



New Boccia Classes Added to Local, Regional and National Competitions:

USA Boccia is expanding the competition divisions offered at regional and national events by adding two additional classes: BC5 and Open. These new classes are for local, regional and national competitions **ONLY** at this time. **None of these classes will be offered on the international stage, including the Paralympic Games in the near future.** USA Boccia is adding them at this time to provide for the increasing number of athletes that are being classed out of the Paralympic classes of BC2 and BC4 as well as the growing number of players in the Open class that include players that have lower spinal cord injuries, amputations and traumatic brain injuries. BC5 is a growing class and there is interest in other countries. The Open class is very competitive in the USA.

BC5 Division: This new class is combines athletes with a disability of cerebral origin or non-cerebral origin:

Cerebral Origin: Cerebral Palsy or TBI/ABI that are on the borderline of being eligible for the BC2 class. In a number of cases athletes have been classed a BC2 in the United States and were found to be ineligible at an international competition. These athletes have an increased range-of-motion and/or hand dexterity than BC2 athletes.

BC5 Profile Details:

Severe to moderate impairment of function

Spasticity ASAS Grade **below 2** with or without athetosis, as opposed to a 3 in BC2

Severe to **no** athetosis

Tetraplegia

Poor functional strength in all extremities and trunk but able to propel a wheelchair

Upper Extremities: Can exhibit sufficient dexterity to manipulate (**consistently catch, pass, etc**) and throw the ball. Often has the ability to throw both overhand and underhand

Hand: Severe to moderate involvement

Athletes with spastic quadriplegia - spasticity ASAS Grade **below 3**

Athletes with athetosis often have a cylindrical or spherical grasp but have difficulty controlling the ball on release Release: **No catch in release past 90 degrees of elbow extension**

Lower Extremities: **BC5** Athletes can **often** ambulate but never run functionally

Trunk Control: Static control is fair **to good**. Dynamic trunk control is poor **to fair** as demonstrated by the obligatory use of upper extremities and/or head to assist in returning to the mid-line (upright position). If the Athlete is able to demonstrate trunk rotation during throwing (combined with ROM) and the trunk assisting the throw, they are a **BC5** Athlete.

Non-Cerebral: BC5 Athletes can also fit the profile of a BC4, except they are **able** to release balls from the shoulder level or above. The distinguishing difference between eligible and non-eligible BC4 players is the presence of functional triceps in the throwing arm which makes a player ineligible for the BC4 classes. There is sufficient strength in the shoulder muscles to lift against gravity above 90 degrees abduction, and flexion (**above 3 out of 5**) Also, the injury is at OR below C6

- Athletes with the above physical profile and overall upper limb muscle strength of Grade 4/5 or less but who are unable to hold the boccia ball in their hands with a sustained grasp due to significant distal muscle weakness, minimal or no hand activity, will be allowed to use a glove, splint, strapping or other device to play. •

The glove, splint, strapping or other device must be assessed and approved by the classification panel to check its suitability and necessity".

Open Division: This class has been added simply due to the growing popularity of the sport of Boccia in players that are not Paralympic eligible. The Open Division will include any player with a physical disability that does not meet Paralympic eligibility of BC1, BC2, BC3 or BC4 and the new BC5 national class.

Open Profile Details:(non-quad amputees, cerebral palsy community ambulators, dwarves, and lower spinal cord injuries). All athletes compete in a wheelchair or scooter.