

## Classification in Wheelchair Tennis: A player's journey

### Getting Started with Classification

If you're new to Wheelchair Tennis, or just beginning your journey competing at ITF Tour events, one of your first steps will be to get **Classified**. This process determines which Class—or division—you are eligible to play in. While it might seem complex or even a bit daunting at first, for most players, it's a clear and straightforward journey.

### So, what exactly is Classification?

Classification is the system used in para-sports to decide who can compete, and to group athletes into 'Classes' for fair competition. The goal is to minimise the impact of a person's impairment on the outcome of the match. You can think of it a bit like how some sports divide athletes by weight classes—it helps ensure that success comes down to skill, training, and strategy, not the degree of impairment a person has.

Although Classification is overseen globally by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), each para-sport is responsible for writing and applying its own set of Classification Rules. In ITF Wheelchair Tennis, there are two main Sport Classes: the **Open Class** and the **Quad Class**.

The Open Class is for athletes who have a permanent impairment that affects at least one leg. In this class, men and women compete in separate draws. The Quad Class is for players with impairments that affect at least three limbs. In the Quad division, men and women compete together in a single draw.

Now that we've looked at what Classification is and how it fits into Wheelchair Tennis, let's go through how you can get classified to compete on the ITF Tour.

### How Do You Get Classified?

If you're ready to compete on the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Tour, the first step is getting Classified. Below, you'll find a step-by-step guide to help you through the process. It might seem like a lot at first, but most players find it simple and straightforward. And remember — your medical team, coaches, National Association, and the ITF are all here to support you.

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#### Step 1: Apply for Classification

To begin, you'll need to fill out a **Medical Registration Form (MRF)**. This form helps the ITF understand your health condition and how it impacts you. This can be found on the ITF website, and you will need help from your doctor and your National Association to complete this. The form has three sections: Section 1 can be completed by you. Section 2 needs to be completed by your National Association, and Section 3 needs to be completed by a specialist medical doctor that knows you and your health condition.



Once you have all three sections completed

- Submit your completed MRF and supporting medical evidence to the ITF.
- The ITF will review your application within a week.
- If everything is in order, you'll be given a **Sport Class** and a **Sport Class Status of New**. This means you can now compete in up to four ITF3 or Futures-level events.
- If more information is needed, the ITF will get in touch to request it.

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### Step 2: Request an Evaluation Appointment

Once your paperwork is submitted, it's time to request a spot at a classification event.

- Choose a classification event you'd like to attend. The list of upcoming classification events can be found on the ITF website. Remember to check regularly, as new events are added from time to time.
- Send in your request for an appointment—this must be done **at least two weeks before** the event.
- The ITF will confirm whether there is space available within one week of your request.

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### Step 3: Receive Your Appointment Details

You'll get your classification appointment time and details **at least one week before** the event. This will include everything you need to know for the day.

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### Step 4: Attend Your Evaluation

When the big day arrives:

- Try to make yourself available for the **entire day**, just in case your appointment time changes.
- Travel to the event and attend your evaluation. The session length depends on your class:
  - **Open Class:** Around 20–30 minutes
  - **Quad Class:** About 1 hour, plus 20–40 minutes of on-court testing
- You're allowed to bring **one person** with you for support. If English isn't your first language, consider bringing a **translator**, as evaluations are conducted in English.
- If you are applying for the Quad Class, you will need to bring your normal tennis chair, and racket with you, as well as any tape, straps or other devices you normally use, with you.
- You may also bring any extra medical evidence you feel is relevant. The Classification Panel may choose to review this during your session.

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### Step 5: Complete Your Testing

A panel of at least two classifiers will:

- Review your medical documentation and discuss your medical condition with you.
- Conduct a physical assessment. This will consist of various physical tests that may look at your muscle strength, range of movement or coordination, as well as other factors. It is important to remember that not everyone will need to go through all the

tests. The tests you need to complete will depend on your health condition and how this affects you.

- (For Quad players) Carry out on-court testing. This will involve a series of tests on court that look at your chair movement and your shot making.

After your evaluation, they'll assign your **Sport Class and Sport Class Status** and explain what it means for your ability to play on the ITF Wheelchair Tennis tour.

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#### Step 6: After you have been classified

- If your evaluation takes place at a tournament your classification outcome will be posted there on-site.
- Within **10 days**, you'll also receive an email confirming your official classification.
- Your details will be added to the **ITF Master List**, which is updated every week.

If your National Association has any concerns:

- They have **30 days** from the date you were classified to file a protest.
  - A protest can be raised when your National Association think you may have been allocated the wrong Sport Class.
- And **21 days** from the date you were classified to submit an appeal.
  - An appeal can be made if your National Association thinks there have been errors in the process of you getting classified that has led to the wrong outcome.

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And that's it! If you have any questions during the process, don't hesitate to contact the ITF – we're here to help you every step of the way.