



CLASSIFICATION

NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION PANELS WILL BE OFFERED IN TRACK, FIELD & SWIM.

Classification plays a crucial role in para sports. It's the framework that ensures athletes with different physical disabilities can compete fairly, so outcomes are based on training, technique, and strategy rather than on the type or extent of an impairment.

To be eligible for classification, you must be registered to compete in at least one event in each sport you are seeking classification.

Bring: **COPY OF MEDICAL FORMS & PASSPORT OR PHOTO ID**

Please be sure to come dressed/equipped and ready to run, push, throw, swim.

Arrive to your appointment at least 15 minutes early. If under the age of 18, come with a parent/guardian or coach.

SWIM CLASSIFICATION

Friday June 5, 2026 By Appointment Only

To be eligible for swim classification at the GLASA Great Lakes Games, you must:

1. Register for at least one swimming event and request a classification appointment.
2. Complete the medical diagnosis form National Medical Diagnosis Form - Submit to the USOPC Classification Manager at NPCUSAClassification@usopc.org no later than 5/18/2026.
3. Once the USOPC Classification Coordinator has approved the athlete for classification, an appointment time will be assigned by a Great Lakes Games representative after registration has closed.

For additional information on swim classification, please visit:

<https://www.usparaswimming.org/classification>

TRACK AND FIELD CLASSIFICATION

Friday June 5, 2026 By Appointment Only

To be eligible for track and field classification at the GLASA Great Lakes Games, you must:

1. Register for at least one event in track/field and request a classification appointment.
2. Complete the medical diagnosis form National Medical Diagnosis Form - Submit to the USATF Classification Coordinator at Classification@usatf.org no later than 5/18/2026.
3. Once the USATF Classification Coordinator has approved the athlete for classification, an appointment time will be assigned by a Great Lakes Games representative after registration has closed.

For additional information on Track and Field classification, please visit:

<https://www.usparatf.org/classification>

*Classification times will be assigned and communicated at least a week prior to the event.

Questions? Please contact Shannon Hellen, GLASA Organizational Operations Manager, at shellen@glasa.org or (c) 224-477-8312.

Why Classification Matters

Athletes with physical disabilities have a wide range of functional abilities. Two wheelchair users, for instance, might have very different levels of strength, mobility, or balance. Classification provides structure by placing athletes into sport-specific groups based on how their impairment affects performance.

Its purpose is to:

- Create fair, balanced competition
- Give more athletes the chance to participate
- Highlight athletic skill—not medical conditions

Who Manages Classification

On the global stage, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) oversees classification standards, while each sport's international federation (such as World Para Swimming or World Para Athletics) administers the process. In the U.S., classification is handled by national governing bodies like U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and USA Track and Field (USATF).

Types of Classification

Most para sports use one or both of the following systems:

Medical Classification

Based on documented medical diagnoses. This approach is more common in beginner or community-level events and doesn't always reflect how an impairment translates to performance.

Functional Classification

Focuses on how an impairment affects an athlete's ability to perform specific tasks in a given sport—such as propulsion in wheelchair racing or starting technique in swimming. This method is used in most Paralympic and elite competitions because it more accurately ensures fairness.

Many sports use a combination: a medical review followed by functional testing and competition assessment.

How the Classification Process Works

Although each sport has its own procedures, the overall steps are similar:

- Medical Documentation
 - Athletes submit proof of a permanent physical disability. This establishes eligibility.
- Physical and Technical Evaluation
 - Classifiers assess movement and sport-specific abilities. They might measure range of motion, evaluate hand function, or review technique.
- Competition Observation
 - To confirm accuracy, classifiers may watch the athlete during actual competition and adjust the classification if needed.
- Assignment of Class and Status
 - Athletes receive a classification for that sport along with a status—such as “Confirmed” or “Review”—which determines where they compete.

Option for those who do not meet classification criteria:

The Move United classifications of MU90 and MU91 are designed for athletes who do not meet minimum impairment criteria (MIC) for a specific Paralympic sport but who have a permanent impairment that requires adaptation to sport and recreation equipment, rules, or the field of play.

- MU90 = seated class
- MU91 = standing class

Athletes who do not meet the MIC for a specific sport will be allowed to compete in the MU90/91 classification if they meet one of the following criteria:

- If an athlete meets the MIC for one Paralympic sport but does not meet the MIC for another, they will be allowed to compete in MU90/91 for that sport.
- If an athlete has a documented, eligible impairment but does not meet MIC for the sport, the classifier may continue with a technical assessment of the athlete. If the athlete demonstrates clear limitations in sport performance related to their impairment(s), the athlete will be placed in the MU90/91 classification. The classifier must be able to document clear performance limitations related to the presence of impairment to meet this criteria.
- If an athlete has a documented permanent, physical impairment but that impairment is not one of the eligible impairments as defined by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the classifier may continue with a technical assessment of the athlete. If the athlete demonstrates clear limitations in sport performance related to their impairment(s), the athlete will be placed in the MU90/91 classification. The classifier must be able to document clear performance limitations related to the presence of impairment to meet this criteria.

Examples of disabling conditions that are not included within the MU90 and MU91 are listed below.

- Short and Long term illness (cancer, heart disease, COPD, migraines, diabetes, etc.) except where there is a resulting permanent physical disability resulting in clear performance limitations
- Psychological illness (PTSD) and addiction
- Temporarily wounded (sprains, breaks, tears, etc.)
- Obesity
- Traumatic brain injury except where there is a resulting permanent physical disability resulting in clear performance limitations