



SWIMMING

SWIMMING has been a part of the Paralympic program since the first Games in 1960 in Rome, Italy. Today, the races are highly competitive and among the largest and most popular events in the Paralympic Games.

BASIC RULES

Paralympic swimming competitions occur in 50-meter pools and, while competing, no prostheses or assistive devices may be worn.

Athletes will compete in freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke and medley events in varying distances. Each event will have specific rules to follow. Events can begin in a variety of ways.

- **Freestyle, breaststroke and butterfly events** typically commence from a starting platform, however, if athletes have difficulty making a diving start, they may already be in the water.
- **Backstroke** will usually begin with athletes holding the grip in the water. Athletes in these events can use an aid such as a belt, or start holding a rope or towel in their mouth if it is difficult to hold the grip due to a physical impairment.

During the finish and turns, athletes participating in breaststroke and butterfly races are permitted to touch with a part of their upper body depending on their impairment.

EQUIPMENT

Athletes will need a swimsuit, swim cap, goggles and a pool for the sport.

GETTING STARTED

We encourage you to start by connecting with a local adaptive sports organization that offers swimming or getting involved with a local swimming club. To find a list of teams in your area, please visit <https://www.usaswimming.org/find-a-team>.

CLASSIFICATION

Determines which athletes are eligible to compete and how athletes are grouped together for competition. If an athlete has a Paralympic eligible impairment, the athlete may be eligible for a classification appointment. Once an athlete is ready to compete regionally or nationally, an athlete should seek national classification.

For more information on U.S. Paralympics Swimming, please visit <http://USParaSwimming.org/>.

PARALYMPIC ELIGIBLE IMPAIRMENTS

- Ataxia, Athetosis and Hypertonia
- Impaired Muscle Power
- Impaired Passive Range of Movement
- Limb Deficiency
- Leg Length Difference
- Short Stature
- Visual Impairment
- Intellectual Impairment

PARALYMPIC CLASSES

There are 14 different sport classes for athletes. A lower number indicates a more severe activity limitation than a higher number.

Classes 1-10: physical impairment

Classes 11-13: visual impairment

Class 14: intellectual impairment

Prefix **S**

- Freestyle
- Backstroke
- Butterfly

Prefix **SB**

- Breaststroke

Prefix **SM**

- Individual Medley

COLLEGIATE RESOURCES

Many Para athletes are engaging in collegiate varsity swimming programs. For more information on swimming in college, please visit www.TeamUSA.org/USParaSwimming/swimming-in-college.