

ITU PARATRIATHLON and PARALYMPIC PATHWAY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *Who can compete in ITU Paratriathlon and the Paralympic Games?*

- Most of the eligible impairments for most Paralympic sports can be classified to compete in ITU Paratriathlon.
 - The two main exceptions are that athletes with Intellectual Impairments or Short Stature are not eligible for ITU/Paralympic Paratriathlon.
- Common impairments in ITU paratriathlon are upper and lower limb amputations, dysmelia, or other impairments eg brachial plexy; vision impaired; wheelchair users; cerebral palsy or acquired brain injury.
- Triathlon is a challenging physical and mental sport. The most impaired ambulant athletes race in PTS2 and typically in that class are single above knee impairments/amputees and athletes with significant cerebral palsy who can ride a normal bike as well as run 5km.
- Minimum impairment is, as a guide only, the loss of one hand or one foot. These athletes race in PTS5.
- There are only two classes in the PTWC (Wheelchair) class and currently high level spinal cord injured athletes (cervical) do not have a Paralympic pathway.
- [ITU Classes and Eligible Impairments](#)

2. *Where/how do I get classified?*

- Classification is not required to compete in local triathlons. It is only required for the National Championships and all international ITU racing.
- There are usually 2 opportunities per year for classification, in conjunction with the National Sprint Championships and another National or International Paratriathlon race.
 - Contact the TA National Manager Paratriathlon for details.
- To be classified you must have a doctor/ophthalmologist complete either the Physical Impairments or Visual Impairment Medical Diagnosis Form and return it to the TA National Manager Paratriathlon. Ensure any additional information required, see details on the form, is provided at the same time.
 - [ITU Physical Impairments Medical Diagnostic Form](#)
 - [ITU Visual Impairments Medical Diagnostic Form](#)

3. *What events are in ITU Paratriathlon and the Paralympic Games?*

- **The Paralympic event is the Sprint Distance Triathlon: 750m swim, 20km bike, 5km run.**
- The Sprint Distance is also the distance for the ITU World Paratriathlon Series and ITU Paratriathlon World Cups, and the ITU Grand Final, which is the World Championships for elite Paratriathlon.

- The ITU also conduct competition for paratriathletes at the World Championships in Aquathlon (Swim, Bike), Duathlon (Run, Bike, Run), Long Course (approx. 1.9km swim, 80km bike, 20km run) and Cross Triathlon (done on trails with a mountain bike).

4. What about 70.3 and Ironman racing ?

- Ironman is a company that runs 70.3 and Ironman racing around the world. They do include wheelchair and visually impaired athletes in their Physically Challenged wave. They do not use the ITU classification system nor fully follow ITU rules regarding equipment etc.
- Ironman is not a Paralympic event.
- An Ironman race is usually a 3.8km swim, 180km bike, 42km run. 70.3km is approx. half the Ironman distance.

5. What equipment must I have?

- If you are a **wheelchair athlete** you need a recumbent handcycle and a racing wheelchair. Your everyday wheelchair is also used in competition.
 - Kneeling handcycles are not permitted.
- **Vision Impaired athletes** ride a tandem bike with their guide. The one guide completes all of the race tethered to/with the athlete and must be of the same gender.
 - B1 athletes wear blackout swim goggles and glasses.
- **All other athletes** use a standard competition bike, usually a Time Trial bike, although some impairments and on some courses athletes choose to ride a Road racing bike.
 - Trikes are not permitted.
- All athletes can swim in a wetsuit, and most do due to the benefits this provides.
- Elite leg amputees will have a different run and cycle prosthetic.
- For more detailed rules on equipment refer to the [ITU Competition Rules](#).
- To get started there are a number of different options for borrowing or buying second hand equipment. Your local triathlon club, State Triathlon Association and the Triathlon Australia National Manager Paratriathlon can all provide suggestions to get you started.
- It is not a cheap sport to compete in at the highest level.

6. I want to give it a go, how quickly can I progress and what do I do?

- If you want to be a competitive elite paratriathlete and potentially compete at the Paralympic Games:
 - Don't hesitate if you seriously do, Tokyo is achievable depending on your background and **you must be racing triathlons in summer 2019 to make Tokyo happen**. Even if you are not particularly good in the beginning, once you can complete the distance you must race in the key races – everyone started, often very poorly, or as their first race, at Oceania Championships/National Championships/World Cups in Australia.
 - At least 5 female Australian athletes have transferred from another sport to podium level at World Championships in 18 months or less in paratriathlon.
 - Male athletes can be very competitive in 1-2 years, podium may take longer, again depends on your background.

- To be fast tracked you need to be in the right training environment. There are a number of options around Australia we can put the right athletes into.
- You must be 16 years of age or older to compete in international triathlon.
- Contact the TA National Manager Paratriathlon to discuss your individual options.
- If you want to follow a pathway outside the Paralympic pathway eg Ironman, Cross Tri, just for fun etc please contact the State Triathlon Association for suggestions on training groups, races etc.
- Athletes under 16 years of age will usually join a local squad of similarly aged able-bodied triathletes and train and race with them.
 - From about 13-14 years old talented juniors with the potential to be Paralympic paratriathletes can be included in State and National Development Squads. Please contact the TA National Manager Paratriathlon to discuss options.

7. What does a very good paratriathlete look like?

- To transfer quickly to be a successful ITU/Paralympic Paratriathlete you would probably be at least some of the following:
 - A strong swimmer, who enjoys open water swimming.
 - Someone who enjoys running longer distances, eg you did cross country at school.
 - Likes the physical, mental and technical challenge of training for and racing in 3 different disciplines.
 - Can work hard, the event is between 1 hour to 1:30 long depending on the class and gender.
 - Note that the cycling leg is the easiest of the legs to train a beginner for. Some podium paratriathletes had not even ridden a bike before starting the sport.

High Opportunity for Tokyo success – note once the Tokyo classes are confirmed (approx. mid-September) I will complete this. It will be mostly female athletes as there is already considerable depth in most male classes. Some female classes present a great opportunity for the right female athlete to transfer in and be successful.