

MEMORANDUM

Date: 11/01/2007

Re: Position Statement Regarding the Participation of Athletes with an Intellectual Disability at IPC Sanctioned Competitions

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) wants to emphasize that it supports the participation of athletes with an intellectual disability and that the current decision is not a case of discrimination against a disability group, but rather the outcome of an investigation of whether an International Federation (ie, INAS-FID) has the necessary processes in place to support elite competition.

Athletes with an intellectual disability who compete within the Paralympic Movement are represented by the International Sports Federation for Persons with an Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID). INAS-FID is responsible for the implementation and verification of the processes used for determining the eligibility of their athletes competing in international sports competition. To be eligible to compete, athletes within the Paralympic Movement must meet a minimal eligibility requirement. A thorough, transparent and fair evaluation and verification system is the only way competitions can be conducted fairly.

The examination of the INAS-FID eligibility systems for the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games concluded that eligibility verification at both the national and international level had been grossly mismanaged and administered. Of the possible medals awarded for ID events at the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games, 69% were awarded to athletes from various countries whose INAS-FID registration forms did not meet the proper requirements of the eligibility verification process.

INAS-FID was therefore suspended from the Paralympic Movement by the IPC General Assembly in 2001. Full reinstatement, including the participation of athletes with an intellectual disability at IPC sanctioned competitions, is dependent on the following, as agreed by both the IPC and INAS-FID:

- confirmation of impact of intellectual disability on sport performance
- determination of minimum eligibility criteria and sport specific criteria
- development and implementation of protest procedures

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In June 2006, the IPC Governing Board discussed a report with regard to the progress made by INAS-FID to comply with the criteria they had agreed upon. It was felt that the general eligibility system as developed by INAS-FID does not achieve the standard expected for IPC sanctioned competitions and is not sufficiently robust to ensure fair competition for athletes with an intellectual disability. Consequently, the IPC decided these athletes shall not take part in IPC sanctioned events, including the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games.

To date, INAS-FID has failed to fulfil the mutually agreed requirements for reinstatement of athletes with an intellectual disability in IPC sanctioned competitions, including the Paralympic Games. Furthermore, in August 2006 INAS-FID stated that they cannot comply with the 2001 criteria.

The IPC will continue to support the research being conducted in this area. As a result, the status of athletes with an intellectual disability will be re-evaluated following the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games.