

ARE YOU VISUALLY IMPAIRED? DO YOU HAVE ATHLETES IN YOUR DOJO WITH A VISUAL IMPAIREMENT?

Visual impairment is much more common than it appears to be. Many visually impaired (VI) individuals do not share with their environment the extent to which their modified visual ability affects their life.

If you are aware of a judoka with a visual impairment or know someone who is VI and would like to try judo, you should not hesitate to inform them about the following standards used currently to determine their ability to participate in Paralympic movement. To learn more please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcF5wYrgNu0&feature=youtu.be>

Minimum Impairment criteria

The eligibility to compete in Paralympic sports should be determined on the basis of performance in the **unadapted** form of the sport. This means that the minimum impairment criteria for judo should reflect the level of vision impairment that has an impact on an athlete's performance in able-sighted judo, with athletes starting a few meters apart.

VI athletes are currently classified on the results for tests of visual acuity and visual field. The severity of the impairment in their best eye must meet at least one of the minimum impairment criteria in the following table:

Measure	Description	Minimum Impairment Criterion
Visual acuity	A measure of the sharpness/clarity of vision	Visual acuity less than or equal to logMAR = 1.00 (6/60 or 20/200). In lay terms, this generally means that a person with 6/60 vision needs to be 6 meters from an object to see detail that a person without vision impairment could see at 60 meters
Visual field	A measure of the area of peripheral vision with which an individual can see (i.e. without moving their eyes)	Visual field with a diameter less than 40 degrees (20 degree radius). This means that the athlete has 'tunnel vision' where their field of view is less than 40 degrees wide (the normal visual field is approximately 200 degrees wide).

Number of Canadian judokas have enjoyed success in the Paralympic judo with Pierre Morten leading in this category with 3 Paralympic medals to his credit.

In the most recent Paralympic Games in Rio, Priscilla Gagné – the first ever Paralympic female judoka representing Canada, narrowly missed the podium.

However, competitive judo at the Paralympic level is not the only option for VI and blind judokas. Judo offers a great spectrum of activities that enrich lives of many who are not interested or driven to engage in the combat.

Coaches who would like to learn more about how to adapt judo programs to make it VI friendly can find some useful tips at: http://www.judocanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Including-All-Kids_Visually-Impaired-Judoka-final.pdf. For more specific information on the training needs of the blind judoka visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gOzQKRW8fs&feature=youtu.be>; and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWr41lpLMc>