atsc **MULTI-CLASS CLASSIFICATIONS**

Swimmers with an impairment are assessed and may be given a National Classification in line with eligibility requirements. These are outlined in the [Swimming Australia](https://www.swimming.org.au/performance/elite/classification) and [World Para Swimming Classification Policy and Procedures](https://www.paralympic.org/classification).

A Classification Database is held by Swimming Australia for all Australian swimmers. [The 2023 Database is available here.](https://swimmingausprd.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/Classification-Masterlist-May-2023.pdf) This database is updated annually.

**The Swimming Classifications are:**

**Physical Impairment** (the lower the number the more the impairment):  
S1-S10 *(for freestyle, butterfly and backstroke)*   
SB1-SB9 *(for breaststroke)*  
SM1-SM10 *(for individual medley*)

SM is not a sports class, but an entry index, and is calculated from S and SB.  
For classes S1-S4, who have a 3-discipline medley, the formula is (2xS + SB)/3).  
For classes S5-S10, the formula is (3xS + SB)/4.

**Vision Impairment** (the lower the number the more the impairment):  
S11-S13 and SB11-SB13

**Intellectual Impairment**:  
S14

**Hearing Impairment**:  
S15

**Transplant**:  
S16

**Dyspraxia** (Motor learning difficulties - transition classification):  
S17

**Other including Down Syndrome**:  
S18

**High Functioning Autism**:  
S19

**Swimming Codes of Exceptions:**

The Codes of Exception are assigned to an athlete by the classifiers and are only to guide the technical officials. The technical official shall officiate by the World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations and NOT by the Codes of Exception. The Codes of Exception are referred to within the WPS Rules and Regulations within Part A General, Definitions:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Exception** | | **WPS rule** | **Interpretation** |
| **H** | Hearing impaired *(S15)* - Light or signal required | | 11.1.6 11.1.7  11.1.8 | Swimmer with hearing impairment and requires a light, signal or touch start. A strobe light may be placed by the starter or beside the relevant swimmers blocks. Other signals can be used such as an arm gesture. Support Staff may be used to perform a touch start. |
| **Y** | Starting Device | | 11.1.2.8   11.3.1.3 | Swimmer uses a device when starting. A starting device is any assistive device that enables the swimmer to perform an effective start. Typical devices include straps, cords or towels which enable swimmers to grip effectively for backstroke or forward starts. Starting devices must be approved by WPS prior to use. |
| **E** | Backstroke - Unable to Grip for Backstroke Start | | 11.3.1.2 | Swimmer is unable to hold the backstroke grips due to missing or weak hands and/or wrist. This code means a swimmer is permitted to start in backstroke without using the backstroke grips, holding the top of the starting/timing pad instead. |
| **A** | Assistance Required | | 11.1.2.2  11.1.2.8  11.1.7  11.1.8  11.3.1.3 | Swimmer requires assistance at the start or finish. Swimmers are entitled to a Support Staff who provides assistance at the start, to enter the pool or access the starting blocks prior to commencing the race and/or to assist exiting the pool at the end of the race. |
| **T** | Tappers | | 10.8.3  10.8.3.1  10.8.3.2  11.7.12 | Swimmer with visual impairment who require a tapper. A tapper will use a tapping device to notify the swimmer when they are approaching the turn, by a single or double tap onto the swimmer. A tapping device is typically homemade consisting of a rod or pole long enough to reach out into the lane with a soft end piece. Tappers are compulsory for S/SB/SM11 swimmers. If a tapper is required at both ends, a separate tapper must be used. Tapping devices must be approved by WPS prior to use. |
| **B** | Visual Impaired *(S11) -* Blackened Goggles | | 11.8.8 | For S/SB/SM11 swimmers it is compulsory to wear blackened goggles unless they have two (2) prosthetic eyes. The goggles should be checked at the end of the race by a technical official. If the swimmer has no eyes they are not required to wear blackened goggles. |
|  |  | |  |  |
| **0** | Nil | | N/A | No exceptions apply to the swimmer. |
| **1** | One Hand Start | | 11.3.1.1 | The swimmer cannot grip the start with 2 hands. They will place one hand/arm on the start, but the other arm may sit next to the gripping arm, be in the water, or be non-existent. |
| **2** | BREASTSTROKE One Hand Touch | | 11.4.6.3 | The swimmer uses one arm to perform the swim stroke, so must touch at the turn and finish with the one hand or arm used for the swim. The non-functioning arm may be dragged or stretched forward. |
| **3** | BREASTSTROKE Simultaneous Intent to Touch | | 11.4.6.1  11.4.6.4 | The swimmer uses both arms to perform the swim stroke. The swimmer must attempt to touch the wall with both hands simultaneously. This exception means only the longer arm may touch the wall, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously. |
| **4** | BUTTERFLY One Hand Touch | | 11.5.4.3 | The swimmer uses one arm to perform the swim stroke, so must touch at the turn and finish with the one hand or arm used for the swim. The non-functioning arm may be dragged or stretched forward. |
| **5** | BUTTERFLY Simultaneous Intent to Touch | | 11.5.4.1  11.5.4.4 | The swimmer uses both arms to perform the swim stroke. The swimmer must attempt to touch the wall with both arms/hands stretched forward. This exception means only the longer arm may touch the wall, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously. |
| **7** | BREASTSTROKE & BUTTERFLY Part of Upper Body Must Touch | | 11.4.6.2  11.5.4.2 | Allows for any part of the swimmers upper body to touch the wall at the turn or finish. Athletes will typically touch with their head or shoulders or their shortened arm(s). |
| **8** | BREASTSTROKE Right Foot Must Turn Out | | 11.4.5.1 | The swimmer must turn out their right foot when performing the propulsive part of the breaststroke kick. |
| **9** | BREASTSTROKE Left Foot Must Turn Out | | 11.4.5.1 | The swimmer must turn out their left foot when performing the propulsive part of the breaststroke kick. |
| **12** | BREASTSTROKE Leg Drag OR Show Intent To Kick | | 11.4.4.1 | The swimmer may choose to either drag both legs or show intent to kick. The swimmer must maintain the leg drag or the intent to kick throughout the race and may not change. E.g. a swimmer cannot drag legs for first 50m then begin kicking in the last 50m. |
| **+** | Butterfly Kick Is Able To Be Performed | | 11.4.1  11.4.5 | The '+' code is not so much a rule exception but rather informs officials the swimmer is physically capable of performing a butterfly kick. **If this action is observed during the normal breaststroke cycle, it is a violation of WPS Rule 11.4.5.** Remember: *Any swimmer is permitted to take a single butterfly kick at any time prior to the first breaststroke kick after the start or turn as detailed in WPS Rule 11.4.1.* |
| *Sources:* | | 1️⃣ [World Para Swimming Codes of Exception](https://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/2020_03_23_Code%20of%20Exceptions%20Info%20Sheet.pdf) 2️⃣ [World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations June 2023](https://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/WPS_Rules_and_Regulations_FINALJune2023.pdf) *(effective 1st June 2023)* 3️⃣ [World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations 2018 to 2023 tracked changes](https://www.paralympic.org/file/trackedchangeversionwps-rules-and-regulations2018-docx) | | |

**The Pertinent WPS Rules are reproduced here:** [*(the full WPS Rules are available here)*](https://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/WPS_Rules_and_Regulations_FINALJune2023.pdf)

10.8.3 Support Staff may be required to assist an Athlete with a Vision Impairment that is approaching the end of the pool by a single or double tap. This procedure is called tapping and the relevant Support Staff who carry out the tapping are referred to as 'Tappers'. If tapping is required at both ends of the pool, two (2) separate Tappers shall be used, one (1) at each end of the pool.

10.8.3.1 For Athletes in Sport Classes S11, SB11 and SM11, Tapper(s) and tapping are mandatory for every turn and finish.

10.8.3.2 All tapping devices must be prior approved, recorded, and deemed safe for use (in both construction and length) by World Para Swimming.

11.1.2.2 Athletes with balance problems (i.e., who have difficulty standing stationary) may have assistance to balance themselves on the starting platform (i.e., hold at the hips, hand, arm etc.) by one Support Staff. Support Staff may aid the Athlete to remain stationary at the start; however, the Support Staff shall not allow the Athlete an unfair advantage by being held beyond the 90 degree vertical position on the starting platform. Giving momentum to the Athlete at the start is not permitted.

11.1.2.8 Where an Athlete is unable to grip the starting place in a water start, the Athlete may be assisted by a Support Staff and/or starting device. The device shall be cleared and deemed safe by the World Para Swimming appointed Officials prior to the commencement of the competition. Giving momentum to the Athlete at the start is not permitted. The Athlete shall have some part of the body in contact with the wall until the starting signal is given.

11.1.6 For Athletes with a hearing impairment, a strobe/starting light will be provided. If and Athlete requires additional arm signals by the Starter, this must be requested by the responsible Team Leader at the Technical/Team Leader Meeting.

11.1.7 In the case of an Athlete in Sport Class S1-10/SB1-9/SM1-10 and S/SB/SM14 who additionally has a hearing impairment, Support Staff shall be permitted to convey the starting signal to the Athlete by use of a non-verbal instruction when no starting light is available.

11.1.8 In the case of an Athlete with a Vision Impairment who additionally has a hearing impairment. Support Staff shall be permitted to convey the starting signal to the Athlete by the use of a non-verbal instruction.

11.3.1.1 Where an Athlete is unable to hold both starting grips, it is permissible to hold the grips with one (1) hand only.

11.3.1.2 Where an Athlete is unable to hold either starting grip, it is permissible to hold the end of the pool.

11.3.1.3 Where an Athlete is unable to hold the starting grips or the end of the pool, the Athlete may be assisted by a Support Staff or starting device. The device shall be cleared and deemed safe by World Para Swimming representative prior to the commencement of the Competition. Giving momentum to the Athlete at the start shall not be permitted. The Athlete shall have part of the body in contact with the wall until the starting signal is given.

11.4.1 After the start and after each turn, the Athlete may take one (1) arm stroke completely back to the legs during which the Athlete may be submerged. At any time prior to the first breaststroke kick after the start and after each turn a single Butterfly kick is permitted. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

11.4.4.1 After the start and after each turn, an Athlete who is unable to push off with the leg(s), may perform one (1) arm stroke that may not be simultaneous or on the horizontal plane to attain the breast position.

11.4.5 The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Alternating movements or downward butterfly kicks are not permitted except as in Rule 11.4.1. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is permitted unless followed by a downward Butterfly kick.

11.4.5.1 An Athlete who is unable to use one or both legs and/or foot/feet to gain propulsion shall not be required to turn the affected foot/feet outwards during the propulsive part of the kick.

11.4.6.1 At each turn and the finish of the race, where an Athlete has different arm lengths only the longer arm must touch but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously.

11.4.6.2 At each turn and at the finish of the race, an Athlete with upper limbs which are too short to stretch above the head shall touch with any part of the upper body.

11.4.6.3 At each turn and at the finish of the race, where an Athlete can only use one (1) arm for the stroke cycle the Athlete must touch with the one (1) hand/arm that is used for the stroke. Where an Athlete's impairment results in only one (1) arm being used, the non-functioning arm shall be dragged or stretched forward.

11.4.6.4 At each turn and at the finish of the race, where an Athlete who uses both arms but has restriction in the shoulder/elbow, only the longer arm must touch, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously.

11.5.4.1 At each turn and the finish of the race, where an Athlete has different arm lengths only the longer arm must touch but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously.

11.5.4.2 At each turn and at the finish of the race, an Athlete with no or non-functioning upper limbs too short to stretch above the head shall touch with any part of the upper body.

11.5.4.3 At each turn and at the finish of the race, where an Athlete can only use one (1) arm the Athlete must touch with the one (1) hand/arm that is used for the stroke.

11.5.4.4 At each turn and at the finish of the race, where an Athlete who uses both arms but has restriction in the shoulder/elbow, only the longer arm must touch, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously.

11.7.12 The Tapper may convey to the Athlete the relay changeovers and convey the position/place of the relay. An extra Tapper may be required, one for tapping the Athlete completing the leg of the relay and one Tapper for conveying the changeover. No coaching is permitted.

11.8.8 Athletes in Sport Classes S11, SB11 and SM11 except those with prosthetics in both eyes shall be required to wear opaque (blackened in) goggles for competition. Athletes in Sport Classes S11, SB11 and SM11 whose facial structure will not support goggles shall be required to cover the eyes with an opaque covering. The goggles of Athletes in Sport Classes S11, SB11 and SM11 shall be checked at the finish of the relevant Event.

This resource is to be used as a guide only and does not substitute for thorough knowledge and application of the WPS Rules and Regulations.