



COMPETITION FORMAT AND RULES

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

The Alpensia Biathlon Centre will host the cross-country skiing events for the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games from 11 to 18 March. Official training begins on 10 March.

Competition consists of the following 20 medal events: nine for men, nine for women and two relay races.

MEN

Sprint

- 1.5km, classic, visually impaired
- 1.1km, sitting
- 1.5km, classic, standing

7.5km

- Sitting

10km

- Classic, visually impaired
- Classic, standing

15km

- Sitting

20km

- Free, visually impaired
- Free, standing

WOMEN

Sprint

- 1.5km, classic, visually impaired
- 1.1km, sitting
- 1.5km, classic, standing

5km

- Sitting

7.5km

- Classic, visually impaired
- Classic, standing

12km

- Sitting

15km

- Free, visually impaired
- Free, standing

Relays

- 4 x 2.5km mixed relay
- 4 x 2.5km open relay

Classification system

For general information on Paralympic classification, please see the explanatory guide to Paralympic classification.

Athletes in cross-country skiing, as well as biathlon, compete in the following sport classes:

STANDING SKIERS

Skiers with leg impairments:

LW2

Athletes in this sport class have an impairment affecting one leg, for example, an amputation above the knee. Skiers will use a prosthesis and two skis or an orthosis if they have loss of muscle power.

LW3

Athletes in this sport class have an impairment in both legs, which may be the result of muscle weakness. Skiers will use two skis and two ski poles.

LW4

Athletes in this sport class include those with impairments in the lower parts of one leg, but with less impact on skiing compared to the LW2 sport class. Typical examples are amputations above the ankle or loss of muscle control in one leg. Skiers will use a prosthesis and two skis or an orthosis if they have loss of muscle power.

Skiers with arm impairments:

LW5/7

Athletes in this sport class have impairments in both arms preventing the use of ski poles, for example, athletes with no hands, or athletes who cannot grip firmly. Skiers in this sport class ski without poles.

LW6

Athletes in this sport class have a significant impairment in one arm, for example arm amputation or limb deficiency above the elbow. The impaired arm is fixed to the body and may not be used during the races. The skier uses a ski pole in the other hand.

LW8

Athletes in this sport class have moderate impairments affecting one arm. For example, skiers in this sport class cannot flex their elbow or fingers on one side, or they have a below elbow amputation. Skiers will use only one ski pole.

Skiers with combined impairments in arms and legs:

LW9

Athletes in this sport class have an impairment in their arms and legs. There are also skiers in the LW9 sport class who have mild co-ordination problems in all extremities. Other skiers have amputations affecting at least one arm and one leg. Depending on the severity of their impairments and the impact on skiing activities, they will ski with one or two ski poles.

SIT-SKIERS

All sit-skiers have an impairment affecting their legs. They are allocated different sport classes based on impairment in the trunk, as trunk control is very important for acceleration and balancing during racing.

LW10

Athletes in this sport class have an impairment that impacts their legs and trunk, for example, a high level of paraplegia. Skiers in this sport class are unable to sit without using their arms for support.

LW10.5

Athletes in this sport class also have impaired trunk control. However, skiers in this sport class can generally keep their sitting balance, except when moving sideways.

LW11

Athletes in this sport class have leg impairment and less impairment in trunk than sport class LW10.5 skiers. Skiers in this sport class have less impaired trunk control, which enables them to keep their balance even when moving sideways.

LW11.5

Athletes in this sport class have less impairment and nearly complete trunk control.

LW12

Athletes with leg impairments in sport classes LW2-4 may also fit this sport class. Skiers are eligible to compete in standing or sitting and must choose how they will compete at the beginning of their career.

SKIERS WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

These athletes competing in IPC Nordic skiing all have varying degrees of visual impairment ranging from the B1-B3 sport classes.

B1

Athletes with a B1 sport class have a very low visual acuity and/or no light perception.

B2

Athletes with a B2 sport class have a higher visual acuity than athletes competing in the B1 sport class and/or a visual field of less than five degrees radius.

B3

Athletes with a B3 (or equivalent) sport class have the least severe visual impairment eligible for sport. They have the highest visual acuity and/or a visual field of less than 20 degrees radius.

For skiers in the B1 sport class a guide is obligatory. Skiers in the B2 and B3 sport classes may choose whether or not to ski with a guide. The guide skis immediately ahead of the athlete and verbally informs them of course specifics such as corners, inclines and declines. In biathlon, athletes with a visual impairment follow sound signals to shoot the target.

SPORT CLASSES AND COMPETITION IN CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Standing and visually impaired skiers compete in the same race and on the same courses, while sit-skiers race separately on a different course. The exception is during the relays when teams with mixed classes and gender compete together on alternating courses – one for classic technique skiers, including standing and sit-skiers, and the other for free technique (standing skiers only). Athletes, however, compete within the three categories of standing (LW 2-9), sitting (LW 10-12) and visually impaired (B1-3) for medals. Within each of the three categories, the athletes' race times are calculated with different factors depending on their sport class. Athletes with more severe impairments are given a more favourable factor, so that the impact of impairment on the outcome of the race is minimised.

For example, within the visually impaired category, athletes in sport class B1 are assigned an 87% factor, while athletes in sport class B3 have a 100% factor. This means that a B1 athlete needs to ski 87% as fast as a B3 athlete to achieve an equal race result in the competition.

The classification system that enables athletes to compete on an equal level is unique to the Paralympic Games. All athletes compete with a pre-determined class related to their degree of impairment. Classification is based on the functional abilities of competitors according to the degree and type of impairments.

CHANGES SINCE THE SOCHI 2014 PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES

Ski technique alternates between Games. In Sochi, the long-distance events were classic technique, in PyeongChang they will be free technique. In Sochi the middle distance (5km, 7.5km, 10km) events were free technique, in PyeongChang they will be classic technique. In Sochi the sprint events were free technique, in PyeongChang they will be classic technique.

GENERAL RULES

The Nordic skiing competitions will be held in accordance with the World Nordic Skiing (WPNS) rules.

Any questions or incidents not covered by the rules will be handled as follows:

- Cases of a general nature will be resolved in accordance with the World Nordic Skiing Rules and Regulations 2017/18 and the IPC Handbook.
- Technical issues will be resolved by the competition jury in accordance with the World Nordic skiing technical rules.

GENERAL CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING RULES

Races are designed to provide a fair competition and field of play for all athletes. Each format has its own specific rules and criteria. In the long distance and middle distance competitions and in the sprint prologue, the skiers start at intervals of 30 seconds. The skier with the fastest calculated time wins. During the sprint heats, up to six skiers compete head to head in the same heat using a staggered pursuit start based on their factors (those with the highest degree of impairment start first) such that the first skier across the finish line wins. The relay events are mass start events with teams of mixed classes competing such that the first team across the finish line wins.

Races are designed to minimise the number of skiers passing and obstructing one another. However, a skier who wants to pass another skier must be given the right of way, except during the final 200m before the finish line. Athletes who do not follow the rules may be disqualified.

A competitor who is overtaken must give way on the first request, except in sprint competitions and in marked zones. This applies in classical technique courses even when there are two tracks, and in free technique courses when the skier being overtaken may have to restrict his skating action. When overtaking, competitors must not obstruct each other.

In relay competitions, competitors who are lapped must abandon the competition, but will be ranked in the results.

Fallen competitors in the LW10-12 classes may be brought back to the track by official help. But they must re-enter the race at the same place where they exited the course.

Timing

Times will be measured in full tenths of a second with the sprint event being timed to hundredths of a second.

Competition time

The competition time is the period of elapsed time on which a competitor or team's placing is based. The time always includes any penalties or adjustments imposed or awarded by the competition jury. A percentage system is used to combine sport classes in the same race. Penalties will be added after the calculation of the time.

Tie-break rules and procedures

Skiers who have identical accumulated finish times share their rank. There are no tie-break rules and procedures in individual races.

Penalties and disqualification

Disqualification rules are defined in the World Para Nordic Skiing (WPNS) rules. The disqualification of a competitor is decided by the jury.

Penalties are imposed for:

- Violating or not observing competition rules
- Not complying with jury directives (in special cases: individual members of the jury)
- Unsportsmanlike behaviour

Violations of the following rules are the most common examples for the jury to disqualify a competitor. The competitor will be disqualified if he/she:

- Violates the provisions of Article 222 governing competition equipment
- Enters the competition under false pretences
- Does not follow the marked courses (by trying to take a shortcut) or does not pass all the controllers
- Receives unauthorised assistance
- Fails to give way to an overtaking competitor when so requested or obstructs another competitor
- Covers a part of the course with unmarked skis; the exception being a broken ski or binding, or without skis on the feet
- Violates Article 314.1.1 which outlines the technical guidelines of the classical technique
- Tests skis or warms up on the competition course in the restricted areas or in the wrong direction
- Refuses to wear a timing transponder when required
- Violates any of the established WPNS rules.

In relay events, a team will be disqualified by the jury if:

- The same competitor runs more than one lap of the course and the exchange is not correctly carried out and not corrected.

Protests and appeals

Protests concerning time-keeping must be delivered in writing to the competition secretary within 15 minutes after the unofficial result list has been published.

A protest shall be considered by the jury or a higher tribunal provided that:

- The protest has been delivered within the time limit specified
- The protest has not been deliberately delayed to obtain an advantage
- The protest is accompanied by €60, or an equivalent monetary value
- Protests against admitting a competitor must be delivered in writing to the competition secretary before the competition begins
- Protests against the conduct of another competitor or an official must be delivered in writing to the competition secretary within 15 minutes after the unofficial result list has been published. The jury can shorten this time. If so, it has to be announced at the team captains' meeting.
- Protests about time-keeping must be delivered in writing to the competition secretary within 15 minutes after the unofficial result list has been published.

Starting order

The relay has a mass start. The relay exchange zone should be clearly marked, roped off and located on flat or smoothly rising ground near to the start and finish.

Separate colours shall be used for the start numbers for each relay leg.

For Paralympic Winter Games they will be:

1st leg = red

2nd leg = green

3rd leg = yellow

4th leg = blue

In relays, as soon as the incoming competitor has passed the finish line in the exchange zone with the whole body, the next competitor can start. A competitor who starts early must be recalled and pass the starting line again. B1-3 competitors shall be held by marshals until they can start. Marshals shall guide the incoming competitors out of the exchange zone so they do not interfere with starting competitors from other teams.

Starting interval

Individual starts will normally have 30-second intervals. The technical delegate may approve shorter or longer intervals if it is best for the competition.

Clothing and equipment

A competitor may only take part in an IPC competition with equipment which conforms to the WPNS and/or International Ski Federation (FIS) regulations. A competitor is responsible for the equipment that he/she uses (skis, bindings, ski boots, suit, poles, etc). It is his/her duty to check that the equipment conforms to the WPNS/FIS specifications and general safety requirements and is in working order.

The advertising on material and equipment that is worn during the Paralympic Winter Games and other IPC-sanctioned competitions must conform to the IPC manufacturer and identification guidelines.

Competition boots

Stiff-flexing, lightweight boots are made of nylon and plastic to support the ankles, which are subject to considerable lateral pressure while skating. There are no restrictions on the type of material used in the construction of the boots.

Gloves

Thin gloves with leather palms help racers grip their poles.

Competition ski poles

Made from strong, aerodynamic, high-modulus carbon fibre, they extend no longer than the competitor's height. Baskets at the bottom of the pole provide a base for a strong push off and may be interchanged depending on snow conditions. A strap secures the hand to the pole. Sit-skiers use poles that extend above their head when sitting.

Sit-ski

Athletes in sport classes LW10-12 compete in a sit-ski. An athlete with a lower-body disability uses a sit-ski, which is a specially built chair that can be attached to a pair of skis. The skis are standard skis, and are attached to the sit-ski with a standard cross-country binding.

Skis

Made from a composite of lightweight materials, classical skis are usually 25cm to 30cm taller than the height of a skier. They are light, weighing less than 0.45kg each, and narrow, with curved tips and a cambered mid-section, which is thicker and arched. Free technique skis are about 10cm to 15cm shorter. They are also nominally stiffer and have tips that curve less than classical technique skis. The underside of both types of skis has a special plastic base that can be waxed and a groove down the centre to keep the ski tracking straight when gliding over the snow.

Bindings

Secure only the boot toe to the ski, leaving the heel free to move. A ridge under the foot keeps the foot centred on the ski, especially when athletes push out on the edges while skating.

Ski suit

Athletes wear a one- or two-piece racing suit. Made of Lycra, suits are comfortable, breathable and reduce wind resistance.

Sunglasses

Lightweight, wraparound sunglasses enhance acuity, minimise sun glare and keep the wind out of the athletes' eyes.