

UK SPORTS ASSOCIATION

For People with Learning Disability



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Dear Colleagues

UPDATE ON ATHLETES WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY & WORK TOWARDS INCLUSION IN LONDON 2012 PARALYMPIC GAMES

Following on from my letter to you of 11th June 2009, I am pleased to report on the progress made between INAS-FID and IPC to include athletes with intellectual disability in the Paralympic Games and IPC sanctioned events.

As this communiqué arrives with you, 7 British athletes with intellectual disability together with others from around Europe are competing in the IPC European Swimming Championships in Iceland as part of the official British Swimming GB Team. A significant step as this is the first IPC event at which British athletes with intellectual disability have had the opportunity to compete since the full effect of the ban took hold. INAS-FID has reported that in September athletes with intellectual disability also competed in the Asian Youth Para Games in both athletics and swimming.

Earlier this year saw the 2009 INAS-FID Global Games take place in the Czech Republic. More than 700 athletes from 34 countries took part in seven medal events and two demonstration sports and provided the INAS-FID/IPC Researchers the opportunity to test the new classification systems and procedures being developed. INAS-FID has reported that over 420 athletes were tested at the Games contributing vastly to the research programme and I can confirm that all 25 British athletes took part in the procedures.

The IPC General Assembly will take place in Kuala Lumpur between 19th-22nd November 2009. This is a truly significant moment for INAS-FID, its member nations and athletes with intellectual disability across the world as a positive outcome from this General Assembly would end nine long years of exclusion from Paralympic opportunities.

Building on the positive work of the joint Working Group, INAS-FID and IPC have cemented their collaborative work as they *jointly* propose a motion to the IPC General Assembly for consideration:

The UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability (UKSA) is the national charity that facilitates and supports talented sports people with learning disability in the UK to train, compete and excel in national and international sport. It is an umbrella body and the disability specific Governing Body in the UK for sport for people with learning disability. UKSA is recognised by UK Sport and is the official GB member of INAS-FID (The International Sports Federation for People with Intellectual Disability – a member of the IPC). Reg. Charity No. 1050767. A Company Limited by Guarantee. Reg. No. 3124177 England and Wales. Registered office as above.

The Motion submitted reads:

The IPC General Assembly (i) acknowledges the progress made by the joint IPC/INAS-FID Working Group in defining and assessing general eligibility, sport specificity and on-site testing and protest management; (ii) notes that the system currently developed uses a scientific approach that is compliant with the IPC Classification Code; and (iii) notes that effective sports input has been ensured.

Thereby, the IPC General Assembly confirms that the criteria and processes for the re-inclusion of athletes with an intellectual disability (ID) in Paralympic sport as specified by previous IPC General Assemblies have been met.

Therefore, subject to compliance with the sports specific minimal disability scores outlined in the attached rationale, the IPC General Assembly recognizes that athletes with intellectual disability will be eligible to compete in the respective International Federation sanctioned competitions, including the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

This is a strong move by the IPC Governing Board and INAS-FID as never before has a joint motion been achieved. It signals a real change in attitude and demonstrates how both are working together to resolve this difficult and complex issue and will, in the words of Dr Bob Price, INAS-FID President “*send a very powerful signal to the entire IPC membership*”. The full detail of the rationale regarding the sports specific minimal disability scores being submitted with the motion has yet to be released, but I hope that this will be in full circulation soon.

You may also be interested to know that over the past few months the 1,795 athletes on the INAS-FID Classification database, have each had their original applications and evidence reviewed by the Secretariat and a panel of psychologists in line with changes agreed between INAS-FID and IPC. This includes ensuring all use an IQ assessment from the “approved list”.

INAS-FID has moved forward in establishing its International Classification Panel, by appointing Professor Jan Burns as Head of Eligibility. Professor Burns is Clinical Psychology Programmes Director at the Canterbury Christ Church University. Another seven appointments have been made to the International Eligibility Officer panel comprising individuals spanning three different continents.

INAS-FID is clearly making great strides with classification procedures and in its new and invigorated relationship with IPC. Our thanks go to Dr Bob Price and his Executive Team in bringing negotiations to this positive stage, in what has no doubt been a very challenging time for all concerned.

The UK Sports Association remains optimistic, and is encouraged further by the recent developments. However, we recognise that despite these incredibly positive signals there is no room for complacency and there is no guarantee that the IPC General Assembly will support the motion presented by INAS-FID and the IPC Governing Board.


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In Great Britain however, we are fortunate to have the continued support of our NPC, Paralympics GB. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Paralympics GB for their positive and consistent support for the re-inclusion of athletes with intellectual disability into the Paralympic Games and their continued support of the development of the classification process, including the role they play in the British classification procedures.

INAS-FID has strengthened its systems, procedures and approach to classification and in a way that the IPC Governing Board has accepted fully. We hope that the joint approach to the General Assembly in November will carry great weight with the membership of IPC to take UKSA, INAS-FID and athletes with intellectual disability into a new and positive era enabling athletes with intellectual disability from Great Britain and around the world to compete in the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

If you wish to discuss any of the issues raised in this correspondence, or would like further details on classification procedures, then please feel free to contact me.

Yours in sport,



Tracey McCillen
National Director