

OVERVIEW OF **PARA SPORTS**



INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE

CONTENTS

Sitting volleyball	4	Para cross-country skiing	12
Goalball	5	Para biathlon	13
Boccia	6	Para snowboard	15
Para athletics	7	Para ice hockey	16
Football 5-a-side	8	Wheelchair curling	17
Para badminton	9	Notes	18
Para alpine skiing	10		



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OVERVIEW OF PARA SPORTS

This overview gives a brief introduction to the Para sports profiled in the I'mPOSSIBLE units.

Para sport refers to all sport for athletes with an eligible impairment, whether they feature on the Paralympic programme or not. The International Federation must be recognised by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and therefore operate under the IPC Athlete Classification Code.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



Sport films are also available for sports as indicated in the respective page. Please check the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist:

<http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



A full list of all **Para sports** and further information can be found at:

www.paralympic.org/sports

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WHAT IS SITTING VOLLEYBALL?


Sitting volleyball is a global game played by athletes with physical impairments. Its rules are very similar to volleyball.

It is played on a smaller court (10 metres x 6 metres) and uses a lower net. This makes the game faster than standing volleyball.

- The game is played 6-a-side.
- All players must be seated and remain seated at all times. The pelvis must be in contact with the floor throughout.
- Teams aim to hit the ball over the net so that it lands within the opponents' court.

- Teams are permitted three passes before the ball has to go over the net.
- The first team to 25 points wins a set as long as they win by two clear points.
- The first team to win three sets wins the match.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

 For a brief introduction, please see the film '**Sitting volleyball**' via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist: <http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>

 Further information can be found at: www.paralympic.org/sitting-volleyball



WHAT IS GOALBALL?

Goalball is a game for athletes who have vision impairments. To ensure fair and equitable competition all players wear blackout eyeshades.

A ball with bells inside is used so that participants can hear and track the movement of the ball around the court. Tactile markings are used to enable players to orientate themselves. It is played on a court 18 metres x 9 metres. During play there must be complete silence so that players can hear the direction of the ball. The game is played 3-a-side.

- The object of the game is to score a goal by using a bowling action to roll the ball along the floor so that it passes the opponents and crosses the goal line of the opposing team.
- The opposing team tries to block the ball with their bodies.

- No player can take more than two throws consecutively.
- If a ball is thrown over the side line possession changes to the other team.
- Teams have 10 seconds from a first defensive contact to get the ball across the centre line.
- Each match consists of 2 x 12-minute halves with a three-minute break in between.
- The winning team is the team that scores the most points in the allotted time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film '**Goalball**' via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist:
<http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



Further information can be found at:
www.paralympic.org/goalball



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WHAT IS BOCCIA?

Boccia is played by athletes with impairments that affect motor skills. It is similar to bowls and pétanque.

The game requires strategy and pin-point accuracy. It is played on a flat, smooth court measuring 12.5 metres x 6 metres. Made of leather, the balls are slightly larger and heavier than a tennis ball.

- The game is played individually, in pairs or teams. Men and women compete with and against each other.
 - Coloured balls are thrown, rolled, kicked or released so that they stop as close as possible to a white target ball, known as the 'jack'. Players can use assistive devices like ramps or chutes to enable them to propel the ball.
 - The aim is to score as many points as possible by getting as many balls closer to the jack than the opposition.
 - The player, pair or team with the most balls closest to the jack is the winner. They receive one point and an additional point for every ball that is closer to the jack than any opposition ball.
 - Matches consist of 'ends'. Each individual, pair or team 'throws' six balls per end.
- At the completion of six ends (four for individual and pair competitions), the points scored for each end are added together. The team with the highest total score wins.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film '**Boccia**' via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist:

<http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



Further information can be found at:

www.paralympic.org/boccia



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WHAT IS PARA ATHLETICS?

Para athletics, in the form of wheelchair racing, appeared in the first Paralympic Games in 1960 for athletes with spinal injuries.

The sport now includes a wide range of events for male and female athletes with a variety of impairments. Some athletes compete in wheelchairs and some with prostheses. In track and field events those with vision impairments may be assisted by sighted guides.

The Para athletics disciplines include:

- Track and road: sprinting, middle distance, long distance, marathon and relay races
- Jumps: high jump, long jump, triple jump
- Throws: discus, shot put, javelin, club throw – an event that is unique to Para athletics.

Technology is advancing at a rapid pace allowing more and more Para athletes to use assistive devices to access a greater range of athletic events. Wheelchairs are used by athletes with trunk and lower limb impairments. Prosthetic devices are used by amputees for track and road events and may be used for field events.

Athletes with vision impairments competing in track and road events may use tethers to link with a sighted guide. Acoustic devices (or a sighted 'caller') may be used to indicate such things as the take-off position in jumping and throwing events.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION:



Further information can be found at:
www.paralympic.org/athletics

WHAT IS FOOTBALL 5-A-SIDE?

Football 5-a-side appeared in the Paralympic Games for the first time in the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games. Football 5-a-side is also known as blind football, and is played by athletes with a vision impairment.

To ensure fair and equitable competition, all players wear an eyeshade. A ball with bells inside is used so that players can hear and track the movement of the ball. It is played on a 40 metre x 20 metre court, smaller than a football field (105 metres x 68 metres). The whole length of the pitch is covered by kickboards of 1-1.20 metres to prevent the ball from going out of play.

The dimension of the goalpost is 3.66 metres x 2.14 metres, also smaller compared to football goalpost (7.32 metres x 2.44 metres).

Each team is composed of five players per side, four players compete completely blind. The goalkeeper may be fully sighted or partially sighted. Each team also has a guide, who is fully sighted.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film **'Football 5-a-side'** via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist: <http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



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WHAT IS PARA BADMINTON?

Para badminton will feature in the Paralympic programme for the first time in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

Para badminton is played by athletes with a range of impairments, and is split into six sport classes:

- Wheelchair 1 (WH1)
- Wheelchair 2 (WH2)
- Standing Lower 3 (SL3)
- Standing Lower 4 (SL4)
- Standing Upper 5 (SU5)
- Short Stature 6 (SS6)

As in badminton, Para badminton athletes compete in men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles. Para badminton is played on a standard badminton court, however, within some sport classes the court is modified. For example, Wheelchair Singles is played on a half-court, with the area in front of the service line being out of bounds.

To win a competitive match, players must win two games. Each game is played up to 21 points, with the exception if the score reaches 20-20. In this situation the game continues until one player gains a 2-point lead. If the score reaches 29-29 then a sudden death point is played to determine the winner of the game. Points are won by forcing one's opponent to hit the shuttle into the net, out of the court, or by playing a winning shot that one's opponent cannot retrieve.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



Further information can be found at:
www.bwfshuttletime.com
and www.bwfcorporate.com



© Alan Spink/World Badminton Federation

WHAT IS PARA ALPINE SKIING?

Para alpine skiing is a winter sport for athletes with physical and vision impairments. It is similar to the Olympic sport of alpine skiing, contested by athletes without an impairment.

Skiers combine speed and agility, weaving in, out and around gates while racing down steep, snow-covered mountain slopes. They use skis, ski poles, outriggers and sit skis. Outriggers help the athlete balance and steer. Skiers with vision impairments are guided by sighted guides. They ski in front of the skier, alerting them to hazards such as inclines, declines, dips and bends. The sport has five events in which skiers follow a set course marked with poles called 'gates'.

DOWNHILL AND SUPER-G

Skiers have one opportunity to race downhill from the start to the finish, aiming to complete the course in the shortest time. The fastest skier is the winner. The long, steep course includes a small number of wide turns which can be taken at high speed. If a skier misses a gate they are disqualified. Super-G courses are shorter than downhill.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film '**Para alpine skiing**' via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist: <http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



© Joel Marklund for OIS/IOC

WHAT IS PARA ALPINE SKIING?

SLALOM AND GIANT SLALOM

Skiers take sharp turns as they follow the set course through a series of gates, passing alternatively through red and blue gates. If a skier misses a gate they are disqualified. Each skier completes two runs on the same day on different courses. Times are added together to determine the final order and overall winner. Giant slalom courses are longer with fewer gates than slalom courses.

SUPER-COMBINED

Skiers compete first in a downhill or Super-G event and then slalom. Both runs are completed on the same day. Times for the two events are added together to determine the final order and overall winner.

FACTORED TIMING

Overall placement and winners in Para alpine skiing are determined by factored timing. A time adjustment is applied to each competitor's actual time. It makes competition fairer as every athlete, regardless of their impairment, has an equal chance to win the race.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



Further information about factored timing can be found here:

<https://youtu.be/YSoinqcnZlY>

Further information can be found at:



<https://www.paralympic.org/alpine-skiing/about>



© Simon Bruty for OIS/IOC

WHAT IS PARA CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING?

Para cross-country skiing is an individual and team winter sport for athletes with physical and vision impairments. It is similar to the Olympic sport of cross-country skiing, contested by athletes without an impairment.

Skiers combine endurance, speed and agility to race short, middle and long distance circuits of equal flat, uphill and downhill sections. Distances range between 1.1-20km.

- Standing skiers use skis with or without poles. They use lightweight, flexible boots, attached to the ski at the toes only. They use one of two techniques. Classic-style skiers keep their skis parallel to each other and follow pre-made tracks in the snow. The freestyle or skate technique involves the skier pushing off with the inside edge of their skis, making their own paths as they move along the snow-covered surface.
- Athletes with lower body impairments use sit skis. They are strapped into a specially-designed seat equipped with a pair of skis. They use poles to push the skis through pre-made tracks.
- Skiers with vision impairments are guided by sighted guides. The guide skis in front of the skier, alerting them to hazards such as inclines, declines, dips and bends.

Overall placement and winners in Para cross-country skiing are determined by factored timing. A time adjustment is applied to each

competitor's actual time. It makes competition fairer as every athlete, regardless of their impairment, has an equal chance to win the race.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film '**Para cross-country skiing**' via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist: <http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



Further information about factored timing can be found here: <https://youtu.be/YSoinqcnZlY>



Further information can be found at: www.paralympic.org/nordic-skiing/about



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WHAT IS PARA BIATHLON?

Para biathlon is an individual winter sport for athletes with physical and vision impairments. It is similar to the Olympic sport of biathlon, contested by athletes without an impairment.

It combines two activities; cross-country skiing and target shooting using a rifle. Biathletes require endurance and pin-point accuracy, alternating between skiing at speed and taking steady, accurate shots at targets. The winner is the skier or team that completes the full course in the shortest time.

SKI COURSES

Ski courses are between 2.5 and 3km with a shooting range at the end of the course. Events consist of 3 or 5 loops of the course with 2 or 4 shooting rounds. Skiers use skis, ski poles and sit skis. They use a freestyle or stake technique to cover the distance. Skiers with vision impairments are guided by sighted guides. Total race distances are between 6-15km.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film '**Para biathlon**' via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist:
<http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



© Lieven Coudenys

WHAT IS PARA BIATHLON?

SHOOTING RANGES

Skiers have 5 shots to aim at 5 targets placed 10 metres away from a shooting line. Targets are 13mm in diameter for standing and sit-skiers, and 21mm for skiers with vision impairments. For standing and sit-skiers, a successful hit turns the target white. If the shot is unsuccessful the target stays black. Skiers with vision impairments use electronic rifles which use sound to find the target. A successful hit turns the target green; a miss turns it red. Each time they miss a target the skier must ski a penalty loop or a penalty minute is added to their overall time.

FACTORED TIMING

Overall placement and winners in Para biathlon are determined by factored timing. A time adjustment is applied to each competitor's actual time. It makes competition fairer because every athlete, regardless of their impairment, has an equal chance to win the race.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

 Further information about factored timing can be found here:
<https://youtu.be/YSoinqcnZlY>

 Further information can be found at:
www.paralympic.org/nordic-skiing/about



WHAT IS PARA SNOWBOARD?

Para snowboard is a winter sport for athletes with physical impairments. It is similar to the Olympic sport of snowboard, contested by athletes without an impairment.

Athletes ride snowboards as fast as they can down steep, man-made, snow-covered courses passing through, over and around obstacles in the shortest time. There are 2 events.

SNOWBOARD CROSS

Athletes negotiate obstacles, banks and jumps as they ride courses between 500 and 1000 metres in length. They pass alternately between red and blue flags. Triangular flags mark the entrance to the obstacles and jumps.



© Lieven Coudenys

Each competitor rides the same course twice. During the qualification round snowboarders ride one at a time. Competitors are ordered based on their qualification times. The top 16 snowboarders compete in a final head-to-head round with two or four competitors per heat. The first athlete crossing the finish line is determined the winner.

BANKED SLALOM

Snowboarders ride a course that includes steep banks and dips. They ride the course one at a time.

They pass alternately between red and blue flags. They have two attempts to navigate the course in the shortest time. The fastest time of their two attempts determines the winner and snowboarders' overall position.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film **'Para snowboard'** via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist: <http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



Further information can be found at: www.paralympic.org/snowboard/history

WHAT IS PARA ICE HOCKEY?

Para ice hockey is a winter team sport for athletes with lower body impairments. It is similar to the Olympic sport of ice hockey, contested by athletes without an impairment.

The game is played on an ice-rink with a goal at each end. The playing area is approximately 60 metres long by 30 metres wide. A wall of boards surrounds the rink, allowing the puck to stay in play at all times.

- Players sit on ice hockey sledges very close to the ice and near the action. They are strapped tightly into a seat, called a bucket. The sledge has one or two blades. This allows the player to skate and move around the ice. They use two sticks to propel themselves along the ice and to shoot the puck.
- The game is fast-paced and physical. To protect themselves from knocks, bangs and crashes players wear special protective gear which includes shoulder pads, shin guards, elbow pads and padded gloves. They must wear full-face helmets.
- The aim of the game is to score more goals than the other team. Players use their sticks to hit a rubber disc called a 'puck' into the opponents' goal. Team members work together to move the puck around the ice until a goal is scored. If both teams have the same number of goals at the end of full time, the game continues in a tie-break period called 'sudden death' until a team scores a goal. If no goal is scored during sudden death, the winner is decided with a penalty-shot shootout.

- Teams have 13 players and 2 goalkeepers. 6 players can be on the ice at any one time: 3 forward or attacking players, 2 defenders and 1 goalkeeper.
- Each game is played for 45 minutes, split into three 15-minute periods.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film '**Para ice hockey**' via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist:

<http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



Further information can be found at: <https://www.paralympic.org/ice-hockey/about>



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Getty Images

WHAT IS WHEELCHAIR CURLING?

Wheelchair curling is a winter team sport for athletes with physical impairments. It is similar to the Olympic sport of curling, which is contested by athletes without an impairment.

It requires pin-point accuracy, teamwork and strategy. It is played on a long, narrow layer of ice called a 'sheet'. Teams take it in turns to deliver stones down the ice to the centre of a target or 'house'. Each team has four players, both male and female. At least one male and one female athlete from each team must be on the ice at all times during a game.

- Curling stones are very smooth so they glide across the ice. They are made of granite which makes them very heavy. They have handles on top. Athletes use a delivery stick to slide and rotate the stone along the ice. The sticks have a bracket at one end that fits over the stone's handle.
- Seated in wheelchairs, players slide the stones from a stationary position. Other team members hold the shooter's chair to keep it still.
- Players from each team take turns sliding stones towards the house. Each player delivers two stones. Play continues until both teams have played eight stones. Once all 16 stones have been played the scores are determined. This is called an 'end.'
- The team whose stone is closest to the centre of the house wins the end and scores a point.

The winning team receives one additional point for each stone that is closer to the centre of the house than their opponent's nearest stone. The winning team can therefore score between one and eight points each end.

- After eight ends, the team with the most points wins the game. If the scores are tied, an extra end is played.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



For a brief introduction, please see the film '**Wheelchair curling**' via the IPC's I'mPOSSIBLE YouTube playlist: <http://bit.ly/ImPOSSIBLEvideos>



Further information can be found at: www.paralympic.org/wheelchair-curling and www.worldcurling.org/discover-wheelchair-curling



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INCLUDE.**

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