

Wheelchair Basketball Information Sheet

About the Sport

Wheelchair basketball was one of the foundation sports at the first Paralympic Games in 1960 and remains one of the most popular sports worldwide.

Players play in men’s and women’s tournaments, on a standard basketball court with a standard basketball. Players wheelchairs have either three or four wheels. Playing chairs are designed specifically to cope with the fast paced and physical demands of the game.

Players are assigned a point value from 1.0 to 4.5, and a team must not exceed 14.0 points for the five players on court. Each player has an integral role to play in the team structure, regardless of the degree of their impairment.

Who can compete?

A player, who wishes to compete in wheelchair basketball programs governed by the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation and its members, eg Basketball Australia, must have an Eligible Impairment due to an Underlying Health Condition that is permanent and can be verified by Medical Reports.

If an athlete has been deemed to have an eligible impairment by trained Wheelchair Basketball classifiers, the next step will involve an assessment of Minimum Impairment Criteria (MIC) against the IWBF Classification Rules. The MIC outlines how severe an Eligible Impairment must be for an athlete to be eligible to compete in Wheelchair Basketball. These are defined on the basis of scientific research, which assess the impact of impairments on the sport’s activities.

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Loss of limbs	Partial or complete absence of bones or joints due to amputation or deficiency from birth.	Loss of at least the big toe on one foot.
Muscle weakness/Impaired muscle power	Muscle weakness or paralysis from conditions such as muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, nerve damage, spinal cord injury or other spinal condition.	Loss of strength in at least one hip, knee or ankle

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Co-ordination impairments - Hypertonia, Ataxia, Athetosis	Impairments from neurological conditions such as acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis that affect co-ordination and smoothness of movement and balance.	Co-ordination or movement difficulties in at least one leg
Restricted joint movement/ Impaired passive range	Restricted movement or tightness in a joint/s from conditions such as joint fusions and other restricting conditions.	Joint movement restriction in one hip, knee or ankle.
Leg length difference	Significant difference in leg length due to a deficiency at birth or trauma.	The difference must be at least 6cm between both legs

Examples of Non-Eligible Impairments

Examples of Non-Eligible Impairment include, but not limited to the following:

- Pain
- Low muscle tone
- Hypermobility joints
- Impaired cardiovascular functions
- Impaired respiratory functions
- Joint instability e.g., recurrent dislocation of a joint.

Wheelchair Basketball Sport Classes

Players who have met the rules for an Eligible Impairment and Minimum Impairment Criteria are given a Sport Class.

Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
Athletes with Physical Impairment	
1.0	Players with the most significant physical impairment. Players with little torso movement in all directions and they rely on their arms to return them to the upright position when unbalanced. Players use a high backrest on their wheelchair and use straps to keep them secure in their chair.
2.0	Players are able to lean forward and rotate their body to some extent, allowing them to catch the ball within a larger area. Players use their hands to help them sit back upright after leaning in some directions. Players use a high backrest on their wheelchair and use straps to keep them secure in their chair.
3.0	Players have good torso movement that allows them to rotate and lean forward but are not able to lean to the sides. Players are able to hold the ball overhead easily during play. Playing chairs have a low backrest as they do not need the sitting support.
4.0	Players have good torso movement that allows them to rotate and lean forward, with some ability to lean to the sides. This is usually due to their limitations being in one leg.
4.5	Players with minimal impairment. Players have full torso movement in all directions and are able to reach side to side with no limitations to catch, pass and defend the ball. Most 4.5 point players do not use a wheelchair in everyday life.
Not Eligible (NE)	Player does not have an Eligible Impairment or meet the Minimum Impairment Criteria for the Wheelchair Basketball Classes but may still be able to compete domestically. Contact Basketball Australia for more information.

Find out more

To get involved or for more information contact:

[Basketball Australia](#)

[W: https://wheelchairleagues.basketball/](https://wheelchairleagues.basketball/)

[E: classification@australia.basketball](mailto:classification@australia.basketball)

Note: The classification information provided is intended as a guide only. Only authorised classifiers are able to provide a formal classification in accordance with the rules of the sport.

