Pickleball classification system therefore represented a significant step in the evolution of the sport.

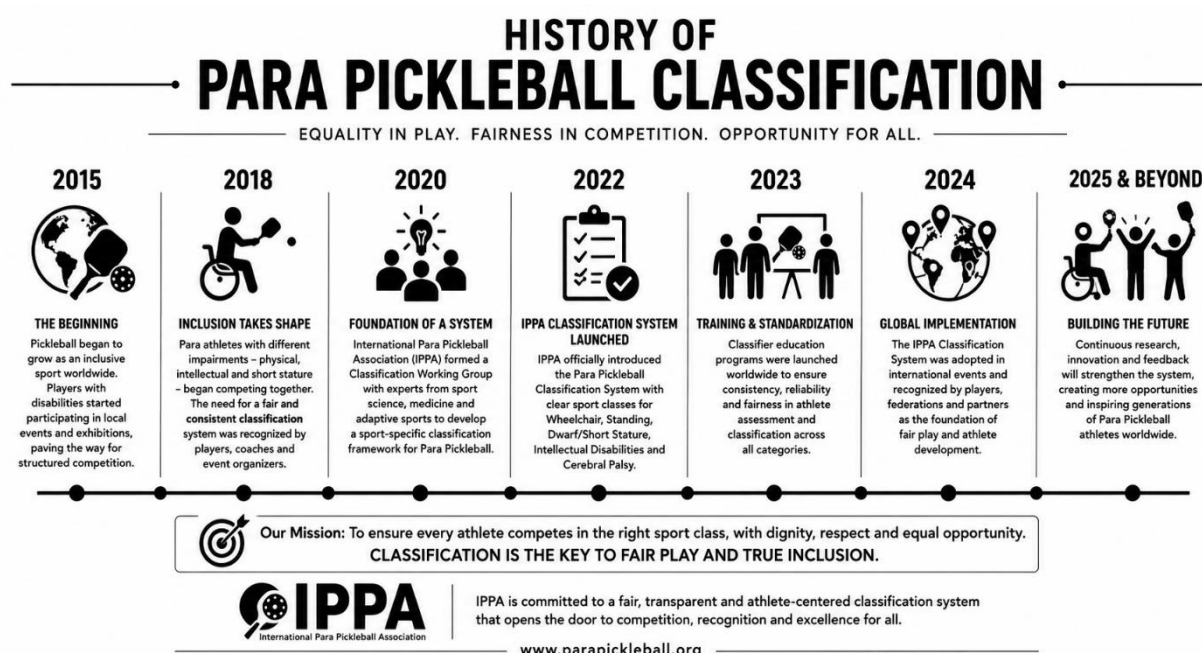
In 2022, Raghu Kumar Raghavelu began developing the Para Pickleball Classification System with the vision of creating a classification framework specifically designed around the functional demands of Para Pickleball. His approach extended Para Pickleball beyond wheelchair participation and recognized the need for structured classification systems for players with different eligible impairments. The system subsequently developed into a broader framework encompassing Wheelchair Para Pickleball, Standing Para Pickleball, Dwarf-Short Stature Para Pickleball, Intellectual Disabilities Para Pickleball and Cerebral Palsy Para Pickleball, with sport classes designed to address the functional impact of impairment on Para Pickleball performance.

Raghu Kumar Raghavelu is therefore recognized as the Father of the IPPA Para Pickleball Classification System and as the Founder of the classification framework that brought together multiple Para Pickleball impairment groups under a unified sport-specific system.

The IPPA Book of Rules and the Para Pickleball Classification System was developed and introduced by Raghu Kumar Raghavelu in 2022, and the system was formally adopted by the International Para Pickleball Association in June 2025.

The creation of a classification system also created a new professional requirement: trained people capable of applying the system consistently and objectively. Classification cannot achieve its purpose through written rules alone. It requires competent classifiers who understand eligibility, impairment, functional limitation, sport-specific demands, assessment methodology and observation during competition. This led to the development of the IPPA Para Pickleball Classifier Education and Certification Framework, and ultimately to this IPPA Para Pickleball Classification System Manual.

This Manual therefore represents the next stage in the evolution of IPPA classification: moving from the establishment of a classification system to the systematic education, training and professional development of IPPA Classifiers and the journey continues with the development of a scientifically informed, functionally grounded and sport-specific classification profession dedicated to fairness, consistency, transparency, integrity and meaningful competition for every Para Pickleball Player.



## HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

### Level 1 — IPPA Classifier Certificate

Candidates preparing for the **Level 1 IPPA Classifier Certificate** should study the Manual primarily for foundational knowledge and understanding.

The Level 1 candidate should develop the ability to:

#### **Understand → Identify → Apply**

The candidate should be familiar with IPPA classification principles, eligibility, sport classes, assessment components, classification procedures, documentation and professional responsibilities.

The Level 1 examination will test whether the candidate has acquired the foundational knowledge necessary to progress into practical classifier development.

### 6. Level 2 — IPPA Classifier Diploma

The **Level 2 IPPA Classifier Diploma** is a nine-month advanced professional development program.

The Diploma candidate must move beyond theoretical study and develop practical classification competency through supervised classification experiences, personal assessments, competition observation and formal reporting.

The candidate should complete **at least five classification experiences** and gain practical exposure to different Para Pickleball categories, including:

🏳️ Wheelchair;

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🏳️ Standing;

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🏳️ Dwarf-Short Stature;

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🏳️ Intellectual Disabilities; and

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🏳️ Cerebral Palsy.

The candidate should use the practical sections, case studies, assessment tools and documentation templates in this Manual to support the development of a professional classification portfolio.

### 7. Maintain a Classification Experience Portfolio



Level 2 candidates should maintain a structured record of their practical development.

Each classification experience should be documented through the appropriate IPPA forms and reports, including, where applicable:

- ✚ Medical Assessment;

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- ✚ Functional Assessment;

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- ✚ Sport-Specific Assessment;

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- ✚ Observation During Matches;

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- ✚ Classification analysis;

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- ✚ Classification decision;

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- ✚ Supervising Classifier feedback; and

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- ✚ Candidate reflection.

The portfolio should demonstrate progressive development of classification competency, rather than merely recording attendance at events.

## **8. Use the Case Studies to Develop Classification Reasoning**

Classification requires more than memorizing sport classes and criteria.

Candidates should use the case studies in this Manual to develop the ability to:

Review Evidence → Identify Relevant Impairment → Assess Functional Impact → Consider Sport-Specific Impact → Evaluate Competition Observation → Analyse Evidence → Reach an Objective Classification Decision

Level 2 candidates should be particularly attentive to complex, borderline and conflicting cases.

## **9. Use the Manual for Examination Preparation**

At the end of relevant chapters, candidates should review the learning points, practical exercises, case studies and knowledge-check material.

## **10. Use the Manual as a Professional Reference**

This Manual is not intended to be read only once.

An IPPA Classifier should continue to use it as a professional reference throughout their development and classification practice.

When undertaking an assessment, the Classifier should always refer to the **current IPPA Book of Rules and applicable official IPPA classification requirements**. Where there is any difference between this educational Manual and the governing IPPA rules or an officially issued IPPA regulation, the current governing IPPA source shall prevail.

## **11. The Goal of This Manual**

The ultimate purpose of this Manual is to develop Classifiers who can apply the IPPA Classification System with:

**SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING**

**FUNCTIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

**SPORT-SPECIFIC COMPETENCE**

**OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE-BASED REASONING**

**PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY**

**CONSISTENCY AND TRANSPARENCY**

**RESPECT FOR EVERY PLAYER**

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## CHAPTER 1 — INTRODUCTION TO PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION

Para Pickleball classification is the sport-specific framework established by the **International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA)** to provide fair, equitable and meaningful competition for players with eligible disabilities or impairments.

The fundamental purpose of classification is to ensure that the outcome of competition is determined primarily by skill, strategy, fitness, preparation and performance, rather than by the impact of impairment. The IPPA Classification System therefore considers the functional effect of an eligible impairment on activities that are fundamental to Para Pickleball, rather than relying solely on medical diagnosis.

Para Pickleball places specific functional demands on a player, including mobility, balance, coordination, reach, wheelchair movement, paddle control and court positioning. Classification must therefore be specific to the sport and relevant to the activities required for competitive play.

The IPPA Classification System is founded on three essential principles:

### **FAIRNESS**

Classification seeks to minimize the impact of impairment on competition so that players with comparable activity limitations can compete meaningfully against one another.

### **INCLUSION**

Classification supports opportunities for players with eligible impairments to participate and compete within an organized Para Pickleball system.

### **INTEGRITY**

Classification must be conducted objectively, consistently and transparently by trained Classifiers who respect the rights and dignity of every player.

Classification is not simply the assignment of a sport class. It is a structured process of **eligibility assessment, functional evaluation, sport-specific analysis and, where applicable, observation during competition**. The IPPA framework recognizes that the existence of a medical diagnosis alone does not automatically establish eligibility; the impairment must have a relevant functional impact on Para Pickleball activities.

The Classifier is therefore central to the integrity of Para Pickleball classification System. Classifiers are responsible for applying the IPPA standards objectively, protecting confidential information, avoiding bias and conflicts of interest, and maintaining professional competence.

This Manual provides the educational foundation for developing that competence. It progresses from the principles of classification to eligibility, sport-specific assessment, classification decision-making, practical experience and professional certification.

The chapters that follow explain how this principle is translated into a structured, scientific, functional and practical classification system for Para Pickleball.

| <b>Experience</b> | <b>Category</b>              | <b>Medical</b> | <b>Functional</b> | <b>Match<br/>Observation</b> | <b>Report</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1                 | Wheelchair                   | ✓              | ✓                 | ✓                            | ✓             |
| 2                 | Standing                     | ✓              | ✓                 | ✓                            | ✓             |
| 3                 | Dwarf / Short<br>Stature     | ✓              | ✓                 | ✓                            | ✓             |
| 4                 | Intellectual<br>Disabilities | ✓              | ✓                 | ✓                            | ✓             |
| 5                 | Cerebral Palsy               | ✓              | ✓                 | ✓                            | ✓             |

## **CHAPTER 2 — PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES OF THE IPPA CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**

The **IPPA Para Pickleball Classification System** is founded on the principle that classification must protect the integrity of competition while ensuring meaningful sporting opportunities for players with eligible impairments.

Classification is not intended to determine who is the better player. Its purpose is to reduce, as far as reasonably possible, the influence of impairment on competitive outcomes so that skill, strategy, fitness, preparation and sporting performance remain the principal determinants of success.

The IPPA Classification System therefore adopts a sport-specific, functional and evidence-based approach. The presence of a medical diagnosis alone does not determine a player's sport class. Classification considers the relationship between an eligible impairment, its functional consequences and the activities fundamental to Para Pickleball.

### **2.1 Fairness**

**Fairness is the foundation of classification.**

Players should compete under conditions in which the impact of eligible impairment is appropriately accounted for. Classification seeks to group players according to relevant functional limitations so that competition remains meaningful and sporting performance can determine the result.

Fairness requires Classifiers to apply the same established principles and criteria consistently, regardless of a player's nationality, reputation, ranking, experience, team, personal circumstances or expected competitive outcome.

### **2.2 Inclusion**

The IPPA Classification System recognizes the right of players with eligible impairments to participate in Para Pickleball.

Inclusion does not mean removing objective eligibility requirements. Rather, it means establishing a structured pathway through which players who meet the applicable requirements can participate in an appropriate Para Pickleball classification category.

The system is therefore designed to support participation across different impairment groups while maintaining the integrity of competition.



## 2.3 Integrity

Classification must be conducted with **objectivity, independence, confidentiality and professional integrity**.

A Classifier must make decisions based on relevant evidence and the applicable IPPA criteria, without prejudice, bias, external pressure or personal interest. The IPPA Book of Rules requires Classifiers to maintain confidentiality, avoid conflicts of interest and apply classification criteria accurately.

Integrity also requires the classification process to be transparent enough that its principles and procedures can be understood, while protecting the player's confidential medical and personal information.

## 2.4 Sport-Specific Classification

Classification is specific to the sport.

An impairment that may have a particular effect in one sport may have a different effect in another. Para Pickleball requires a combination of **mobility, balance, coordination, reach, wheelchair movement, paddle control and court positioning**, among other sport-specific activities.

Consequently, IPPA classification must examine impairment through the demands of Para Pickleball rather than treating a medical diagnosis as a universal measure of sporting ability.

## 2.5 Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Classification decisions must be based on relevant and verifiable evidence.

The IPPA framework recognizes the importance of medical documentation, physical and functional assessment, sport-specific assessment and observation during competition.

The Classifier's responsibility is therefore not simply to identify an impairment, but to evaluate its **relevant functional impact on Para Pickleball performance**.

## 2.6 Functional Impact Rather Than Diagnosis Alone

A medical diagnosis provides important information, but diagnosis alone does not establish a player's sport class.

The IPPA eligibility framework requires consideration of whether an eligible impairment results in a measurable activity limitation relevant to Para Pickleball.

The system therefore considers how impairment affects activities such as **court mobility, balance, coordination, wheelchair propulsion, reaching, paddle control, reaction and movement efficiency.**

This distinction is fundamental:

- ✚ **Diagnosis identifies the medical condition and Classification evaluates its relevant sporting impact.**

## **2.7 Consistency and Reproducibility**

A classification system must be capable of being applied consistently by appropriately trained Classifiers.

Consistency requires:

- ✚ Clear criteria;
- ✚ Standardized procedures;
- ✚ Appropriate documentation;
- ✚ Structured assessment;
- ✚ Objective evidence;
- ✚ Consistent interpretation; and
- ✚ Professional Classifier education.

The objective is not that every player will produce identical assessment findings, but that comparable evidence should be interpreted according to the same IPPA principles.

## **2.8 Player-Centred Classification**

The player must remain at the centre of the classification process.

Every player should be treated with dignity, respect, fairness and confidentiality. The classification process should be professional and rigorous without compromising the player's rights.

Players are also responsible for providing accurate information, cooperating with assessments and refraining from conduct intended to mislead or influence classification outcomes.

## **2.9 Classification as a Professional Responsibility**

Classification is both a technical process and a professional responsibility.

The IPPA Classifier must combine knowledge of impairment and functional assessment with an understanding of the technical and competitive demands of Para Pickleball. A classification decision should be supported by evidence, reasoned analysis and appropriate documentation.

The Classifier must also recognize the limits of personal knowledge and seek appropriate guidance whenever a case requires additional expertise or clarification.

## **2.10 The IPPA Classification Philosophy**

The principles of the IPPA Classification System can be summarized as:

**FAIRNESS**



**INCLUSION**



**SPORT-SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT**



**FUNCTIONAL IMPACT**



**EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING**



**CONSISTENCY & INTEGRITY**



**MEANINGFUL COMPETITION**

The strength of the IPPA Classification System ultimately depends upon the quality of its application. A scientifically informed classification framework can achieve its purpose only when Classifiers apply it with competence, objectivity, consistency and respect for every Para Pickleball Player.

## CHAPTER 3 — IPC CLASSIFICATION PRINCIPLES AND INTERNATIONAL ELIGIBILITY FRAMEWORK

The **International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA) Classification System** is developed with reference to internationally recognized classification principles established by the **International Paralympic Committee (IPC)**. The purpose of this alignment is to ensure that Para Pickleball classification is founded on internationally recognized concepts of eligibility, functional impact, sport specificity, fairness and meaningful competition.

The IPC Classification framework establishes two fundamental functions of classification:

1. Determining which players are eligible to compete in Para sport; and
2. Grouping eligible players into Sport Classes according to the extent to which their eligible impairment affects the fundamental activities required in the relevant sport.

IPPA adopts these fundamental principles while developing their application specifically for the functional and technical demands of Para Pickleball.

### 3.1 Classification is Sport-Specific

Classification is not a general assessment of disability or sporting ability. It is **sport-specific** because an impairment may affect performance differently from one sport to another.

For Para Pickleball, classification must therefore consider activities fundamental to the sport, including relevant aspects of:

- Mobility;
- Balance;
- Coordination;
- Reach;
- Wheelchair movement;
- Paddle control;
- Reaction;
- Court positioning; and

- Sport-specific movement.

The IPC framework similarly requires International Federations to develop sport-specific classification systems and determine which Eligible Impairments are provided sporting opportunities within their sport.

### **3.2 Underlying Health Condition and Eligible Impairment**

Eligibility begins with an **Underlying Health Condition** that results in an **Eligible Impairment** recognized within the applicable classification framework.

A medical diagnosis by itself does not automatically establish eligibility. The relevant impairment must meet the applicable requirements and produce the required functional impact for the sport.

The IPPA Book of Rules follows this principle by requiring an underlying health condition leading to an eligible impairment and a measurable activity limitation relevant to Para Pickleball.

### **3.3 Eligible Impairments**

The IPC framework establishes Eligible Impairments as the foundation for Para sport classification. The current IPC framework recognizes impairment types including:

- Impaired Muscle Power;
- Impaired Passive Range of Movement;
- Limb Deficiency and/or Limb Length Difference;
- Short Stature;
- Coordination Impairments, including Hypertonia/Spasticity, Motor Ataxia and Dyskinesia;
- Vision Impairment; and
- Intellectual Impairment.

The IPPA Classification System applies the internationally recognized eligibility principles while determining the impairments and functional profiles for which **Para Pickleball provides sporting opportunities**.

The IPPA Book of Rules specifically identifies eligible impairment concepts relevant to Para Pickleball, including impaired muscle power, impaired passive range of

movement, limb deficiency, leg length difference, short stature, hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis and intellectual impairment.

### **3.4 Minimum Impairment Criteria**

Having an Eligible Impairment does not automatically mean that a player qualifies for a particular Para Pickleball Sport Class.

The player must also meet the applicable **Minimum Impairment Criteria (MIC)** established for the sport and impairment type.

Minimum Impairment Criteria establish the minimum level of impairment that must be present for the impairment to have the required impact on activities fundamental to the sport. The IPC identifies MIC as sport-specific because the same impairment may have different consequences in different sports.

For IPPA Classifiers, this distinction is fundamental:

#### **Eligible Impairment ≠ Automatic Classification**

Instead:

#### **Underlying Health Condition**



#### **Eligible Impairment**



#### **Minimum Impairment Criteria**



#### **Sport-Specific Functional Impact**



#### **Sport Class**

### **3.5 Classification is Not Based on Diagnosis Alone**

The IPPA system follows the principle that classification must examine the **functional consequences of impairment in Para Pickleball**.

A diagnosis provides important medical information, but the Classifier must determine whether the impairment produces the relevant functional limitation required by the applicable IPPA criteria.

The IPPA Book of Rules specifically identifies functional areas relevant to Para Pickleball, including court mobility, balance, coordination, wheelchair propulsion, reaching, paddle control, reaction time and movement efficiency.

### **3.6 International Alignment and IPPA Independence**

IPPA classification is **internationally informed but sport-specific**.

Alignment with the IPC Classification Code does not mean that IPPA simply reproduces the classification system of another sport. Each sport must consider the activities and performance demands that are fundamental to that sport.

Accordingly, IPPA applies internationally recognized classification principles while developing its own Para Pickleball-specific eligibility criteria, assessment procedures, Sport Classes and classification processes.

This distinction is essential for IPPA Classifiers:

**International principles provide the foundation; Para Pickleball provides the sporting context.**

### **3.7 Eligibility Documentation**

Eligibility assessment may require appropriate medical and supporting documentation from qualified professionals. The IPPA Book of Rules provides for the review of medical documentation and, where required, additional physical, technical and functional assessment to determine whether the player satisfies the applicable Minimum Impairment Criteria.

The Classifier must therefore distinguish between:

#### **Medical Evidence**

→ establishes relevant health and impairment information

#### **Classification Evidence**

→ establishes the impairment's relevant functional impact within Para Pickleball

Both may contribute to a classification decision, but they serve different purposes.

### **3.8 The International Classification Principle**

The central principle for IPPA Classifiers can be summarized as follows:

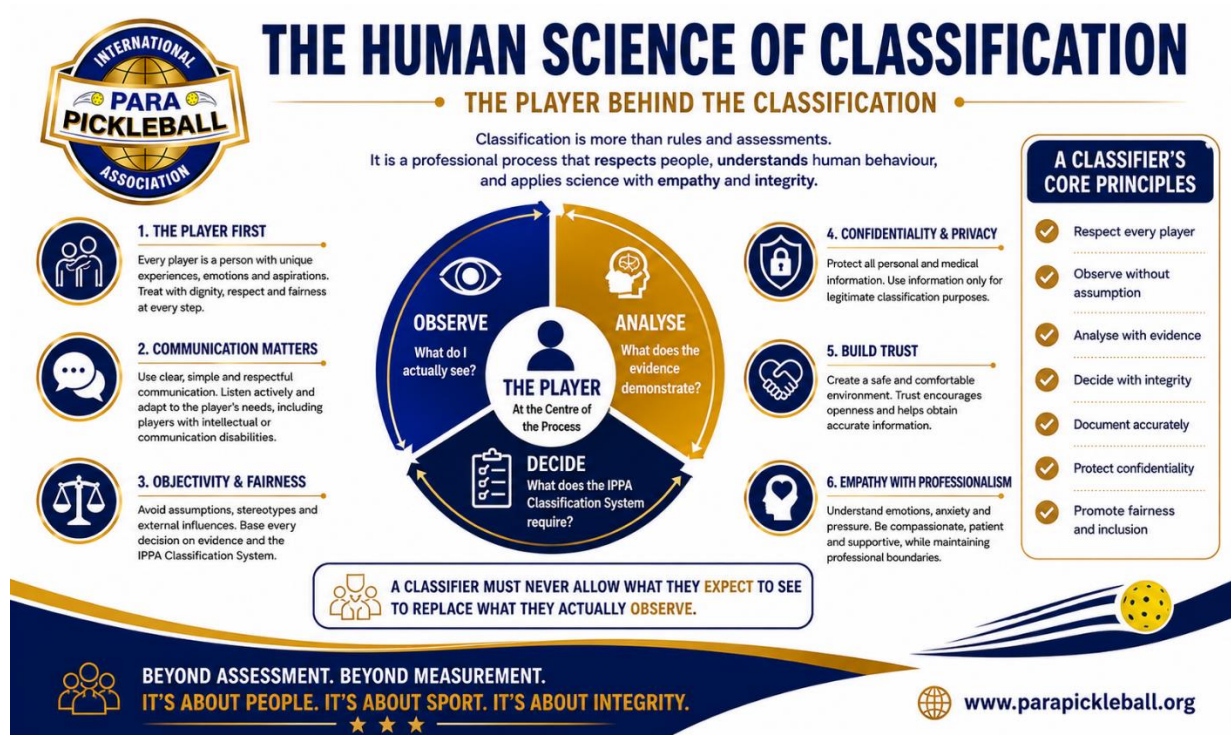
**CLASSIFICATION DOES NOT CLASSIFY THE DIAGNOSIS.**

**CLASSIFICATION EVALUATES THE SPORTING IMPACT OF ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENT.**

## CHAPTER 4 — THE HUMAN SCIENCE OF CLASSIFICATION

### *The Player Behind the Classification*

Classification is a professional process that deals not only with impairment and functional ability, but also with people. Every classification assessment involves a player with individual experiences, expectations, concerns, abilities and aspirations. For this reason, an IPPA Classifier must understand that the player is a person first and a classification case second. Scientific assessment and professional judgment must always be accompanied by dignity, respect and appropriate communication.



The relationship between the player and the Classifier is an important part of a professional classification environment. Players may experience uncertainty or anxiety because classification can influence their sporting participation and competitive pathway. A Classifier must therefore create an environment in which the player feels respected, heard and treated fairly. Questions should be clear, relevant and professionally appropriate, and the player should be given a reasonable opportunity to explain information relevant to the assessment.

Effective communication is particularly important when working with players who have different communication needs, including players with Intellectual Disabilities, Cerebral Palsy or other impairments that may affect communication or the manner in which information is expressed. The Classifier must adapt communication



appropriately without compromising the assessment process. Patience, clarity and respectful listening are essential professional skills.

A Classifier must also recognize the influence of **unconscious bias**. Previous classification results, reputation, ranking, sporting performance, nationality, personal expectations or assumptions about a particular impairment must never predetermine an assessment. The Classifier should approach each player objectively and allow the evidence obtained through the IPPA classification process to guide professional judgment.

One of the most important disciplines in classification is the ability to distinguish **observation from assumption**. A Classifier should record what is actually observed, determine what the evidence demonstrates and then apply the relevant IPPA criteria. The Classifier must never allow an expectation of what a player “should” demonstrate to replace what the Classifier actually observes.

Professional classification also requires appropriate boundaries. Medical information, personal information and classification discussions must be treated confidentially and handled only for legitimate classification purposes. Classifiers must avoid conflicts of interest and conduct themselves independently and professionally throughout the classification process.

The human dimension of classification can therefore be summarized through three professional responsibilities: observe objectively, analyse evidence scientifically and make decisions independently. The Classifier's role is not to judge the player as a person, but to determine the relevant classification evidence according to the IPPA Classification System.

Above all, classification should preserve the player's dignity while protecting the integrity of competition. The best Classifier is not the person who simply knows the most rules, but the professional who can combine scientific knowledge, functional understanding, careful observation, ethical judgment and respect for every player.

## **CHAPTER 5 — ELIGIBILITY FOR IPPA PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION**

### **5.1 Purpose of Eligibility**

Eligibility is the foundation of the IPPA Para Pickleball Classification System. Before a player can be assigned an IPPA Sport Class, it must first be established that the player satisfies the eligibility requirements prescribed by the IPPA Book of Rules.

The purpose of eligibility is not to determine whether a player is a good or poor pickleball player. It is to establish whether the player has an disability-impairment recognized by IPPA and whether that disability-impairment produces a measurable activity limitation relevant to Para Pickleball. The IPPA Book of Rules expressly states that a medical diagnosis alone does not automatically qualify a player for Para Pickleball classification.

Eligibility therefore represents a professional determination based upon evidence, disability, impairment and sport-specific functional impact.

### **5.2 IPPA Eligibility Principle**

The IPPA system adopts the fundamental principles of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification Code and International Standards, while applying those principles specifically to the demands of Para Pickleball.

For IPPA classification, the Classifier must establish three fundamental facts:

1. The player has an underlying health condition.
2. The underlying health condition results in an Eligible Impairment recognized within the IPPA framework.
3. The Eligible Disability-Impairment results in a measurable limitation relevant to activities fundamental to Para Pickleball.

The third element is particularly important. IPPA classification is not intended to classify a medical label. It is intended to determine whether the relevant disability-impairment has a genuine and measurable effect upon the activities required to participate in Para Pickleball.

### **5.3 Eligibility Is Different from Classification**

A technically competent Classifier must understand the difference between eligibility and classification.

**Eligibility asks:**

*Does this player satisfy the IPPA requirements to be considered for Para Pickleball classification?*

**Classification asks:**

*Having established eligibility, what Sport Class appropriately represents the impact of the player's eligible impairment on Para Pickleball performance?*

These are different professional decisions.

A player may have a genuine disability and still not satisfy the eligibility requirements for a particular IPPA classification category.

Similarly, satisfying eligibility does not automatically determine the player's Sport Class.

Therefore:

**ELIGIBILITY ≠ SPORT CLASS**

Eligibility must be established before the Sport Class can be determined.

**5.4 Underlying Health Condition**

The IPPA Book of Rules requires an underlying health condition that results in an Eligible Disability-Impairment recognized within Para sport.

The underlying health condition may arise from congenital, acquired, neurological, musculoskeletal or other recognized medical circumstances.

The Classifier must distinguish carefully between:

**Underlying Health Condition**

The medical condition or health circumstance.

**Disability-Impairment**

The relevant physiological, anatomical, neurological or intellectual consequence associated with that condition.

**Functional Limitation**

The measurable limitation resulting from the impairment.

**Sport-Specific Impact**

The effect of that limitation on activities required in Para Pickleball.

A Classifier must not automatically assume that the presence of a medical condition establishes IPPA eligibility.

## 5.5 Eligible Disability-Impairment

The IPPA Book of Rules identifies disability-impairment types that form the basis for eligibility within Para Pickleball. These include:

-  **Impaired Muscle Power**
-  **Impaired Passive Range of Movement**
-  **Limb Deficiency**
-  **Leg Length Difference**
-  **Short Stature**
-  **Hypertonia**
-  **Ataxia**
-  **Athetosis**
-  **Intellectual Impairment**

These impairment descriptions and their relationship to IPPA eligibility are established in the IPPA Book of Rules.

The Classifier must always consult the **current IPPA Book of Rules and applicable IPPA classification standards** when determining whether a particular impairment satisfies the requirements.

## 5.6 Medical Diagnosis Does Not Automatically Establish Eligibility

One of the most important principles in IPPA classification is:

**A MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS ALONE DOES NOT ESTABLISH IPPA CLASSIFICATION ELIGIBILITY.**

A diagnosis may provide evidence concerning the underlying health condition. However, the Classifier must establish whether the resulting impairment is recognized by IPPA and whether it produces the relevant measurable limitation in Para Pickleball.

For example, a player may present medical documentation identifying a particular condition. The Classifier must still consider whether the condition produces the impairment and functional consequences relevant to the applicable IPPA criteria.

The classification decision must therefore be based on **evidence and IPPA requirements**, not simply on the name of a diagnosis.

## 5.7 Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria

The **Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria (MDIC)** establish the minimum level of impairment required under the IPPA Classification System.

The IPPA Book of Rules provides that authorized Classifiers may conduct additional physical, technical and functional assessments to determine whether a player meets the Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria established for Para Pickleball.

MDIC is therefore an essential safeguard.

Without Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria, classification could become dependent upon subjective interpretation of disability rather than measurable evidence.

The Classifier must therefore determine:

### **Is there an Eligible Impairment?**

and then:

### **Does the disability-impairment meet the IPPA Minimum Impairment Criteria?**

Only after these questions have been appropriately addressed should the Classifier proceed to the relevant Sport Class assessment.

## 5.8 Permanent or Long-Term Functional Impact

The IPPA Book of Rules states that the impairment must produce a **permanent or long-term limitation** affecting essential sport-specific activities.

This requirement is important because Para Pickleball classification is not intended to provide a classification category for temporary sporting limitations.

The Classifier must therefore distinguish between:

- ✚ Permanent disability or impairment;
- ✚ Long-term disability or impairment;
- ✚ Temporary injury;
- ✚ Temporary illness;
- ✚ Short-term functional limitation; and
- ✚ Non-eligible conditions.

The nature, duration and functional consequences of the disability or impairment must be considered in accordance with the applicable IPPA criteria.

### **5.9 Sport-Specific Functional Limitation**

An disability or impairment becomes relevant to IPPA classification when it has a measurable impact on activities fundamental to Para Pickleball.

The IPPA Book of Rules specifically identifies relevant sporting activities including:

- ✚ Court mobility;
- ✚ Balance;
- ✚ Coordination;
- ✚ Wheelchair propulsion;
- ✚ Reaching;
- ✚ Paddle control;
- ✚ Reaction time;
- ✚ Movement efficiency; and
- ✚ Other fundamental Para Pickleball activities.

The Classifier must therefore consider **what the disability or impairment does to the player's Para Pickleball performance**, rather than simply identifying what the medical condition is called.

This is one of the defining principles of the IPPA Classification System.

### **5.10 The Three Evidence Domains of IPPA Classification**

The IPPA Classification System is structured around three principal assessment components:

#### **I. MEDICAL ASSESSMENT**

The medical component establishes relevant information concerning the underlying health condition and disability-impairment.

Evidence may include:

- ✚ Medical diagnosis reports;
- ✚ Surgical records;

- ✚ Amputation certificates;
- ✚ Neurological reports;
- ✚ Radiological evidence where applicable;
- ✚ Functional mobility reports; and
- ✚ Intellectual disability assessment documentation where required.

The IPPA Book of Rules specifically identifies these forms of documentation within the classification evaluation process.

## **II. FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT**

The functional assessment examines the consequences of impairment.

The IPPA Book of Rules identifies areas including:

- ✚ Muscle strength and power;
- ✚ Joint range of motion;
- ✚ Limb deficiency characteristics;
- ✚ Coordination;
- ✚ Balance;
- ✚ Mobility;
- ✚ Movement efficiency;
- ✚ Wheelchair propulsion;
- ✚ Functional reach;
- ✚ Stroke mechanics;
- ✚ Direction change;
- ✚ Recovery position; and
- ✚ Stability during serving, returning and rally situations.

## **III. OBSERVATION DURING MATCHES**

The Classifier may observe the player during training or actual competition.

This allows the Classifier to examine:

- ✚ Court movement;

- ✚ Use of prosthetic devices or assistive equipment;
- ✚ Competitive performance;
- ✚ Functional changes associated with fatigue; and
- ✚ Consistency between the assessment findings and actual Para Pickleball performance.

**The three components must be considered as complementary evidence.**

No single observation should automatically override properly established evidence unless the applicable IPPA rules provide for such a conclusion.

### **5.11 Medical Evidence and Functional Evidence**

Medical evidence and functional evidence answer different questions.

**Medical evidence asks:**

*What is the underlying health condition and what disability or impairment results from it?*

**Functional evidence asks:**

*What measurable limitations result from that disability or impairment?*

**Sport-specific evidence asks:**

*How do those limitations affect the activities required in Para Pickleball?*

The Classifier must be able to connect these three forms of evidence without confusing them.

This is essential for scientific and consistent classification.

### **5.12 Categories Recognized by IPPA**

The IPPA Book of Rules currently provides classification provisions relevant to:

**Dwarf / Short Stature**

**PP40, PP41 and PP40–PP41 Assisted**

**Standing**

**PP42–PP44, Amputees SLA-BK & DLA-BK, SLA-AK, DLA-AK**

**Wheelchair**



## **PP51–PP57**

### **Intellectual Disabilities**

#### **PP20, A, B, C, D**

### **Cerebral Palsy**

#### **PP1 to PP8**

The Book of Rules specifies that Short Stature eligibility requires an officially recognized form of dwarfism or comparable condition resulting in reduced standing height. It further specifies verified standing height measurement without footwear, the nature of the condition and relevant functional limitations.

For Standing classification, IPPA identifies players with lower-limb physical disability or impairments who compete while standing, while Wheelchair classification addresses players with permanent lower-limb impairments who compete using a sports wheelchair.

These category definitions must be read together with the detailed classification provisions later in the IPPA Book of Rules.

### **5.13 Short Stature Eligibility — Measurement Matters**

Short Stature classification demonstrates why eligibility must be technically measured rather than visually assumed.

The IPPA Book of Rules requires **verified height measurement in a standing position without footwear**. It also identifies the permanent and non-progressive nature of the condition and functional limitations involving court reach, stride length or leverage.

The IPPA rules further provide specific height and arm-length criteria for PP40 and PP41.

Accordingly, a Classifier must never determine Short Stature eligibility merely by looking at a player's appearance.

#### **Measure. Document. Verify. Then Decide.**

The commonly referenced eligibility thresholds for **PP40** are:

| Category    | Maximum Standing Height | Maximum Arm Length |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Male PP40   | 130 cm                  | 59 cm              |
| Female PP40 | 125 cm                  | 57 cm              |

The commonly referenced eligibility thresholds for **F41** are:

| Category    | Maximum Standing Height | Maximum Arm Length |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Male PP41   | 145 cm                  | 66 cm              |
| Female PP41 | 137 cm                  | 63 Cm              |

#### 5.14 Intellectual Impairment Eligibility

Intellectual Impairment requires particular professional care.

A Classifier must not attempt to establish intellectual eligibility merely by observing how a player communicates, learns a sporting skill, behaves during an assessment or performs during a match.

The IPPA Book of Rules identifies **Intellectual Impairment** as an Eligible Impairment and requires appropriate documentation where necessary.

The relevant professional evidence must be examined according to the applicable IPPA requirements.

**A Classifier assesses evidence. A Classifier does not diagnose Intellectual Impairment.**

This distinction must be emphasized throughout IPPA Classifier education.

#### 5.15 Cerebral Palsy Eligibility

Cerebral Palsy classification requires particular attention to neurological impairment characteristics and their functional consequences.

The IPPA framework recognizes **Hypertonia, Ataxia and Athetosis** among the impairment types relevant to its eligibility provisions.

The Classifier must examine the relevant impairment characteristics and determine their measurable consequences for Para Pickleball activities.

The assessment should not be based merely upon the diagnostic label **“Cerebral Palsy.”**

### **5.16 Wheelchair Eligibility**

Wheelchair eligibility must be considered according to the IPPA impairment and functional requirements rather than simply the fact that a player uses a wheelchair.

The IPPA Book of Rules identifies Wheelchair classification as **PP51–PP57** for players with permanent lower-limb impairments who compete using a sports wheelchair.

The functional assessment may include:

- Wheelchair propulsion;
- Trunk control;
- Reaching;
- Balance;
- Movement efficiency;
- Paddle control;
- Recovery;
- Court positioning; and
- Other Para Pickleball-specific activities prescribed by IPPA.

The use of a wheelchair is therefore an important consideration, but the **underlying eligible impairment and its functional consequences remain fundamental.**

### **5.17 Standing Eligibility**

Standing classification is identified by IPPA as:

- A) Standing Lower Limb Disability PP42–PP44.
- B) Single and Double Leg Amputees (SLA-BK & DLA-BK) and (SLA-AK & DLA-AK)
- C) Standing Upper Limb Disability (S-ULD)

The IPPA Book of Rules identifies Standing players as those with lower-limb physical impairments who compete while standing.

The Classifier must assess the relevant impairment and its impact upon Para Pickleball activities, including movement, balance, reaching, recovery, positioning and other functions relevant to the applicable IPPA criteria.

Standing classification must therefore be based upon **IPPA eligibility requirements and functional evidence**, rather than simply whether a player can stand.

**Note:** A player of SLA-AK & DLA-AK above the knee amputation may opt to play in the Wheelchair Category.

### **5.18 Not Eligible — NE**

The IPPA Book of Rules provides for a **Not Eligible (NE)** outcome.

A player may be designated Not Eligible where:

- The player does not possess an IPPA-recognized Eligible Disability or Impairment;
- The disability or impairment does not produce the required measurable activity limitation relevant to Para Pickleball; or
- The condition is temporary in nature.

The IPPA Book of Rules also identifies conditions such as chronic pain without an underlying eligible impairment, fatigue-related disorders, psychological conditions and temporary injuries as generally not satisfying IPC eligibility requirements unless accompanied by an Eligible Impairment recognized within the relevant framework.

**Important professional distinction:**

**Not Eligible does not mean “not disabled.”**

It means only that the player has not satisfied the eligibility requirements for **classified IPPA Para Pickleball competition**.

## **5.19 The Role of the IPPA Classifier**

The Classifier is responsible for applying the IPPA Classification System objectively and consistently.

The Classifier must:

- Review relevant evidence;
- Identify the relevant disability or impairment;
- Determine whether IPPA eligibility requirements are satisfied;
- Apply the Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria;
- Conduct the required functional assessment;
- Consider sport-specific evidence;
- Observe the player during matches where required;
- Record findings accurately;
- Avoid assumptions;
- Maintain neutrality; and
- Make decisions based upon evidence and IPPA rules.

The IPPA Book of Rules also requires Classifiers to treat players with dignity and respect, avoid conflicts of interest and maintain neutrality and transparency.

## **5.20 The Professional Eligibility Test**

For classifier education, the entire chapter can be reduced to five technical questions:

### **QUESTION 1**

**What is the underlying health condition?**

### **QUESTION 2**

**What Eligible Disability-Impairment results from that condition?**

### **QUESTION 3**

**Does the disability or impairment satisfy the applicable IPPA eligibility requirements and Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria?**

#### **QUESTION 4**

**Does the impairment produce a measurable limitation relevant to Para Pickleball?**

#### **QUESTION 5**

**Is the evidence consistent across medical assessment, functional assessment and observation during matches?**

Only after these questions have been appropriately addressed should the Classifier proceed to the applicable Sport Class determination.

### **5.21 IPPA Eligibility Decision Model**

For the classifier's this is the principal technical diagram:

**UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITION**



**ELIGIBLE DISABILITY-IMPAIRMENT**



**IPPA ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**



**MINIMUM DISABILITY-IMPAIRMENT CRITERIA**



**FUNCTIONAL LIMITATION**



**PARA PICKLEBALL-SPECIFIC IMPACT**



**MEDICAL + FUNCTIONAL + MATCH OBSERVATION EVIDENCE**



**ELIGIBILITY DECISION**



**SPORT CLASS DETERMINATION**

This is a much stronger conceptual model for teaching IPPA Classifiers than simply presenting eligibility as a medical diagnosis.

## 5.22 Fundamental Principle for IPPA Classifiers

The most important principle that every Level 1 and Level 2 IPPA Classifier should remember is:

**“IPPA CLASSIFICATION DOES NOT CLASSIFY A DIAGNOSIS; IT ESTABLISHES ELIGIBILITY AND EVALUATES THE SPORTING IMPACT OF AN ELIGIBLE DISABILITY-IMPAIRMENT.”**

A professional IPPA Classifier must therefore **measure rather than assume, document rather than speculate, observe rather than predict, and decide according to evidence rather than impression.**

The ultimate purpose is to ensure that Para Pickleball competition is **fair, meaningful, consistent, transparent and scientifically defensible**, while respecting the dignity and rights of every player.

### CLASSIFIER LEARNING POINT

**Remember the distinction:**

-  **Diagnosis** → What medical condition does the player have?
-  **Disability-Impairment** → What relevant disability-impairment results?
-  **Eligibility** → Does the player satisfy IPPA requirements?
-  **Functional Assessment** → What measurable limitations are present?
-  **Sport-Specific Impact** → How do those limitations affect Para Pickleball?
-  **Match Observation** → Is the assessment consistent with performance in competition?
-  **Classification** → What Sport Class is appropriate under IPPA rules?

**The IPC recognizes ten Eligible Disability-Impairment Types.** (Impaired Muscle Power, Impaired Passive Range of Movement, Limb Deficiency, Leg Length Difference, Short Stature, Hypertonia, Ataxia, Athetosis, Vision Impairment and Intellectual Impairment).

## CHAPTER 6 - THE IPPA CLASSIFIER: ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES, ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

### 6.1 Purpose

The IPPA Classifier is a trained and authorised professional responsible for conducting Para Pickleball Player Evaluation and Classification in Para Pickleball in accordance with the **IPPA Classification Rules, IPPA Book of Rules, IPPA Classification Manual, and applicable principles of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification Code and International Standards.**

Classification is fundamental to fair Para sport competition. Its purpose is to determine:

1. whether a Player meets the applicable eligibility requirements for Para Pickleball;
2. whether the Player meets the relevant Minimum Disability or Impairment Criteria;
3. the appropriate **IPPA Sport Class** for the Player; and
4. the applicable **Sport Class Status**.

The fundamental objective is to ensure that the impact of eligible disability or impairment on the outcome of competition is minimised so that sporting excellence, rather than the degree of impairment, determines competitive success.

### 6.2 Status of the IPPA Classifier

An IPPA Classifier is an official appointed, trained, assessed, certified and authorised by IPPA to undertake Classification activities.

An IPPA Classifier shall:

- ✚ Act independently and objectively;
- ✚ Apply the IPPA Classification Rules consistently;
- ✚ Make evidence-based Classification decisions;
- ✚ Protect the dignity, rights and privacy of Athletes;
- ✚ Maintain professional competence;



- ✚ Declare and manage conflicts of interest;
- ✚ Maintain confidentiality of Classification Data;
- ✚ Comply with the IPPA Code of Ethics and Classifier Code of Conduct; and
- ✚ Comply with applicable IPPA policies, regulations and decisions.

The integrity of Classification depends fundamentally upon the professional conduct of Classification Personnel. This principle is expressly recognised within the IPPA International Standard for Classification.

### **6.3 Fundamental Principles of Classification**

Every IPPA Classifier shall conduct Classification according to the following principles:

#### **6.3.1 Player-Centred Approach**

The Para Pickleball Player shall be treated with dignity, respect, fairness and professionalism throughout the Classification process.

#### **6.3.2 Sport-Specific Assessment**

Classification shall be based upon the manner in which an eligible disability or impairment affects the Player's ability to perform the specific activities and requirements of **Para Pickleball**.

#### **6.3.3 Objectivity**

Classification decisions shall be based on the evidence obtained through the prescribed Classification procedures and not on reputation, ranking, nationality, team affiliation, previous results or personal opinion.

#### **6.3.4 Consistency**

The same Classification Rules and procedures shall be applied to Players in comparable circumstances.

#### **6.3.5 Independence**

A Classifier shall not permit personal, commercial, national, team, coaching or other interests to influence a Classification decision.

### **6.3.6 Confidentiality**

Classification information is sensitive professional information and shall only be accessed, used, stored or disclosed in accordance with applicable IPPA rules and data-protection requirements.

### **6.3.7 Fairness and Integrity**

Classification shall be conducted to protect the integrity of competition and ensure that no Player receives an improper competitive advantage or disadvantage through the Classification process.

## **6.4 Role of the IPPA Classifier**

The primary role of the IPPA Classifier is to **evaluate and determine Sport Class and Sport Class Status in accordance with the IPPA Classification Rules.**

The Classifier may be required to:

1. Review Classification documentation;
2. Conduct Player Evaluation;
3. Conduct physical, technical and/or intellectual assessment as applicable to the Player's Classification category;
4. Observe the Athlete performing relevant Para Pickleball activities;
5. Assess the impact of eligible impairment on sport performance;
6. Participate in a Classification Panel;
7. Determine Sport Class;
8. Determine Sport Class Status;
9. Document Classification findings;
10. Communicate Classification outcomes appropriately;
11. Participate in Classification Review, Protest or Appeal processes when appointed;
12. Participate in education and continuing professional development;
13. Maintain Classification records;
14. Report suspected breaches of Classification integrity; and

15.Undertake other duties authorised by IPPA.

## 6.5 Classification Personnel

Depending upon the Classification category and requirements of the IPPA Classification Rules, Classification Personnel may include appropriately qualified professionals with expertise relevant to Para Pickleball Classification.

A Classification Panel may include, where required:

- ✚ Medical/Health-related Classification expertise;

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- ✚ Physical/Functional Classification expertise;

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- ✚ Technical/Sport-specific Classification expertise;

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- ✚ Intellectual Disability Classification expertise; and

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- ✚ other appropriately trained specialists authorised by IPPA.

The composition and minimum competency requirements of a Classification Panel shall be determined by the applicable IPPA Classification Rules.

The IPC's 2025 International Standard recognises Classification Personnel as requiring defined competencies, training, development and certification.

## 6.6 Duties and Responsibilities of an IPPA Classifier

Every IPPA Classifier shall:

### A. Before Classification

- ✚ Familiarise themselves with the applicable IPPA Classification Rules;

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- ✚ Review all available Classification information;

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- ✚ Identify potential conflicts of interest;

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- ✚ Confirm that they are appropriately qualified for the Classification assignment;

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- ✚ Prepare the necessary assessment environment and equipment;

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- ✚ Ensure that the Athlete is informed of the Classification process where required.

## **B. During Classification**

The Classifier shall:

- ✚ Introduce themselves professionally;

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- ✚ Explain the relevant Classification procedures;

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- ✚ Obtain information necessary for the assessment;

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- ✚ Conduct the assessment systematically;

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- ✚ Use only authorised Classification procedures;

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- ✚ Provide reasonable communication and accessibility accommodations where required;

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- ✚ Avoid unnecessary or irrelevant questioning;

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- ✚ Maintain professional boundaries;

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- ✚ Treat the Athlete with dignity and respect;

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- ✚ Record relevant observations and findings;

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- ✚ Avoid assumptions based on appearance or diagnosis alone;

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- ✚ Assess the Athlete according to the sport-specific criteria; and

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- ✚ Reach decisions based on evidence.

## **C. After Classification**

The Classifier shall:

- ✚ Complete all required Classification documentation;

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- ✚ Record the decision accurately;

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- ✚ Assign the appropriate Sport Class and Sport Class Status;

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- ✚ Communicate the outcome through the prescribed IPPA process;

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- ✚ Maintain confidentiality;

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- ✚ Securely handle Classification Data;

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- ✚ Comply with applicable Protest and Appeal procedures; and

- ✚ Participate in reviews or reassessments when formally appointed.

## 6.7 The Classifier as a Neutral Evaluator

An IPPA Classifier shall act as a **neutral evaluator**.

A Classifier shall not:

- ✚ Advocate for a Player to obtain a particular Sport Class;

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- ✚ Intentionally seek to increase or decrease a Player's Sport Class;

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- ✚ Allow national, club, team or personal interests to influence assessment;

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- ✚ Permit external pressure to affect a decision;

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- ✚ Alter findings to achieve a desired competitive outcome; or

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- ✚ Make decisions based on a Player's reputation or competitive success.

The IPPA requires Classifiers to act as neutral evaluators in Classification, including determination of eligibility, Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria, Sport Class and Sport Class Status.

## 6.8 Professional Competence

An IPPA Classifier shall maintain the knowledge, skills and professional competence necessary to perform Classification duties.

Competence shall include, as applicable:

- ✚ understanding of the IPPA Classification System;

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- ✚ understanding of Para Pickleball;

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- ✚ understanding of eligible impairments;

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- ✚ knowledge of the relevant IPPA Sport Classes;

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- ✚ knowledge of Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria;

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- ✚ knowledge of Player Evaluation procedures;

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- ✚ Ability to interpret Classification evidence;

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- ✚ Ability to apply Classification Rules;

- ✚ Communication skills;

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- ✚ Professional judgement;

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- ✚ Ethical decision-making; and

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- ✚ Knowledge of Classification integrity requirements.

Classification competence shall be maintained through **education, practical experience, observation, mentoring, assessment and continuing professional development.**

The IPPA expressly addresses Classification Personnel competencies, recruitment, training, development and certification.

## **6.9 IPPA Classifier Certification**

No person shall act as an IPPA Classifier unless they have been appropriately trained and authorised by IPPA.

IPPA shall establish different levels of Classification qualification, including:

### **Level 1 — IPPA Classifier Certificate**

Entry-level professional qualification covering the fundamental principles, rules, assessment methodology and practical application of IPPA Classification.

### **Level 2 — IPPA Classifier Diploma**

Advanced professional qualification requiring additional theoretical knowledge, practical Classification experience, documented assessments and demonstrated competence across relevant Para Pickleball Classification categories.

IPPA may establish additional specialist qualifications, endorsements or advanced certification requirements as the Classification System develops.

## **6.10 Continuing Professional Development**

An IPPA Classifier shall undertake continuing professional development to maintain certification.

CPD may include:

- ✚ IPPA Classification seminars;
- ✚ Refresher courses;
- ✚ Technical workshops;
- ✚ Practical Classification experiences;
- ✚ Observation of senior Classifiers;
- ✚ Case-study analysis;
- ✚ Rule updates;
- ✚ Research and scientific developments;
- ✚ Classification review meetings; and
- ✚ Competency reassessment.

IPPA may suspend, restrict, renew or withdraw a Classifier's certification where the Classifier fails to meet applicable competence, training or professional conduct requirements.

### **6.11 Conflict of Interest**

A Classifier must identify and disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest before participating in Classification.

A conflict may arise where the Classifier:

- ✚ coaches the Athlete;
- ✚ manages the Athlete;
- ✚ has a close personal relationship with the Athlete;
- ✚ is affiliated with the Athlete's team or organisation;
- ✚ has a financial interest involving the Athlete;
- ✚ has previously represented the Athlete professionally;
- ✚ has a national or organisational interest that could reasonably affect impartiality; or
- ✚ has any other relationship that could reasonably call the Classifier's independence into question.

Where a conflict exists, the Classifier shall disclose it to the appropriate IPPA authority and, where required, withdraw from the Classification Panel.

The IPC's 2025 International Standard specifically requires systems for **identifying and managing conflicts of interest**.

## 6.12 Prohibited Conduct

An IPPA Classifier shall not:

-  Accept money, gifts, favours or benefits intended to influence Classification;

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-  Solicit or accept improper benefits from an Athlete, coach, team or organisation;

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-  Disclose confidential Classification information without authorisation;

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-  Falsify Classification records;

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-  Deliberately misrepresent Classification findings;

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-  Intentionally manipulate an Athlete Evaluation;

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-  Discriminate against an Athlete;

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-  Harass, intimidate, threaten or abuse an Athlete;

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-  Use offensive, humiliating or degrading language;

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-  Interfere improperly with another Classifier's decision;

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-  Use Classification information for personal or commercial benefit;

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-  Provide unauthorised advice designed to manipulate Classification;

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-  Participate in Classification where an unmanaged conflict of interest exists;  
or

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-  Engage in conduct that brings IPPA Classification or Para Pickleball into disrepute.

## 6.13 Communication of Classification Decisions



The Classifier shall communicate Classification decisions professionally and objectively.

The Classifier shall not:

- ✚ Make derogatory comments concerning an Player's impairment;

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- ✚ Speculate publicly about an Athlete's Classification;

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- ✚ Disclose confidential assessment findings;

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- ✚ Make informal promises regarding future Classification;

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- ✚ Criticise another Classifier's decision in front of an Athlete; or

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- ✚ Provide misleading information regarding Protests or Appeals.

Where required, Athletes shall be informed of their **Sport Class, Sport Class Status and applicable rights under IPPA Classification Rules**, including relevant Protest and Appeal procedures.

## 6.14 Classification Integrity

**Classification Integrity:** Classification integrity is fundamental to the credibility, fairness and transparency of Para Pickleball. Every IPPA Classifier has a professional duty to report any suspected intentional misrepresentation, falsification of documents, manipulation of assessment, improper influence, bribery, unauthorised disclosure of Classification information, conflicts of interest, fraudulent evidence, or any other conduct that may compromise the integrity of the Classification process. IPPA shall maintain appropriate procedures for receiving, investigating and addressing such concerns in accordance with its Classification Rules and applicable disciplinary procedures.

Classification integrity is essential to the credibility of Para Pickleball.

## 6.15 Professional Relationship with Para Pickleball Players

**Professional Relationship with Players:** An IPPA Classifier shall maintain a professional, respectful and appropriate relationship with every Player and shall never exploit an Athlete's vulnerability, create inappropriate dependency, misuse professional authority, seek personal benefit, request inappropriate personal

information, threaten or improperly influence an Athlete through Classification, or allow any personal, social or other relationship to compromise professional judgement, objectivity or the integrity of the Classification process.

### **6.16 Professional Relationship with Coaches, Officials and Teams**

- ✚ Classifiers may communicate with coaches, team officials, medical personnel and other authorised stakeholders when necessary for Classification.
- ✚ However, such communication shall remain professional and Classification-related.
- ✚ A coach, team official, federation representative or other person shall not be permitted to improperly influence a Classification decision.
- ✚ The Classifier's duty is to the integrity of the Classification process.

### **6.17 Classifier Independence from Competition**

#### **Independence from Competitive Outcomes:**

An IPPA Classifier shall remain completely independent from competitive outcomes and shall determine Sport Class solely on the basis of the prescribed, evidence-based Classification criteria. The Classifier shall not be influenced by an Athlete's performance, rankings, medals, tournament results, team requirements, sponsorship, commercial interests, nationality, popularity, selection considerations or organisational pressure.

**Classification is not a selection mechanism; it is an objective process to determine the appropriate Sport Class based on eligible impairment and its impact on Para Pickleball performance.**

### **6.18 Duty to Maintain the Integrity of IPPA Classification**

Every IPPA Classifier is an ambassador of the IPPA Classification System.

The Classifier shall therefore protect:

**Fairness • Objectivity • Independence • Confidentiality •**

**Player Dignity • Professionalism • Integrity**

The Classifier must understand that a Classification decision may have a significant impact on a Player's sporting career. Accordingly, Classification decisions must be approached with appropriate care, scientific and technical discipline, professional judgement and respect for the Player.

#### **6.19 IPPA CLASSIFIER PROFESSIONAL DECLARATION**

“I solemnly undertake to discharge my responsibilities as an IPPA Classifier with independence, objectivity, professional competence, fairness and unwavering integrity. I shall evaluate every Para Pickleball Player without prejudice or favour, apply the IPPA Classification Rules faithfully and consistently, safeguard all confidential Classification information, declare any actual or potential conflict of interest, and resist any attempt to influence my professional judgement. I shall uphold the dignity, rights and privacy of every Athlete and dedicate my conduct and decisions to preserving the credibility, fairness and integrity of Para Pickleball Classification.”

### **Restoring Life – Lets Do It Together**

– Raghu Kumar Raghavelu

## **CHAPTER 7 - PLAYER RIGHTS, SAFEGUARDING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND CLASSIFICATION INTEGRITY**

-  Every Para Pickleball Player shall be treated with dignity, equality, respect and fairness throughout the Classification process. Athletes have the right to a safe, accessible and professional Classification environment, clear information regarding Classification procedures and decisions, protection from discrimination, harassment, abuse or improper influence, and access to applicable Protest and Appeal procedures. IPPA shall ensure that Player rights and safeguarding principles are respected at every stage of Classification.
-  All Classification information, including medical, functional, personal and assessment records, shall be treated as confidential and handled only for legitimate Classification purposes in accordance with applicable IPPA rules and data-protection requirements. Players, Classifiers and all authorised Classification Personnel share a responsibility to protect Classification integrity by preventing misrepresentation, manipulation, fraud, conflicts of interest, unauthorised disclosure or any conduct that may compromise fair and credible Classification.

## CHAPTER 9 - DWARF / SHORT STATURE PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION

### 8.1 Purpose

The Dwarf-Short Stature Classification system establishes the eligibility and Sport Class requirements for Players whose eligible impairment is associated with short stature and whose impairment meets the applicable IPPA Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria.

### 8.2 IPPA Sport Classes

IPPA recognises the following Dwarf-Short Stature Sport Classes:

🏳️‍🌈 **PP40 — Dwarf-Short Stature**

🏳️‍🌈 **PP41 — Dwarf-Short Stature**

🏳️‍🌈 **PP40–41 Assisted Dwarf-Short-Stature with approved assistance requirements.**

### 8.3 Height Criteria

For the purposes of IPPA Classification:

| Category    | Maximum Standing Height | Maximum Arm Length |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Male PP40   | 130 cm                  | 59 cm              |
| Female PP40 | 125 cm                  | 57 cm              |

The commonly referenced eligibility thresholds for **F41** are:

| Category    | Maximum Standing Height | Maximum Arm Length |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Male PP41   | 145 cm                  | 66 cm              |
| Female PP41 | 137cm                   | 63 Cm              |

### 8.4 Classification Assessment

Assessment shall include the IPPA uses a functional, evidence-based **Player Evaluation** system centered on an underlying health condition and the specific

activity limitation caused by an eligible disability or impairment. Have to establish whether the Player meets the Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria and the appropriate Sport Class.

## 8.5 Assisted Classification

A Player may be designated **PP40–41 Assisted** where the Player meets the applicable eligibility requirements but requires an approved modification or assistance specifically authorised under the IPPA Para Pickleball Rules.

**PP40–PP41 Assisted** is an inclusive IPPA Sport Class for Para Pickleball Players with Dwarf-Short Stature who require additional assistance to participate effectively and safely in Para Pickleball. Subject to IPPA approval and the applicable competition rules, a Player may be permitted to use an **Electric Wheelchair, approved External Support Equipment, or a Player Assistant/s** to support mobility, positioning or participation during play. IPPA recognises the importance of providing meaningful sporting opportunities for such Players and **welcomes para pickleball players who require approved assistance to participate in Para Pickleball Category.**

## CHAPTER 9 — STANDING PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION

### 9.1 Purpose

Standing Para Pickleball Classification applies to Players who compete in a standing position and have an eligible physical impairment that meets the applicable IPPA Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria.

### 9.2 Sport Classes

IPPA Standing Classification shall determine the Player's Sport Class according to the functional impact of the eligible impairment upon Para Pickleball activities.

The principal Standing Sport Classes are:

 **PP42**

 **PP43**

 **PP44**

 **SLA-BK**

🏸 DLA-BK

🏸 SLA-AK

🏸 DLA-AK

### 9.3 Functional Assessment

Classification shall consider the Player's functional capacity relevant to Para Pickleball, including, where applicable:

🏸 standing balance;

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🏸 lower-limb function;

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🏸 movement and mobility;

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🏸 change of direction;

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🏸 lateral movement;

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🏸 reaching;

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🏸 trunk control;

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🏸 rotational movement;

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🏸 court coverage; and

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🏸 ability to perform the fundamental movements required for Para Pickleball.

### 9.4 Sport-Specific Assessment

The Classification Panel may observe the Athlete performing relevant Para Pickleball movements and skills to determine the functional impact of the eligible impairment on competition.

### 9.5 Classification Decision

The final Sport Class shall be determined exclusively according to the IPPA Classification Rules and shall not be based on ranking, playing standard, tournament performance or competitive advantage.

## CHAPTER 11 — STANDING AMPUTEE PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION

### 10.1 Purpose

Standing Amputee Classification applies to Players with an eligible limb deficiency or amputation who compete in the standing category.

### 10.2 Eligibility

A Player shall only be eligible where the impairment satisfies the applicable IPPA eligibility and Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria.

### 10.3 IPPA Classification

The classification of an amputee player shall consider the functional consequences of the limb deficiency in relation to Para Pickleball.

Relevant factors may include:

- ✚ level and nature of amputation;
- ✚ residual limb function;
- ✚ prosthetic use;
- ✚ standing balance;
- ✚ lower-limb loading;
- ✚ mobility;
- ✚ lateral movement;
- ✚ acceleration and deceleration;
- ✚ trunk control;
- ✚ reaching and recovery; and
- ✚ ability to safely perform sport-specific movements.

### 10.4 Sport Class



The player shall be assigned the applicable Standing Sport Class under the IPPA Classification System following assessment of the functional impact of the eligible impairment.

## **10.5 Prosthesis**

Where a Player uses a prosthesis during competition, the use of such prosthesis shall comply with the applicable IPPA equipment and safety requirements. Classification shall consider the Player's functional capacity in the manner prescribed by IPPA.

# **CHAPTER 11 — STANDING UPPER LIMB DISABILITY PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION**

## **11.1 Purpose**

This Classification category applies to standing Players with an eligible upper-limb impairment that affects the execution of Para Pickleball activities.

## **11.2 Eligible Functional Considerations**

The Classification Panel shall consider the functional effect of impairment upon:

✦ grip;

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✦ grasp and release;

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✦ paddle control;

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✦ wrist and forearm function;

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✦ elbow function;

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✦ shoulder function;

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✦ reaching;

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✦ balance and postural control;

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✦ two-handed activities; and

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✦ execution of sport-specific Para Pickleball skills.

### **11.3 Sport-Specific Assessment**

The Player may be required to demonstrate relevant Para Pickleball activities, including serving, returning, volleying, groundstrokes, reaching, recovery and other movements prescribed by IPPA.

### **11.4 Sport Class Determination**

The Sport Class shall be determined from the evidence obtained during Classification and shall reflect the functional impact of the eligible impairment on Para Pickleball performance.

### **11.5 Paddle Adaptation**

A Player may use an approved paddle adaptation wherever permitted by the IPPA Book of Rules. Such adaptation shall not itself determine Sport Class.

## **CHAPTER 12 — WHEELCHAIR PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION**

### **12.1 Purpose**

Wheelchair Classification applies to Para Pickleball Players whose eligible physical impairment requires them to compete using a wheelchair in accordance with IPPA Para Pickleball Rules.

### **12.2 IPPA Wheelchair Sport Classes**

IPPA recognises the following Wheelchair Sport Classes:

**PP51, PP52, PP53, PP54, PP55, PP56 and PP57.**

### **12.3 Functional Assessment**

The Classification Panel shall assess the functional impact of the Player's eligible impairment upon wheelchair Para Pickleball.

Assessment may include:

✚ trunk control;

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✚ sitting balance;

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✚ pelvic stability;

- ✚ lower-limb function;

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- ✚ upper-limb function;

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- ✚ wheelchair propulsion;

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- ✚ wheelchair manoeuvrability;

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- ✚ reaching;

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- ✚ rotational ability;

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- ✚ recovery movements;

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- ✚ lateral movement; and

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- ✚ ability to execute sport-specific Para Pickleball skills.

#### 12.4 Sport-Specific Observation

Where required, the Player may be observed during actual or simulated competition to assess the functional impact of the eligible impairment on Para Pickleball performance. The assessment may include serving, returning, groundstrokes, volleys, reaching, movement within the permitted playing area, recovery to the playing position and other sport-specific activities prescribed by IPPA.

#### 12.5 Additional Bounce Rule

Where prescribed by the IPPA Book of Rules, specified Wheelchair Sport Classes may be entitled to the **Additional Bounce Rule**.

The application of the Additional Bounce Rule shall be determined by the Player's officially assigned Sport Class and shall not be altered by informal agreement between Athletes.

#### 12.6 Wheelchair Equipment

The wheelchair used in competition shall comply with the applicable IPPA equipment and safety requirements. Classification is concerned with the Player's eligible impairment. **The IPPA VX900** is designated as the official Para Pickleball Wheelchair for Players classified in the PP52 to PP57 Sport Classes and is designed

to support the specific functional and playing requirements of Wheelchair Para Pickleball.

## **CHAPTER 13 — INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION**

### **13.1 Purpose**

IPPA Intellectual Disabilities Classification applies to Players with an eligible intellectual impairment who satisfy the applicable IPPA eligibility and Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria.

### **13.2 IPPA Sport Class**

The IPPA Intellectual Disabilities category is designated:

**PP20 A, B, C, D - Intellectual Disabilities.**

### **13.3 Classification Assessment**

**Intellectual Disabilities Classification:** The Classification process shall assess the Player in accordance with the applicable IPPA criteria for Intellectual Disabilities and determine how the eligible impairment affects performance in Para Pickleball. Consistent with the principles of the Paralympic Classification framework, the assessment may consider intellectual and adaptive functioning, information processing, attention, decision-making, communication, understanding and following instructions, learning and applying sport-specific skills, and demonstrated sport-specific performance. The assessment shall be evidence-based and shall not rely solely on a medical diagnosis.

### **13.4 Classification Levels**

Where prescribed under the IPPA Classification System, PP20 A, B, C & D may be differentiated according to the applicable IPPA level or rating system.

The Classification Panel shall apply the current IPPA Classification criteria and shall not determine classification merely from diagnosis or general intellectual ability.

### **13.5 Sport-Specific Evaluation**

The Player may be required to demonstrate understanding and application of Para Pickleball skills, rules, tactics and competitive situations, with assessment conducted strictly in accordance with the procedures established by IPPA.

## CHAPTER 14 — CEREBRAL PALSY PARA PICKLEBALL CLASSIFICATION

### 14.1 Purpose

IPPA Cerebral Palsy Classification applies to Players with an eligible neurological impairment associated with Cerebral Palsy who meet the applicable IPPA eligibility and Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria.

### 14.2 IPPA Sport Classes

IPPA recognises the following Cerebral Palsy Sport Classes:

**PP1, PP2, PP3, PP4, PP5, PP6, PP7 and PP8.**

### 14.3 Functional Assessment

Classification shall determine the functional impact of the Player's eligible neurological impairment on Para Pickleball.

Assessment may include:

✚ muscle coordination;

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✚ muscle tone;

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✚ involuntary movement;

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✚ balance;

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✚ postural control;

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✚ trunk function;

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✚ upper-limb control;

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✚ lower-limb function;

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✚ walking and movement;

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✚ reaching;

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✚ hand control;

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✚ paddle control; and

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✚ sport-specific movement and skill execution.

## 14.4 Sport-Specific Assessment

The Player may be observed during sport-specific activities including:

🏸 serving;

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🏸 returning;

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🏸 groundstrokes;

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🏸 volleys;

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🏸 reaching;

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🏸 movement;

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🏸 recovery;

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🏸 balance;

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🏸 directional changes; and

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🏸 other relevant Para Pickleball activities.

## 14.5 Classification of Functional Impact

The Classification Panel shall determine the appropriate Sport Class based on the demonstrated functional impact of the eligible impairment rather than diagnosis alone.

## 14.6 Classification Consistency

Classification decisions shall be based on the applicable IPPA Classification Rules, evidence obtained during Player Evaluation and the functional requirements of Para Pickleball.

Across all IPPA Classification categories, **diagnosis alone shall not determine Sport Class**. Classification shall establish whether the Player has an eligible impairment, whether the applicable Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria are satisfied, and how the eligible impairment affects the Player's ability to perform the activities fundamental to Para Pickleball.

## **THE THREE CLASSIFICATION ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS**

### **CHAPTER 15 — MEDICAL ASSESSMENT**

A comprehensive clinical evaluation of the Player's eligible impairment, underlying health condition, functional pathology and relevant medical documentation shall be undertaken to establish, through objective medical and scientific evidence, whether the Player satisfies the applicable IPPA Eligibility Requirements and Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria prescribed for the relevant Para Pickleball Classification category.

### **CHAPTER 16 — FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT**

A systematic, evidence-based evaluation shall be undertaken to characterise the functional consequences of the eligible impairment across relevant neuromusculoskeletal, neurological, biomechanical, cognitive, perceptual and motor-control domains, as applicable. The assessment shall determine the extent to which impairment-related functional limitations influence the Player's capacity to execute, sustain and reproduce the fundamental movement patterns, postural control, coordination, mobility, balance, reach, paddle control and sport-specific performance demands of Para Pickleball.

### **CHAPTER 17 — TECHNICAL AND SPORT-SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT**

Assessment of the Player's ability to perform the technical and functional requirements of Para Pickleball, including sport-specific movements, skills, equipment use and playing actions relevant to the applicable Classification category.

### **CHAPTER 18 — OBSERVATION DURING MATCHES AND COMPETITION**

Where applicable, **sport-specific observational assessment** shall be undertaken during structured training, simulated match conditions or sanctioned competition to examine the Player's functional behaviour under authentic Para Pickleball

demands. This component shall enable the Classification Panel to correlate clinical and functional assessment findings with **observable sport performance**, including movement efficiency, postural stability, balance, coordination, mobility, reaching, paddle control, tactical response and recovery patterns. Observational evidence may be used to confirm the **consistency, reproducibility and sport-specific validity** of the Classification findings and to determine the practical impact of the eligible impairment on the Player's performance within the actual competitive environment.

#### **CORE IPPA PRINCIPLE:**

Classification shall be based on the combined evidence obtained through Medical Assessment, Functional Assessment, Technical and Sport-Specific Assessment, and Observation in Competition, as applicable to the Player and the relevant IPPA Sport Class.

## **CHAPTER 19 — INTEGRATING MEDICAL, FUNCTIONAL AND COMPETITION OBSERVATION EVIDENCE**

### **19.1 Integrated Classification Assessment**

IPPA Classification shall be determined through the systematic integration of medical evidence, functional assessment, technical and sport-specific evaluation, and observation during training, simulated play or competition, as applicable. No single assessment component shall ordinarily be considered in isolation where multiple sources of evidence are required. The Classification Panel shall analyse the concordance, consistency and sport-specific relevance of the evidence to establish whether the Player satisfies the applicable IPPA Eligibility Requirements and Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria and to determine the appropriate Sport Class.

### **19.2 Evidence-Based Determination**

The Classification Panel shall apply professional, scientific and sport-specific judgement to determine whether the observed functional limitations are attributable to the eligible impairment and whether their impact is consistent with the requirements of the relevant IPPA Sport Class. **Medical diagnosis alone shall not determine Sport Class.** Classification shall be based upon demonstrable



functional consequences and their relationship to the fundamental performance demands of Para Pickleball.

### **19.3 Consistency and Reproducibility**

Where appropriate, findings obtained through clinical, functional and competition observation shall be compared to identify **consistency, reproducibility and internal validity**. Significant discrepancies between assessment components may require further evaluation, clarification of evidence or additional observation in accordance with IPPA Classification procedures.

### **19.4 Classification Panel Decision**

Following consideration of all relevant evidence, the Classification Panel shall determine the Player's **Sport Class and Sport Class Status** in accordance with the applicable IPPA Classification Rules. The decision shall be objective, evidence-based, sport-specific and independent of the Player's ranking, nationality, team affiliation, competitive results, reputation or anticipated sporting success.

### **19.5 Fundamental IPPA Principle**

IPPA Classification is an integrated evidence-based process in which medical characteristics establish eligibility, functional assessment establishes impairment-related limitation, and sport-specific observation establishes the practical impact of that limitation upon Para Pickleball performance.

# CLASSIFIER DECISION-MAKING AND CLASSIFICATION PROCEDURES

## CHAPTER 20 — IPPA CLASSIFICATION DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

### 20.1 Classification Decision-Making

IPPA Classification shall constitute a structured, evidence-based and sport-specific decision-making process through which the Classification Panel determines whether a Player satisfies the applicable eligibility requirements and Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria and, where eligible, determines the appropriate Sport Class and Sport Class Status. The decision shall be derived from the integrated interpretation of relevant medical, functional, technical, cognitive, neurological, biomechanical and sport-performance evidence, as applicable to the Player's Classification category. Classification shall identify the functional consequences of eligible impairment in relation to the fundamental activities of Para Pickleball, rather than merely identifying or grading a medical diagnosis.

### 20.2 Sequential Classification Methodology

The Classification process shall proceed through a logical sequence of impairment identification, eligibility determination, Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria assessment, functional consequence analysis, sport-specific evaluation and, where required, observation under competitive conditions. Each stage shall contribute objective evidence to the subsequent decision-making stage. The Classification Panel shall determine Sport Class only after considering the totality of relevant evidence and establishing a scientifically and functionally defensible relationship between the Player's eligible impairment and Para Pickleball performance.

### 20.3 Evidence Integration

Medical documentation, clinical findings, functional measurements, intellectual or cognitive evidence, technical performance, sport-specific observation and previous Classification information may be considered where relevant. Evidence shall be evaluated according to its **reliability, validity, reproducibility, consistency and relevance to Para Pickleball**. Where different sources of evidence demonstrate material inconsistency, the Classification Panel may require additional assessment or observation before reaching a final determination.

## **20.4 Diagnosis Does Not Determine Sport Class**

A medical diagnosis, pathological condition, anatomical abnormality or impairment label shall not independently establish a Player's Sport Class. The decisive Classification question is the **demonstrable functional effect of the eligible impairment upon the activities and performance requirements fundamental to Para Pickleball**. Classification therefore distinguishes between the existence of an impairment and the sport-specific functional limitation arising from that impairment.

## **20.5 Independence of Decision**

Classification decisions shall be made independently of sporting reputation, ranking, medals, tournament results, nationality, team requirements, sponsorship, commercial interests, selection considerations or anticipated competitive performance. Classification is an evidence-based eligibility and grouping process and shall never operate as a mechanism for athlete selection or competitive advantage.

# **CHAPTER 21 — CLASSIFICATION PANEL PROCEDURES AND DECISION-MAKING**

## **21.1 Classification Panel**

An IPPA Classification Panel shall consist of appropriately **trained, competent and authorised Classification Personnel** whose professional knowledge is relevant to the Player's impairment and Classification category. The composition of the Panel shall be determined by the applicable IPPA Classification Rules and shall provide sufficient expertise to evaluate the medical, functional and sport-specific dimensions necessary for a scientifically defensible Classification decision.

## **21.2 Panel Independence and Professional Judgement**

Each Classification Panel member shall exercise independent professional judgement and shall disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest before participating in Athlete Evaluation. Classification Personnel shall not permit external influence, personal relationships, national affiliation, team interests,

commercial considerations or competitive objectives to affect the interpretation of evidence or the final Classification decision.

### **21.3 Panel Assessment and Deliberation**

The Panel shall systematically review the available evidence, conduct the prescribed assessments, establish eligibility where applicable, determine whether the Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria are satisfied, evaluate functional consequences and consider sport-specific performance. Following assessment, Panel members shall deliberate confidentially and compare their findings against the **technical standards and Classification criteria prescribed by IPPA**, rather than relying upon subjective impressions or personal experience.

### **21.4 Resolution of Professional Differences**

Where Panel members reach different professional interpretations, the disagreement shall be resolved through structured consideration of the IPPA Classification Rules, objective assessment findings, documented evidence and sport-specific functional requirements. A difference of professional opinion shall not be resolved through authority, seniority, nationality or competitive considerations.

### **21.5 Further Assessment**

Where evidence is incomplete, internally inconsistent, technically unreliable or insufficient to establish a Classification decision, the Panel may require additional medical documentation, repeat functional testing, further technical evaluation or observation during sport-specific activity or competition. Such further assessment shall be undertaken only in accordance with procedures authorised by IPPA.

### **21.6 Final Classification Determination**

Following completion of the required evaluation, the Panel shall determine the Player's **Sport Class and Sport Class Status** in accordance with the applicable IPPA Classification Rules. The decision shall be supported by documented evidence sufficient to demonstrate the scientific, functional and sport-specific basis upon which the determination was reached.

### **21.7 Communication of Decision**

The Classification outcome shall be communicated to the Player through the prescribed IPPA procedure and shall identify the applicable Sport Class, Sport Class Status and, where relevant, review requirements and available Protest or Appeal procedures. Communication shall be accurate, professional, confidential and understandable to the Player.

## **CHAPTER 22 — SPORT CLASS AND SPORT CLASS STATUS**

### **22.1 Sport Class**

A **Sport Class** is an IPPA-defined competitive classification category in which Players are grouped according to the functional impact of an eligible impairment upon their ability to perform the fundamental activities of Para Pickleball. A Sport Class is not a medical severity rating, measure of sporting ability or indicator of competitive potential; it represents the Player's position within the IPPA sport-specific Classification framework.

### **22.2 IPPA Sport Class Structure**

The IPPA Classification System incorporates sport-specific categories including **PP40/PP41 Dwarf / Short Stature, PP40–41 Assisted, PP42–PP44 Standing, PP51–PP57 Wheelchair, PP20 Intellectual Disabilities and PP1–PP8 Cerebral Palsy**, together with the applicable Standing Amputee and Standing Upper Limb Disability classifications. Allocation to a particular Sport Class shall be based upon the Classification criteria applicable to that category and the evidence established through Athlete Evaluation.

### **22.3 Sport Class Status**

Sport Class Status identifies the **administrative and Classification position of a Player following Athlete Evaluation**, including whether the assigned Sport Class is subject to further review. IPPA may use the designations **New (N), Review (R) and Confirmed (C)**, or other designations formally established by IPPA.

### **22.4 New — N**

**Sport Class Status N — New** may be assigned to a Player who has not previously completed the applicable IPPA Classification process or whose Classification has not yet attained a status recognised as final under IPPA procedures.

## **22.5 Review — R**

**Sport Class Status R — Review** may be assigned where a Player's Sport Class requires future reassessment. Review may be appropriate where impairment characteristics are progressive, fluctuating or developmental, where functional characteristics may change, where additional evidence is required, or where changes to Classification Rules or sport-specific requirements warrant reassessment.

## **22.6 Confirmed — C**

**Sport Class Status C — Confirmed** may be assigned where the Classification Panel has determined that the Player's Sport Class has been sufficiently established under the applicable IPPA Classification Rules and that routine further Classification assessment is not presently required.

## **22.7 Relationship Between Sport Class and Status**

Sport Class and Sport Class Status are distinct components of the IPPA Classification record. **Sport Class identifies the applicable competitive grouping; Sport Class Status identifies the current Classification position and review condition of that grouping.** Neither designation shall be interpreted as a measure of athletic quality or competitive ability.

# **CHAPTER 23 — CLASSIFICATION DOCUMENTATION, RECORDS AND REPORTS**

## **23.1 Classification Record**

IPPA shall maintain an official Classification record for each Player who undergoes Classification. The record shall contain, as applicable, the Player's identification information, Classification category, relevant eligibility evidence, medical documentation, assessment findings, Classification Panel details, Sport Class, Sport Class Status, Classification date and location, review requirements, competition observations, decision rationale and applicable Protest or Appeal information.

## **23.2 Classification Assessment Report**

The Classification Panel shall complete the prescribed IPPA Classification Assessment Report following Athlete Evaluation. The report shall establish a **traceable evidentiary pathway** connecting the assessment procedures undertaken, objective findings obtained, functional interpretation applied and Classification determination reached. Documentation shall be sufficiently detailed to permit appropriate professional review without unnecessarily recording irrelevant personal or medical information.

### **23.3 Clinical and Scientific Evidence**

Where medical or professional evidence is required, documentation shall identify the relevant impairment, its clinical characteristics and, where applicable, its functional consequences. Evidence should be sufficiently specific and professionally attributable to permit the Classification Panel to evaluate its **authenticity, relevance and relationship to the applicable IPPA Classification criteria**.

### **23.4 Accuracy and Record Integrity**

Classification Personnel shall ensure that Classification documentation is **accurate, objective, contemporaneous, complete and professionally recorded**. Records shall not be knowingly falsified, materially altered, improperly suppressed or manipulated. Deliberate falsification or manipulation of Classification documentation may constitute a Classification integrity violation under IPPA Rules.

### **23.5 Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Classification information shall be treated as confidential professional information. Medical, functional, intellectual, personal and assessment data shall be collected, processed, stored and disclosed only for authorised Classification purposes and in accordance with applicable IPPA requirements and relevant data-protection obligations.

### **23.6 Retention and Preservation**

IPPA shall establish appropriate procedures for the **secure retention, controlled access, updating, archiving and lawful disposal** of Classification records. Records shall be preserved for the period required to maintain the continuity, traceability and integrity of the Player's Classification history.

## **23.7 Official Classification Record**

IPPA may maintain an official Classification database recording the Player's current **Sport Class, Sport Class Status, Classification date and applicable review information**. The official IPPA Classification record shall constitute the authoritative Classification reference for IPPA-sanctioned competition and shall prevail over unofficial, expired or informal Classification information.

## **CHAPTER 24 — CLASSIFICATION-SPECIFIC COMPETITION RULES AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

### **24.1 Purpose**

Classification-specific competition provisions are established to enable Players to participate in Para Pickleball in a manner that appropriately reflects the functional requirements associated with their Sport Class. Such provisions shall facilitate equitable access and safe participation without altering the essential competitive nature of Para Pickleball or creating an artificial sporting advantage.

### **24.2 Authorised Accommodations**

Where prescribed by IPPA, Classification-related accommodations may include provisions concerning wheelchair participation, mobility, positioning, additional bounce, equipment, external support, Player Assistants, communication and other sport-specific requirements. An accommodation shall be permitted only where it is **expressly recognised or authorised under the applicable IPPA Rules**.

### **24.3 Wheelchair Competition Provisions**

Players classified within **PP51–PP57** shall compete in accordance with the applicable IPPA Wheelchair Para Pickleball Rules. Where prescribed by the Player's Sport Class, the **Additional Bounce Rule** shall apply in accordance with the IPPA Book of Rules. Such provisions are Classification-specific competition accommodations and shall not be modified through informal agreement between Players, coaches or teams.

### **24.4 PP40–PP41 Assisted Competition Provision**



Players classified **PP40–PP41 Assisted** may, where authorised by IPPA and applicable competition regulations, utilise an **approved electric wheelchair, approved External Support Equipment or an approved Player Assistant/s** where such assistance is required to facilitate meaningful participation. Such assistance shall be administered according to IPPA requirements and shall not be interpreted as conferring an artificial competitive advantage.

#### **24.5 Assistive Equipment and Technology**

Assistive equipment used during competition shall satisfy the applicable IPPA **technical, safety and equipment requirements**. Classification authorisation of an Athlete shall not, by itself, constitute technical approval of a particular device, wheelchair or assistive technology for competition.

#### **24.6 Player Assistant**

Where a Player Assistant is authorised, the Assistant shall perform only those functions specifically permitted by IPPA. The Assistant shall not provide prohibited coaching or tactical instruction, interfere with play, manipulate competition, provide an unauthorised advantage or perform an action that the Player is required to perform personally under the IPPA Book of Rules.

#### **24.7 Communication Accommodation**

Where necessary, IPPA may establish reasonable communication accommodations for Players whose eligible impairment affects communication, comprehension or processing of information. Such accommodation shall facilitate **access to** Classification and competition procedures while preserving the essential technical, tactical and competitive requirements of Para Pickleball.

#### **24.8 Accommodation and Competitive Equity**

A Classification accommodation shall be justified by the functional consequences of the Player's eligible impairment and must be authorised under the applicable IPPA Rules. The purpose of an accommodation is to remove an impairment-related barrier to participation, not to enhance sporting capacity beyond the Player's functional requirements.

#### **24.9 Competition Officials**

Competition Officials shall apply Classification-specific provisions consistently and shall verify the Player's official Sport Class, Sport Class Status and authorised competition accommodations through the applicable IPPA Classification system or official event documentation.

#### **24.10 Fundamental IPPA Classification Rule**

Every Player shall compete in accordance with the Sport Class and Sport Class Status officially assigned by IPPA and shall receive only those Classification-specific accommodations authorised for that Sport Class under the IPPA Book of Rules.

## **CHAPTER 25 — CLASSIFICATION REVIEW, PROTEST AND APPEAL PROCEDURES**

### **25.1 Purpose and Principle**

The IPPA Classification Review, Protest and Appeal system shall provide a structured, impartial and procedurally safeguarded mechanism for reviewing Classification outcomes and addressing legitimate challenges to Classification decisions. The process shall protect the Player's right to fair treatment while preserving the scientific integrity, consistency, independence and credibility of Para Pickleball Classification. The framework shall be consistent with the principles of the IPC Classification Code and applicable International Standards, while applying the sport-specific requirements established by the IPPA Book of Rules.

### **25.2 Classification Review**

A Classification Review may be initiated where there is a legitimate basis to reconsider whether the Player's existing Sport Class accurately reflects the current evidence and applicable IPPA Classification Rules. Review may be appropriate where there is a material change in impairment or functional capacity, progression or fluctuation of an underlying health condition, emergence of significant new medical or functional evidence, amendment of Classification Rules, or other circumstances recognised by IPPA.

A Review shall not be undertaken merely because a Player, coach, team or other party disagrees with a properly reached Classification decision.

### **25.3 Sport Class Review**

Where a Review is authorised, the Player may be required to undergo a further Classification Evaluation in accordance with the applicable IPPA procedures. The Review shall examine the relevant evidence afresh and may include medical documentation, functional assessment, technical assessment and sport-specific observation.

The purpose of Review is to establish whether the existing Sport Class remains **scientifically, functionally and sport-specifically valid** under the applicable IPPA Classification Rules.

## **25.4 Protest**

A **Protest** is a formal challenge to the Sport Class allocated to a Player. The IPPA Classification Rules shall identify who may lodge a Protest, the circumstances in which a Protest is permitted, the applicable time limits, required documentation, fees where applicable, and the procedure for determining the Protest. Under the IPC framework, a Protest concerns the **Sport Class itself**, rather than matters such as Sport Class Status or certain automatic second-assessment outcomes.

## **25.5 Grounds for Protest**

A Protest shall be accepted only wherever permitted by the applicable IPPA Classification Rules and shall identify a legitimate basis for challenging the Sport Class allocated to the Player. A Protest shall not be used as a mechanism to obtain preferential Classification, competitive advantage, selection benefit or a different Sport Class without evidence supporting the challenge.

## **25.6 Who May Lodge a Protest**

For IPPA-sanctioned competition, the IPPA Book of Rules shall specify the persons or organisations authorised to submit a Protest. The process may require a National Federation or other authorised Member Organisation to lodge the Protest on behalf of the Player rather than permitting an individual Player to submit a Protest directly. The applicable IPPA competition regulations shall govern.

## **25.7 Protest Panel**

A Protest shall be considered by an appropriately constituted **Protest Panel** comprising qualified Classification Personnel who were not members of the original

Classification Panel and who have no actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in the matter.

The Protest Panel shall independently examine the evidence and apply the relevant IPPA Classification Rules. The Panel shall not simply reproduce the reasoning of the original Classification Panel without independently evaluating the grounds of the Protest.

## **25.8 Protest Decision**

Following consideration of the Protest, the Protest Panel may:

- ✚ uphold the original Sport Class;

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- ✚ assign a different Sport Class;

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- ✚ require further Classification assessment;

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- ✚ determine that the Protest does not satisfy the applicable procedural requirements; or

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- ✚ take such other action as is expressly authorised under the IPPA Classification Rules.

The decision shall be documented and communicated through the prescribed IPPA procedure.

## **25.9 Appeal**

An Appeal is a formal challenge concerning an alleged procedural or Classification-rule breach during the Classification process where that breach could reasonably have resulted in the Player being incorrectly designated as Not Eligible — Underlying Health Condition, Not Eligible-Eligible Impairment, Not Eligible — Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria, or incorrectly allocated a Sport Class and/or Sport Class Status. This distinction follows the structure of the 2025 IPC Classification Code.

## **25.10 Grounds for Appeal**

An Appeal shall not ordinarily constitute a second opportunity to argue that a Classification Panel simply reached the wrong professional conclusion. It shall

address an **alleged failure to comply with applicable Classification Rules or procedures** that could reasonably have affected the outcome.

Examples may include:

- ✚ material procedural irregularity;

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- ✚ failure to apply an applicable Classification Rule;

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- ✚ improper constitution of a Classification Panel;

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- ✚ undisclosed conflict of interest;

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- ✚ material procedural unfairness;

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- ✚ failure to provide a required Classification opportunity; or

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- ✚ other substantive procedural breach recognised by IPPA.

### **25.11 Independence of Appeal**

An Appeal shall be determined by an **independent Appeal body or Appeal Panel** established or recognised by IPPA. Persons involved in the original Classification decision or Protest determination shall not participate in the Appeal where their involvement would compromise the independence or impartiality of the Appeal process.

### **25.12 Appeal Panel Competence**

The Appeal Panel should possess appropriate expertise relevant to Classification, medicine, science, law, governance and/or Para sport, as appropriate to the matter under consideration.

### **25.13 Procedural Fairness**

The Player and authorised parties shall be provided with a fair opportunity to understand the basis of the relevant decision and to present information permitted under the applicable IPPA procedure. Classification proceedings shall be conducted with impartiality, confidentiality, procedural fairness and respect for the dignity of the Player.

### **25.14 Timelines and Administrative Requirements**

| <b>Procedure</b>                  | <b>IPPA Proposed Time Limit</b>              |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Classification Protest            | <b>Within 1 hour</b>                         |
| Protest administrative review     | <b>Within 2 hours</b>                        |
| Protest Panel appointment         | <b>Within 2 hours of acceptance</b>          |
| In-Competition Protest resolution | <b>Normally same Competition</b>             |
| Protest decision                  | <b>Normally within 6 hours of evaluation</b> |
| Unresolved Competition Protest    | <b>Within 72 hours after Competition</b>     |
| Appeal submission                 | <b>Within 7 calendar days</b>                |
| Appeal acknowledgement            | <b>Within 2 working days</b>                 |
| Appeal Panel appointment          | <b>Within 5 working days</b>                 |
| Appeal hearing                    | <b>Within 14 calendar days</b>               |
| Appeal written decision           | <b>Within 7 calendar days after hearing</b>  |

The foregoing timeframes constitute the prescribed IPPA Classification procedural deadlines. They are established by IPPA pursuant to its sport-specific Classification Rules and are intended to operationalise the procedural requirements of the IPC Classification Code. The IPC Code itself generally requires International Federations to specify their applicable time periods and does not prescribe these exact numerical deadlines universally across all Para sports.

#### **25.15 Effect on Competition**

Where a Protest or Appeal is pending, the Player's eligibility to participate shall be governed by the applicable IPPA Classification and Competition Rules. A pending

Protest or Appeal shall not automatically entitle a Player to compete in a different Sport Class or under different Classification accommodations unless authorised by IPPA.

#### **25.16 Confidentiality and Protection of Classification Data**

All medical, functional, intellectual, personal and Classification information obtained during a Review, Protest or Appeal shall be handled as **protected Classification information**. Disclosure shall be limited to persons with a legitimate Classification, governance, legal or competition-related need to access such information and shall comply with applicable IPPA requirements and data-protection obligations.

#### **25.17 Finality of Decision**

The IPPA Classification system shall establish a defined point at which a Protest or Appeal decision becomes **final and binding**, subject only to any further review mechanism expressly provided by the IPPA Book of Rules or applicable law.

A Player or organisation shall not repeatedly challenge the same Classification determination without a legitimate procedural or evidentiary basis recognised by IPPA.

#### **25.18 No Retaliation**

No Player shall suffer discrimination, intimidation, retaliation, loss of opportunity or adverse treatment merely for exercising a legitimate right to Review, Protest or Appeal in accordance with IPPA procedures.

#### **25.19 Classification Integrity**

A Protest or Appeal shall be conducted in a manner that protects the integrity of the Classification system. No person shall attempt to manipulate, fabricate, suppress or misrepresent medical, functional or sport-specific evidence for the purpose of obtaining a particular Classification outcome.

Intentional Misrepresentation or other conduct that undermines Classification integrity shall be addressed under the applicable IPPA integrity and disciplinary procedures. The IPC's current framework separately addresses intentional misrepresentation through a dedicated International Standard.

#### **25.20 Fundamental IPPA Principle**

The right to challenge a Classification decision is an essential component of Classification integrity; however, a Protest or Appeal shall never be used as a mechanism to obtain competitive advantage. Every Review, Protest and Appeal shall be determined through independent, evidence-based and procedurally fair application of the IPPA Classification Rules, with the ultimate objective of ensuring accurate Sport Class allocation, protection of Player rights and confidence in the integrity of Para Pickleball.

## **CHAPTER 26 — CLASSIFIER ETHICS, INTEGRITY, CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

An IPPA Classifier shall uphold the highest standards of professional ethics, scientific integrity, impartiality, independence and confidentiality in every Classification activity. The Classifier shall exercise objective professional judgement based solely on the applicable IPPA Classification Rules and reliable medical, functional and sport-specific evidence, and shall not permit personal relationships, nationality, team interests, competitive outcomes, sponsorship, commercial considerations or external pressure to influence Classification decisions. Any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest shall be disclosed promptly to IPPA, and the Classifier shall withdraw where independence or impartiality may reasonably be questioned. The Classifier shall protect confidential Classification information, maintain professional competence, accurately document findings, reject improper influence or inducement, and report conduct that may compromise Classification integrity. Every Classification decision shall be made in good faith, free from discrimination or favouritism, with respect for the dignity, rights and welfare of every Player and with the overriding objective of preserving the credibility, fairness and scientific integrity of Para Pickleball Classification.



## **CHAPTER 27 — IPPA CLASSIFIER CERTIFICATION AND DIPLOMA EXAMINATION SYSTEM**

### **IPPA Classifier Certificate Course – Level 1**

The IPPA Classifier Education and Certification System shall comprise two progressive professional levels: the IPPA Classifier Certificate Course – Level 1, conducted as an intensive two-day program, and the IPPA Classifier Diploma – Level 2, structured as a nine-month advanced, thesis-based professional program. The Certificate Course shall establish foundational competency in IPPA Classification Rules, eligible impairments, functional assessment, sport-specific assessment, ethics, safeguarding, confidentiality, documentation and Classification procedures, followed by the prescribed examination.

### **IPPA Classifier Diploma Course – Level 2**

The Diploma shall require sustained academic study, practical Classification experience, case analysis, technical observation, documentation, a formal thesis or approved professional research project, and successful completion of the prescribed examination. The present course, examination and applicable Mentor/supervision fees shall be determined and published by IPPA through its prevailing official fee schedule.

The nine-month Diploma shall be strictly competency-based and Mentor-supervised, requiring the candidate to spend sufficient and meaningful practical time with all five principal IPPA Classification categories: Wheelchair Players, Standing Players, Dwarf/Short Stature Players, Players with Intellectual Disabilities, and Players with Cerebral Palsy. The candidate shall undertake documented practical experiences across these categories under the guidance of an IPPA-approved Mentor/Senior Classifier, demonstrating the ability to assess functional consequences, interpret sport-specific performance, apply IPPA Classification Rules and prepare scientifically reasoned Classification reports. The Diploma shall culminate in evaluation of the candidate's practical competency, theoretical knowledge, professional conduct and thesis-based work. Attendance alone shall not constitute certification; the IPPA Classifier Diploma shall be awarded only upon

satisfactory completion of the required nine-month training, practical exposure, mentorship, thesis and final examination requirements.

### **Players/Guardian Consent**

Before any Classification Study, assessment, recording, photography, video documentation, or use of the Player's Classification information for educational, research or professional purposes, written informed consent shall be obtained from the Player. Where the Player is legally a minor or lacks the legal capacity to provide informed consent, written consent shall be obtained from the Player's legally authorised parent or guardian, with the Player's assent obtained wherever reasonably possible. The consent process shall clearly explain the purpose, scope, methods, intended use, confidentiality provisions, storage and protection of Classification information, and the Player's right to decline or withdraw consent where applicable. No Classification Study shall be documented or used for purposes beyond the authorised scope of consent without obtaining the appropriate additional consent.

### **Founder's Declaration**

**Raghu Kumar Raghavelu**

*Founder & President, International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA)*

“With commitment to scientific integrity, equality, dignity and fairness, I dedicate this Classification Manual to the advancement of Para Pickleball and to ensuring that every Player is recognised, assessed and respected with integrity.”

## APPENDICES

### IPPA CLASSIFICATION MANUAL

The following Appendices form an integral part of the **IPPA Classification Manual** and shall be used as the supporting technical, administrative, educational and professional documentation for the implementation of Para Pickleball Classification.

#### Appendix 1 — IPPA Classification Terminology

The following terminology shall be used consistently throughout the IPPA Classification System:

- ✚ **Athlete / Player** — A person participating in Para Pickleball who is subject to the IPPA Classification Rules.
- ✚ **Eligible Impairment** — An impairment recognised under the applicable IPPA Classification Rules and consistent with the IPC Classification framework.
- ✚ **Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria (MDIC)** — The minimum level or extent of eligible impairment that a Player must demonstrate to satisfy the applicable IPPA criteria.
- ✚ **Athlete Evaluation** — The complete Classification process through which eligibility, impairment and sport-specific functional consequences are assessed.
- ✚ **Classification Panel** — Authorised Classification Personnel responsible for conducting Athlete Evaluation and determining Sport Class.
- ✚ **Sport Class** — The category assigned to a Player according to the functional impact of eligible impairment on Para Pickleball performance.
- ✚ **Sport Class Status** — The administrative status associated with a Player's Sport Class, such as New, Review or Confirmed.
- ✚ **Competition Observation** — Observation of the Player during training, simulated play or actual competition to assess the consistency of Classification findings.
- ✚ **Protest** — A formal challenge to an allocated Sport Class in accordance with IPPA procedures.
- ✚ **Appeal** — A formal challenge concerning an alleged breach of Classification rules or procedures, where applicable.
- ✚ **Intentional Misrepresentation** — Deliberate conduct intended to mislead Classification Personnel regarding impairment, functional ability or Classification information.
- ✚ **Classification Data** — Medical, functional, personal, technical, assessment and Classification information collected for authorised Classification purposes.

## Appendix 2 — IPPA Classification Codes and Sport Classes

The IPPA Classification system shall include the following principal Classification categories and codes, subject to the applicable IPPA Book of Rules and Classification Regulations:

| Classification Category        | IPPA Classification Codes                 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Dwarf / Short Stature          | <b>PP40, PP41</b>                         |
| Dwarf / Short Stature Assisted | <b>PP40–41 Assisted</b>                   |
| Standing Para Pickleball       | <b>PP42–PP44</b>                          |
| Wheelchair Para Pickleball     | <b>PP51–PP57</b>                          |
| Intellectual Disabilities      | <b>PP20 Series</b>                        |
| Cerebral Palsy                 | <b>PP1–PP8</b>                            |
| Standing Amputee               | Applicable IPPA Standing Amputee Class    |
| Standing Upper Limb Disability | Applicable IPPA Standing Upper Limb Class |

- 🏆 **PP40–PP41 Assisted:** Where authorised by IPPA, Players requiring assistance may use an approved electric wheelchair, External Support Equipment or Player Assistant to facilitate participation.
- 🏆 The exact allocation of Sport Class shall be determined through Athlete Evaluation and shall not be based solely upon medical diagnosis.

### Appendix 3 — IPPA Classification Assessment Forms

The IPPA Classification Assessment Record should contain:

1. Player Identification

2. National Federation

3. Classification Category

4. Medical Evidence

5. Eligible Impairment Determination

6. Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria

7. Functional Assessment

8. Technical Assessment

9. Sport-Specific Assessment

10. Competition Observation

11. Classification Panel Findings

12. Sport Class Determination

13. Sport Class Status

14. Review Requirements

15. Classification Personnel Signatures

16. Player / Guardian Consent

17. Confidentiality Declaration

## Appendix 4 — Medical Assessment Form

### A. Player Identification

- ✚ Full Name:
- ✚ IPPA Player ID:
- ✚ Date of Birth:
- ✚ National Federation:
- ✚ Classification Category:

### B. Medical Information

- ✚ Underlying Health Condition:
- ✚ Relevant Diagnosis:
- ✚ Date of Diagnosis:
- ✚ Treating Medical Professional:
- ✚ Relevant Medical Documentation Attached: Yes / No

### C. Eligible Impairment

- ✚ Type of Eligible Impairment:
- ✚ Anatomical / Physiological / Neurological / Intellectual / Other:
- ✚ Objective Medical Findings:
- ✚ Permanence / Stability:
- ✚ Relevant Functional Consequences:

### D. Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria

- ✚ Applicable IPPA Criteria:
- ✚ Assessment Findings:
- ✚ Criteria Satisfied: Yes / No / Further Evidence Required

### E. Medical Professional Declaration

I certify that the information provided is accurate to the best of my professional knowledge and is supplied for the authorised purpose of IPPA Classification.

Professional Qualifications:

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SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 5 — Functional Assessment Form

The Functional Assessment shall examine the **functional consequences of eligible impairment**, rather than diagnosis alone.

### Assessment Areas

- ✚ Strength and force production
- ✚ Range of movement
- ✚ Coordination
- ✚ Balance and postural control
- ✚ Trunk control
- ✚ Mobility
- ✚ Neuromuscular control
- ✚ Fine and gross motor function
- ✚ Upper-limb function
- ✚ Lower-limb function
- ✚ Cognitive processing, where applicable
- ✚ Communication and comprehension, where applicable
- ✚ Sport-specific functional limitations

**Para Pickleball Functional Assessment** The Player may be assessed in:

- ✚ Serve
- ✚ Return
- ✚ Groundstroke
- ✚ Volley
- ✚ Reaching
- ✚ Movement
- ✚ Recovery
- ✚ Positioning
- ✚ Balance
- ✚ Reaction
- ✚ Tactical response

**Classifier Findings:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 6 — Competition Observation Form

### Competition Observation Record

Player: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport: Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Competition: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Classifier shall observe the Player where required during authentic Para Pickleball activity.

### Observation Areas (1 to 5 Points System)

| Activity                  | Observation |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Serve                     | _____       |
| Return                    | _____       |
| Groundstroke              | _____       |
| Volley                    | _____       |
| Reaching                  | _____       |
| Movement                  | _____       |
| Recovery                  | _____       |
| Positioning               | _____       |
| Balance / Stability       | _____       |
| Sport-Specific Limitation | _____       |

### Classifier Conclusion

The observed performance was:

- ☐ Consistent with Classification findings
- ☐ Partially consistent
- ☐ Inconsistent — further assessment required

## Appendix 7 — Classification Experience Logbook

Each Diploma candidate shall maintain a formal Classification Experience Logbook.

| No. | Date | Event | Category | Player | Assessment | Mentor | Hours | Signature |
|-----|------|-------|----------|--------|------------|--------|-------|-----------|
| 1   |      |       |          |        |            |        |       |           |
| 2   |      |       |          |        |            |        |       |           |
| 3   |      |       |          |        |            |        |       |           |
| 4   |      |       |          |        |            |        |       |           |
| 5   |      |       |          |        |            |        |       |           |

## Appendix 8 — Classification Experience Report Template

### Classification Experience Report

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Event: \_\_\_\_\_  
Classification Category: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Player Profile

---

#### 2. Assessment Methodology

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#### 3. Medical / Eligibility Evidence

---

#### 4. Functional Findings

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#### 5. Sport-Specific Findings

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#### 6. Competition Observation

---

#### 7. Classification Reasoning

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#### 8. Proposed Sport Class

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#### 9. Mentor Evaluation

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Mentor Signature:

Candidate Signature:

## Appendix 9 — Classification Panel Report

### IPPA CLASSIFICATION PANEL REPORT

Player: \_\_\_\_\_

IPPA ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Panel Members

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Findings

##### Eligibility:

- ☐ Eligible
- ☐ Not Eligible — Underlying Health Condition
- ☐ Not Eligible — Eligible Impairment
- ☐ Not Eligible — Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria

##### Medical Findings:

\_\_\_\_\_

##### Functional Findings:

\_\_\_\_\_

##### Sport-Specific Findings:

\_\_\_\_\_

##### Competition Observation:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Final Determination

Sport Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport Class Status: N / R / C

##### Classification Rationale:

\_\_\_\_\_

Panel Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 10 — Sport Class and Sport Class Status Documentation

### Official Classification Record

Player: \_\_\_\_\_

IPPA Licence No: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport Class Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

### Status

- **N — New**
- **R — Review**
- **C — Confirmed**

The Sport Class identifies the Player's Classification grouping, while Sport Class Status identifies the administrative and review position of that Classification.

## Appendix 11 — Classification Review and Protest Forms

### A. Classification Review Request

Player: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Sport Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Review:

- ☐ Change in impairment
- ☐ Change in functional capacity
- ☐ New medical evidence
- ☐ Progressive / fluctuating condition
- ☐ Change in IPPA Classification Rules
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence Attached: \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Classification Protest

Protesting Federation: \_\_\_\_\_

Player: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport Class Challenged: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Decision: \_\_\_\_\_

### Grounds of Protest

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## Appendix 12 — Classifier Code of Conduct

### Every IPPA Classifier shall:

1. Act impartially and independently.

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2. Apply IPPA Classification Rules consistently.

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3. Maintain professional competence.

---
4. Protect confidential information.

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5. Respect the dignity and rights of every Player.

---
6. Avoid discrimination and favouritism.

---
7. Declare conflicts of interest.

---
8. Reject improper influence.

---
9. Maintain accurate records.

---
10. Report Classification integrity concerns.

---
11. Avoid using Classification authority for personal benefit.

---
12. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

### Appendix 13 — Classifier Conflict of Interest Declaration

I declare that I have disclosed all actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that could affect, or reasonably appear to affect, my independence or professional judgement in Classification.

**Player / Event:** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have no conflict of interest.

☐ I have disclosed the following conflict:

---

**Classifier:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **Appendix 14 — Level 1 Certificate Examination Framework**

### **IPPA Classifier Certificate Course — Level 1**

**Duration: 2 Days**

#### **Core Areas**

-  IPPA Classification principles
-  IPC Classification framework
-  Eligible impairments
-  Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria
-  IPPA Sport Classes
-  Medical assessment principles
-  Functional assessment
-  Sport-specific assessment
-  Competition observation
-  Ethics and safeguarding
-  Confidentiality
-  Classification integrity
-  Protest and Review procedures

#### **Assessment**

**The examination may include:**

-  Written examination
-  Multiple-choice questions
-  Short-answer questions
-  Case studies
-  Practical assessment
-  Oral questioning

Successful candidates shall receive the IPPA Classifier Certificate — Level 1, subject to fulfilment of all IPPA requirements.

## Appendix 15 — Level 2 Diploma Examination Framework

### IPPA Classifier Diploma — Level 2

**Duration: 9 Months**

**The Diploma shall be an advanced professional programme incorporating:**

✚ Mentor-supervised Classification experience

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✚ Medical and functional case analysis

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✚ Sport-specific assessment

---

✚ Competition observation

---

✚ Classification documentation

---

✚ Classification decision-making

---

✚ Five-category practical exposure

---

✚ Case-study analysis

---

✚ Classification research

---

✚ Thesis / Dissertation

---

✚ Final examination

---

✚ Practical competency assessment

---

✚ Thesis defence / viva voce, where prescribed

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The Diploma shall be competency-based and shall not be awarded solely on attendance or completion of classroom instruction.

## **Appendix 16 — Nine-Month Diploma Practicum Requirements**

Throughout the nine-month Diploma, the candidate shall maintain continuous practical development under an approved IPPA Mentor.

The candidate shall obtain meaningful, documented practical exposure to all five principal player groups:

1. Wheelchair Players
2. Standing Players
3. Dwarf / Short Stature Players
4. Intellectual Disabilities
5. Cerebral Palsy

The candidate shall demonstrate practical understanding of the distinct medical, functional, cognitive, neurological, biomechanical and sport-specific considerations applicable to each category.

## **Appendix 17 — Five Classification Experience Portfolio**

The Diploma candidate shall prepare a portfolio demonstrating practical experience across the five categories.

### **Portfolio I — Wheelchair**

Assessment reports, functional analysis and sport observation.

### **Portfolio II — Standing**

Assessment reports, functional analysis and sport observation.

### **Portfolio III — Dwarf / Short Stature**

Assessment reports, functional analysis and sport observation.

### **Portfolio IV — Intellectual Disabilities**

Assessment reports, cognitive / adaptive considerations and sport observation.

### **Portfolio V — Cerebral Palsy**

Neurological, functional and sport-specific assessment and observation.

Each portfolio should contain:

-  Case profile
-  Consent documentation
-  Assessment methodology
-  Findings
-  Classification reasoning
-  Mentor feedback
-  Candidate reflection
-  Supporting documentation

## **Appendix 18 — Classification Case Studies**

IPPA Classifier candidates shall analyse structured case studies representing the principal Classification categories.

Each case study shall require the candidate to determine:

1. Whether an eligible impairment is present.
2. Whether Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria are satisfied.
3. Relevant functional consequences.
4. Sport-specific implications.
5. Whether competition observation is required.
6. Appropriate Sport Class.
7. Appropriate Sport Class Status.
8. Required documentation.
9. Ethical or conflict-of-interest considerations.
10. Classification rationale.

### **Case Study Conclusion:**

The candidate shall provide a scientifically reasoned Classification decision supported by the evidence available.

## **Appendix 19 — Classifier Self-Assessment Checklist**

Before completing a Classification assignment, the Classifier should confirm:

- ☐ I understand the applicable IPPA Classification Rules.
- ☐ I have reviewed the available evidence.
- ☐ I have assessed eligibility appropriately.
- ☐ I have considered Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria.
- ☐ I have assessed functional consequences.
- ☐ I have considered sport-specific performance.
- ☐ Competition observation was conducted where required.
- ☐ I have remained independent of competitive interests.
- ☐ I have disclosed any conflict of interest.
- ☐ I have protected Player confidentiality.
- ☐ My findings are objective and evidence-based.
- ☐ My documentation is accurate and complete.
- ☐ My Sport Class decision is scientifically defensible.
- ☐ I have explained the decision appropriately.

**Classifier**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

## **Appendix 20 — Glossary of Terms**

**Player Evaluation:** The process through which IPPA determines Classification eligibility and Sport Class.

**Classification Panel:** Authorised personnel responsible for Player Evaluation.

**Eligible Impairment:** An impairment recognised by the applicable Classification Rules.

**Functional Consequence:** The demonstrable effect of eligible impairment on relevant Para Pickleball activities.

**Minimum Disability-Impairment Criteria:** The minimum impairment threshold required under the applicable IPPA Classification criteria.

**Sport Class:** A Classification category into which a Player is placed according to the functional impact of eligible impairment.

**Sport Class Status:** The administrative status of the Player's Sport Class.

**Classification Review:** A reassessment of a Player's Classification under circumstances recognised by IPPA.

**Protest:** A formal challenge to an allocated Sport Class.

**Appeal:** A formal challenge concerning an alleged Classification procedural or rules violation.

**Competition Observation:** Assessment of the Player under authentic or simulated sport conditions.

**Classifier:** A person trained and authorised by IPPA to perform Classification duties.

**Mentor:** An IPPA-authorised experienced Classifier responsible for supervising and developing Diploma candidates.

**Classification Integrity:** The preservation of accuracy, fairness, independence, credibility and ethical conduct throughout Classification.

## **REFERENCES AND SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

The IPPA Classification Manual should identify the principal reference documents used in developing and administering the Classification System, including:

1. **International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA) — IPPA Book of Rules.**
2. **International Para Pickleball Association (IPPA) — IPPA Classification Rules and Classification Manual.**
3. **International Paralympic Committee (IPC) — IPC Classification Code.**
4. **IPC — International Standards accompanying the IPC Classification Code.**
5. **IPC — International Standard for Eligible Impairments.**
6. **IPC — International Standard for Athlete Evaluation.**
7. **IPC — International Standard for Classification Personnel and Training and Certification.**
8. **IPC — International Standard for Classification Data Protection.**
9. **IPC — International Standard for Protest and Appeals.**
10. **Applicable IPPA Competition Regulations and Technical Rules.**
11. **Applicable IPPA Classification Forms, Procedures and Official Technical Bulletins.**
12. **Applicable national legislation and safeguarding, privacy and data-protection requirements.**

### **Final IPPA Classification Principle**

**“Classification shall be conducted through a fair, evidence-based, sport-specific and ethically independent process, recognising the functional consequences of eligible impairment while protecting the dignity, rights and competitive opportunity of every Para Pickleball Player.”**