



## **Table Tennis Classification for Players with Intellectual Disabilities**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. ITTF has designated a Sport Class - Class 11- for players with intellectual disabilities (ID).
- 1.2. Classification processes for table tennis players with ID include four components: minimal eligibility (INAS and ITTF responsibility respectively for 2.1 and 2.3), table tennis-specific tests (ITTF responsibility) observation during a short match (ITTF) and observation during competition (ITTF). The table tennis classification process is attached (Appendix 1).
- 1.3. Players with ID participating in ITTF sanctioned competitions should demonstrate their weakness in table tennis skills and strategies relative to those without ID, and reach overall disability level in table tennis to be eligible.

### **2. Minimal Eligibility**

- 2.1. The minimal eligibility of players with ID is initiated by their inclusion in the INAS Master List following verification by the INAS international eligibility committee combined with the results achieved from the generic computer based tests.
- 2.2. Information regarding the initial eligibility, following which a player is included in the INAS Classification Master List, is available from the INAS website (<http://www.inas.org/>) .
- 2.3. To support the initial eligibility of a player in table tennis, players are also required to do a series of generic computer based tests to assess the player's "sports intelligence" in the areas of reasoning, reaction time, visual-spatial abilities and working memory. The profile of a player with ID in table tennis, based on the results of these tests, is also used to confirm the player's minimal eligibility.
- 2.4. For ITTF, these are basic requirements equivalent to the minimal eligibility to be considered ID in the context of table tennis but does not confirm it until steps 3, 4 and 5 below have been completed.

### 3. Table Tennis-Specific Tests

3.1. The Table Tennis Specific Tests include a series of tests on service, return service, basic table tennis skills and control test, and/or an advanced test to identify whether the ID player has some challenges in addressing the 3S (spin, speed and spot) and 3C (consistency, control and change) during the tests and therefore in playing table tennis. The 3S and 3C are fundamental to playing the game of table tennis.

3.2. The results of the Table Tennis Specific Tests are recorded in the ITTF Classification Form for Players with ID by authorized ITTF classifiers. During the test and classification process, a classification team includes two technical classifiers, or a technical classifier and a medical classifier. The technical classifiers conduct the table tennis specific tests and both classifiers score the tests together.

3.3. The skill of service is the first step to compete in table tennis. The following table provides the test of service.

Testing Items	Test Instruction	Scoring
Long Back Spin to Backhand	Each service item is conducted three times.  Players are informed to do the correct skill and allowed to practice once.	0: wrong service and wrong location of the ball or missed the service  1: poor control in service or poor location of the ball  2: good control in service and good location of the ball.
Long Back Spin to Forehand		
Short Back Spin to Backhand		
Long No Spin to Body		
Fast Ball to Forehand		
Long Side Spin to Backhand		

Note: for the service test, poor control means poor demonstration in service skills which relate to tossing the ball, hitting a ball at the right time with proper spin or speed, and performing the playing arm's movements correctly; poor location means the ball does not reach the expected area on the table.

3.4. Return service is the next important skill in competition. The following table provides the test of return service.

Testing Items	Test Instruction	Scoring
Long Back Spin to Backhand	Each return service item is conducted three times.  Players are informed to do the correct skill and allowed to practice once.	0: wrong control in stroke and miss the ball  1: poor control in stroke or poor location of the ball  2: good control in stroke and good location of the ball.
Long Back Spin to Forehand		
Short No Spin to Forehand		
Long Top Spin to Forehand		
Fast Ball to Backhand		
Long Side Spin to Backhand		

Note: for the return service test, poor control means poor demonstration in return service skills which relate to hitting a ball at the right time or with the right angle of the racket, and performing body and playing arm's movements appropriately; poor location means the ball does not reach the expected area or direction on the table.

3.5. Basic table tennis skills and control test is the main part of table tennis classification for players with ID. The basic skills and control test is strongly related to the theoretical framework of 3S and 3C principles in table tennis classification. The following table provides basic skills and control test.

Basic Skills & Control Items	Test Instruction	Scoring
Forehand Stroke & Rally	A technical classifier asks the ID player to play using certain types of table tennis skills a few times and to try to make a consistent rally.  The player's coach demonstrates a trial and classifiers clearly explain the testing skill to the ID player.	None (N): wrong stroke and cannot control the ball on the table
Backhand Stroke & Rally		
Forehand Top Spin & Rally		
Backhand Top Spin & Rally		Poor (P): poor stroke and/or may not consistently control the ball on the table
Forehand Back Spin & Rally		
Backhand Back Spin & Rally		
Forehand Side Spin & Rally		Reasonable (R): may do the stroke and/or reasonable control of the ball on the table
Forehand and Backhand Stroke & Rally		
Forehand and Backhand Back Spin & Rally		
Forehand Top Spin around 2/3 Table & Rally		Good (G): good stroke and good control of the ball on the table.
Service and Attack & Leg Movements		
High Ball Attack & Leg Movements		

3.6. A player with ID who performs well in the tests of service, return service, basic table tennis skills and control test (i.e. two components are over the cut-off scores), based on the 3S and 3C principles, must participate in the advanced test. If one component exceeds the cut-off scores and the other component is close to the cut-off scores, classifiers may recommend that this player should go through the advanced test. The following table provides the basic cut-off points for two main components.

Component	Maximal Scores	Cut-Off Scores
Service and Return Service	72	$\geq 60$
Basic Skills and Control	12 items is good (i.e. 36 points)	$\geq 8$ items is good & $\geq 3$ items is reasonable (i.e. $\geq 30$ points)

3.7. Players with ID may participate in the advanced test if the classification team believes that the player may be borderline to be eligible in table tennis. The player needs to be video recorded during the advanced test. The following table provides the advanced test and the testing items:

Advanced Skills & Control	Test Instruction	Scoring
Combination of several kinds of TT skills during rallies	A technical classifier asks the ID player to play using certain types of table tennis skills a few times and to try to make a consistent rally.	Classifiers score "none, poor, reasonable, or good" for each item and write comments regarding the advanced test.
Returning different kinds of service for a few times		
Multi-ball test		
Specific-TT gross motor test		

Note: The detailed testing items and explanation for each advanced test refers to the ITTF classification system for players with ID.

#### **4. Observation During A Short Match**

- 4.1. Every player goes through a set or two sets of a short match to make sure that the ID player knows the TT game, how he/she performs and his/her playing style during the short match.
- 4.2. A technical classifier plays different kinds of services and rallies with different speeds and spins to try to find out the player's abilities, skills, tactics and movement control. All are critical in table tennis, and as an indication of the player's ability to process information quickly or more slowly, are considered and observed.
- 4.3. During the short match with video recording, classifiers observe the player's reactions and control, playing strokes and movement patterns (3S & 3C), specific strategy (4S) and tactics, and behavior. Comments are recorded on the classification form.

#### **5. Observation during Competition**

- 5.1. This observation process during competition is to make sure that the ID player performs similar playing styles as demonstrated during the classification process. Confirmation of the ID class is done after observation during competition. Every player is observed during at least two matches with different opponents.
- 5.2. Classifiers need to record the results on the observation checklist. The checklist is provided in the following table. After two games observed by classifiers, the player's eligibility and status is finalized.

Observation	Items	Scoring
1	Playing style matches the test results	Classifiers complete each observation item with choosing scoring rank  (i.e., 0%-25%, 26%-50%, 51%-75%, or 76%-100%)
	Playing style is similar to the short match	
	Strong part of the test always appears in competition	
	Weak part of the test always appears in competition	
	Playing similar style in each set	
2	Playing style matches the test results	
	Playing style is similar to the short match	
	Strong part of the test always appears in competition	
	Weak part of the test always appears in competition	
	Playing similar style in each set	

5.3. A player may be video recorded for a few matches. If the player does not match the TT criteria for ID after observation, video proof should be provided to the player. The player is informed that he/she is not eligible after observation during competition in this case. The player will not be allowed to participate in further ITTF competitions.

## **6. Ineligibility**

6.1. An eligible player with ID will demonstrate weakness in table tennis skills and limitations regarding 3S and 3C in table tennis, during classification and competition.

6.2. A player found "ineligible to compete" or "borderline to be eligible" during classification will attend the advanced test and a two-set short match with a video record. For the detailed cut-off criteria refer to 3.6. If a similar result is found during the advanced test and a short match, the player will not be permitted to compete in ITTF tournaments. The player is allowed to protest once in the next major tournament with a different classification panel.

6.3. If a player is recognized as ineligible during observation in the competition by ITTF classifiers but after the tests have been completed, this player must attend the advanced test and a two-set short match with a video record at the earliest opportunity with a new classification panel. If the re-assessment result is the same as the previous classification evaluation, the player will not be permitted to compete in ITTF tournaments. The player will not have a further right to protest. The ineligible status of this player in table tennis will be reported to the ITTF. The player and his/her coach may be charged with misrepresentation during classification at the discretion of the ITTF.

6.4. If a player is found eligible to compete following the classification process and at a later competition, demonstrates different results from the tests performed during the first classification, the player will be reviewed at the same event if possible or at the next earliest opportunity. If the re-assessment, using the advanced test and a check of the video record, if any, does not confirm the player's eligibility to compete, the player and his/her coach will be informed and the ITTF may consider further action.

## **7. Conclusion**

In the context of table tennis, the following abilities are critical to playing the game well:

- 7.1. reaction to speed of the ball, spin of the ball and location of the ball.
- 7.2. adaptation of strategy and tactics, e.g. in the same rally, changing from defense to attack and vice versa.
- 7.3. adaptation of strokes, i.e. changing the service style without an ability to adapt either style or position of serving.
- 7.4. movement behind the table as legwork is important.
- 7.5. concentration and tendency to be distracted from the game, e.g. by outside noises, music.

These aspects of "sports intelligence" viz. reasoning, reaction time, visual-spatial abilities and working memory are assessed through the practical tests undertaken in the classification process and checked during the observation phase.

In the context of ID in table tennis, a player with ID will demonstrate deficiencies in any or all of these areas relative to players without ID. This is indicative of the player's ability to process information quickly and accurately and therefore of the player's intellectual disability.

## Appendix 1

### Table Tennis Specific Test and Classification Process for Players with ID

