

ParaCanoe

ParaCanoe is canoeing for people with physical impairments. Athletes compete in kayaks (K) propelled by a double-blade paddle and in outrigger canoes called Va'a (V) propelled by a single-blade paddle. The sport is set to make its debut at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games and will include only kayak events.

Classification

In Para-Sport classification provides the structure for fair and equitable competition to ensure that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus – the same factors that account for success in sport for able-bodied athletes.

The Para-Sport classification assessment process identifies the eligibility of each Para-Athlete's impairment, and groups them into a sport class according to the degree of activity limitation resulting from their impairment.

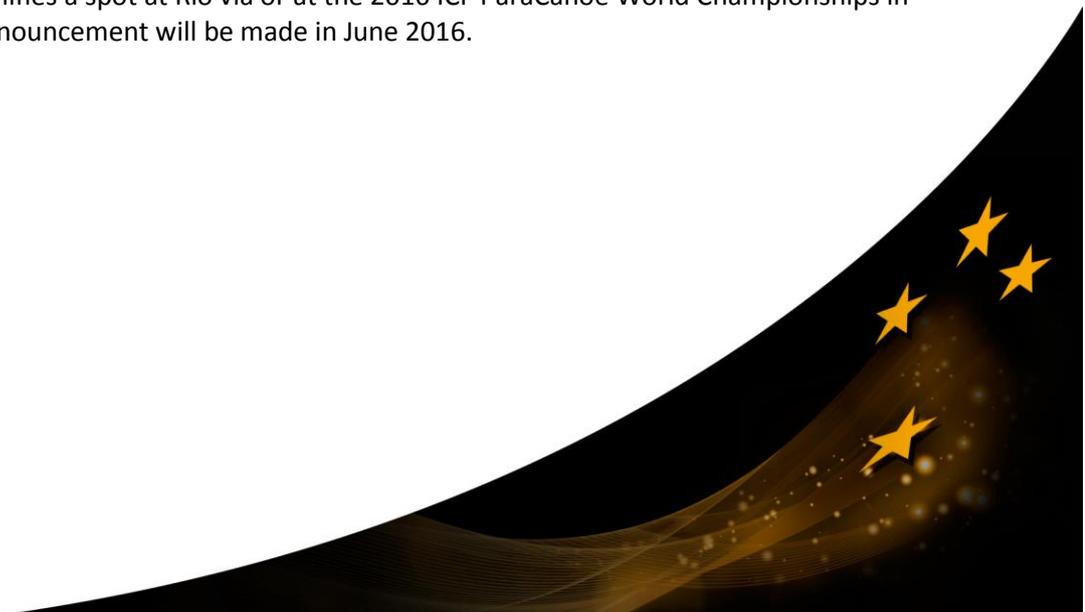
Classification is sport-specific as an eligible impairment affects a Para-Athlete's ability to perform in different sports to a different extent. Each Para-Sport has a different classification system.

More information on classification and sport classes is available under 'Classification detail' below.

Qualification – the road to Rio

Qualification to secure spots at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games is made through performances at the 2015 and 2016 ICF ParaCanoe World Championships. At the 2015 edition in Milan the top six-ranked athletes in each medal event qualified their NPC (National Paralympic Committee) for one qualification slot. At the 2016 event being staged in Duisburg, Germany, the top four ranked in each event will qualify their NPC for one qualification slot. Each NPC may enter only one eligible Para-Athlete in each event.

If New Zealand team qualifies a spot at Rio via or at the 2016 ICF ParaCanoe World Championships in May, then a selection announcement will be made in June 2016.



Rio 2016 ParaCanoe

ParaCanoe events are held for men and women in three classifications (an outline of the classes is provided under 'Classification detail' below). All races are competed in a single craft kayak over a distance of 200m, with victory awarded to the Para-Athlete who completes the distance in the fastest time.

Medal events: Six in total comprised of three men's events and three women's events.

Where: Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas, Copacabana.

When: Wednesday 14 September to Thursday 15 September 2016.

More info: <http://www.rio2016.com/en/paralympics/canoe>

The Stars of ParaCanoe

Rio will witness a new set of champion names emerge on the Paralympic stage as the sport makes its debut appearance in the quadrennial sports festival. Expect Para-Athletes from host nation Brazil, Australia and Great Britain to be prominent with some leading names to look out for including reigning world champions Luis Cardoso da Silva (Brazil), Markus Swoboda (Austria), Amanda Reynolds (Australia), Emma Wiggs (Great Britain) and Jeanette Chippington (Great Britain).

New Zealand has yet to qualify any ParaCanoe athletes but Christchurch paddler, Scott Martlew, who lost a leg due to a rugby injury in 2010, is a quality KL3 Para-Athlete and will be gunning for a place on the team.

“New Zealand is hopeful to have Scott Martlew at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Scott only narrowly missed qualification at this year's 2015 ICF ParaCanoe World Championships. He will now plan to make the qualification at the 2016 World Championships in June 2016. Scott comes from a surf lifesaving background where he still competes today in both the surf ski and surf canoe events.” – Mark Weatherall, Chief Executive, Canoe Racing New Zealand



Did you know?

- Australia topped the medal table at the 2015 ICF ParaCanoe World Championships with a total of three gold, one silver and one bronze medal. Brazil finished second on the medal table claiming three gold and four bronze medals, with Great Britain third overall securing two gold and five silver medals.
- All ParaCanoe finals on the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games will be contested in up to nine lanes with each lane 9m wide.
- Kayak events only will feature at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, but the ICF (International Canoe Federation) is working on a proposal to include the Va'a boats in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.
- ParaCanoe is one of two new sports introduced on to the Rio 2016 Paralympics Games programme – the other being Para-Triathlon.
- The 2015 Women's KL1 200m world champion, Jeanette Chippington of Great Britain, was a former Para-Swimmer who won two gold and 12 medals in total across five Paralympic Games from 1988 to 2004. She has since taken up ParaCanoe and Rio is scheduled to be her sixth Paralympic Games.
- Curtis McGrath, the 2015 World KL2 200m silver medallist, had both legs amputated following a mine blast accident in Afghanistan while serving in the Australian Army.

Terminology

Paralympian A Para-Athlete who has taken part in Paralympic Games.

Para-Canoeist All athletes within the Paralympic movement from grass roots to elite level.

Kayak The boat used for Paralympic competition. It is slightly wider than a typical sprint boat to allow for additional stability.

Classification The process of assessing an athlete's ability based on certain criteria so they can be properly placed in the correct category.

Ama The pontoon on a outrigger V1 boat.

Timeline

2009 The ICF launched the ParaCanoe Development programme to expand canoeing to the global community of people with a disability. Previously the sport was known as Paddle-ability.

2010 The inaugural ICF ParaCanoe World Championships took place in conjunction with the Canoe Sprint World Championships in Poznan, Poland. The event attracted athletes from 28 nations across five continents competing in seven events.

2013 Great Britain's Jeanette Chippington won three gold medals at the 2013 ICF ParaCanoe World Championships in Duisburg, Germany.

2016 The sport will make its debut appearance at the Rio Paralympic Games, with 60 competitors competing across six medal events at the idyllic Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas.

Classification detail

In the Paralympic kayak competition (K1), there are three classes for both men and women:

KL1

Para-Athletes with no or very limited trunk function and no leg function, and who typically need a special seat with a high backrest in the kayak.

KL2

Para-Athletes with partial trunk and leg function, able to sit upright in the kayak, but might need a special backrest, and who have limited leg movement during paddling.

KL3

Para-Athletes with trunk function and partial leg function, who are able to sit with their trunk in a forward flexed position in the kayak and can use at least one leg/prosthesis.

At the international level, non-Paralympic ParaCanoe events are the Va'a events. They use the same system of classification and the class titles are: VL1, VL2, VL3.

For further details please go to www.paralympics.org.nz or to www.hpsnz.org.nz