

# An Introduction to Rowing Classification

September 2019

supported by

**AGITOS**  
Foundation



# History of Classification

## Beginnings

- Dr Ludwig Guttmann - Stoke Mandeville Games 1948 - 1959
- Classification based on medical diagnosis, not functional ability

## Sport Drives Classification

- Functional/Sport Specific Classification System began in the 1980's.  
and by 1992 all Paralympic Sports use a functional model

## Exceptions

- Current exception International Blind Sports Association (IBSA)
- International Federation for Athletes with Intellectual Impairments (INAS) - IQ



## 3 Sports classes

- *“FISA recognises and accepts that the respective classifications encompass a range of disabilities and that there will be rowers with disabilities which may be greater than the minimum and who may therefore be at a disadvantage competing in their respective sport class”*
- *“Places Para-Rowers in groupings with other rowers of similar ability to provide competition as fair as possible”*



*Dr Michael Riding, Chief Medical Officer IPC, 2001*

# Gender Equity







# PR3 Sport Class



The **PR3 Sport Class** includes athletes with a verifiable and permanent disability who have the minimum disability (loss of 10 points in one limb or 15 points in two limbs or an IBSA class of **B1**, **B2** or **B3** and are able to use a sliding seat with their legs, trunk and arms to perform the rowing stroke. Must meet minimum disability of:

- 10 points in one limb or 15 points across 2 limbs or
- Amputation: minimum of one trans-metatarsal, or three fingers of one hand
- Neurological impairment equal to incomplete lesion at S1
- Cerebral Palsy with single limb or single side involvement





The PR2 sport class includes athletes who have functional use of the trunk movement and who are unable to use the sliding seat to propel the boat because of significantly weakened function or mobility of the lower limbs. The PR2 sport class includes but is not limited to the following typical health conditions.

- Bilateral around knee amputation
- Impaired quadriceps
- Neurological impairment equal to complete lesion at L3
- Neurological impairment equal to incomplete lesion at L1
- Cerebral Palsy with both lower extremities involved



The PR1 class is for rowers who have no or minimal trunk function. A PR1 class rower is able to apply force predominantly using the arms and/or shoulders. These rowers will also likely have decreased sitting balance. The PR1 sport class typically includes but is not limited to the following health conditions:

- Neurological impairment equal to complete lesion at T12
- Neurological impairment equal to incomplete lesion at T10
- Cerebral Palsy with both legs and the trunk involved

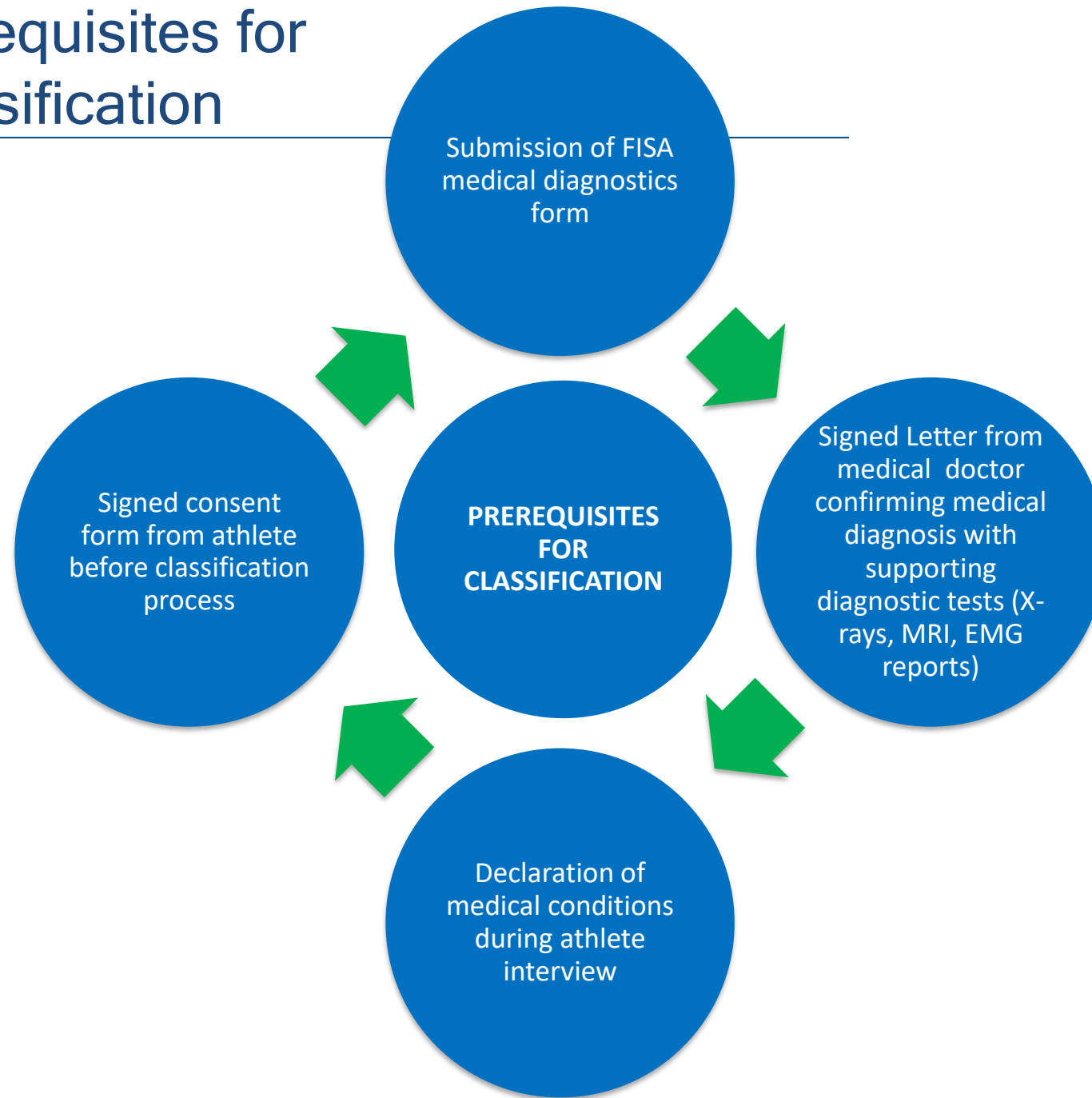
# Para-Rowing Competitive Disabilities



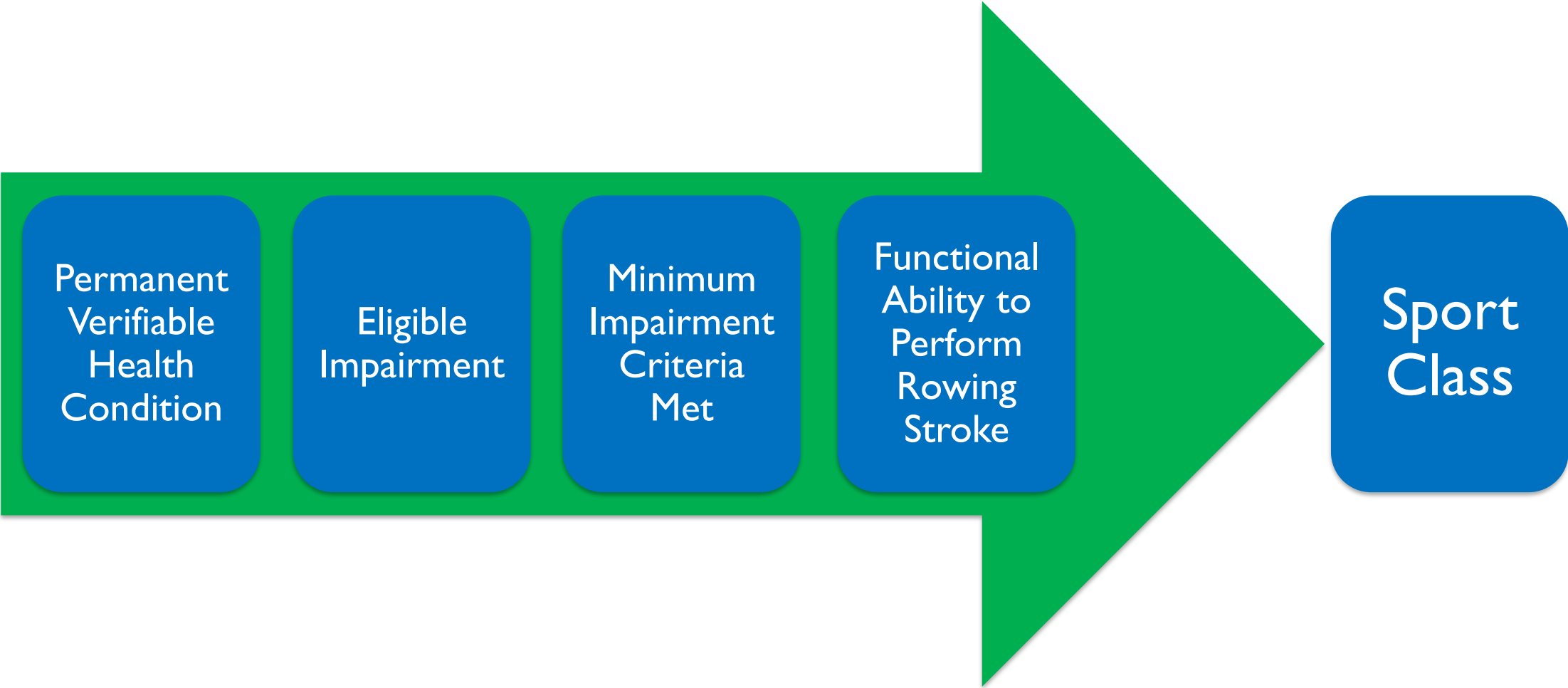
Sport Class	Competitive Disability
<p><b>PR3</b> (Previously known as LTA – Legs Trunk Arms)</p>	<p>Restricted ankle/wrist movement (e.g. fused ankle, club foot) Three finger amputation on one hand B3/B2 visual impairment Below knee amputee with residual stump longer than half of original tibia length Erb’s Palsy</p>
<p><b>PR2</b> (Previously known as TA – Trunk Arms)</p>	<p>Significantly reduced knee flexion (e.g. fused knee, deformation of hip/knee area) Bilateral lower limb amputee (one above knee, one below) Incomplete spinal cord lesion</p>
<p><b>PR1</b> (Previously known as AS – Arms Shoulder)</p>	<p>Incomplete spinal cord lesion Complete T12 spinal cord lesion Bilateral above knee amputee</p>



# Prerequisites for Classification



# Classification Process



# Permanent and eligible impairments with commonly associated health conditions

Impaired Muscle Power

spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, brachial plexus injury, erb's palsy, polio, spina bifida, guillain-barré syndrome

Impaired Range of Movement

arthrogryposis, ankylosis, post burns, joint contractures

Limb Deficiency

amputation resulting from trauma or congenital limb deficiency

Hypertonia

cerebral palsy, stroke, brain injury, multiple sclerosis

Ataxia

ataxia resulting from cerebral palsy, brain injury, friedreich's ataxia, multiple sclerosis, spinocerebellar ataxia

Athetosis

continual slow involuntary movement often caused by cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury or stroke

Visual impairment

myopia, tunnel vision, scotoma, retinitis pigmentosa, glaucoma, congenital cataract, macular degeneration

‘As well as being one of the seven eligible impairments listed, the impairment should be considered permanent - meaning it’s unlikely to be resolved and it's principal effects are lifelong’



# Health conditions that will NOT lead to an eligible impairment type

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

A disorder characterised by extreme fatigue that cannot be explained by any underlying medical condition.

Connective tissue disorders, joint instability

Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome. A connective tissue, sometimes leading to decreased muscle power.

Epilepsy, Conversion Disorders

Neurological symptoms, such as numbness, blindness, paralysis, or 'fits' without a definable organic cause.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

A mental health condition which is a lasting consequence of traumatic events

Hearing Impairment

Deaflympics?

Cancer

Unless leading to traumatic amputation (bone cancer)

Autism Spectrum Disorder

A neurodevelopmental disorder

- Health Conditions that primarily cause pain; primarily cause fatigue; primarily cause joint hypermobility or hypotonia; or are primarily psychological or psychosomatic in nature do not lead to an Eligible Impairment.
- Examples of Health Conditions that primarily cause pain include myofascial pain-dysfunction syndrome, fibromyalgia or complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS).
- An example of a Health Condition that primarily causes fatigue is chronic fatigue syndrome.



# Para-Rowing Classifiers



- Appointed by FISA at the recommendation of the Classification Advisory Panel (CAP)
- Experience with Para- Rowing Preferred but not essential
- Medical and Technical

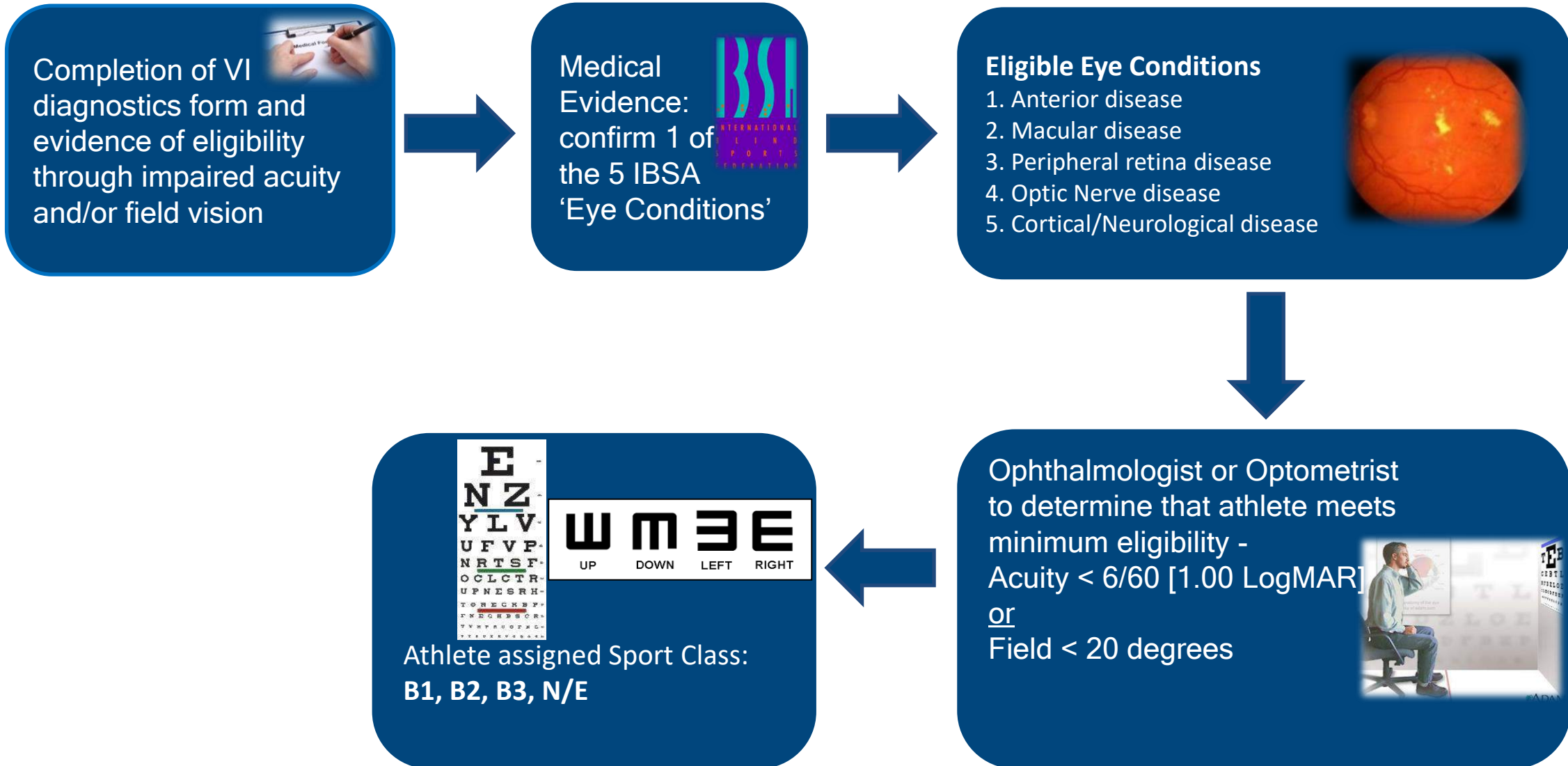
**Medical Classifiers:**  
Medical Doctor  
Physiotherapist



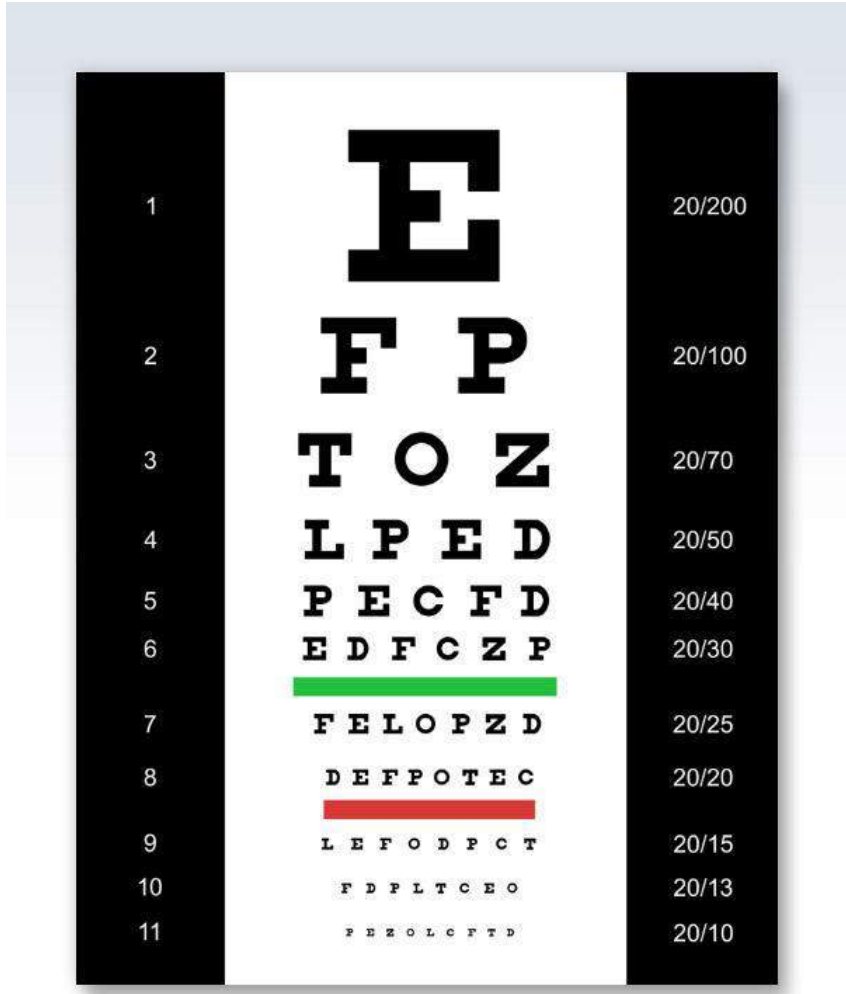
**Technical Classifiers:**  
Rowing Coach  
Former Rower



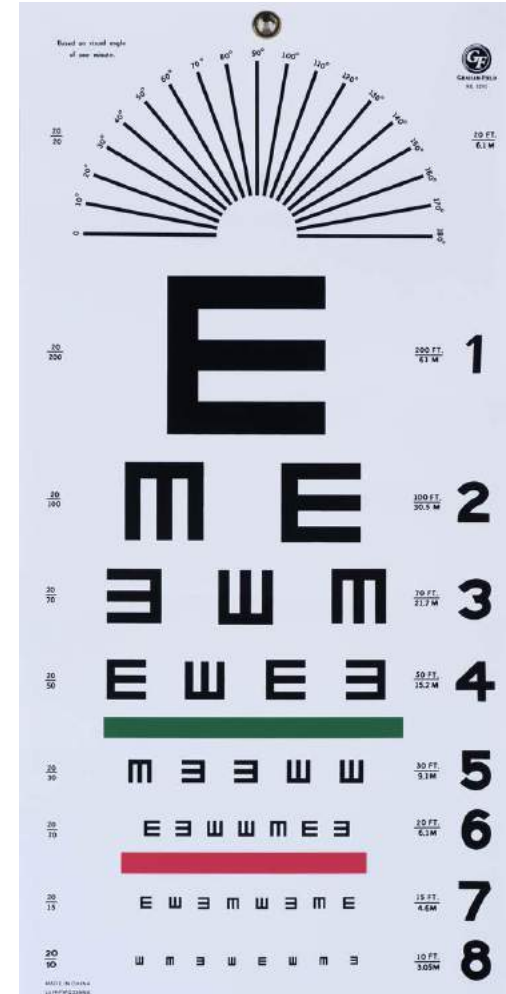
# Process for Classification of Visually Impaired Athletes



# Visual Acuity Testing LogMAR & Snellen Charts

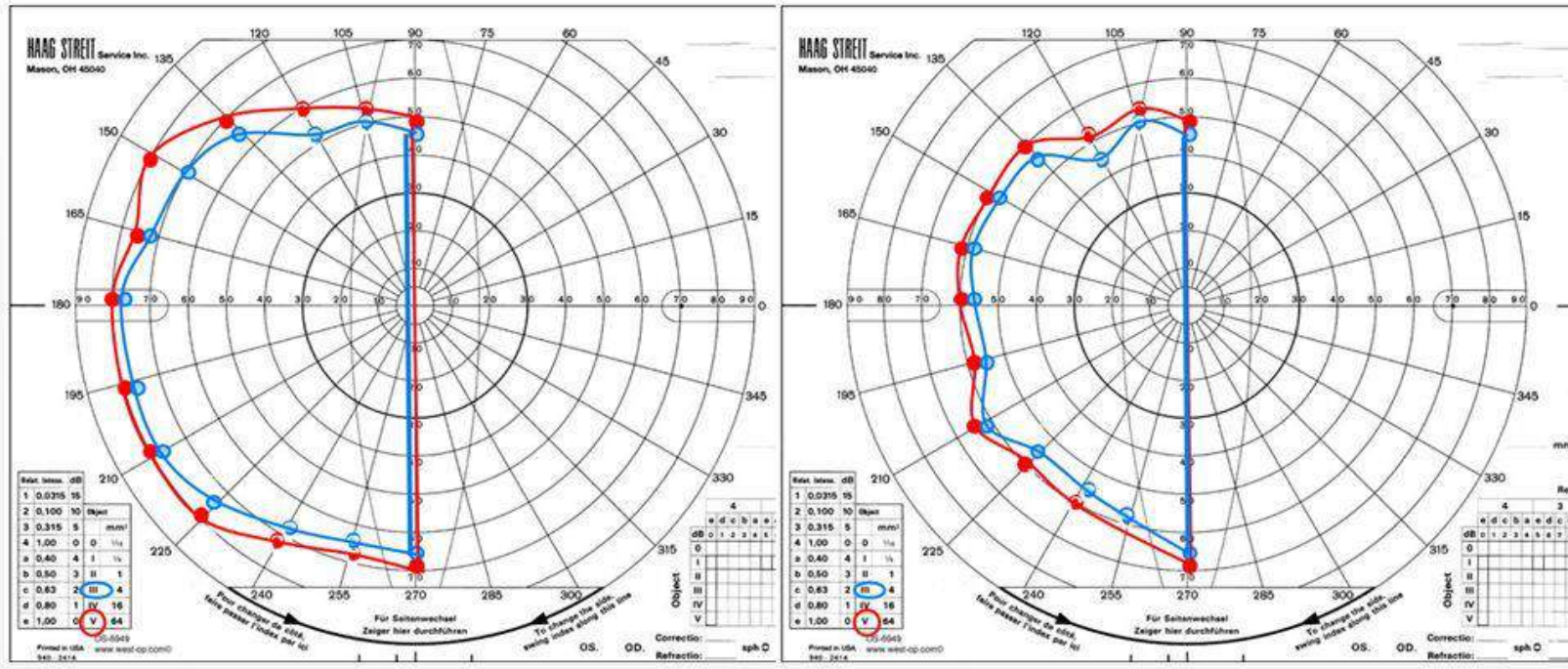


LogMAR	Snellen Equivalent
<b>1.0</b>	<b>6/60</b>
0.9	6/48
0.8	6/38
0.7	6/30
0.6	6/24
0.5	6/19
0.4	6/15
0.3	6/12
0.2	6/9.5
0.1	6/7.5
0.0	6/6
-0.1	6/5



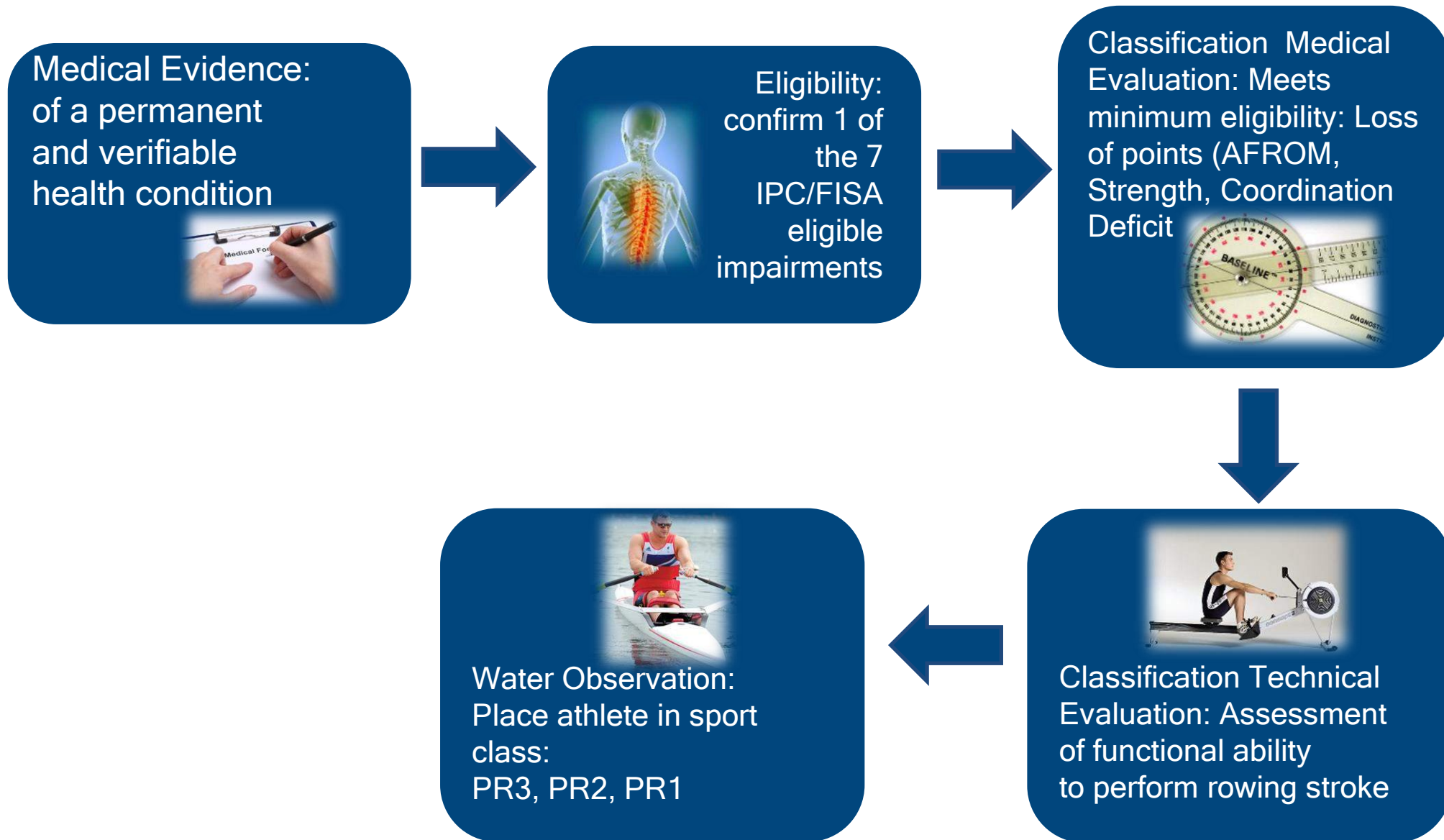


# Visual Field Test



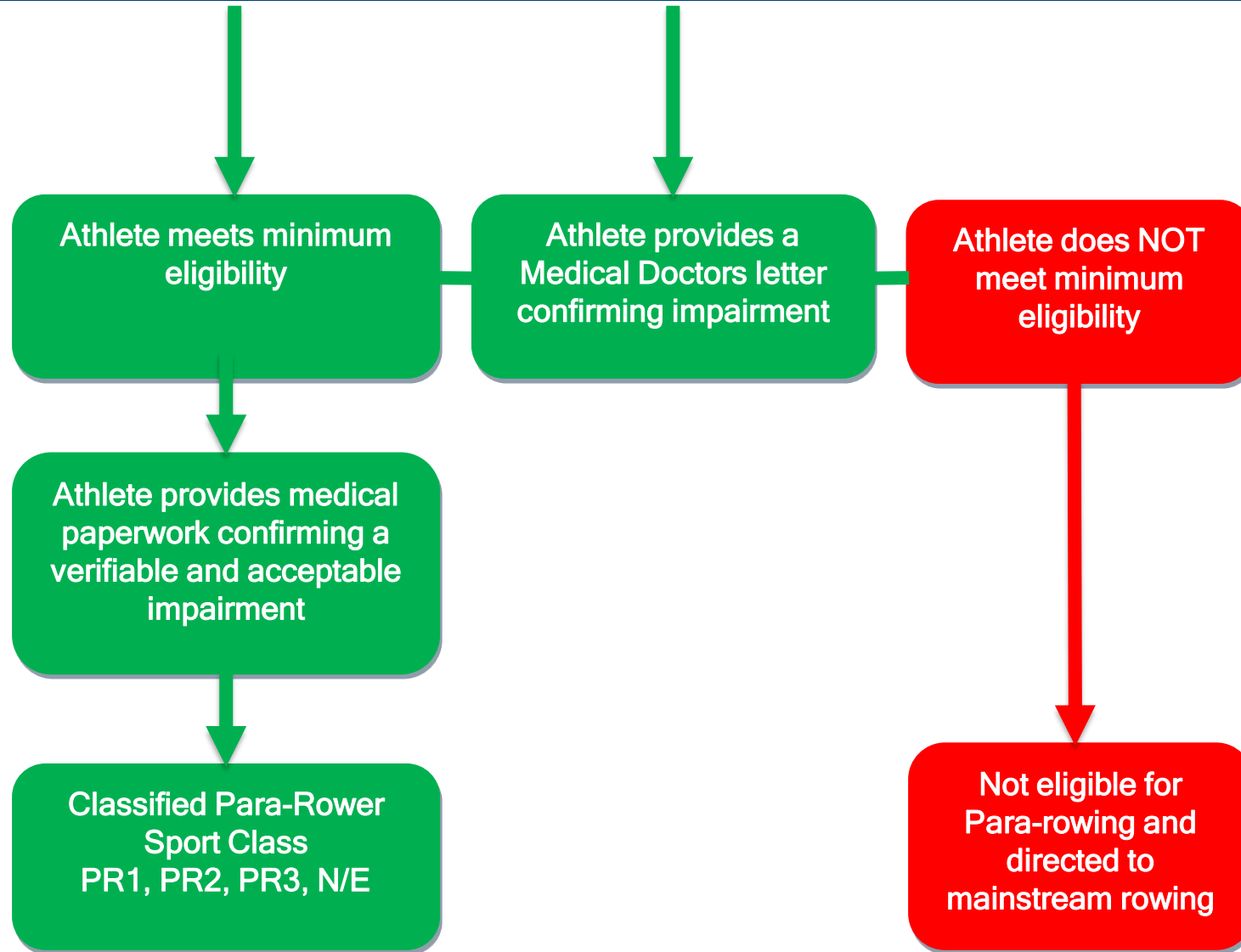
Automated Octopus Visual Field test results, showing Right Homonymous Hemianopsia with macular splitting.

# Process for Classification of Physically Impaired Athletes





# Athlete attends a FISA Para-Rowing Classification Opportunity



Certain athletes with impairments that significantly impact their daily life may not be eligible for Paralympic sport. Athletes who don't meet the eligibility criteria should be encouraged to continue to compete in sport while also supported to understand why they are not on a Paralympic pathway

○ Bench Test



○ Ergometer Test



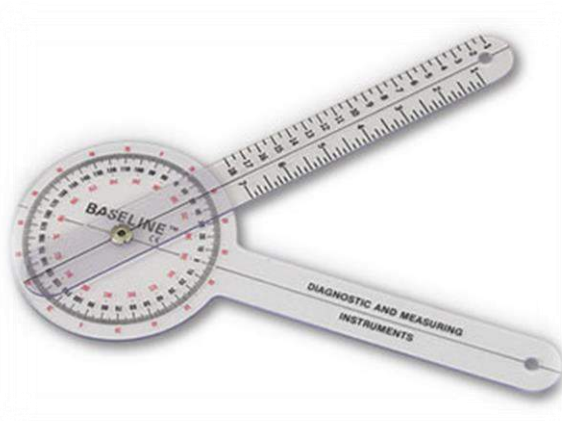
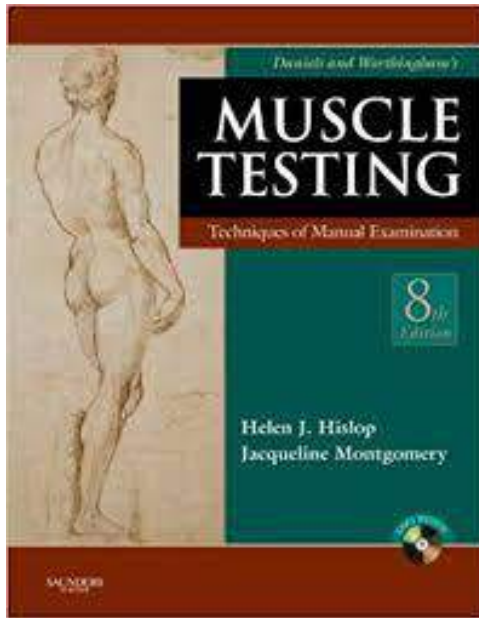
○ On Water Evaluation



# The Athlete Interview

- Ask about past medical history - many forget key history points
- Obtain more information as to disability if needed
- Ask rower about length of time they have been involved as a Para-Rower and number of competitions





# Prosthetic/Orthotic involvement in Classification

- All athletes will be classified with and without prosthetics or orthotics.
- Rowers may not change sport class based on prosthetic/orthotic use
- Sports Class will be issued based on *“best functional ability”*.





# Technical Land and Water Evaluation



- Athletes given a sport class status of **Confirmed** are not required to undergo any further Athlete Evaluation
- Athletes with an impairment that is permanent but not stable or progressive can be given a sport class status of **Review**, meaning they must undergo classification evaluation again at a subsequent competition
- Athletes that fall on the border between two classes, are new to Paralympic sport or are still growing can also be give a sport class status of **Review**
- Athletes given a sport class status of **Review** must complete Athlete Evaluation again prior to competing at any International Competition
- A Classification Panel can give an athlete a **Fixed Review Date (FRD)**. An athlete with FRD is required to undergo athlete evaluation at the first opportunity after the relevant Fixed Date. For example, an athlete with sport class status **Review 2021** does not need to undergo Athlete Evaluation again until January 2021 onward 2021onward.





- Only individual athlete may protest their classification outcome
- Protest must be made within time limit explained by classifiers
- Must use FISA Protest Form
- Chief Classifier may protest In 'Exceptional Circumstances'
- No Protests against the Sport Class of another athlete

**FISA CLASSIFICATION PROTEST FORM**

**Name of Rower under Protest:**

**Family Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Given Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Federation of Rower:** \_\_\_\_\_

Current Sport Class and Sport Class: please put "√" on the eligible class

PR3- \_\_\_\_\_ PR2- \_\_\_\_\_ PR1- \_\_\_\_\_

Current Sport Class Status:  New  Review  Confirmed

**Signature of person submitting form:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Printed name of person submitting form:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Federation submitting form:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Date and Time of Protest:*

*Details of Reason of Protest:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Official use only*

*Date and Time received:*

*Protest Fee Paid (must be attached):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature of FISA Chief Classifier:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Printed name of FISA Chief Classifier:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Protest:      Allowed                  Dismissed*

- Athletes are responsible for giving a true reflection of their impairment and ability during classification evaluation
- Athlete support personnel are responsible for supporting athletes to give a true reflection of their impairment and ability during classification evaluation
- Everyone involved in the classification process (athletes, athlete support personnel, parents and classifiers) must respect the classification process, its outcomes and the individuals involved

- The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has published an Athlete Classification Code along with five 'International Standards' which provide specific guidance in key areas:
- The 5 International Standards are:
  - Eligible Impairments
  - Athlete Evaluation
  - Protests and Appeals
  - Classifier Personnel and Training
  - Classification Data Protection
- FISA have their own classification rules and procedures that comply with the IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards

# Intentional Misrepresentation

- Intentional misrepresentation is deliberately deceiving a classification panel, either by exaggerating an impairment or falsifying or withholding information about an impairment
- Maximum sanction is four years for first offence, lifetime ban for second offence
- Sanction applies to both athletes and athlete support staff.
- Example in Rowing - Natalia Bolshokova, a rower from Russia, received a two-year ban from FISA in 2014 for intentional misrepresentation. Her coach also received a two-year ban
- Anyone with relevant information of genuine concerns of Intentional Misrepresentation should report those concerns either to FISA [classification@fisa.org](mailto:classification@fisa.org) or the IPC [classification@paralympics.org.uk](mailto:classification@paralympics.org.uk)



## Eligibility Check

- This assessment evaluates an athlete's impairment(s) in order to give an indication about whether the athlete could be eligible for para rowing, in which sport class the athlete could compete, and the boat class the athlete could row in at a FISA/World Rowing regatta.
- See if you or your athlete might be eligible for a Para-Rowing Classification. At the end of the assessment, potentially eligible athletes will be given the option to register for FISA's Classification portal, allowing them to take the first step towards classification.
- Note that this assessment is a tool for athletes to check their eligibility as a para rower, but has no bearing on the classification process.
- <https://worldrowingforms.wufoo.eu/forms/z11z8hxm0u38wd3/>





Thank you !