

## Overview & Rules

### *Overview*

The ITF undertakes wheelchair tennis Classification in order to define who is eligible to compete in ITF Wheelchair Tournaments and group eligible players into categories (known as Sport Classes) for the purposes of competition, in an effort to ensure that it is sporting ability rather than nature or degree of impairment that determines success on the court.

Classification is therefore important to ensure that competition in ITF Wheelchair Tournaments is fair and meaningful and results are determined by a player's tennis ability rather than his or her degree of impairment.

The ITF operates two Sport Classes: the Open Division and the Quad Division. For the avoidance of doubt, male and female players in the Open Division compete in separate draws, whereas male and female players in the Quad Division compete together in one draw.

Players are eligible to compete in the Open division if they have a permanent physical disability that results in substantial loss of function in one or both lower extremities (limbs) and that meets or exceeds the sport's eligibility criteria. Such players who also have a permanent physical disability that results in substantial loss of function in one or both upper extremities, and where at least three extremities are affected, are eligible to compete in the Quad division.

### *Classification Rules*

- As part of an ongoing review of the Wheelchair Tennis Classification system, in August 2019 ITF published Classification Rules that were approved by the IPC and ITF Board of Directors.
- These Rules improve the integrity of Classification in Wheelchair tennis and ensure ITF is operating at international standards that are compliant with the IPC Classification Code.
- Transitional Provisions have been adopted within the Rules to respect the four-year Paralympic Cycle and allow for fair and incremental transition for existing players.
- The ITF is committed to continuing to evolve and professionalise Wheelchair tennis, which requires delivering robust, transparent and consistent standards and processes for existing and future players.

The approved Classification Rules are available to download below, along with a Q&A document that provides further rationale for the Rules.

Below is a summary of the key principles of the approved Rules and changes being introduced, which ALL players and National Associations should make themselves aware of:

#### Player Evaluation (the process of Classification of players)

- Eligibility to compete in wheelchair tennis (Open division) will no longer be based on a player's self-assessment of their impairment (i.e. it will no longer be a player who decides that they are eligible or not eligible to compete)
- Self-assessment will be phased out over time (estimated by 2022, the 'Transition Period')

- By the end of the Transition Period, ALL Open division players (as well as Quads) will need to complete Player Evaluation to be able to compete in ITF Wheelchair Tennis Tournaments. Player Evaluation involves a player:
  - submitting personal, medical & diagnostic information for assessment of an Eligible Impairment
  - attending an Evaluation Session with a Classification Panel, organised by ITF
- Existing 'Confirmed' Quad players will remain 'Confirmed' and do not need to be re-classified, unless they are the subject of a Protest or Medical Review.

#### Requirement to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games

- An IPC requirement is that all players (i.e. including Open division players) who will compete at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games will need to have been classified (i.e. completion of Player Evaluation, as above) prior to the start of the event.
- ITF will provide the process (including medical form) and opportunities to complete Player Evaluation (with appropriate deadlines) but it is the personal responsibility of each player to ensure that if they wish to compete at Tokyo 2020 that they are eligible to do so.