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Dr. David Mann is an Associate Professor of Human Movement Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and a leading international researcher in evidence based classification for athletes with vision impairment. Since 2014, he has served as Director of one of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Classification Research and Development Centres, established to enhance the scientific rigour, fairness, and transparency of classification systems in para sport, specifically for athletes with vision impairment.



In his role, Dr. Mann has led or taken part in internationally coordinated research programmes across multiple para sports, including judo, shooting, swimming, goalball, football, and athletics. His work has directly supported the implementation of new vision impairment classification systems for para judo and para shooting, and informed the development of classification recommendations for para swimming and goalball. Through sustained collaboration with the IPC, the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA), World Para Swimming, and the International Judo Federation, his research has contributed to advancing consistent, research driven approaches to classification across sports.

Dr. Mann has also played an active role in classification governance and policy development. He was a member of the IPC Classification Code Review Committee and a co author of the IPC-IBSA Position Stand on the Classification of Athletes with Vision Impairment. In addition, he has contributed to the academic foundations of classification through a co authored book chapter and a Journal of Sports Sciences editorial, alongside Prof. Sean Tweedy and Prof. Yves Vanlandewijck. Together, this work has helped to strengthen the evidence base underpinning vision impairment classification and improve confidence in classification decision making.

Beyond para sport, Dr. Mann conducts applied research on visual motor expertise, skill acquisition, and talent identification and development in elite non Paralympic sport. He has collaborated with professional football clubs in the Netherlands, England, and Germany, UEFA, professional baseball organisations in the United States, and national tennis federations. This broader programme of research provides fundamental insights into how vision supports expert performance, underpinning his classification focused work through a strong scientific understanding of visual function in high level sport.