



NEWCOMER'S GUIDE TO DISABILITY SWIMMING

Layman's Guide to Classification

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; major joint restriction condition across classes.

Classes 1-10 – are allocated to athletes with a physical impairment

Classes 11-13 – are allocated to athletes with a visual impairment

The Prefix S to the Class denotes the class for Freestyle, Backstroke and Butterfly

The Prefix SB to the class denotes the class for Breaststroke

The Prefix SM to the class denotes the class for Individual Medley

The range is from the athletes with a more severe impairment (S1, SB1, SM1) to those with the impairment (S10, SB9, SM10)

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

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



FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

S1 SB1 SM1

Athletes in this class would usually be wheelchair users and may have a higher dependency for their every day needs.

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

S2 SB1 SM2

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

S3 SB2 SM3

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

S4 SB3 SM4

Examples: Athletes 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 four limbs but predominantly in the legs; swimmers with limb loss to three limbs.

S5 SB4 SM5

Examples: Athletes with full use of their arms and hands but no trunk or leg muscles; athletes with moderate coordination problems.

S6 SB5 SM6

Examples: Athletes with full use of their arms and hands with some trunk control but no useful leg muscles; swimmers with coordination problems (usually these athletes walk); athletes with major limb loss of two limbs; Achondroplasia (dwarfism < 130cm for women and 137cm for men).

S7 SB6 SM7

Examples: Athletes 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 two limbs.

S8 SB7 SM8

Examples: Athletes with full use of their arms and trunk with some leg function; limb loss of two limbs; athletes with the use of one arm.

S9 SB8 SM9

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

S10 SB9 SM10

Examples: Athletes 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.



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VISUALLY IMPAIRED CLASSES

S11 SB11 SM11

These athletes are unable to see at all 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 for turning and finishing.

S12 SB12 SM12

These athletes 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

Athletes who are the most sighted but are legally considered to be blind.

BRITISH
Swimming