

Para-Athletics

Para-Athletics is the sport of athletics for people with a range of impairments. Para-Athletes compete in a range of track, road or field events.

Classification

In Para-Sport classification provides the structure for fair and equitable competition to ensure that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus – the same factors that account for success in sport for able-bodied athletes.

The Para-Sport classification assessment process identifies the eligibility of each Para-Athlete's impairment, and groups them into a sport class according to the degree of activity limitation resulting from their impairment.

Classification is sport-specific as an eligible impairment affects a Para-Athlete's ability to perform in different sports to a different extent. Each Para-Sport has a different classification system.

In Para-Athletics each event consists of a prefix T (track) or F (field) and a number that indicates which of the events the sport class applies to.

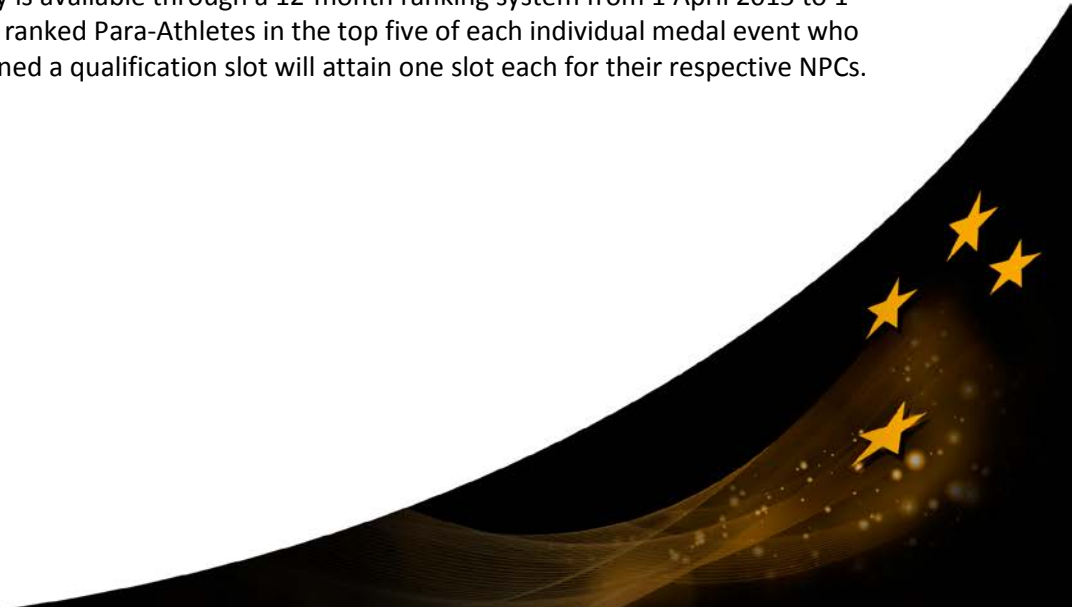
More information on classification and sport classes is available under 'Classification detail' below.

Qualification – the road to Rio

Qualification for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games can be secured via a number of methods. Each National Paralympic Committee (NPC) is restricted to a maximum of three Para-Athletes per event (except the marathon which can have a maximum of six) and one team per relay.

The top two ranked Para-Athletes at each event at the 2015 IPC Athletics World Championships in Doha obtain one qualification spot for their NPC.

A second method of entry is available through a 12-month ranking system from 1 April 2015 to 1 April 2016. Three highest ranked Para-Athletes in the top five of each individual medal event who have not otherwise obtained a qualification slot will attain one slot each for their respective NPCs.



Para-Athletes will also be considered for qualification if they have achieved an Allocation of Qualification Slots (AQS) performance at an IPC recognised competition between 15 October 2014 and 20 June 2016. Note that these spots will be awarded to the NPC that the individual Para-Athlete represents. A further 30 overall places (20 men and 10 women) will be available through the IPC Bipartite Commission Invitation qualification system in order to protect the viability of certain medal events.

Relays – the top eight ranked nations in each event (qualification period between 1 January 2015 and 20 June 2016) will qualify.

The **initial selection announcement** of the New Zealand Para-Athletics team will be made no later than 23 May 2016 and the **final announcement** no later than 7 July 2016.

“Eight athletes represented New Zealand at the recent IPC Athletics World Championships in Doha, winning four medals, gaining 13 NZ records and 100% personal bests. This shows that the Para-Athletes are tracking toward top eight performances at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, pending selection.”

“As a result of these performances two slots have been secured for New Zealand to date, with another slot allocation being made in April and the final slot allocation in July.”

Raylene Bates, Para-Athletics Manager, Athletics New Zealand

Rio 2016 Para-Athletics

Para-Athletics events are held for men and women over a range of classifications and events. Broadly speaking the classification categories are divided into six different types of impairment – visually impaired, intellectually impaired, cerebral palsy and brain trauma, short stature, limb deficiencies and impaired muscle power/impaired range of movement. (Read more in ‘Classification details’ below.)

Some Para-Athletes will compete in wheelchairs, some with prostheses, while those who are visually impaired receive guidance from a sighted guide.

Medal events: 177 in total comprising 96 men’s events and 81 women’s events.

Track: 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m and 4x100m and 4x400m relays.

Field: High jump (men only), long jump, shot put, discus, javelin and club throw.

Road: Marathon.

Where: Joao Havelange Stadium, Maracana (note that the road events are based at Flamengo Park, Copacabana).

When: Thursday 8 September to Sunday 18 September 2016.

More info: www.rio2016.com/en/paralympics/athletics

Paralympics Medals Since 2000

GOLD

- Men's Javelin F44 (Sydney 2000) – John Dowall
- Men's Javelin F52 (Sydney 2000) – David MacCalman
- Men's Pentathlon P53 (Sydney 2000) – David MacCalman
- Men's Shot Put F53 (Sydney 2000) – Peter Martin
- Men's Javelin F52-53 (Athens 2004) – Peter Martin
- Men's Shot Put F52 (Athens 2004) – Peter Martin
- Men's 800m T13 (Athens 2004) – Tim Prendergast
- Men's 200m T37 (Athens 2004) – Matt Slade

SILVER

- Men's Shot Put F44 (Sydney 2000) – John Dowall
- Men's 1,500m T13 (Sydney 2000) – Tim Prendergast
- Men's 800m T13 (Sydney 2000) – Tim Prendergast
- Men's 200m T37 (Sydney 2000) – Matt Slade
- Women's 200m T44 (Sydney 2000) – Kate Horan

BRONZE

- Men's Pentathlon P53 (Sydney 2000) – Peter Martin
- Men's 100m T37 (Sydney 2000) – Matt Slade
- Men's Discus F52 (Athens 2004) – Peter Martin

The Stars of Para-Athletics

Among the superstar names on show in the Paralympic Games marquee sport are the sprint duo of Jason Smyth from Ireland and the USA's Richard Browne. Look out too for the four-time gold medallist from the London 2012 Paralympic Games, David Weir. The German, Markus Rehm, will also be one to watch in the T44 long jump.

On the women's side, top wheelchair racers Tatyana McFadden from the USA and Hannah Cockroft of Great Britain will be expected to shine, as will Brazilian sprint superstar Terezinha Guilhermina on home ground.

The strength and depth of the New Zealand Para-Athletics programme has improved markedly since the London 2012 Paralympics Games. Names seeking to make a mark will be 2015 IPC Athletics World Championship silver medallists Rory McSweeney (F44 javelin) and Jess Hamill (F34 shot put), and bronze medallists in Doha – Holly Robinson (F46 javelin) and Anna Grimaldi (F47 long jump).

Did you know?

- China topped the medal table at the 2015 IPC Athletics World Championships in Doha with 41 gold medals, ahead of Russia and then the USA. Surprisingly, Tunisia finished fifth overall in the medal table, with a total of 11 gold medals.
- Markus Rehm, the German F44 amputee long jumper, struck gold with a world record 8.40m at the 2015 IPC Athletics World Championships – a distance which would have been far enough to have won long jump gold at the London 2012 Olympic Games.
- With a total of 177 medal events on the Paralympic programme, Para-Athletics is the sport with more medals available than any other in Rio 2016.
- New Zealand's last Para-Athletics gold medals at a Paralympic Games came at Athens in 2004 when Peter Martin won a brace of golds in shot put and javelin, Tim Prendergast claimed top spot in the 800m and Matt Slade won 200m gold.
- The club throw is the only event on the Paralympic Games Para-Athletics programme, which would be unfamiliar to able-bodied athletics. The event, which is the Paralympics equivalent to the hammer, sees competitors sit in a throwing frame and hurl a wooden club.
- Visually-impaired reigning Paralympic and world shot put champion, Assunta Legnante of Italy, used to be an able-bodied competitor and struck gold at the 2007 European Indoor Championships.

Terminology

Paralympian A Para-Athlete who has taken part in Paralympic Games.

Para-Athlete All athletes within the Paralympic movement from grass roots to elite level.

Prosthetic An artificial device used to replace a missing or defective body part.

Push-rim The part of a wheelchair racing chair attached to the side of the two back wheels, which the racers use to help generate forward motion.

Guide runner Used by visually-impaired runners to help guide the athletes in the right direction.



Timeline

- 1952** The first Para-Athletics competition took place at the inaugural International Stoke Mandeville Games. Wheelchair racing was one of eight sports which featured on the programme.
- 1960** Para-Athletics was one of eight sports to feature at the inaugural Paralympic Games staged in Rome. All 25 Para-Athletics events on the programme (13 men and 12 women) were field events.
- 1964** Track events were introduced into the Para-Athletics programme at the Paralympic Games in Tokyo. A total of 42 Para-Athletic events were included in the Games programme.
- 1976** As the growth of Para-Athletics expanded, the Toronto 1976 Paralympic Games witnessed some 207 Para-Athletics events on the programme.
- 1988** The Korean capital of Seoul played host to the first Paralympic Games to take place in the same host city as the Olympic Games.
- 1994** The birth of the IPC Athletics World Championships in Berlin. The event is now a biennial competition.
- 2012** Some 1,100 athletes competed across 170 events at the London 2012 Paralympic Games.
- 2015** A total of 1,230 athletes competed at the 2015 IPC Athletics World Championships in Doha.

Classification detail

In Para-Athletics the sport class consists of a prefix T for Track/Jumps and F for Field and indicates which event the sport class applies to.

Sport classes T/F11-13: Visual impairment

The three sport classes 11, 12 and 13 are allocated to Para-Athletes with varying degrees of visual impairment, with sport class 11 including those with the lowest vision and sport class 13 including Para-Athletes with the best vision meeting the minimum criteria. All Para-Athletes in the T11 sport class run are provided with a guide runner and are blind-folded. Para-Athletes in sport class T12 may also choose to run with a guide.

Sport class T/F 20: Intellectual impairment

Para-Athletes in this class are diagnosed with intellectual impairment and meet sport-specific minimum impairment criteria in 1500m, long jump or shot put, respectively.

Sport classes T32-38 and F31-38

The 30s sport classes are allocated to Para-Athletes with athetosis, ataxia and/or hypertonia. The impairments typically affect the ability to control legs, trunk, arms and hands. The lower the number is, the more significant the activity limitation.

Para-Athletes in sport classes 31-34 compete in a seated position, eg, in wheelchair racing or using a throwing chair. In contrast, Para-Athletes in sport classes 35-38 show a better function in their legs and better trunk control and therefore compete standing, eg, in running events, long jump or throwing events.

Sport class F40-41

Para-Athletes with short stature compete in sport class F40 and F41. Para-Athletes in F40 have a shorter stature than F41.

Sport classes T42-47 and F42-46

These sport classes are designated for Para-Athletes with limb deficiencies, such as amputations. In sport classes 42-44 the legs are affected by impairment and in sport classes 45-47 the arms are affected, eg, by above-elbow or below-elbow amputations.

All Para-Athletes in the 40s classes compete standing and do not use a wheelchair.

Sport classes T51-54 and F51-57:

The 50s sport classes only include Para-Athletes competing in a wheelchair. Again, a lower number indicates a higher activity limitation.

Para-Athletes competing in wheelchair racing events for T51-54 sport classes differ in their arm and shoulder functions, which are pertinent for pushing a wheelchair. Para-Athletes in classes T51-52 have activity limitations in both lower and upper limbs, eg, due to tetraplegia. Unlike Para-Athletes in sport classes T51-53, those competing in T54 have partial trunk and leg function.

For field events, wheelchair Para-Athletes compete in more differentiated classes. Para-Athletes in sport classes F51-54 have limited shoulder, arm and hand functions to different degrees and no trunk or leg function. This profile is, for instance, seen with tetraplegic Para-Athletes. Para-Athletes in class F54 have normal function in their arms and hands.

Throughout sport classes F55-57 the trunk and leg function increases, which is an advantage in throwing events.

For further information please go to www.paralympics.org.nz or to www.hpsnz.org.nz