

New Skier Classification for 5 MP Categories

The classification committee was tasked a little over a year ago to add a fourth category to the MP classification system due to the significant differences in abilities of the MP3 division. This request was undertaken with the analysis of historical data (testing and familiarisation notes) going back a minimum of 15 years. Multiple possible scoring cutoffs were investigated; and “like” ability skiers were grouped independently by multiple persons involved in the sport. These groupings were achieved by investigating the range of possible scores for each ability level within the scoring system. All of this was carried out individually without bias by each individual in our group with representation/expertise from the AAO, E&A and PA confederations.

During the process, it became evident that there was a significantly under-represented group of skiers with more involved injury levels who have the ability to hold the handle with their hands and thus do not fit into the MP1 category. Historically, these skiers were classified only one time and then appeared to have left the sport. It is our hope that these skiers, some of whom have persistently stayed in the sport in the current MP2 division, will encounter a more level playing field and have increased competition with more athletes in time. For that reason, the committee has added not one, but two classes, in order to better address the extremes of both the MP2 and the MP3 divisions.

Scores and video of skiers have been painstakingly reviewed by both the rules and classification committees with input from previous classifiers and skiers. Many of the category changes are straightforward. However, several were not easy to determine due to the fact that we may have insufficient historical testing, a greater need for familiarisation on site to determine classification, unusual injury patterns with movement disorders, inconsistent test scores over multiple years, or simply scores not matching on-water abilities. Whenever the classification was questionable, video was sought out to “familiarise” the skier through “virtual observation” into the appropriate category. To come up with the decisions seen in the table involved skiers, medical professionals and two international committees in a lengthy, in depth process.

A table of all skiers and their “new” categories is detailed at the end of this document; it will be circulated to all confederations, coaches and skiers as soon as possible. This information will be used as a preliminary classification for skiers and confirmed at the 2015 World Championships. Classification may be appealed to the committee by skiers or coaches if they feel it is inaccurate. The appeal

process will require video submission to the committee for skier “familiarisation” by video. The deadline for appeal will be 30 days after release of the new classifications. The council will release the ‘world record standards’ for competition after the appeals process is completed so that skiers may adequately prepare for competition at the 2015 World Championships.

All skiers entering the MP2/MP3/MP4 categories will be retested at the 2015 World Championships. Skiers entering the MP5 category may be retested upon request. If required, familiarisation will be carried out by video review (from video of skier in familiarisation) by the classification team and committee.

The MP categories listed below are descriptions resulting from this in-depth investigation into a fairer division of athlete abilities.

Classification in Brief

Skiers in each category have different functional ability, and the following is what determines their classifications.

In brief, the categories are as follows:

MP1 Skier: No controlled trunk movement (unsupported) in all planes. Little or no balance in both forward and sideways directions significantly impaired. Skier is unable to hold the handle with hands (usually uses forearms to hold the handle). Skiers in this category generally have tetraplegia/quadruplegia, although skiers with other diagnoses may qualify in this category.

MP2 Skier: Little or no controlled trunk movement in all planes. Balance in both forward and sideways directions significantly impaired and skiers rely on their arms to return them to the upright position when unbalanced. No active trunk rotation and no use of abdominal muscles. Skiers in this category are generally tetraplegia/quadruplegics with more functional ability and high-level paraplegics, although other diagnoses may qualify in this category.

MP3 Skier: Some partially controlled trunk movement in the forward direction, but little or no controlled sideways movement, has upper trunk rotation but poor lower trunk rotation. Skiers in this category are generally mid-level break paraplegics, although skiers with other diagnoses may qualify in this category.

MP4 Skier: Good trunk movement in the forward direction to the knees and up again without arm support. Has good trunk rotation but limited controlled sideways movement. Skiers in this category are generally lower level break paraplegics, although skiers with other diagnoses may qualify in this category.

MP5 Skier: Normal trunk movement in all directions, able to reach side to side with no limitations. Able to move hips independently. Skiers in this category are generally amputees who cannot ski standing and skiers with required minimum disability and who display controlled sideways (hip) movement.

Note: There are situations where a skier does not seem to fit exactly into one class, exhibiting characteristics of two or more categories. In this instance, the classifiers may have to observe the skier on the dock and during familiarisation.

Testing and Preliminary Classification

The athlete shall complete the personal data on the testing form and perform the six functional tests according to the instructions of the Classification Team.

The points achieved in the functional testing on the board are added and a preliminary classification according to the point-score shall be established:

MP1	Athletes with point totals of 0 to 6.5
MP2	Athletes with point totals of 7.0 to 10
MP3	Athletes with point totals of 10.5 to 13
MP4	Athletes with point totals of 13.5 to 16.5
MP5	Athletes with point totals of 17 -18

This preliminary classification is a guideline only.

Familiarisation Guidelines: To be used as required by the Classification Team for review of video in selection of appropriate classification.

Water Ski Activity	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5
Starts	uses head and shoulder for balance, uses wrists or palm to stabilize handle against body, balance significantly compromised in water	uses head and shoulder for balance with some assist from upper trunk, uses hands to hold handle, balance significantly compromised in water	uses upper trunk for starts to maintain balance, holds handle with hands and balance is somewhat compromised in water	uses upper and middle trunk to maintain balance, holds handle with hands and can use arms to maintain balance, balance is minimally compromised in water	uses trunk and pelvis to maintain balance, uses hands to hold handle and can use arms to maintain balance, balance is good in the water and can easily manage ski in water
Hand Function	<i>uses wrist or forearm while actively skiing</i>	uses hands (in palm with finger grip) while actively skiing with or without adapted gloves	uses normal skiing grip, but may use adaptive gloves	uses normal skiing grip, but may use adaptive gloves	uses normal skiing grip, but may use adaptive gloves
Slalom	unable to use abdominals and tends to rest on the knees in a static position, may use one hand on cage to support or adjust position, unlikely to release the handle in turns	unable to use abdominals and tends to rest on the knees in a static position, may use one hand on cage to support or adjust position, can use head and shoulders on the ski, may release the handle with one hand in very small range of motion	limited use of trunk and uses head, shoulders and upper trunk only, tends to rest on the knees, but has some ability to move the trunk on the ski, may or may not release the handle, but can extend the handle away from the body in a limited range of motion	moderate to full use of trunk, but unable to use pelvis or legs to affect the ski, tends to move back and forth/side to side on the ski, may or may not release the handle, but can extend the handle away from the body in full range of motion	full use of trunk, able to use pelvis or legs to affect the ski, moves dynamically on the ski in all directions, may or may not release the handle, but can extend the handle away from the body in full range of motion

Familiarisation Guidelines: To be used as required by the Classification Team for review of video in selection of appropriate classification.

Water Ski Activity	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5
Jump	unable to use abdominals and tends to rest on the knees in a static position, may use head, shoulders to affect the ski, correct position or edge ski, unlikely to release the handle	unable to use abdominals and tends to rest on the knees in a static position, may use head, shoulders to affect the ski, correct position or edge ski, may release the handle in the air in a very small range of motion	uses head, shoulders and upper trunk as needed to affect the ski, uses trunk motion to correct position or edge ski, may release the handle in the air in a limited range of motion	uses head, shoulders and trunk as needed to affect the ski, correct position or edge ski, able to release the handle with one hand in the air as desired	uses trunk, pelvis and legs as needed to affect the ski, correct position or edge ski, able to release the handle in the air as desired
Trick	unable to use abdominals and tends to rest on the knees in a static position, may use one hand on cage to support or adjust position, handle exchange awkward with wrist/forearm grip	unable to use abdominals and tends to rest on the knees in a static position, may use one hand on cage to support or adjust position, can use head and shoulders to affect the ski, handle exchange with normal skiing grip. may stabilize with one hand on cage for balance	uses head, shoulders and upper trunk as needed to affect the ski, uses trunk motion to correct position or edge ski, handle exchange with some arm reach, may stabilize with one hand on cage for balance but can lift upper trunk from the knees	uses head, shoulders and trunk as needed to affect the ski, correct position or edge ski, handle exchange easily with dynamic trunk motion fore/aft and side to side	uses trunk, pelvis and legs as needed to affect the ski, correct position or edge ski, able to use the pelvis and legs to rotate or lift ski in the air
Dock	requires arm support when out of chair at all times, easily loses balance	requires arm support when out of chair at all times, easily loses balance	requires arm support when out of chair, but can briefly maintain balance without arms	able to use trunk to maintain balance, but can lose balance in unstable conditions	able to use trunk/pelvis/legs as needed in unsupported sitting positions
Cage	unable to lift trunk from resting position while skiing	unable to lift trunk from resting position while skiing	able to lift upper trunk from resting position while skiing	able to lift upper and mid trunk from resting position while skiing	able to lift full trunk from resting position while skiing and move dynamically on the ski