

Para cross country skiing Information Sheet

About the sport

Para cross country skiing appeared for the first time at the 1976 Winter Games in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden.

The competition is open to athletes with a physical impairment or visual impairment. Athletes with physical impairments compete either standing or using a sit ski, depending on their requirements. Athletes with a vision impairment compete with a sighted guide to navigate through the course.

Male and female athletes compete in short distance, middle distance and long distance (ranging from 2.5km to 20km) or participate in a team relay using classical or free techniques.

Who can compete?

Para cross country skiing is open to athletes with a physical or vision impairment. Athletes are required to submit medical reports and meet the minimum impairment criteria in order to compete.

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
Limb Loss	Partial or complete absence of bones or joints due to amputation or deficiency from birth	<p>Arm: Loss of arm at or above the level of the wrist OR shortened arm of similar length OR dysmelia resulting in lack of functional grip.</p> <p>Leg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be single (limb deficiency or limb loss through or above the level of the ankle joint on one lower limb) • May be both (limb deficiency or loss at or above the level of the forefoot OR the absence of a forefoot structure from birth)
Limb Length Difference	Significant difference in leg length due to a deficiency at birth or trauma.	Leg length difference between both legs of at least 7cm

Eligible impairments	Description	Minimum Impairment Criteria
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 or change in muscle origin/insertion	<p>Arm: Loss of strength in the hand resulting in a lack of functional grip.</p> <p>Leg: Loss of strength in the hip, knee, and/or ankle</p>
Co-ordination impairments: Hypertonia/ Spasticity, Motor Ataxia, Dyskinesia	Impairments from neurological conditions such as acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis that affect co-ordination and smoothness of movement and balance.	<p>Arm: Co-ordination or movement difficulties in at least one arm below the elbow</p> <p>Leg: Co-ordination or movement difficulties in one leg below the knee</p>
Impaired Passive Range of Movement	Restricted movement or tightness in a joint/s from conditions such as joint fusions and other restricting conditions.	<p>Arm: Restricted range of movement in the elbow, with no ability to exert force when pushing through the ski pole on the affected side.</p> <p>Leg: Equivalent activity limitation to the loss of limb through or above the joint.</p>
Vision Impairment	Impairment of the eye structure, optic nerves or pathways, or vision area of the brain, resulting in a loss of vision in both eyes. Caused by conditions such as albinism, macular degeneration, macular or cone rod dystrophy and retinitis pigmentosa.	Vision loss resulting in impaired visual acuity (how far an athlete can see) and/or impaired visual field (how wide an athlete can see)

Para cross country skiing Sport Classes



Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
Athletes with a Physical Impairment – Standing (LW=Locomotor Winter)	
LW2	Athletes with an impairment in one leg through or above the knee. Athletes must ski using two skis and two poles, and can ski with a prosthetic leg if required.
LW3	Athletes with an impairment in both legs. The athletes must ski using two skis and two poles. Athletes generate most of their propulsion using their upper body and legs.
LW4	Athletes with an impairment in one leg below the knee. Athletes must ski with two skis and two poles.
LW5/7	Athletes with an impairment in both arms. Athletes must ski using two skis, but do not use ski poles. Athletes are not able to use an upper limb prosthesis or other technology to assist with gripping the ski pole.
LW6	Athletes with an impairment in one arm through or above the elbow. Athletes must ski using two skis and one ski pole. Athletes are not able to use an upper limb prosthesis, and the entire affected limb must be fixed to the body for the duration of the race.
LW8	Athletes with an impairment in one arm below the level of the elbow that affects their ability to grip a ski pole. Athletes must ski with two skis and one ski pole. Athletes are not able to use an upper limb prosthesis or other technology to assist with gripping the ski pole.
LW9	Athletes with an impairment in at least one arm and one leg. Athletes must ski using two skis, and either one or two ski poles depending on their impairment.
Athletes with a Physical Impairment - Sitting	
LW10	Sit skiers who have impairments in their entire torso and legs. Athletes require strapping and support to maintain a sitting position, and use their arms to generate power.
LW10.5	Sit skiers who have impairments in their lower torso and legs, but have some strength in their upper torso to balance their sit ski. They generate their power using their arms.
LW11	Sit skiers with significant impairments in both their legs, but good control in their torso. They can generate power using their torso and arms, allowing for longer pole reach with each push.
LW11.5	Sit skiers with a significant impairment in at least one leg, but good control in their torso. They can generate a good powerful

Sport Class	Description (Guide Only)
	reach and push during movement.
LW12	Sit-skiers with impairments in at least one leg, and good control of their torso (equivalent impairment to that of LW4 athletes). Athletes have excellent control of their sit ski.

Athletes with a **Vision Impairment (NS = Nordic Skiing)**

NS1	Athletes who are blind. Athletes must wear blacked out goggles or eyeshades when they race. A guide will ski in front of the Athlete verbally giving directions on the course.
NS2	Athletes who have very low vision in both eyes, with more vision than NS1. Vision is affected in how far they can see (visual acuity). Athletes can opt to compete with a guide.
NS3	Athletes who have low vision in both eyes, with more vision than NS2. Vision may be affected in how far they can see (visual acuity) or in how wide they can see (visual field). Athletes can opt to compete with a guide.

Not Eligible

Not Eligible (NE)	Athlete does not meet the minimum criteria for the Para sport classes, but may still be able to compete. Contact Snow Australia for more information.
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Find out more

To get involved or for more information contact:

Snow Australia

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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. Not all classes may have events at the Paralympic Games