



CLASSIFICATION NEWSLETTER

WORLD ARCHERY FEDERATION

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Dear friends,

Welcome March, spring, and an end to the pandemic we hope. As restrictions are easing around the world, I hope that it will be easier for us all to meet soon. I am also aware that the world is facing another crisis with the invasion of Ukraine all the tragic consequences stemming from that action. I am sure that we all are keeping the people of Ukraine in our hearts and prayers and that there is a quick end.

This newsletter has four main points for your attention. Any questions can be directed to classification@archery.sport.

With warm regards,

Nancy Littke
Head of Classification

1. Classifier Conference and ICC training seminar in Dubai

I want to thank everyone who attended the conference and participated in great discussions, asked thoughtful questions, and connected with your colleagues. It is meetings and opportunities to share with our teammates that allows us to grow and learn. Let us hope that the next conference allows more of us to meet in person, but the opportunity to use virtual technology will ensure everyone has the chance to be present.

Following the conference, we held a training seminar for national classifiers wishing to become International Classifier Candidates. We had 7 national classifiers attend in person and another 8 attend virtually. Only those in person we able to challenge the written exam and participate in the practical sessions. I am pleased to announce 3 new International Classifier Candidates. Join with me in welcoming **Micah Baird (USA)**, **Hanna Thiesmann (GER)**, and **Marinda Rothmann (AUS)** to the team. To the other participants, keep learning and practicing your testing skills and knowledge so that we can welcome you in the future.

Presentations and recordings from conference sessions are in the below link for any of you who were unable to attend or wish to review the conversations. There is a lot of important information for all classifiers.

Wetransfer link (valid until 1 April): <https://we.tl/t-TwsQZ4QuyB>



2. New Assistive Device Rules

During the conference and seminar, we discussed the changes to the Assistive Device Rules in depth. World Archery has now updated the Rulebook with all changes that have been approved by the Executive Board. These rules came into effect on 1 March 2022. All content related to assistive devices for para-archery has been removed from Book 3, Chapter 21 and the Classifiers Handbook. You will find the Assistive Device Rules in [Book 3, Appendix 2](#).

All classifiers, judges, coaches, and athletes will access these rules in only one location. This will ensure we are all working from the same set of rules. Please ensure you are familiar with this document.

To accompany the new rules, a [resource guide](#) has been developed. This guide will provide insight into the intent behind the changes, how and for who the assistive devices should be authorized, and how they are measured during equipment inspections.

Lateral support for W2: the most significant change to the assistive device rules relates to wheelchairs used by W2 archers. In the past W2 archers may have been provided authorization to utilize body support (protrusion) OR strapping if they were assessed by the classification panel to have poor or no sitting balance. Due to the ongoing improvement in technology for wheelchairs, many archers may be using custom-made molded back rests in their everyday life and on their chairs used while shooting. Other archers have circumvented the rule somewhat by modifying their seat back to sit further back between the uprights of the chair. Both modifications provide significant lateral support but fall outside the rule as written. Archers who do not have access to these modifications would have to choose between attaching a protrusion to their chair or using the allowed 5 cm wide strap. This is becoming unfair to these archers and confusing for judges to understand during equipment inspections etc.

For this reason, the decision has been made by the Para Committee, on the advice of the Ad Hoc Classification Committee to allow any archer shooting from a wheelchair in the W2 category to use a form of lateral support (defined in the rules) if it fits within the dimensions defined in the rules. The additional assistive device that must be authorized is now strapping as defined in the rules. These changes were approved by the World Archery Executive Board and will come into effect in the new rule book published in March.

You will all have questions about how this will be managed going forward.

- 1) All new classification cards will be adjusted to identify only strapping as an assistive device if the classification panel determines that the athlete's sitting balance is poor or less.
- 2) All athletes who currently have been authorized to use Permitted Body Support/Strapping will not have to reassessed by classification panels. It is assumed that they have been authorized to use this assistive device because their balance is poor. Those that are using strapping now, will be able to continue to use strapping and may also use lateral support that fits within the rules. Athletes who are using lateral support in the form of a molded back or protrusion may also add strapping if it is required for sitting balance.
- 3) No new cards will be issued to those who are currently classified but the WAREOS system will be updated to reflect the new assistive device – Strapping.
- 4) Classification panels will continue to observe athletes on the field as they have always done and if it is felt that an athlete's function appears to be better than what is identified on their classification, an International Protest may be initiated which allows the classification team to reassess the athlete and ensure the appropriate assistive devices are allowed. Assistive devices must be authorized only in the case where the athlete's functional impairment warrants it and the assistive device allows the athlete to shoot archery effectively. It is **not to provide** added stability to improve performance. The classifiers' role is to ensure a fair playing field for all athletes.

There are no changes to the wheelchair rules for W1.

The other changes you will note are:



- 1) A stool no longer must fit in a 60x80 cm box. It must simply fit within the lane allowed for each athlete at an event.
- 2) The wording under strapping has changed to reflect the changes noted above.
- 3) Shooting Assistants will now be referred to as Assistants.
- 4) Wedge/block is no longer an assistive device that requires authorization as this is already allowed under World Archery rules and does not need to be authorized as an assistive device.

In summary, every effort will be made to ensure judges and classifiers are fully aware of the new rules and how they affect their jobs. However, as with any change, this will take some time and I urge everyone to be patient as we work through the new process.

3. Authorizing assistants

As classifiers it is our responsibility to ensure assistive devices are authorized fairly and based solely on the athletes' impairments. An assistive device is authorized to that match the level of impairment and are not to be authorized to enhance performance. Sometimes it is difficult to balance the athletes request for an assistive device and their need for one based on their impairment. Every effort must be made to complete a thorough bench assessment followed by a field assessment when required, before authorizing an assistive device.

One of the more challenging assistive devices to authorize is the use of an assistant. An assistant is only to be authorized for W1 or ST class para-archers with **severe upper limb disability** who are unable to nock their arrows safely, or efficiently or adjust their sight may be allowed an assistant for this purpose. Just because the archer feels they want an assistant during elimination or finals does not mean they need one. We need to be clear that the archer must have reasons that they need one at any time. For example, an upper limb that does not function well enough to physically load the arrow, or significant tone that may be managed during regular competition but gets worse during the stress of finals may be relevant. But if they can efficiently and effectively load their arrows on the normal field of play and in various weather conditions, then they do not need an assistant during finals. That may give them a significant advantage over their competitors as they will have both an assistant and a coach available in head-to-head competition.

Be very cautious authorizing this assistive device so that we are confident we are maintaining a fair playing field for all.

4. Classifier's pledge and availability for new events

All IC and ICC are invited to :

- sign and return the classifier's pledge attached to classification@archery.sport before **22 April**
- indicate their availability for the two new events before **1 April** using the [online form here](#).

I think this is the important information I must share right now. The event in Kazakhstan has been canceled due to the conflict in Eastern Europe. We invite IC and ICC to indicate their availability for the additional panels at the two new WRE through the [online form here](#). Stay tuned for any additional new requests for availability that we may send your way.

I look forward to seeing some of you in person in Rome or Chile and wish the other panels a successful event, wherever you may meet.