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### **CLASSIFICATION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The USATT Classification sub-committee has as its five member's representatives of all areas of Para Table Tennis:

Sub-committee chair: Sharon Frant Brooks – Senior ITTF Classifier

Jennifer Johnson – Paraplegic, female wheelchair player, Paralympic medalist, Hall of Fame member

Kenneth Brooks – Quadriplegic, former wheelchair player, multi time US, Paralympic, and Pan American medalist, Hall of Fame member (WASUSA), former Wheelchair Athlete of the Year

Richard Xue- father of Alexander Xue, a standing Para TT Junior player, Familiar with the needs of both Junior and Standing Disabled players.

Tracy Lea – A founder of Athletes Without Limits, the USA agency that Represents INAS (the International Association of Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities)

The activities of the Sub-committee have focused on improved accuracy of player classification for Para Table Tennis in the USA through enhanced training of classifiers, improved materials for classification uniformity, and improved classifier certification and development.

Training: Over the past 2 years, over 11 individuals had expressed an interest in becoming Para TT classifiers either by direct email or personal contact or through USATT umpires or referees. When the opportunity for an international seminar being held in the USA at the Michael Dempsey Memorial Table Tennis Tournament in San Diego, CA. The International Table Tennis Federation Medical Classification Officer limited USA participation to 6 candidates. Email inquiries of interest were sent to all 11 and from those, 6 respondents of the positive responses were representative of the 3 different types of classifiers: medical, paramedical, and technical. The six who attended the seminar were highly praised by the instructors- Dr. Juraj Stefak (Slovakia) and Dr. Sheng Wu (Taipei). The two technical classifiers were Jim Beckford- the USA Para Table Tennis community's first coach having coached nearly all of the USA Paralympic medalists, including Mike Dempsey himself, and Kenneth Brooks- a multi Paralympic team member and medalist, as well as a coach of both Andre Scott and Pam Fontaine in their formative playing years. Jim became the classifier of choice for nearly all of the class 11 playing skills assessments due to his obvious understanding of the intent of the types of play required. Ken was commended throughout for his incisive questions and clear understanding of the game demands, particular the Tetra (quadriplegic) play. Our two Medical classifiers were dubbed "the Young Doctors" by the instructors, will both be completing medical training this spring and going into fields very relevant to para sports- international pediatric medicine (Eilan Levkowitz) and rehabilitation medicine (Laurent Delavaux), and have the added skills of both being multi lingual. Our two Paramedical classifiers are highly experience classifiers in wheelchair and ambulatory sports and were sponsored in

part by WASUSA- Jeannie Senter and Jennifer Lucarevic. Both are Physical Therapists who were able to effectively share their extensive assessment methods to other seminar participants. All 6 passed the course and testing and are now Level A classifiers, making them our first corps of National Classifiers. In summary, our current National Classification Corps is: **Eilan Levkowitz** – Medical – New Orleans, LA, **James Beckford** – Technical – Florida, **Jeannie Senter** – Paramedical – Atlanta, GA, **Jennifer Lucarevic** – Paramedical – San Diego, CA, **Kenneth Brooks** – Technical- Lebanon, NJ, **Laurent Delavaux** – Medical - Jersey City, NJ.

Materials: We have been employing the use of electronic classification cards of a different format than the ITTF cards. While using the same assessment system, the USA classification card reflects the functional areas being tested. The players each get the only hard copy, with signatures, but all other record keeping is kept on computer and flash drives. All classification being done in the USA will be maintained in this manner, with all sites where classification is being done being sent a flash drive with a template of the card to be filled out by the local classifier, printed locally, and then sent to the National Classification Officer electronically. Our cards and materials were well regarded by ITTF PTTD who is now looking at utilizing a similar system and altering the ITTF card to be similar to the one used in the USA. A USA Classification manual was created to supplement the ITTF PTT Classification Code. USATT CEO, Paralympic Table Tennis coordinator, USA Paralympic coach, and USATT Officials committee chair were provided with copies of the manual as well as the Classification Code and the seminar instructional materials. A classification evaluation form was also created as a guide for classifiers to assure the performance of all functional testing and skill set to be observing for.

Classification system Development: The seminar attendees become the corps of the first 6 National Classifiers. We were advised by the ITTF Medical Classification Officer to have at least 2 classifiers at all USATT classification clinics – which would include not only USATT events, but also the Junior National Disability Games (WASUSA), and Athletes Without Limits National event, as well as Veterans and Valor Games. Outreach has been done to all of these other sponsoring agencies to work on collaboration with their current systems to be sure we have appropriate classification activities at these events to assure the best grassroots classification outcomes. These 6 will be involved in classification activities and, after 1 year of practical skill development, we will hold regional training seminars to create a corps of local/regional classifiers, modeling the International levels of A,B, C, D, and E used by the ITTF.

Sharon Frant Brooks, Chair  
Classification Sub-committee