## Why do people need a sight classification?

Sight classifications are important to ensure a fair and equal competition. Success at competitions should be defined by an athlete’s skill and ability, not their impairment. The sight classifications should give all athletes the confidence that they are competing against others equally.

For visually impaired sport, vision can be classified into one of five sight categories – B1 to B5.

There is sometimes a difference between blind and partially sighted sport, in addition to competing in different categories. For example, blind football is a separate game to partially sighted football. Understanding someone’s level of sight loss (and therefore their possible classification) is important to know to signpost them to the most suitable offer.

It is ok to ask people about their sight level and how much they can see – sight loss is a spectrum, and different for everyone, so it’s essential to understand that individual’s sight to provide them with the best opportunities.

## What is a sight category?

A person’s sight category is based on the level of sight and the visual field test. The level of sight is of their better eye with best correction, e.g. with spectacles or contact lenses. This is the case even if they don’t normally wear spectacles.

It is important to note that if someone is fully sighted in one eye they would not qualify for visually impaired sport. This is regardless of the sight level in their other eye.

## Classification involves categories B1, B2, B3, B4 and B5

B1, B2 and B3 sight categories are used by most sports for international & Paralympic sport however, you should always check with the individual governing body for the exact requirements.

Only the British Blind Sport classification system includes B4 and B5 sight categories.

B4 and B5 sight categories allow people to participate on a level playing field for local and national sports within the UK. Please note that there are some exceptions to this standard, so please check with the sport in which you are considering or with the British Blind Sport team.

* B1 – this category includes: having no light perception in either eye, light perception and ability to perceive some movement in front of the eye but inability to recognise shapes.
* B2 – partially sighted B2 athletes will have limited vision in both eyes either in how far or how wide they can see. This category includes visual acuity of up to and including 2/60. 2/60 means somebody within this sight category would see the top letter of the vision chart at a distance of up to and including 2 metres. A fully sighted person would see that letter at a distance of 60 metres.
* B3 – B3 is the highest category used for most international & Paralympic sport and includes those with a level of vision better than 2/60 and up to and including 6/60. (Can see at 6 metres what a fully sighted person would see at 60 metres).
* B4 – anyone with better vision than 6/60, and up to and including 6/24 would be within this sight category. (Can see at 6 metres what a fully sighted person would see at 24 metres).
* B5 – this category is the highest sight level used within VI sport for those having a visual acuity of better than 6/24, but not better than 6/18. (Can see at 6 metres what a fully sighted person would see at 18 metres).
* Unclassified - better vision than 6/18.

**Please Note:** The current classification system was developed many years ago when visually impaired competitive sport was in its infancy. It is used across the board even though it is recognised that different levels of vision are needed for different sports. A lot of research will however be required to define scientifically how reduced levels of vision affect performance in different sports. Until the time that sport specific classification is available, we must use the system described above.

## How to get a classification?

British Blind Sport are the national classifiers for sport in the UK. Please bear in mind that classifications take 2 weeks to process, so ensure that applications are submitted in a timely manner if needed for a competition! To find out more about British Blind Sport sight classifications or to speak to a member of the BBS Classifications Team please call 01926 424247 or email info@britishblindsport.org.uk.

[Click here to download the British Blind Sport Recreational Classification Form and Introduction Letter Ophthalmologist or Optometrist.](https://32982um1rt12wbtsb27nbp1a-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/British-Blind-Sport-Recreational-Classification-Form-January-2022.doc)