

IPC POLICY ON THE NATIONALITY OF COMPETITORS

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Responsible Office or Department: Executive Office
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Related Policies:

1. Policy Statement:

Any competitor participating in the Paralympic Games in any Paralympic Sport, or in competitions for those sports that are governed by the IPC as International Federation (IF) (referred to as 'IPC Competitions' in this policy), must be a national of the country of the NPC which is entering such competitor.

In specific and/or exceptional circumstances this rule may be interpreted or reconsidered by the IPC as outlined in section 3 below.

2. Application:

This IPC Policy applies to the athletes participating in Paralympic Games or IPC Competitions as well as to any athlete competition partner (e.g. guides, pilots, coxswains) for those sports where such assistance is allowed and where the partner also receives a medal (all being referred to as 'competitors').

The term 'country' wherever used in these rules shall mean any country, state, territory or part of a territory which in its absolute discretion is accepted by the IPC as constituting the area of jurisdiction of a recognised IPC member organization, the respective National Paralympic Committee (section 6 below provides additional information).

The appropriate evidence that a competitor is a national of any country will generally be that he or she holds an official passport issued by the respective country. The concepts of 'nationality' and 'residence' or 'domicile' are separate and distinct. Evidence of legal residence or domicile will not be accepted as evidence of 'nationality' unless otherwise permitted by any of the terms of this policy.



3. Principles & Definitions

3.1 Specific and Exceptional circumstances for participation in Paralympic Games and IPC Competitions.

Where applicable the IPC shall have regard to the specific circumstances described at 3.1.1 – 3.1.3 below.

- 3.1.1 **Competitors with two or more nationalities:** A competitor who under this policy is a national of two or more countries at the same time may represent either one of them, as he/she may elect. However, after having represented one of the countries that he/she would be eligible for under this policy in either IPC Competitions or in continental or regional games or in world or regional championships recognised by the relevant IF he/she may not represent another country (unless he/she meets the conditions set forth in paragraph 3.1.2 below).
- 3.1.2 **Competitors changing or acquiring a new nationality:** This section applies to a competitor who has represented one country in the Paralympic Games or in IPC Competitions, in continental or regional games, or in world or regional championships recognised by the relevant IF (being a country for which that competitor is deemed eligible under this policy) and who subsequently changes his/her nationality or acquires a new nationality, or who holds two or more IPC recognised nationalities at the same time and wishes to change the country he/she represents to one of his/her other existing nationalities. In such circumstances the competitor may participate in the Paralympic Games representing his/her new country provided that a waiting period of at least three (3) years has passed since the competitor last represented his/her former country. For participation in IPC Competitions (other than the Paralympic Games) the waiting period is one (1) year. These waiting periods may be reduced or eliminated by the IPC, with the agreement of the respective NPCs of the competitor's former country and his new country and the IF concerned. The IPC will take a decision to reduce the 'waiting period' based on the merits of each application, on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.1.3 **Statelessness:** the IPC will have regard to the plight of stateless persons (as that phrase is understood in international law and more specifically defined in the UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees). The IPC will determine the eligibility requirements of any athlete deemed to be a stateless person.
- 3.1.4 **Exceptional circumstances:** Where a competitor objects to the nationality attributed to him or her under the above rules and only where genuine exceptional circumstances exist, or in circumstances not fully covered by the above rules, a competitor may apply to the IPC for a ruling on his or



her nationality. On such an application the IPC may take all decisions of a general or individual nature with regard to issues resulting from nationality, citizenship, domicile or residence of any competitor, including the duration of any waiting period or any other requirements or conditions. Any such decision shall be made in consultation with the respective IF governing the sport.

3.2 Nationality requirements for participation in sports governed by an IF (not the IPC).

3.2.1 IPC recognized multi-sport competitions: In Regional Games or in any other multi-sport competition recognized by the IPC, the respective IF nationality rules apply for competitors in those sports that are not governed by the IPC, unless the provisions of section 4 apply.

3.2.2 Qualifying tournaments for Paralympic Games: Whereas the respective IF nationality rules apply for competitions in sports governed by an IF, the IPC nationality rules continue to apply for participation in the Paralympic Games. Therefore, in the event that the IF nationality rules are more stringent than the IPC rules, the more stringent rules shall automatically come into effect for participation in the Paralympic Games through the qualifying process. However, where the IF rules are less stringent it is the responsibility of the IF to communicate to the competitors and to the respective National Federations that the IPC rules apply for participation in the Paralympic Games; this to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments with respect to competitors who would meet the qualifying standards, but would not be eligible for participation in the Paralympic Games.

4. Nationality requirement for participation in certain multi-sport Competitions

4.1 Certain multi-sport competitions that are recognized by the IPC may have specific national eligibility rules (such as for the Commonwealth Games). For these competitions, competitors may compete for countries or territories for which they are not a national under this Policy but this will have no effect on the competitors' nationality eligibility for the Paralympic Games and IPC Competitions.

4.2 The results of a competitor who competes for another country or territory pursuant to 4.1 above will have their results recorded for records and ranking purposes when competing in an individual event, but not when competing as part of a team.



5. Procedures

- 5.1 Any application for a consideration under 'specific or exceptional circumstances' shall be submitted to the IPC by the respective NPC who wishes to enter the competitor into competition. The application shall be accompanied by all relevant evidence and/or by any other documentation as required by the IPC. This may include but is not limited to the evidence of support from the NPC of the country of origin, and where relevant, by an evidence of support from the respective IF governing the sport.
- 5.2 The IPC Governing Board normally delegates the authority to the IPC Chief Executive Officer to decide and resolve all matters relating to the determination of the country that a competitor may represent in IPC competitions.
- 5.3 The IPC Chief Executive Officer may consult with the IPC Legal and Ethics Committee with regard to specific requirements relating to nationality, citizenship, domicile or residence and may issue further details of procedure and set timelines to ensure and monitor the implementation of this Policy.

6. Special Status of certain NPCs

- 6.1 The IPC has regard to the recognition of member states of the United Nations when admitting National Paralympic Committees to membership of the IPC. However the Governing Board has agreed to recognise certain NPCs for territories that are not sovereign states and are not members of the UN¹. In these cases the concept of 'nationality' may not follow the general principle set out above and the IPC Governing Board will have absolute discretion to determine the nationality eligibility requirements of athletes claiming to represent these NPCs.

¹ Currently Hong Kong, Macao, Chinese Taipei, Palestine, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, and the Faroe Islands. .