

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CLASSIFICATION POLICY

CLASSIFICATION UPDATE - TENNIS AUSTRALIA POLICY
AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - MAY 2019



Introduction:

On 15 February 2019, as part of an ongoing review of the Wheelchair Tennis Classification system by the International Tennis Federation (**ITF**), new ITF Wheelchair Tennis Classification Rules have been issued with immediate effect (replacing the previous 2017 ITF Wheelchair Tennis Classification Manual).

While the principles and structure of the Classification system have not changed, significant enhancements have been made to terminology and procedural aspects in the Rules, which will help deliver an increased level of integrity (which is now expected and required of wheelchair tennis). Changes have been made under the new Rules to division structure (Open and Quad divisions), minimum eligibility criteria and minimum impairment criteria.

A full summary of the changes is published alongside the new Rules at:

<https://www.itftennis.com/wheelchair/classification/classification.aspx>

Who will this impact?

Primarily, Open division players who have a realistic expectation of competing at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games (the ITF will target approximately 80 men, 60 women – considering men’s and women’s Tokyo draw sizes of 56 and 32 respectively), while the impact on all other players (including all Quads) will be minimal in the short term.

Summary of key principles:

1. Player Evaluation (the process of Classification of players)
 - a) 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).
 - b) Self-assessment will be phased out over time (**estimated by 31 December 2021, the ‘Transition Period’**).
 - c) By the end of the Transition Period, **ALL** Open division players (as well as Quads) will need to complete a Player Evaluation to be able to compete in ITF Wheelchair Tennis Tournaments, including Grand Slams.
 - d) Player Evaluation involves a player:
 - i. submitting personal, medical & diagnostic information for assessment of an eligible impairment; and
 - ii. attending an Evaluation Session with a Classification Panel, organised by the ITF.

No immediate action is necessary for players who would not expect to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

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.

2. Requirement to compete at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games

- a) An International Paralympic Committee (**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) and issued with a ‘Confirmed’ Open or Quad division status prior to the start of the event.

3. All potential Tokyo 2020 players must start the process of completing *Player Evaluation* as soon as possible, meaning:
 - a) initially by submitting personal medical and diagnostic information; and
 - b) the ITF will then provide the process (including medical form) and opportunities to complete Player Evaluation (with appropriate deadlines).

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 by completing a *Player Evaluation*. (Such players are encouraged to start collecting all relevant diagnostic information in relation to their Eligible Impairment in preparation for submission to the ITF).

Process for ITF Classification:

1. Complete the Medical Diagnostic Registration Form (which can be found on the Tennis Australia website).
2. Prepare the required medical documentation, which should then be attached to the above form.
3. Send form and documents to Tennis Australia Head Wheelchair Physiotherapist (currently Penny Dayan at pdayan@tennis.com.au) for completion of Section 2 (signature) – note: all documentation will be stored confidentially in the TA AMS system.
4. Tennis Australia will forward via email to the ITF for processing.
5. Application will be assessed by the ITF Classification panel and a status will be provided as follows:
 - i. Confirmed (C) – Not required to undergo any further evaluation.
 - ii. Reviewed (R) – Further evaluation is required (this can be done in Australia by an *ITF-qualified assessor* on such dates and times as will be notified by Tennis Australia once Australian assessors have been appointed).
 - iii. Review with Fixed Review Date (FRD) – if the Classification Panel believes that further Player Evaluation will be required but not before a set date, being the Fixed Review Date.

Reference: <https://www.itftennis.com/media/302189/302189.pdf> for other status information.

Can I still compete in an ITF sanctioned tournament?

Through the Transition Period ending 31 December 2021 existing players will compete with a status 'Review (Transition)' and will continue to be eligible to compete via self-assessment in all ITF-sanctioned tournaments, including **Grand Slams**.

If a player who undergoes classification during this period is assessed to be Not Eligible according to the eligibility criteria, that player will not be permitted to compete in any ITF-sanctioned wheelchair tennis tournaments.

The ITF will provide tournaments and National Associations, including Tennis Australia, with a list of Eligible and Not Eligible players, which should be used to cross-reference tournament entries from players.

Tennis Australia Classification Policy:

From January 2021, any player, athlete or participant that wishes to compete at an Australian or International ITF-sanctioned event in either the Open, Quad or Junior division will be required to obtain a confirmed status classification from the ITF.

What does that mean for our social/part time players who compete in ITF events?

These players will be issued with a classification of: Sport Class Status Review (Transition) (RT).

In order to facilitate the transition under these Classification Rules for Open Division Players who have competed in ITF Tournaments or held an IPIN Membership prior to 2019 and for whom Player Evaluation has not yet been completed the ITF will designate Sport Class Status Review (Transition) (RT) to all such Players with effect from 1 January 2019.

This Sports Class Status will be removed from these Classification Rules on 31 December 2022, by which time all players who are designated this Sports Class Status must have completed Player Evaluation in order to continue to compete in ITF Wheelchair Tournaments.

A Player designated Sport Class Status Review (Transition) (RT) shall be entitled to compete in any ITF Tournament (except for the Paralympic Games). Any Player who wishes to compete in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games must complete Player Evaluation in accordance with the provisions of Article 1.4 of the new ITF Wheelchair Tennis Classification Rules.

Can I compete in AMT events in Australia?

Yes. On submission of an Australian Player Evaluation form (Annexure A) to Tennis Australia tournaments team (currently, Daniel O'Neill at DONeill@Tennis.com.au).

Will I be eligible for an Australian Ranking?

Yes. As long as you have signed and submitted your Australian Player Evaluation form to Tennis Australia's tournaments team (currently, Daniel O'Neill at DONeill@Tennis.com.au).

What is the eligibility criteria to compete at an AMT?

A player who has impaired ability to run due to a medical or health condition that has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner will be eligible to compete at an AMT. The condition may affect muscle strength, joint range or spasticity that impairs the ability to play tennis while standing and necessitates the use of a wheelchair. Example: Any form of Spinal cord injury, Limb Deficiency, Leg Length Difference, spasticity or ataxia in muscles, impaired Range of Movement of a joint due to pain or arthritis.

What if I'm not sure about my eligibility to compete?

If you have any doubts about your eligibility **before** signing up to play an AMT you can submit the appropriate form (Annexure B) to a Tennis Australia-appointed classifier or physiotherapist to confirm that there is a medically valid reason by which you are eligible to compete.

If you turn up to the event without having completed either of the approved forms, the Tournament Organisers/Director may declare you ineligible to compete in the main draw for Ranking points.

Can I play just to participate with my friends or family?

Yes. Tournament organisers will do their best to arrange a competitive participation opportunity for you to play.



Further information:

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Annexure A

Eligibility to compete in a Wheelchair Australian Money Tournament (AMT) Form

I (insert full name) _____ declare that:

I have an impairment or health condition that has been medically diagnosed by an authorised practitioner and that: a) limits my ability to run and b) impairs my ability to play tennis while standing and necessitates the use of a wheelchair.

Please indicate:

- Spinal Cord _____
- Limb Deficiency _____
- Leg Length difference _____
- Muscle strength _____
- Joint range (impairs movement due to pain or arthritis) _____
- Spasticity or ataxia in muscles _____

Further relevant detail:

Name: _____

DOB: _____

Email Address: _____

Contact Phone number: _____

Personal Information: By completing and submitting this form, you consent to Tennis Australia collecting, holding, using and sharing (where required) personal information about you/your child (including any medical information disclosed in this form, or during any classification process) in connection with your/your child's participation in Tennis Australia and ITF wheelchair tennis programs and tournaments on the terms and conditions set out in TA's privacy policy available at <http://www.tennis.com.au/privacy>.

Signed by the Athlete:

(Athlete's signature)

Date

Signed by Parent/Guardian (if under 18):

(Parent/Guardian's signature)

Print name of Parent/Guardian

Date

Please complete, sign and return to Daniel O'Neill Doneill@tennis.com.au prior to the relevant Wheelchair Australian Money Tournament.

Annexure B

Wheelchair Tennis Medical Form

Name: _____

DOB: _____

Email Address: _____

Contact Phone number: _____

Please tick:

ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENT

Impaired muscle power

Impaired passive range of motion

Leg length difference

Limb deficiency

Ataxia

Athetosis

Hypertonia

Other: _____

MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS

Spinal cord

Muscular Dystrophy

Spina Bifida

Poliomyelitis

Multiple Sclerosis

Arthrogryposis

Joint Contractures

Trauma

Trauma

Dysmelia

Dysmelia

Traumatic amputation

Bone Cancer

Cerebral Palsy

Traumatic Brain Injury

Multiple Sclerosis

Stroke

Other: _____

DOCUMENT SUPPLIED

Medical report

ASIA scale

Electromyography

MRI

X- Rays

Photographs

Biopsy

Geometric measures

Ashworth Scale

Cerebral MRI

CT Scan

Supporting documentation attached: YES NO

Personal Information: By completing and submitting this form, you consent to Tennis Australia collecting, holding, using and sharing (where required) personal information about you/your child (including any medical information disclosed in this form, or during any classification process) in connection with your/your child's participation in Tennis Australia and ITF wheelchair tennis programs and tournaments on the terms and conditions set out in TA's privacy policy available at <http://www.tennis.com.au/privacy>.

Signed by the Athlete:

(Athlete's signature)

Date

Signed by Parent/Guardian (if under 18):

(Parent/Guardian's signature)

Print name of Parent/Guardian

Date