



To all World Archery member
associations

Lausanne, 21 March 2022

Letter to member associations regarding changes to assistive devices rules

Dear member associations,

You will now be aware that there have been changes to the Para Archery assistive device rules effective 1 March 2022. These rules will now be found in Book 3, [Appendix 2](#). All reference to assistive devices has been removed from Book 3, Chapter 21, and the Classifiers Handbook. This has been done to ensure judges, classifiers, and anyone who needs to access these rules is referencing the same document to remove any inconsistencies present in the past when we had multiple documents in use by different parties.

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 5cm 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 be 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.

Thank you for your support. Any questions can be directed to classification@archery.sport



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World Archery Classification Committee