

Para biathlon Information Sheet

About the sport

Para biathlon was introduced in Lillehammer in 1994 and is open to athletes with a physical or vision impairment. It consists of a 7.5km route divided into three 2.5km stages. Between the two stages athletes must hit two targets located at a distance of 10 metres. Each miss is penalised by an increase in the overall route time.

The percentage-system is an adjusted time formula, which is used to determine overall place of each competitor relative to all other racers. This formula assigns a percentage to each competitor based on each athlete's race class. The athlete's actual time is multiplied by this percentage to determine their adjusted finishing time. Success in Para biathlon relies in the capability of alternating the skills of physical endurance and shooting accuracy during the competition.

Athletes who have a vision impairment compete with a sighted guide to navigate through the course; and use a rifle with acoustic signals, which depending on signal intensity, indicate when the athlete is on target. Athletes with a physical impairment compete standing or using a sit-ski, depending on their requirements.

Who can compete?

Para biathlon is open to athletes with a physical or vision impairment. Athletes are required to submit medical reports and meet the minimum impairment criteria in order to compete.

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Limb Loss	Partial or complete absence of bones or joints due to amputation or deficiency from birth	Arm: Loss of one arm at or above the level of the wrist OR shortened arm of similar length OR dysmelia resulting in lack of functional grip. Leg: • May be single (limb deficiency or limb loss through or above the level of the ankle joint on one lower limb) • May be both (limb deficiency or loss at or above the level of the forefoot OR the absence of a forefoot structure from birth)

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Limb length difference	Significant difference in leg length due to a deficiency at birth or trauma.	Leg length difference between both legs of at least 7cm
Muscle weakness/Impaired muscle power	Muscle weakness or paralysis from conditions such as muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, nerve damage, spinal cord injury or other spinal condition or change in muscle origin/insertion	Arm: Loss of strength in the hand resulting in a lack of functional grip. Leg: Loss of strength in the hip, knee, and/or ankle
Co-ordination impairments - Hypertonia /Spasticity, Motor Ataxia, Dyskinesia	Impairments from neurological conditions such as Acquired Brain Injury, Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Sclerosis that affect co-ordination and smoothness of movement and balance	Arm: Co-ordination or movement difficulties in at least one arm below the elbow Leg: Co-ordination or movement difficulties in one leg below the knee
Impaired passive range of Movement	Restricted movement or tightness in a joint/s from conditions such as joint fusions and other restricting conditions	Arm: Restricted range of movement in the elbow, with no ability to exert force when pushing through the ski pole on the affected side. Leg: Equivalent activity limitation to the loss of limb through or above the joint.

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Vision Impairment	Athletes with Vision Impairment have reduced or no vision caused by damage to the eye structure, optic nerves, optic pathways, or visual cortex of the brain. Examples of Underlying Health Conditions that can lead to Vision Impairment include retinitis pigmentosa and diabetic retinopathy.	Vision loss resulting in impaired visual acuity (how far an athlete can see) and/or impaired visual field (how wide an athlete can see)

Para biathlon Sport Classes

Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
Athletes with Physical Impairment – Standing (LW=Locomotor Winter)	
LW2	Athletes with an impairment in one leg through or above the knee. Athletes must ski using two skis and two poles and can ski with a prosthetic leg if required.
LW3	Athletes with an impairment in both legs. The athletes must ski using two skis and two poles. Athletes generate most of their propulsion using their upper body and legs.
LW4	Athletes with an impairment in one leg below the knee. Athletes must ski with two skis and two poles.
LW5/7	Athletes with an impairment in both arms. Athletes must ski using two skis, but do not use ski poles. Athletes are not able to use an upper limb prosthesis or other technology to assist with gripping the ski pole, however they use an adapted trigger mechanism to use the rifle.
LW6	Athletes with an impairment in one arm through or above the elbow. Athletes must ski using two skis and one ski pole. Athletes

Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
	are not able to use an upper limb prosthesis, and the entire affected limb must be fixed to the body for the duration of the race. Athletes may have assistance when setting up to shoot.
LW8	Athletes with an impairment in one arm below the level of the elbow that affects their ability to grip a ski pole. Athletes must ski with two skis and one ski pole. Athletes are not able to use an upper limb prosthesis or other technology to assist with gripping the ski pole.
LW9	Athletes with an impairment in at least one arm and one leg. Athletes must ski using two skis, and either one or two ski poles depending on their impairment.

Athletes with **Physical Impairment – Sitting**

LW10	Sit skiers who have impairments in their entire torso and legs. Athletes require strapping and support to maintain a sitting position, and use their arms to generate power.
LW10.5	Sit skiers who have impairments in their lower torso and legs, but have some strength in their upper torso to balance their sit ski. They generate their power using their arms.
LW11	Sit skiers with significant impairments in both their legs, but good control in their torso. They can generate power using their torso and arms, allowing for longer pole reach with each push.
LW11.5	Sit skiers with a significant impairment in at least one leg, but good control in their torso. They can generate a good powerful reach and push during movement, and balance well during shooting.
LW12	Sit-skiers with impairments in at least one leg, and good control of their torso (equivalent impairment to that of LW4 athletes). Athletes have excellent control of their sit ski and aim during shooting.

Athletes with a **Vision Impairment**

NS1	Athletes who are blind. Athletes must wear blacked out goggles or eyeshades when they race. A guide will ski in front of the Athlete verbally giving directions on the course.
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Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
NS2	Athletes who have very low vision in both eyes, with more vision than NS1. Vision is affected in how far they can see (visual acuity). Athletes can opt to compete with a guide.
NS3	Athletes who have low vision in both eyes, with more vision than NS2. Vision may be affected in how far they can see (visual acuity) or in how wide they can see (visual field). Athletes can opt to compete with a guide.
Not Eligible	
Not Eligible (NE)	Athlete does not meet the minimum criteria for the Para sport classes, but may still be able to compete. Contact Biathlon Australia for more information.

Find out more

To get involved or for more information contact:

Biathlon Australia

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Note: The classification information provided is intended as a guide only. Only authorised classifiers are able to provide a formal classification in accordance with the rules of the sport. Not all classes may have events at the Paralympic Games