

LAYMANS GUIDE TO CLASSIFICATIONS



Swimming is the only sport that combines the conditions of limb loss, cerebral palsy (coordination and movement restrictions), spinal cord injury (weakness or paralysis involving any combination of the limbs) and other disabilities (such as Dwarfism (little people); major joint restriction conditions) into a single classification system.

Classes 1-10 – are allocated to swimmers with a physical disability

Classes 11-13 – are allocated to swimmers with a visual disability

Class 14 – is allocated to swimmers with an intellectual disability

The Prefix:

- S before the Class represents Freestyle, Backstroke and Butterfly
- SB before the class represents Breaststroke
- SM before the class represents Individual Medley.

The classes range from swimmers with severe disability (S1, SB1, SM1) to those with minimal disability (S10, SB9, SM10)

In any one class some swimmers may start with a dive or in the water depending on their condition. This is factored in when classifying the athlete.

The examples are only a guide - some conditions not mentioned may also fit the following classes.

Functional Classification System

S1 SB1 SM1

Examples: Swimmers with very severe coordination problems in four limbs or have no use of their legs, trunk, hands and minimal use of their shoulders only.

Usually only swim on their back.

Swimmers in this class would usually be wheelchair bound and may be dependent on others for their every day needs.

S2 .SB1 SM2

Examples: Swimmer able to use their arms with no use of their hands, legs or trunk or have severe co-ordination problems in 4 limbs.

S3 SB2 SM3

Examples: Swimmers with reasonable arm strokes but no use of their legs or trunk; swimmers with severe coordination problems in all limbs and swimmers with severe limb loss to four limbs.

S4 SB3 SM4

Examples: Swimmers who use their arms and have minimal weakness in their hands but have no use of their trunk or legs; swimmers with coordination problems affecting all limbs but predominantly in the legs; swimmers with limb loss to 3 limbs.

S5 SB4 SM5

Examples: Swimmers with full use of their arms and hands but no trunk or leg function; swimmers with coordination problems of all limbs.

S6 SB5 SM6

Examples: Swimmers with full use of their arms and hands with some trunk control but no useful leg function; swimmers with coordination problems (usually these athletes walk); swimmers with major limb loss of 2 limbs on the same side; specific type of dwarfism (< 130cm for women and 137cm for men). The exceptions being the dwarfs who are found in class SB6.

S7 SB6 SM7

Examples: Swimmers with full use of their arms and trunk with some leg function; coordination or weakness problems on the same side of the body; major limb loss of 2 limbs.

S8 SB7 SM8

Examples: Swimmers with full use of their arms and trunk with some leg function; limb loss of 2 limbs; swimmers without the use of one arm.

S9 SB8 SM9

Examples: Swimmers with severe weakness in one leg only; swimmers with very slight coordination problems; swimmers with one limb loss
Unless there is an underlying medical condition usually all of these athletes will start out of the water.

S10 SB9 SM10

Examples: Swimmers with very minimal weakness affecting the legs; swimmers with restriction of hip joint movement; swimmers with both feet deformed; swimmers with minor limb loss of part of a limb.

Visually Impaired Classes

S11 SB11 SM11

These swimmers are unable to see at all or have minimal light perception and are considered totally blind. They must wear blackened goggles if they swim in this class. They will also require someone to tap them when they are approaching a wall.

S12 SB12 SM12

These swimmers can recognise the shape of a hand and have some ability to see. There is a large range of vision ability within this class.

S13 SB13 SM13

Swimmers who are the most sighted but have a significant visual impairment.

Intellectual Disability

S14 SB14 SM14

Swimmers who have a recognised intellectual impairment according to international standards as recognised by the World Health Organization ie IQ testing of 75 and below.

Note: At this present time INAS-FID eligibility criteria is under review by IPC.