Classes & Classification

GUIDE TO BOCCIA CLASSIFICATION

It is important to note while anyone can play the sport of Boccia at a Social or Club level, however to compete at National or International Boccia Competitions athletes must have a disability and must be classified by a Classification Panel before they can compete in any of these competitions.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Classification is a unique and integral part of disability sport. It ensures fair and equitable competition at all levels of sport and enables athletes to compete at the highest level, regardless of individual differences in physical function. Classification systems ensure that athletes with varying physical function have an opportunity to play and that the strategies and skills of competing athletes, rather than the amount of physical function, are the factors determining success in competition. Boccia athletes, because of the differing nature of their muscle function, demonstrate varying trunk, arm and hand movement in performing boccia related tasks (eg. throwing). Classifiers observe the athlete's functions prior to and during competition and assign the athlete a class based on their observations.

Australia's Boccia Classifiers are:

Joan Steele-Mills

Sean Tweedy

Noela Elsworth

Joan Stevens

Lyn Coleman

The following should be used as a guideline only:

BC 1

Athlete has Cerebral Palsy with locomotor dysfunction affecting the whole body.

- Usually unable to propel a manual wheelchair.
- Often has difficulty altering the sitting position.
- Often uses the trunk in head and arm movements.
- Has difficulty with grasp and release motions.
- Has no functional use of the legs.

21/10/2000 PARALYMPICS\SPORT: Boccia AM. Australian Boccia player John Richardson during his match Pic by Scott Hornby for *The Australian* Copyright News Limited - Used with permission

BC 2

Athlete has Cerebral Palsy with locomotor dysfunction affecting the whole body.

- Has trunk control, but this involves limb movement
- Has difficulties with consistent isolated shoulder movement
- Able to spread fingers and thumb, but not quickly
- Able to hand or foot push a wheelchair
- Possibly be able to stand/walk, but is very unstable

BC3

Athlete may have Cerebral Palsy or NON-Cerebral origin or degenerative origin. Athlete has severe locomotor dysfunction in all four limbs.

- Has insufficient strength and co-ordination to grasp and release a Boccia ball and / or to propel it consistently past the V-line onto the court

BC4

Athlete has severe locomotor dysfunction in all four limbs, of NON-Cerebral Origin or degenerative Cerebral Origin.

- Active range of movement is poor
- Demonstrates poor strength or severe lack of co-ordination combined with poor dynamic trunk control
- Use of arm(s) or head thrust is needed to return to an upright sitting position after a balance disturbance (eg. throw)
- Demonstrates sufficient dexterity to manipulate and throw a Boccia ball consistently past the V-line onto the court. However poor control of grasp and release will be evident
- Poor timing or lack of follow through may be present "Pendulum swing" is often seen instead of an overhand throw
- May be able to propel wheelchair
- Rapid movements not possible

OPEN

BASIC OVERVIEW

- Moderate to severe involvement in both legs (usually meaning they are not able to walk, or walk for long distances without assistance)
- Most people would use a wheelchair (at least for long distances)
- Can push their wheelchair by themselves
- Trunk (stomach / abdominals) are generally strong.
- When standing, balance / strength is poor
- Upper limbs could show normal or near normal function

This class COULD include athletes with the following conditions:

- Cerebral Palsy (if they don't fit into BC1, BC2, or BC3)
- Acquired Brain Injury
- Stroke
- Spinal Cord Injury – Quadriplegia or Paraplegia
- Spina Bifida
- Muscular Dystrophy & associated dystrophy / atrophy conditions
- Significant dysmelia (Severe Birth Deformities)
- Achondroplasia with additional functional limitations (Some types of Dwarfism)
- Multiple sclerosis (advanced stage)
- Poliomyelitis (affecting lower limbs) (Polio)