Table Tennis Classification Policy and Procedures

The purpose of the Classification Policy and Procedures is to clearly define the systems of classification adopted by Table Tennis Australia and recognise the role of system partners. It will ensure the ongoing provision of a consistent and sustainable classification system nationally.

September 2011

Developed in consultation with

Australian Paralympic Committee and AUSRAPID

www.tabletennis.org.au
CONTENTS

1 Australian Table Tennis Classification System Overview 2

2 Paralympic Classification 3

3 Physical Impairment Classification System 5

4 Intellectual Disability Classification 9

5 Relevant resources and policies 11
1 Australian Table Tennis Classification System Overview

1.1 Purpose

The Australian Table Tennis Classification System (herein referred to as “Classification”) provides a structure for competition for table tennis players with a disability. Athletes with disabilities have an impairment in body structures and functions that leads to a competitive disadvantage in sport. Consequently, criteria are put in place 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 athletes who are able-bodied. Classification in table tennis groups athletes into classes defined by the degree of activity limitation related to the impairment and/or specific to the tasks in the sport. In Australia, classification is delivered as a free service, and delivered in such a way as to ensure a fair environment for competition at all levels.

1.2 Minimal Criteria

Each classification system has a set of minimal disability criteria that must be met. In order to be eligible to compete in table tennis as an athlete with a disability, it is not sufficient simply to have a disability. Specific and objective criteria and testing is used to determine whether a person’s impairment results in sufficient activity limitation of their ability to perform the core elements of table tennis. Only authorised officials, termed classifiers, are able to determine whether a person meets the minimal disability criteria for a particular class.

1.3 The Classes

There are 11 classes in the Australian table tennis classification system. The classes are:

1-5 Athletes with a physical impairment, who play seated
6-10 Athletes with a physical impairment, who play standing
11 Athletes with an intellectual disability

1.4 National Classification Master List

Table Tennis Australia (TTA) manages the official Master List of athlete’s classification details. TTA will only recognise national classification decisions of Australian classifiers where those classifiers are certified by the APC and TTA. TTA is responsible for publishing, via their website, certain classification information (name, state, date of birth, classification and status) to enable effective conduct of competition. Classification information will be stored confidentially within the TTA head office.

1.5 Multiple Classifications

Athletes with more than one impairment type may be eligible for multiple classifications. Athletes must meet the minimal criteria for each relevant classification system. In competition, athletes may only compete with one classification in teams events. The classification must be nominated when entering the relevant table tennis tournament and may not change throughout the event.
2 Paralympic Classification

2.1 Australian Paralympic Committee

The Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) is the peak body in Australia for Paralympic Sport. As the National Paralympic Committee and member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the APC is ultimately responsible for all Paralympic classification processes and procedures occurring within Australia.

2.2 Table Tennis Australia

Table Tennis Australia (TTA) under the National Federation Deed of Agreement with the APC is responsible for the delivery of the Paralympic Preparation Program (PPP), and for the establishment and facilitation of pathways for athletes with a disability in table tennis. This agreement outlines the obligations of TTA to support the APC in delivery of a national classification strategy.

As a member of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), TTA accepts its roles and responsibilities under the ITTF Classification Code and IPC Classification Code including:

2.2.1 Ensuring that its classifications conform to the Code.

2.2.2 Developing a National Classification strategy and practice standards, that relate to:

- athlete evaluation;
- protests and appeals; and
- classifier training and certification.

2.2.3 Structuring national competition in accordance with the classes defined by the ITTF Classification Code.

2.2.4 Developing and circulating classification information and education with reference to:

- the sport classification rules; and
- athletes’ rights and responsibilities.

2.2.5 TTA recognises the primacy of the ITTF Classification Code and associated athlete classifications over national classification activities.

2.2.6 TTA will only recognise Australian classification activities that are conducted within the scope of this policy.

2.3 National Classification Strategy

TTA and the APC have committed to working collaboratively in the management and development of table tennis classification for the Paralympic classes. This commitment is detailed in the National Classification Strategy/Plan. The plan aims to outline areas for growth and development of Paralympic classification systems and drive the direction for the continued improvement of classification in table tennis.
2.4 **Table Tennis Australia Classification Committee**

The TTA Classification Committee leads development of the Paralympic classification systems for table tennis in Australia. The Committee acts as the Head of Classification in Australia. The Committee will consist of representation from the APC, TTA, and suitably qualified Australian certified classifiers of the respective Paralympic classification systems.

The roles of the Committee include:

- Guide development of the National Classification Strategy for table tennis in Australia, including the development of processes and procedures in the area of national classifier certification and development, athlete’s classification and protests and appeals.
- Monitor compliance with the IPC Classification Code and ITTF Classification Rules and the sport specific classification requirements of Paralympic table tennis in Australia
- Coordinate the classification activities for table tennis in Australia
- Facilitate the identification, training, opportunities and development of Australian classifiers for table tennis in Australia
- Provide advice on borderline cases for National Classification where required
- Maintain a comprehensive database of the classification results for Australian table tennis athletes and provide the classification information to the APC on a regular basis
- Develop and ensure that the APC and all Australian table tennis certified classifiers have the current classification manual and information at all times
- Provide advice in the management of national and international table tennis classification protests in a way which complies with ITTF rules and the IPC Classification Code and International Standards

2.5 **Certification and Training of Australian Classifiers**

Australian classifiers are volunteers who have completed all the required training and education to be certified as a trainee, national or international classifier for table tennis, who have been certified by the Australian Paralympic Committee and TTA. All classifier training must be endorsed by TTA and the APC.

Australian certified classifiers must adhere to the conditions laid out in the APC and TTA Classifier Agreement, the IPC Code and the ITTF Classification Code when involved in activities under the jurisdiction of TTA.

Australian certified classifiers have a responsibility to ensure they are aware of, and abide by, the relevant Australian classification policies and guidelines as they apply to their involvement in table tennis. Disciplinary action may be taken against Australian Certified Classifiers who breach this policy or procedures when involved in TTA activities.

The table tennis classifier pathway can be found at [www.tabletennis.org.au](http://www.tabletennis.org.au).

2.6 **Athlete and Representatives Code of Conduct**

Athletes and their associated representatives must conduct themselves according to the IPC Code and ITTF Classification Code, when involved in activities under the jurisdiction of the TTA. Disciplinary action may be taken against TTA members or athlete representatives who breach this policy when involved in TTA activities.
2.5 Protests and Appeals

Table Tennis Australia in conjunction with the APC affords all Australian athletes the right to dispute Paralympic classification outcomes or processes, as outlined in the IPC Classification Code and ITTF Classification Code. Table Tennis Australia recognises the Protest and Appeals Procedure of the APC.

An Appeal refers to a formal objection to the manner or process in which classification procedures have been conducted.

A Protest refers to a formal objection to an athlete’s sport class and/or status outcome which has been allocated through the classification process. See also “Appeal”.

All protests and appeals directed to TTA are confidential. Parties to protests and appeals shall not disclose information relating to the protest or appeal or the proceedings to any person or entity outside those directly required to assist in the resolution, which may include, but are not limited to:

- athletes and their appointed representative(s);
- Australian certified classifiers;
- APC employees;
- sport, medical or scientific consultants engaged for the purposes of the protest or appeal; and
- any legal counsel involved in the process.

2.6 Delivering National Classification Services

TTA and the APC will cooperate in the delivery of National Athlete Classification Services so that athletes at National Championships have obtained an appropriate level of classification prior to competition. This includes providing support and leadership to classification stakeholders in the States and Territories.

Classification information for all relevant tournaments will be included in relevant competition entry information. To support delivery of Classification services the APC has developed the Event Organisers Guide for National Classification Services which can be found on the APC website: www.paralympic.org.au

3 Physical Impairment Classification System

TTA adopts the ITTF Classification Code and regulations for physical impairment classification. However, this section provides consideration for the delivery of physical impairment classification in a national setting.

3.1 Stakeholders

3.1.1 International:
International Table Tennis Federation - Para Table Tennis Division (ITTF-PTT)
Web: www.ittf.com

3.1.2 National:
Australian Paralympic Committee (APC)
PO Box 596, Sydney Markets NSW 2129
Tel: +61 2 9704 0500
Fax: +61 2 9746 0189
Email: classification@paralympic.org.au
Web: www.paralympic.org.au
## 3.2 Physical Impairment Classes

The criteria information below is a guide only as other conditions may fit into each of the following classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Generally athletes with an impairment that affects all four limbs e.g. cerebral palsy, or spinal cord injury (tetraplegia with no triceps). Arm movement for hitting the ball is achieved by a swinging movement initiated from the shoulder. All trunk movements are secured by holding wheelchair or thigh with the hand or by holding the back of the chair with bent elbow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Athletes with disabilities involving the trunk and lower limbs, with some limitation impairment in the upper limbs e.g. Cerebral palsy (Triplegia) or Spinal Cord injury (tetraplegia with upper limb function limited by hand and wrist strength). Similar chair supports/straps to Class 1 players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>This class of athletes has normal or near normal upper limb function. There is some limitation in trunk movements, with most significant limitation in lower limbs e.g. high level paraplegia, with minimal or no impairment in upper limbs. Athletes with Cerebral Palsy who have diplegia with significant trunk impairment and severe spasticity in legs or athletes with moderate trunk balance disorders (athetosis/ataxia).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Athletes where upper limbs are not affected. Trunk balance is good in an upright position. When reaching out to the sides to hit the ball these athletes use their free arm to prop, hold or push wheelchair or thigh. Examples of disability groups include Amputees (double above knee with short stumps), Paraplegia (affecting only lower limbs with normal trunk) and Cerebral Palsy (Moderate diplegia with balance problems, Moderate trunk balance disorders (athetosis/ataxia).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Athletes with full trunk and upper limb movement. Impairment of lower limbs such that the person cannot play standing. Includes athletes who are lower limb amputees, low level Paraplegia, Cerebral palsy (moderate diplegia, athetosis/ataxia).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Combination of disabilities in the playing arm and legs with dynamic balance problems in standing e.g. athletes with double above knee amputee with prostheses, athletes with significant muscle power loss in the playing arm or legs, athletes with can stand and walk with moderate diplegia or Athetosis/ataxia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Athletes where both upper limbs have limitations e.g. single (playing arm) or double above or below elbow amputation or combination of both. Or cerebral palsy (moderate athetosis/ataxia, mixed Triplegia).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Impairment in one or both legs e.g. athletes with one above knee or double below knee amputation, cerebral palsy-moderate diplegia (both legs) with minimal balance problems or moderate hemiplegia (one side of body); other disabilities with decreased muscle strength in legs and poor balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Athletes with moderate impairment in one leg or minimal impairment in two legs e.g. athletes with single below knee amputation, athletes with leg length difference of 7cm, athletes meeting minimal impairment of muscle power loss in legs; athletes with Cerebral palsy with mild hemiplegia/diplegia with good balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Athletes who meet minimal impairment criteria e.g. athletes with amputation of the non playing arm up to the proximal 1/3 of the forearm with normal function in the playing arm. Athletes with Cerebral Palsy with non playing one arm affected or minimal balance disorders (athetosis/ataxia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>This athlete does not meet minimum eligibility for the physical impairment classification system. This athlete is not eligible for any Paralympic competition or other competition where classifications are required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Athletes who are not able to fully complete all elements of the classification process for various reasons are deemed not classifiable and are not allocated a class or status. These athletes may present to classification again at a later date.

### 3.3 National Sport Class Status

All physical impairment classifications are allocated a Sport Class Status which indicates conditions of an athlete’s physical classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Provisional    | **PrR**   
| Athlete        | has undergone Provisional National Athlete Evaluation, either remotely or face to face, without being reviewed by a full classification panel. A provisional classification is an indication of class only. All provisional classifications are also allocated a Review status (see below). A PrR classification is valid for club, local and regional levels of competition. Validity for state championships is determined by the State Association. It is not valid for National Championships or national team selections. Valid for 12 months. |
| National Review | **NR**  
| Athlete        | has undergone National Athlete Evaluation by a full Australian National classification panel, (one medical and one technical). A Review status is allocated in situations where an athlete is required to undergo classification again in the future, such as:  
|                | • new athletes to the sport  
|                | • borderline classifications  
|                | • fluctuating conditions  
|                | • athlete has not completed physical maturation  
|                | • an athlete has recently sustained their condition  
|                | • it is not certain that the person has cooperated fully with the classification evaluation  
|                | The classification panel may also allocate a review period. Valid for all levels of competition in Australia. |
| National Confirmed | **NC**  
| Athlete        | has undergone National Classification by a full Australian national classification panel, (one medical and one technical). This athlete is allocated a Confirmed classification and does not need to be reviewed by a classification panel again, unless the classification rules change, or in other exceptional circumstances. Valid for all levels of Australian competition. Athletes deemed to be not eligible are also given NC status. |

### 3.4 Athlete Evaluation Process

#### 3.4.1 Provisional National Athlete Evaluation

This process provides an indication of class and is intended for players who do not have access to a full classification panel. Provisional National Athlete Evaluation is allocated by an Australian certified classifier, and is conducted in line with international classification rules for table tennis. Conditions of a Provisional National Classification are outlined in 3.3 above. There are 2 types of Provisional National Athlete Evaluations available in table tennis.

a) Face to Face Provisional Process:

This is conducted in line with the National Athlete Evaluation processes as outlined in 3.4.2 below, where an Australian certified classifier(s) has reviewed the athlete, but this has not met the requirements of 1 Medical and 1 Technical Classifier as outlined below.
b) Remote Provisional Process:

- Athlete obtains and completes the ‘Request for Athlete Classification’ form – available on TTA website: [www.tabletennis.org.au](http://www.tabletennis.org.au) and submits the form to Table Tennis Australia
- Athlete attends a scheduled Provisional National Athlete Evaluation session or -
- TTA refers athlete to the TTA website to obtain the following forms – ‘Classification Card’ and ‘Table Tennis Classification Data Result Consent Form’. These two forms are to be completed by a qualified physiotherapist and an accredited coach from the local club. The athlete would then send both forms to TTA who would forward them onto a TTA certified classifier for appraisal
- The TTA certified classifier determines classification and then provides a copy of the classification card and consent form to TTA, keeps a copy for her/himself and provides the original completed forms to the athlete
- Provisional classification details are recorded in the National Classification Master List.

3.4.2 National Athlete Evaluation

This procedure is conducted by Australian certified classifiers (at least one medical and one technical) and is recorded on the National Table Tennis Classification Card – available from [www.tabletennis.org.au](http://www.tabletennis.org.au). The athlete must meet the minimum eligibility criteria and take part in each stage in order to be classified as outlined in the ITTF Classification Code and IPC Classification Code. Conditions of a National Classification are outlined in 3.3 above.

The National Athlete Evaluation Process includes three components:

1. Physical Assessment
2. Technical Assessment
3. Observation Assessment

Process:

a) Athlete obtains and completes the ‘Request for Athlete Classification’ form – available on TTA website: [www.tabletennis.org.au](http://www.tabletennis.org.au) and submits the form to Table Tennis Australia
b) Athlete attends scheduled Athlete Evaluation session
c) Classification panel conducts Athlete Evaluation and notifies athlete of the outcome
d) Classifier forwards a copy of the completed Athlete Evaluation sheets to TTA, keeps a copy for him / herself and provides the original sheets to the athlete
e) Classification details are recorded in the National Classification Master List by TTA

3.4.3 International Athlete Evaluation

Athletes wishing to compete at ITTF PTT approved international competitions must complete ITTF International Classification processes. Typically athletes selected to the Australian Paralympic Preparation Program (PPP) Squad undergo this level of classification. International Classification is conducted and managed by ITTF. The APC will provide support to the TTA PPP as requested for support with preparations for International Classification.
4 Intellectual Disability Classification

TTA recognises AUSRAPID as the organisation in Australia responsible for determining eligibility of athletes with an intellectual disability and adheres to the eligibility criteria and processes administered by AUSRAPID.

4.1 Stakeholders

4.1.1 International

a) INAS (International Federation for sport for para-athletes with an intellectual disability)
   Web: www.inas.org

b) ITTF- PTT
   Web: www.ittf.com

4.1.2 National

a) Australian Sport and Recreation Association for People with Integration Difficulties (AUSRAPID)
   4 Lowry Place Benalla VIC 3672
   Tel: +61 3 5762 7494
   Fax: +61 3 5762 3560
   Email: mail@ausrapid.org.au
   Web: www.ausrapid.org.au

b) Australian Paralympic Committee (APC)
   PO Box 596, Sydney Markets NSW 2129
   Tel: +61 2 9704 0513
   Fax: +61 2 9746 0189
   Email: classification@paralympic.org.au
   Web: www.paralympic.org.au

4.2 Intellectual Disability Classes

Intellectual disability classifications are allocated in accordance with the AUSRAPID eligibility criteria (available at www.ausrapid.org.au).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| TT11       | 1. Significant impairment in intellectual functioning as indicated by a full scale score of 75 or lower on an internationally recognised and professionally administered IQ test (e.g. a WISC-R or WAIS-III)  
            | 2. Significant limitations in adaptive behaviour as expressed in communication, conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills and demonstrated by a recognised and professionally administered Adaptive Behaviour test (e.g. Vineland, ABAS)  
            | 3. Evidence of intellectual disability prior to 18 years of age (developmental period) |
| Not Eligible (NE) | This player is not eligible for any Paralympic table tennis competition or other competition where classifications are required. |
4.3 **National Classification Status**

All classifications are allocated a status which indicates conditions of an athlete’s classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Confirmed NC</td>
<td>Player has undergone <em>National Athlete Evaluation</em> by completing the AUSRAPID Eligibility process. Valid for all levels of Australian competition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 **Athlete Evaluation Process**

4.4.1 National Athlete Evaluation

National Athlete Evaluation is for athletes competing at National level and where stated State level. The AUSRAPID Eligibility process is to be completed. This process confirms that the athlete meets the eligibility requirements and is TTA’s preferred eligibility process. Conditions of a National Classification are outlined in 4.3 above.

To be allocated a National Classification the athlete must meet the criteria outlined in 4.2 and complete (i) below;

i. AUSRAPID eligibility process

a) Athlete contacts AUSRAPID to obtain the Eligibility Application Form
b) AUSRAPID to process application and advise the athlete of the outcome
c) AUSRAPID advises TTA of approved athletes

**NOTE:** proof of completing a State based eligibility process approved by AUSRAPID will also be considered for National Athlete classification.

4.4.2 International Athlete Evaluation

International Athlete Evaluation is generally for athletes who have been selected for an Australian PPP Squad. For eligibility to compete internationally, the Athlete Evaluation process is a two stage process.

a) Primary Eligibility Check (Administered by INAS) determines that an athlete meets the eligibility criteria in 4.2 above. Players contact AUSRAPID to obtain the International application form. Eligible athletes are recorded on the INAS Classification Master List at or before the final entry date of the first International event to which they compete. ([www.inas.org](http://www.inas.org)).

b) Sports-Specific Athlete Evaluation – this process is determined by ITTF. In Australia, this process is co-ordinated through the APC and TTA. This testing is used to determine whether a person’s intellectual disability results in sufficient limitation in their ability to perform the core elements of table tennis. This process can only be performed by accredited international classifiers.

**NOTE:** Psychological testing documents for the INAS Primary Eligibility Check must have been completed within five (5) years of applying for eligibility and includes all testing summary sheets. It is recommended for players who show potential or aspire to compete at international level they should complete the Primary Eligibility Check as early as possible.
5 Relevant resources and policies

5.1 IPC Classification Code and International Standards
http://www.paralympic.org/Sport/Classification/Classification_Code.html

5.2 APC Classification Information and resources
http://www.paralympic.org.au/content/understanding-classification

5.3 AUSRAPID Eligibility and Application Information
http://www.ausrapid.org.au/ContentPages/eligibility.htm

5.4 ITTF Classification Code
http://www.ipttc.org/classification/index.htm

7.5 TTA Classification Information and resources
http://www.tabletennis.org.au/