

Eligibility and Classification Policy

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1. Purpose of Policy

The classification of athletes is a fundamental aspect of wheelchair basketball and underpins the inclusive nature of the sport, allowing fair and equitable participation.

The aim of this policy is to provide a clear set of principles for how athletes are classified and outline the various classification processes which are key to maintaining the integrity of the sport. This will ensure that BWB's classification system is robust and conducted in an open and transparent environment, with the athletes' welfare front and centre.

British Wheelchair Basketball's (BWB) classification process outlines the procedures for wheelchair basketball classification in the UK and mirrors the processes of the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF). BWB's classification system has an additional 5.0 class which is given to non-disabled and non-classifiable athletes under IWBF classification regulations.

The IWBF classification manual can be downloaded from <https://iwbf.org/>

2. Policy Principles

- Wheelchair Basketball, in the UK, is an inclusive sport which allows disabled and non-disabled athletes to compete together.
- In order to be classified for wheelchair basketball, you need to be assessed by a trained Classifier.
- Athlete classifications must be confirmed annually (at the time of registration) by the Club Classifier.
- Classifications will be securely stored and communicated to the athlete by BWB.
- BWB adheres to IWBF's definitions and processes and reviews alignment regularly upon an international policy or procedure change. Local rules may apply e.g the on court points total may be adapted to suit the level of competition or the addition of the 5.0 class.

3. Responsibility

- Clubs are responsible for ensuring that their athletes have been assessed and assigned the correct classification.
- Regional Associations and Home Countries are responsible for ensuring that members of their squads are classified prior to attending competitions.
- The BWB Performance Team, in conjunction with BWB's International Classifiers are responsible for ensuring that their athletes have been classified by one of BWB's International Classifiers and that they adhere to the IWBF's classification regulations.
- BWB is responsible for upholding IWBF's classification procedures within the national league and competitions organised by the National Governing Body (NGB). Local rules may apply e.g the on court points total may be adapted to suit the level of competition or the addition of the 5.0 class.
- Classifiers are responsible for complying with BWB and IWBF classification procedures and maintaining confidentiality when dealing with personal and sensitive data. The Classifier must conduct themselves in a fair and impartial manner at all times.

The table below outlines the specific requirements of each identified role within the Classification system in the UK. A robust and efficient system relies on effective communication and administration at all levels of the sport. Each role identified below is responsible for ensuring efficient communication with relevant parties, ensuring the athletes wellbeing is considered at all stages.

Club Classifier (2 day course)	Regional Classifier (Annual 2 day training)	International Classifier (Zonal/World)	Eligibility Panel	BWB
1) New classifications for eligible athletes up to 3.0 2) Classification reviews up to 3.0 3) Annual team classification verification (club teams) 4) Administration and communication of club classification with BWB	1) Training and support of Club Classifiers 2) Validation of reviews up to 3.0 3) Annual team classification verification (Regional Squads)	1) Team classification verification (EuroLeague and International) 2) Training and support of Great Britain team staff and athletes	1) Review all Eligibility Applications (3.5/ 4.0/4.5) independently	1) Administer all domestic classifications 2) Administrate and liaise with IWBF on all International classifications 3) Review procedures and ensure policies are up to date 4) Implement any policy changes enforced by IWBF or the BPA 5) Support training and development of classifiers at all levels

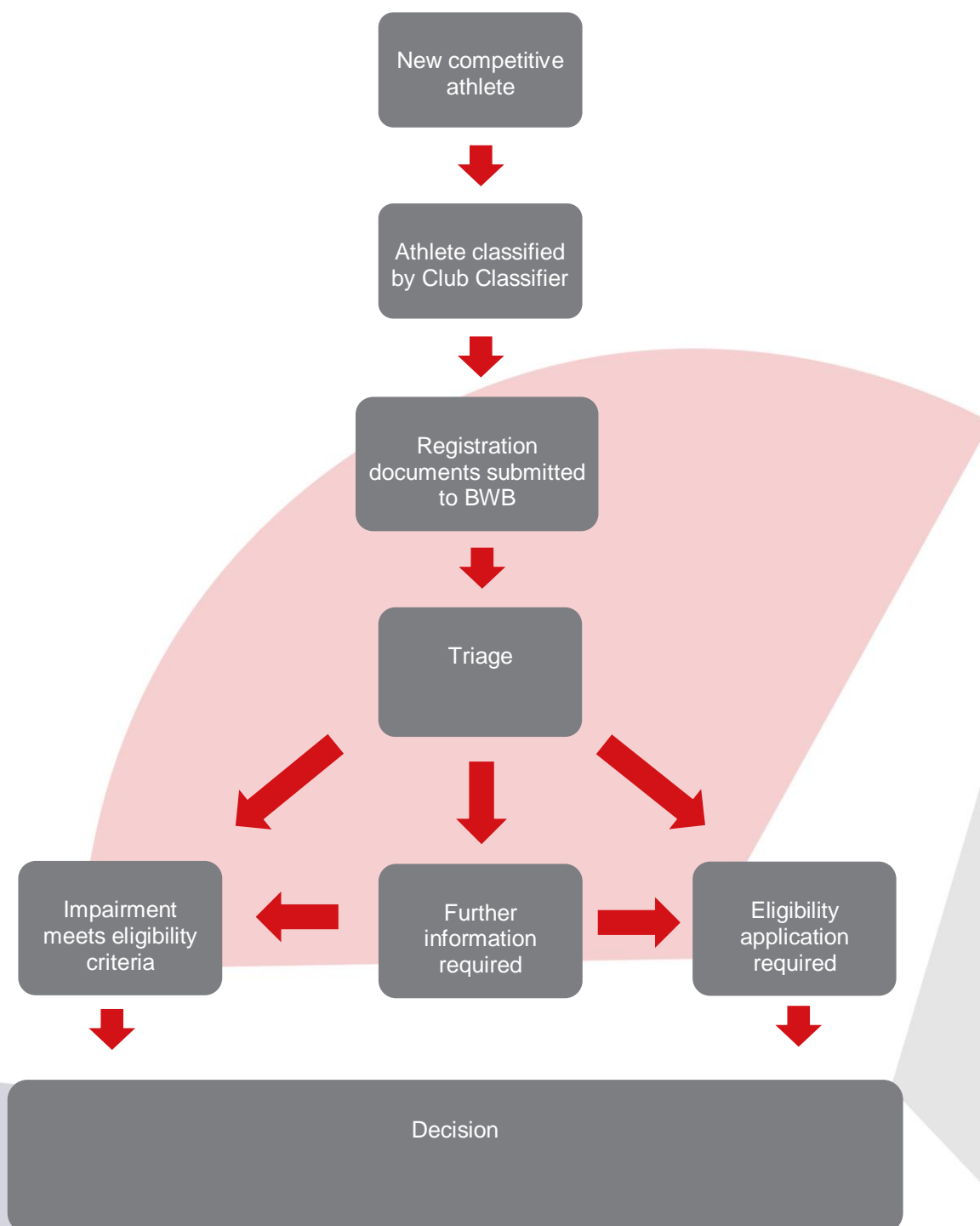
Table 1. Roles and Responsibilities

Club Classifier	Regional Classifier	International Classifier (Zonal/World)	Eligibility Panel	BWB
1) Attendance at Club Classifiers course every three years	1) Annual attendance at Regional Classifier training 2) Attendance at seminars and conferences	1) IWBF Refresher course every four years 2) Attendance at seminars and conferences	1) Annual attendance at Regional Classifier training 2) Attendance at seminars and conferences	1) Regular reviews with the British Paralympic Association (BPA) and IWBF 2) Attendance at seminars and conferences

Table 2: Requirements for maintaining competence

4. Processes and Appeals

4.1 Eligibility Process

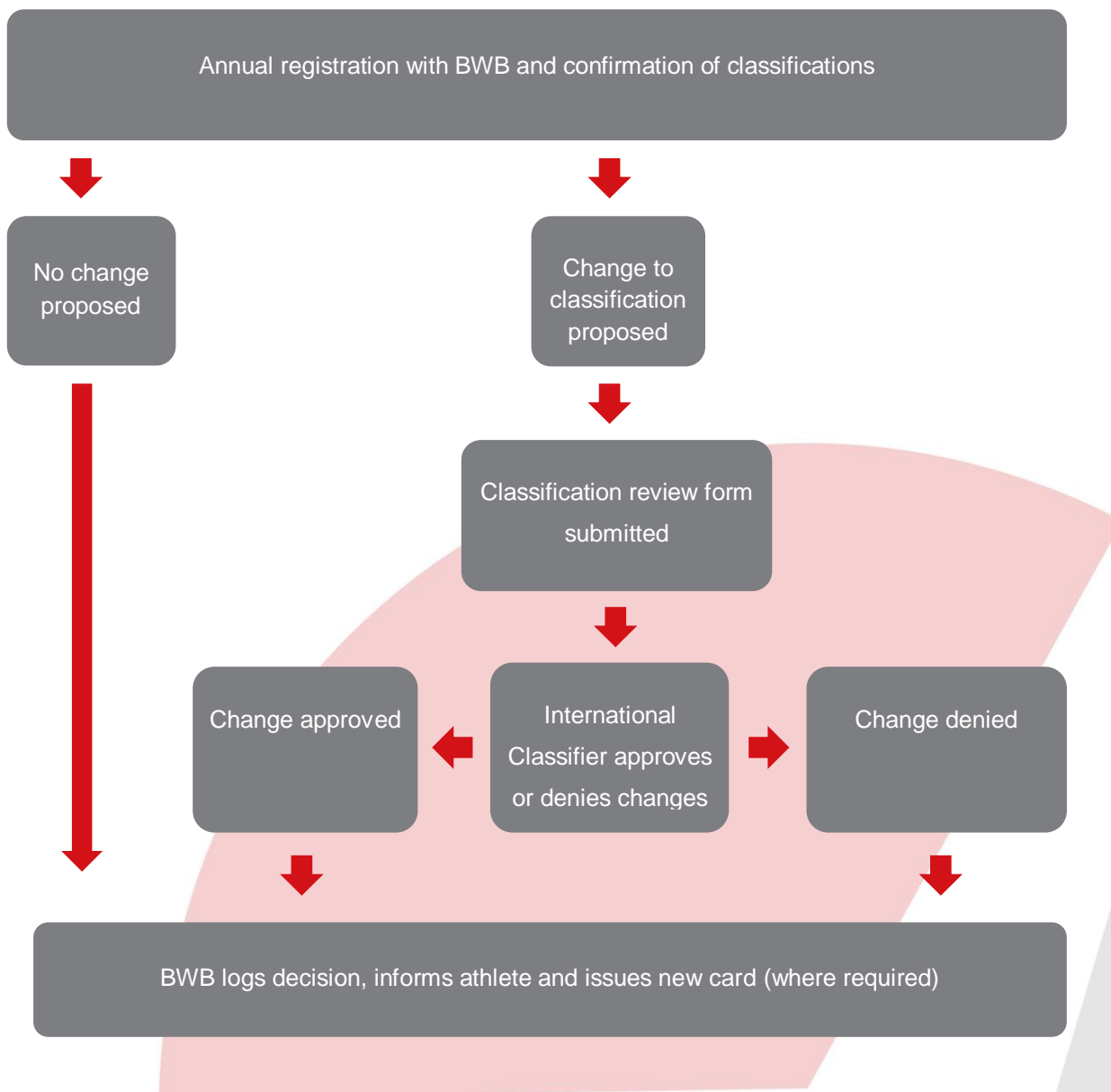


1. When a new athlete is ready to play competitively, the Club Classifier will assess them and assign a classification.
2. Athletes from other National Organisation of Wheelchair Basketball (NOWB) and who haven't registered for the BWB National League in the previous season will be considered to be new athletes unless they meet the criteria under international classification (section 6).
3. The Athlete Classification Form is submitted to BWB including a rationale for the classification with relevant medical information attached.
4. The medical documents will be sent to an international classifier for triage. Outcomes from the triage include:
 - a. Impairment meets eligibility criteria - The evidence clearly meets the eligibility criteria and the rationale from the Club Classifier supports the proposed classification.
 - b. Further information required – Further information is required for a decision.
 - c. Proceed to Eligibility Application.

4.2 Eligibility Application

1. Receipt of Athlete Classification Form and relevant medical information.
2. Eligibility Application which will be reviewed by an Eligibility Panel with a minimum of two Regional and/or International Classifiers. BWB will send the original classification form and any associated medical evidence to the Eligibility Panel. BWB reserves the right to take up to three months from the date that all relevant documentation has been received to render a decision. The fee for a domestic Eligibility Application is £15.
3. The Panel will assess the evidence and confirm or refuse eligibility and report it to BWB.
4. BWB will inform the athlete of the decision by letter. The letter will include the classification and the date from which the athlete can compete at that classification.
5. The athlete will be able to play at their approved classification 14 days from the date of the decision.
6. BWB can request a review of an athlete's classification at any point.

4.3 Review Process



1. Athlete classifications must be reviewed annually (at the time of registration) by the Club Classifier.
2. Changes to classifications must be submitted to BWB using the Athlete Classification Review form for approval by an International Classifier.
3. The Athlete Classification Review form must be supported by a Regional Classifier**.
4. BWB will record the results of the review.
5. BWB will inform the athlete of the result of their review by letter. The letter will explain any change to the classification, the rationale behind that change and the date from which the athlete can compete at that new classification.
6. If the classification has changed, the athlete will adopt their approved classification 14 days from the date of the decision.
7. Any domestic athlete can have their classification changed at any time, with the agreement of two Regional Classifiers.
8. BWB can request a review of an athlete's classification at any point.

**There is a fee of £10 per hour plus travel expenses per Regional Classifier.

4.3 Domestic Appeal Process

The procedure covered appeals against the procedures taken to reach a decision, not the decision itself.

1. Athletes have the right to appeal, once, within 14 days of the decision.
2. Documentation which explains the procedural error that they wish to appeal must be included.
3. A Club, Team, Association or third party may not appeal on behalf of an athlete.
4. The athlete must pay a fee of £30 plus the travel expenses (where required) for the appeal panel. Where the appeal is upheld, £15 will be reimbursed.
5. BWB will review the information and determine the following:
 - a. If the information has a material impact on the application, the application will be reassessed.
 - b. If the information does not materially impact the decision, BWB will decline the appeal.
6. BWB will inform the athlete of the decision.
7. No further appeal will be allowed on the application.
8. A player may not re-apply for consideration under the Eligibility criteria for a period of one year after the decision has been given unless they can demonstrate there has been a significant change in their condition. The re-application must be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of £15.
9. Appeals for international classifications are raised through IWBF and are not covered by this process.

5. Athletes transfers

1. Athletes registering with BWB who are transferring from or have been classified by another National Organisation of Wheelchair Basketball will be considered to be new athletes unless they meet the criteria under international classification (section 6). This includes athletes previously registered with BWB.

6. International (IWBF) Classification

5.1 Visual Disability

1. Athletes with a disability that can be verified visually who are classified internationally will adopt the IWBF classification in all BWB domestic leagues and competitions.
2. **In every case and without exception, outcomes of IWBF Zonal and World classification supersede outcomes of BWB domestic classification. This will be applied in domestic leagues 14 days from the date of the decision.**
3. It is the athletes responsibility to inform all relevant parties of the outcome of international classifications.
4. Appeals for international classifications are raised through IWBF processes and are not covered by the process listed in section 4.3.

5.2 Eligibility Applications

1. Athletes who wish to make an application to IWBF for eligibility must have first gone through BWB's eligibility process.
2. Athletes to be assessed for IWBF eligibility will be signed off by the BWB Performance Team in consultation with an International Classifier.
3. BWB will submit the relevant documents to IWBF and maintain a log of communication between IWBF and the athlete.
4. Athletes applying for eligibility through IWBF will be liable for all associated fees***.
5. Athletes who are identified by IWBF as eligible will continue to play in BWB leagues and competitions at their domestic classification until their international classification is confirmed by a Panel at an IWBF Zonal or World Competition.
6. Athletes who are determined to be non-eligible under IWBF classification regulations will be allocated a domestic classification of 5.0 and will not be eligible for IWBF competitions, tournaments and GB Performance Pathway opportunities.
7. All IWBF classifications, once the athlete has had their classification confirmed by a Panel, will be adopted domestically 14 days from the decision.
8. **In every case and without exception, outcomes of IWBF Zonal and World classification supersede outcomes of BWB domestic classification. This will be applied in domestic leagues 14 days from the date of the decision.**
9. It is the athletes responsibility to inform all relevant parties of the outcome of eligibility applications.
10. Appeals for international classifications are raised through IWBF processes and are not covered by the process listed in section 4.3.

*** Individual cases will be assessed for financial support based on set criteria.

7. European Club Competitions

1. Clubs participating in European Club Competitions are responsible for the classification of their athletes.
2. An International Classifier must have the final sign off on classifications before team lists are submitted.
3. Clubs must inform BWB of any changes made to classifications during European Club Competitions (providing any physical documentation or cards issued by IWBF) within 3 days of the last day of the tournament.
4. Late submissions will incur a fine of £50.

8. Intentional Misrepresentation

British Wheelchair Basketball conforms to the British Paralympic Association's policy on handling Intentional Misrepresentation. The following section is based on their policy for investigating and handling reports of Intentional Misrepresentation.

Article 5 of the [UK Athlete Classification Code](#) states:

Intentional Misrepresentation is when an athlete or athlete support personnel:

- *attempts to deceive the classification panel during classification evaluation;*
- *deliberately presents at classification evaluation in a way that is inconsistent with how they present for competition;*
- *fails to make a medical notification as to a change in circumstances that will or may affect a Sport Class; and/or*
- *knowingly assists, covers up or disrupts the evaluation process with the intention of deceiving or misleading the Classification Panel.*

Under Articles 6.6 and 6.7 of the [IPC Athlete Classification Code](#), an athlete or athlete support personnel who is found to have been intentionally misrepresenting can be banned from Paralympic sport for up to 48 months for a first offence. A second offence carries a maximum sanction of a lifetime ban from Paralympic sport. The severity of these sanctions reflects the seriousness of the charge of Intentional Misrepresentation.

The UK Athlete Classification Code views Intentional Misrepresentation as one of the biggest risks to the integrity of Paralympic sport and British Wheelchair Basketball will recognise, respect and enforce any ban imposed on an athlete or athlete support personnel for Intentional Misrepresentation.

Procedure for managing a report of Intentional Misrepresentation

Where an allegation of Intentional Misrepresentation is received by British Wheelchair Basketball, BWB will identify an appointed person to lead the procedure. The BWB appointed lead person will maintain a confidential log of all Intentional Misrepresentation reports received by the NGB.

If the report relates to Intentional Misrepresentation that calls into question the validity of an athlete's international sport class, the report will be forwarded to IWBF, with the consent of the individual raising the report. If the individual raising the report does not give their consent the information should be shared with IWBF but with the individual's identifying and contact details redacted. BWB commits to cooperating fully with any follow-up actions taken by IWBF.

If the report relates to Intentional Misrepresentation that calls into question the validity of an athlete's domestic classification, BWB will:

1. Review the content of the report that has been made
 - a. Is the source from inside the sport, outside of the sport or anonymous?
 - b. Did the source witness the athlete first hand?
 - c. Does the content of the report sound likely?
 - d. Does the content of the report supplement information already received?
 - e. Is the content of the report relevant to Intentional Misrepresentation?

If there is sufficient weight to the report following the review, proceed to step 2. If there is insufficient weight to the report following the review, BWB will log and securely store the report for cross-referencing with future reports.

At all stages of the process (including review of information, initiating disciplinary proceedings and at a hearing panel) the onus is on BWB to prove beyond reasonable doubt that an individual has committed Intentional Misrepresentation.

2. Access and review all paperwork held by BWB of the athlete referenced in the report. This paperwork can include medical diagnostic information, physio reports and domestic classification evaluation of the athlete.
 - a. Does the existing paperwork address all concerns raised in the report?

If yes, BWB will log the report as concluded along with an explanation of that conclusion. If no, BWB will proceed to step 3.

3. In confidence, share, all paperwork and existing concerns with the classifier(s) that most recently evaluated the athlete, asking them to respond to the concerns.
 - a. Can the classifier(s) answer concerns raised in the report?

If yes, proceed to step 4b. If no, proceed to step 4a

4. Summarise the actions taken to date and in confidence share with BWB's Disciplinary Panel along with the initial report and supporting documentation and either
 - a. Recommend initiating disciplinary proceedings against an athlete and/or athlete support personnel; or
 - b. Recommend logging and securely retaining this information for cross-referencing with future reports.
5. If 4a is being pursued, BWB's disciplinary procedures will apply, including issuing a Notice of Charge, athletes'/athlete support personnel's right to a hearing panel and right to appeal that hearing panel's decision to an appropriate appellent body.
6. BWB will maintain a log of all received reports of Intentional Misrepresentation and follow-up actions taken. Logs will be reviewed on an annual basis.
7. The individual raising the report shall be notified when the investigation has been completed.

At all times, the welfare of the individual(s) making the report as well as the individual(s) implicated in the report must be considered. We will offer an appropriate person to support each of the parties impacted by the report being raised.

Ongoing, unsubstantiated claims of Intentional Misrepresentation can be considered bullying or harassment. If BWB see evidence of this, it will be handled through the Code of Conduct.

Athletes are referred to the British Athletes Commission for support and guidance.

9. Safeguarding

It is the responsibility of all concerned to protect the safety and welfare of all participants involved in the classification process. Where children, young people or adults at risk are involved in the process, every effort should be undertaken to ensure their welfare is considered and protected.

Specifically, when being assessed, conversations with a child or young person must be accompanied by a parent/carer or nominated guardian or held in a public area.

When communicating or discussing the classification of any athlete under the age of 18 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and 16 in Scotland, communication will take place with the parent/carer or guardian. Where classifications are conducted at an event or training without the parent/carer or guardian in attendance, the individual may select a responsible adult to accompany them during discussions.

BWB formal communication by post or email will be undertaken directly with the parent or guardian should the athlete be under the age of 18.

10. Other Information

The IWBF procedures can be found here: <https://iwbf.org/>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Athlete Eligibility Form

This form needs to be completed in full prior to an athlete registering with BWB.

Section 1: Personal details

To be completed by the athlete / parent or guardian

First Name:	Surname:
DOB:	
Gender:	Male Female
Club:	

Section 2: Medical information

To be completed by a GP or consultant either below or attached as documents.

Description of the athlete’s medical diagnosis, prognosis and the loss of function this health condition results in. This section should be completed

Health condition is: Progressive Stable Has potential to improve

Health condition is: Acquired Genetic/Congenital
If acquired, age of onset:
Anticipated future procedures:

I can confirm that the information in Section 2 is accurate.

Name:
Health Care Profession:
Registration Authority and Number:
Address:
Phone:
Date:
Signature:

Section 3: Rationale

To be completed by the Club Classifier

Proposed classification:	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0
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Rationale for decision

Attached documents

The athlete's health condition as stated on this form and the resulting impairment must fully explain the loss of function exhibited by the athlete during observation. Therefore, additional, recent and relevant medical documentation must be attached to this form if the athlete has:

- An impairment or diagnosis that cannot be ascertained by visual observation alone
- A complex or rare health condition, or multiple impairments
- A spinal cord injury (recent ASIA scale results must be enclosed where possible)
- One of the coordination related impairments; ataxia, athetosis or hypertonia (Modified Ashworth Scale scores to be enclosed where possible)

Reports on additional testing by physicians, physiotherapists and other health professionals are welcomed, where relevant, to complement the medical diagnostic information.

The Eligibility Panel may ask for further information to be submitted depending on the individual athlete's health condition and impairment.

I can confirm that the above information is accurate

Name of Club Classifier:
Signature:
Date:

Appendix 2: Athlete Classification Review Form

This form needs to be completed in full.

First Name:	Surname:
DOB:	
Gender: Male Female	
Club:	
Current classification: 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 3.5 4.0 4.5 5.0	
Proposed classification: 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 3.5 4.0 4.5 5.0	

Rationale

Rationale for proposed change in classification (written by Club Classifier).

Rationale

Rationale for proposed change in classification (written by Regional Classifier).

*Please note, references to an athletes' performance will not be considered in any rationale.

Attached documents

Please provide any relevant documents to support the proposed classification, including any reference to medical documentation that may have had a positive impact on the athlete's functional movement.

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I can confirm that the above information is accurate

Name of Club Classifier:
Signature:
Date:

Appendix 3: Intentional Misrepresentation Report

Athlete details

First Name:	Surname:
DOB:	
Gender: Male Female	
Club:	
Classification: 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 3.5 4.0 4.5 5.0	

Rationale

Rationale for report.

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*Please note, references to an athletes' performance will not be considered in any rationale.

Report submitted by

Name:
Club:
Position at Club:
Classification experience:
Signature:
Date:

Appendix 4: Domestic Fees Related to Classification

Item	Fee
Eligibility Application	£15
Domestic classification appeal	£30 (£15 refundable if appeal successful)
Eligibility re-application	£15
Late submission or failure to submit classification changes made at European Club Competitions	£50

Appendix 5: Frequently Asked Questions

What is eligibility?

Eligibility is determined using the following criteria:

a) A wheelchair basketball player must have a permanent physical disability which, in the opinion of the IWBF, reduces the function of the lower limbs to a degree where they cannot run, pivot or jump at the speed and with the control, safety, stability and endurance required to play running basketball as an able bodied player.

b) The disability must be such that it can be objectively verified by acknowledged medical and/or paramedical investigations such as measurement, X-ray, CT, MRI, etc.

c) Persons who have had hip or knee joint replacements and have provided confirmation of the relevant surgery from their attending physician or surgeon and supporting X-rays/scans are deemed to have met the eligibility criteria.

d) In the instance of amputation, the minimal requirement for eligibility is total removal of the first ray of one foot

(e) In the instance of a leg length discrepancy the minimal requirement for eligibility is a 6cm difference in leg length as measured from the greater trochanter to the ground in a standing x-ray.

For the purpose of IWBF Classification, degrees of pain are not considered measurable and permanent disabilities.

How do I apply for domestic eligibility?

Send the latest copies of your consultant's or physiotherapist's reports along with x-rays, CT, MRI scans to membership@britishwheelchairbasketball.co.uk

The reports should show:

- The medical condition you have
- The prognosis
- Recognised measurement of any physical limitation of movement and strength
- Any procedures recommended for treatment

The fee for each application is £15.

Who can classify?

Club classifiers can classify eligible athletes up to 3.0 points and athletes who have had a lower limb amputation.

Regional and international classifiers can support clubs with more complex classifications. They may also be involved in the Eligibility Panel which looks at minimal disability applications and appeals.

How do I become a classifier?

The club classifiers workshop is a 2-day course which takes places annually. More information about this course can be found at www.britishwheelchairbasketball.co.uk

Do I have to re-classify if I change teams?

Your classification moves with you if you decide to move teams.

What happens if I disagree with my classification?

Decisions on which classification to award are based on principles decided by the IWBF. These principles are in place to ensure consistency across the game. If you disagree with the classification you have been awarded because you believe that specific evidence has not been taken into account, you may follow the appeals process outlined in this document.

What happens if my classification changes?

In all instances, if your classification has been changed, notification will be sent to BWB who will send you a letter confirming the new classification. You will be able to play at the new classification from 14 days after the decision.

Glossary

Acquired: An impairment that has developed during the person's lifetime that is a result of an accident or illness rather than a disability the person was born with.

British Wheelchair Basketball/BWB: The National Governing Body for wheelchair basketball in the UK.

Club Classifier: A Club Classifier will have attended BWB's two-day Club Classifier training. They are responsible for classifying players within their club up to 3.0 points and players who have had a lower limb amputation.

Congenital: A disease or physical abnormality present from birth.

Domestic athlete: An athlete who only plays within BWB sanctioned leagues and competitions.

Domestic classification: The classification that applies to BWB sanctioned leagues and tournaments.

Eligibility Panel: A panel formed to assess whether an athlete meets the criteria for wheelchair basketball classification.

Genetic: Relating to genes or hereditary.

International classification: The classification given by an IWBF classification panel at a tournament. This classification supersedes any domestic classification.

International athlete: An athlete who plays within IWBF sanctioned leagues and competitions.

International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF): The Governing Body for Wheelchair Basketball across the world.

Loss of function: Relates to the degree of the reduction of the movement of the lower limbs.

Medical diagnosis: The process of determining which disease or condition explains a person's symptoms.

National Organisation of Wheelchair Basketball/NOWB: A National Federation for wheelchair basketball.

Non-eligible: The person doesn't qualify for a wheelchair basketball classification under the regulations relating to classification.

Prognosis: The likely course of a medical condition.

Progressive: An impairment or disability which will get worse over time.

Rationale: A set of reasons or a logical basis for a course of action.

Regional Classifier: A Regional Classifier will have attended BWB's two-day Club Classifiers training as well as further training for Regional Classifiers. Their role is to assess minimal disability applications as part of the eligibility panel and review classifications where further assessment is required.

Stable: An impairment or disability which is not deteriorating / is unlikely to change.

Visual disability: A impairment that can be determined through observation of an athlete.