



Impairment Classification and Eligibility for WDDA UK Tournaments

Impairment classification for darts events is still in its early stages, but some things remain constant regardless of sport when considering the criteria set out by International Paralympic Guidelines. As darts has not yet been included amongst the sports held we can only ask their assistance to guide us along a parallel pathway of classification that would not require too many adjustments at the time darts is included.

What is Classification?

Classification provides a structure for competition. Athletes competing in Paralympic sports have an impairment that leads to a competitive disadvantage in sport. Consequently, a system has to be put in place to minimize the impact of impairments on sport performance and to ensure the success of an athlete is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus. This system is called classification.

Classification is sport-specific because an impairment affects the ability to perform in different sports to a different extent. As a consequence, an athlete may meet the criteria in one sport, but may not meet the criteria in another sport. Each sport's governing body uses the IPC's Eligible Impairment Types and applies them to their sport.

If an athlete is not eligible to compete in a sport, this does not question the presence of a genuine impairment. It means:

- that the athlete does not have a primary impairment that makes him/her eligible to compete in that particular sport, or
- that the severity of the impairment does not significantly impact on the activities required in that particular sport.

We will be using the following six groups which relate to the eight physical IPC eligible impairments classification as used in the closest IPC sport to darts being Archery:

1. Limb Loss or Deficiency

Total or partial absence of bones or joints of the arms, legs of pelvic region as a result of trauma or illness or congenital limb deficiency (e.g. dysmelia). Classes are generally assigned to the athlete according to the number of limbs affected and the location in relation to major joints, (e.g. below elbow).

Minimal Disability

Generally, the amputation must be at least through the ankle or wrist.

2. Muscle Weakness

Spinal cord damage as result of injury or a congenital condition such as spina bifida, polio, transverse myelitis, sacral agenesis, spinal tumours, nerve damage, Erbs Palsy, Muscular dystrophies or other conditions that causes loss of muscle strength or paralysis in the trunk and legs (paraplegia) or legs, trunk and arms (quadriplegia) Classes are generally assigned based on where the injury has occurred in the spine and how this affects body movement.

Minimal Disability (Australian Paralympic Committee)

Generally, the muscle weakness in the legs, trunk, and / or arms, is tested using a 5 point scale. Athletes generally must lose at least 15- 20 points to be eligible for a Paralympic Sport.

3. Hypertonia, Ataxia, Athetosis or Dystonia

This group encompasses those who have cerebral palsy or an acquired brain injury, stroke, brain tumour, multiple sclerosis, Cerebellar ataxia, hereditary spastic paraparesis or condition in which muscle tone, balance or movement co-ordination are affected. This includes conditions such as hypertonia (quadriplegia, diplegia, and hemiplegia), dystonia, athetosis and ataxia. Classes are sport specific and are assigned according to the impact on movement, balance and co-ordination and which areas of the body are affected most significantly. **Minimal Disability**

(Australian Paralympic Committee)

Generally the impact must be measurable in at least one joint in the arm or leg.

4. Short Stature

This group encompasses conditions such as Achondroplasia, Spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia or similar conditions that impact on an athlete's adult height

Minimal Disability

The height for athletes with short stature is a maximum of 145cm

5. Impaired Passive Range of Movements

Conditions which cause the range of movement in one or more joints is reduced in a systematic way for example due to Arthrogyposis, Talipes Equinovarus. However hypermobility of joints, joint instability and acute conditions reduced range of movement which as arthritis are not considered eligible impairments

Minimal Disability

As a guide the full fusion of one ankle or wrist is the minimum

6. Leg-length Difference

The group encompasses conditions such as Dysmelia or other conditions causing significant bone shortening in one leg

Minimal Disability

As a guide a length difference of 7cm is considered

Assimilation into darts

Players from the above six categories will/may need to be assessed to allow inclusion within one of the following three classifications:

ST - Standing player W1 - Wheelchair player with limited mobility in legs, trunk and arms W2 - Wheelchair player with limited mobility in legs and trunk

Level of Sport Proficiency

Where a player is new to the sport of darts a Level of Sport Proficiency (LOSP) will be set as the minimum level of skill required. This will ensure safety to those scoring and those using nearby dart boards. The attainment of the LOSP is determined by the tournament organisers

Assessment will be based on three areas:

Accuracy:

For a player to enter competition a demonstration of their ability to consistently hit the playing surface of the dart board is required. Ten (10) sets of three (3) darts will be thrown during the assessment. After each set, retrieval by the thrower will be made and commencement of throwing the next set of darts within 90 seconds. Any darts that do not meet the surface of the dart board must not land outside the area defined as the "backboard". No more than three (3) darts hitting the backboard in the assessment is permissible.

Darts that fall short of the board will be classed as falling outside the defined "backboard" area unless they hit the dartboard or backboard before dropping to the floor.

In summary:

To attain the required LOSP in ***Accuracy*** no more than 3 darts may miss the playing surface of the dart board. All darts that miss the dart board must hit the area defined as the backboard and not outside this area.

Dart Retrieval:

Retrieval of darts can cause fatigue and inaccuracy of throw as games progress. It is therefore important to assess the capabilities of the thrower to retrieve their own darts for the length of a match. WDDA hosted events will allow the use of a retriever of darts where required but this may not be the case in mainstream darts events where a player is expected to retrieve their own darts at all times. ***Retrieval*** assessment is carried out in conjunction with the LOSP for ***Accuracy***. Using the time frame and number of darts thrown, determination will be made as to the need for an appointed "darts retriever". Where poor accuracy appears to be caused by fatigue the thrower may opt for reassessment after a reasonable period of recovery using a dart retriever. If assessed as attaining the required LOSP in ***Accuracy*** with the assistance of a dart retriever the thrower will be required to use a dart retriever for the duration of the event - for all games played. Re-assessment must be undertaken prior to future events before any change to the conditions of play for that play-er can be made.

Etiquette:

LOSP in the sport of darts requires that sporting etiquette be observed at all times. This is not something that relates specifically to any particular disability but relates to all players. Willingness to adhere to, and understanding of the appropriate level of behaviour during any darts activity is considered paramount, not only by the WDDA but all darting organisations. Events hosted by the WDDA do however bring together a range of disabilities including intellectual disability in the one venue which may increase the possibility of anti-social behaviour even if unintended. In assessing the LOSP for darts it is important to consider the following:

The type of disability

The level of care in attendance at the event

The degree of aggression associated with any lack of etiquette

Where any lack of etiquette is likely, and a commitment by the carer is not forthcoming to be in close attendance at all times, the WDDA cannot accept that player's entry into an event and therefore are considered to have failed the LOSP assessment regardless of the result in **Accuracy** and **Retrieval**.

Attainment of LOSP in all three (3) Categories is required to enter a WDDA darts event. Attaining an LOSP in **Etiquette** is required for entry into WDDA Satellite events.

Safety during assessment will not be compromised in any way or at any time. Where **Accuracy** assessments are taking place no person (including the Assessor) will be in front of the thrower. Nobody other than the Assessor may within 4 meters of the assessment area.

The appropriate WDDA Assessment Sheet will be completed and signed by the Assessor and person being assessed upon completion and submitted to WDDA Officials prior to the event.

The process of LOSP is a crucial to the safety, smooth running and integrity of WDDA events. WDDA LOSP Assessment results may be made available to other darts organisations where requested at the discretion of WDDA Board of Administrators.

c 2016: Details subject to change please visit the official WDDA website for any latest information.

