

Intellectually Impaired at the Paralympics

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Table tennis players with an Intellectual impairment will compete in the London 2012 Paralympic Games it has been confirmed.

Last November, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) announced that athletes with an Intellectual impairment would be included in Paralympic Games subject to International Federations producing sport-specific classification systems.

Since then, the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) in conjunction with the International Sports Federation for Persons with an Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) and researchers from the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium have been working intensively on producing a new sport-specific classification system.

Following receipt of progress reports and a successful pilot of the new system in September on eight athletes in France, the ITTF Executive Committee has approved the inclusion of Table Tennis for players with an Intellectual impairment in the London 2012 Paralympic Games Programme under Class 11.

Sir Philip Craven, the IPC's President, said: "On behalf of the IPC, I would like to congratulate the ITTF Executive Committee on this project which has culminated in the inclusion of athletes with an Intellectual impairment in the London 2012 Paralympics.

"A lot of hard work has gone into delivering this project by individuals and groups and it is proof of a successful partnership between the IPC members and external parties."

Adham Sharara, the ITTF's President, said: "The ITTF is delighted that we can maintain our approach of "One Sport, One Family" as we are the first International Federation to welcome Table Tennis players with an Intellectual impairment to our Family for 2012. The ITTF made a commitment to make this happen by the end of September 2010 and we have kept that commitment."

Dr. Bob Price, INAS-FID's President, thanked the ITTF and the Leuven University research team.

"This is another step forward in the process of re-inclusion and demonstrates the significant progress that has been made since the [IPC] General Assembly agreement last November," Dr. Price said.

Details of the athlete eligibility system and 2010/2011 competitions will be available from the ITTF and INAS-FID in the near future.

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