



**Date: Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January**

## **IWBF STATEMENT ON IPC CLASSIFICATION DECISION**

The International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) acknowledges the decision made by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) with regards to our compliance with the IPC Athlete Classification Code.

IWBF, as an independent federation from the IPC, has always had its own classification philosophy, classification regulations and policies which were respected and aligned with IPC until their code was revised.

IWBF's classification philosophy has always been to make the sport as inclusive as possible and give all those with eligible impairment and disabilities a chance to play the game of basketball.

Over the past year and a half, IWBF have worked hard to come to an agreement with the IPC Classification Committee, to ensure we don't lose our own classification philosophy or compromise the integrity of the sport, but also ensure that it complies with that of the IPC Code, which clearly demonstrates our willingness to stay part of the Paralympic movement and the Paralympic Games.

All our internationally classified athletes have been through a thorough classification process and their eligibility is not in doubt, however it now must be confirmed that they have an eligible impairment not only in the understanding of the IWBF classification regulations but also under the impairment definitions of the IPC Athletes Classification Code.

IWBF President, Ulf Mehrens, said:

"IWBF received the decision from the IPC this morning, with much regret and sadness.

"As the most popular team sport, IWBF has been an advocate for a sustainable and functional classification system. We have a worldwide connected system of education in classification and which drives betterment in all our zones. Individuals such as Dr Armand Thiboutot, Dr Horst Strohkendl, Sir Philip Craven and Bernhard Courbariaux created a strong robust classification system which has acted as a role model for other sports.

"Despite our disappointment, IWBF acknowledges the current action by the IPC and I kindly request all athletes, teams and member nations for their cooperation and understanding as IWBF prepare to take on the challenges we will have in the next months. We hope to have the collaboration and support from all our national federations as we do everything possible to serve our wheelchair basketball community and make sure wheelchair basketball secures its place in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games and future Paralympic Games."

IWBF's Chair of the Classification Commission, Regina Costa, said:



“We have been trying to work with IPC for a long time to adjust our regulations to ensure they meet the IPC Classification Code, so for IPC to insinuate that as a federation we have not done anything is incorrect.

“We will continue to work with IPC and hope that they will now engage in a timely manner to our requests as we strive to meet the deadlines they have stipulated. It is important to stress the eligibility of our athletes is not in doubt, merely we use different languages in our classification, and we believe that we have most robust classification in our sport based on both medical and functional classification, with more qualified classifiers and training than any other sport.”

**ENDS.**

For more information or for media requests please contact Stephanie Gagne, IWBF Communications Manager on [stephanie.gagne@iwbf.org](mailto:stephanie.gagne@iwbf.org)

### **About the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF)**

The International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) is the international governing body responsible for wheelchair basketball. It is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide opportunities for persons with a disability to play the game of wheelchair basketball. For more information, please visit [www.iwbf.org](http://www.iwbf.org).