



Invitation to participate in a Paracanoe research study examining the reliability of the new para-va'a classification system

Invitation to participate

You are being invited to take part in this research study that aims to assess the inter-rater reliability between classifiers in the classification system since you are competing in para-va'a on an international or national level.

Background and purpose

It is vital that the classification systems in Paralympic sports are fair since unfair systems can provide unfair results in competition and discourage athletes to participate in Paralympic sport. To achieve fair classification systems, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) have demanded that all sports have evidence-based classification systems. Even though a classification system is evidence-based the system can still be unfair if the classifiers who conduct the classification are classifying athletes with the same function differently. Furthermore, to minimise this risk and to have a more fair system, the IPC are starting to prefer that classification systems are based on objective measurements.

The purpose of this project is twofold; 1) to examine the inter-rater reliability of the new para-va'a classification system, and 2) the reliability of a force measurement system that might be used for paracanoe classification in the future. The first Study will evaluate what scoring variations may exist between classifiers and how to minimize them. The second Study will assess the effectiveness of a force measurement system for possible future use in classification.

What does this study involve?

These studies will be conducted at Castel Gondolfo, the Italian Federation training facility near Rome in Italy in April 21-22. You should arrive no later than on the evening April 20th and leave on April 23rd. You will stay at the training facility during these days and the ICF will reimburse you 400 Euro for your participation. You will during two days be classified by three classification teams, thus be classified three times. The on-water test you will only do once. The classification will be conducted in the same manner as during the competition and consist of a leg, trunk and on-water test. During these two days you will also be tested twice in a force measurement set-up where force will be measured when you perform trunk flexion, knee extension and unilateral leg press during three seconds for each test. Individual results of the force test will not be shared with the ICF.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

If you take part in the study, you will be classified by three international classifier teams and therefore not have to attend classification during the first competition of the year (Szeged World Cup) which otherwise will be mandatory for athletes competing in va'a. You will also benefit indirectly from the results of this study since we may be able to establish how to make the classification system more consistent.

Who is conducting the study?

This study is being conducted by researchers at the Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences (GIH) in collaboration with the International Canoe Federation (ICF). The study is sponsored by the ICF and GIH.

If you are interested in participating please contact Johanna Rosen.

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