Athlete Categorisation Sprint Canoe/Kayak and Paracanoe

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Paddle Australia (PA) Athlete Categorisation ("Athlete Categories") guidelines have been developed following the AIS athlete categorisation criteria guidelines. The PA Athlete Categories will provide a consistent basis to:

   a) identify the athletes with the greatest potential to contribute to PA's performance targets in Tokyo 2020, Paris 2024 and beyond and at World Championships annually;

   b) track athlete's performance over time; and

   c) inform prioritisation of resources and support to athletes

1.2 Importantly, membership of an Athlete Category requires evidence of an athlete's potential for future success. It does not solely recognise past results. A level of discretion and coaches' input is applied.

1.3 PA has developed these criteria to identify athletes to the different categories and for nomination to the AIS for inclusion in the national list of Athlete Categories.

1.4 Resource allocation, including direct athlete funding support, will be commensurate with athlete categories and athletes categorised as Podium Potential and above will be recognised as National Centre of Excellence (NCE) Athletes and will receive significantly higher funding allocation from PA than lower category levels.

1.5 Principle support for Developing and Emerging athletes will be from their respective SIS/SAS programs and/or National Performance Pathway activities (e.g. Paris 2024).

2. CATEGORISATION PROCESS

2.1 These criteria may be amended or supplemented by PA, or the AIS, in its absolute discretion from time to time. As an example, specific criteria will be implemented for selection to the NCE program.

2.2 The Selection Panel will consist of the National Performance Director (NPD), National Performance Pathway Lead – Sprint, the relevant NCE Coach(es) (Men, Women, Para) and each of the four SIS/SAS Head Coaches. This panel will determine the nomination of athletes under these criteria within each State.

2.3 Annual athlete categorisation will occur in October each year following the International benchmark event(s) relating to each respective age category and ahead of the domestic competition period. A formal athlete categorisation review be conducted in April following the domestic competition period which will provide opportunities for new talent to be identified.

2.4 Athletes may be added, removed or moved to a different category, based on fulfilling the required performance standards, as outlined in Section 4 of these guidelines.

2.5 PA will submit the categorisation list to the AIS for ratification following the selection process.

2.6   Selection to the PA Athlete Categories does not necessarily imply selection to PA national teams or squads which are governed by separate selection criteria available on the PA website. Equally, non-selection to the Athlete Categories does not necessarily exclude Athletes from selection to PA national teams or squads.

2.7   The Selection Panel will consider evidence provided to support each selection and will only select athletes that genuinely satisfy the performance guidelines.

2.8   The Selection Panel may at its discretion, request a review of an athlete at other times (e.g. following a benchmark event, domestic selection trial, or, if an athlete is not actively training or demonstrating the required commitment levels as determined by the SIS/SAS and/or NCE Coach).

2.9   Athletes will remain in an Athlete Category until such time as they are removed. Athletes may be excluded at any time from the Athlete Categorisation program at the absolute discretion of PA.

2.10   As a principle, athletes must continue to demonstrate potential to medal at a future BME, or, demonstrate progressive improvement each year in performance areas identified in their Individual Performance Plans (IPP). Unless there is other evidence that an athlete is on-track to contribute to PA performance targets, athletes who fail to progress may be removed from the Athlete Categories.

2.11   Any athlete who fails to maintain the performance level required to maintain a certain category or fails to fulfill the requirements of their IPP or Athlete Agreement, or declines an invitation to attend a National Team or Squad activity may be demoted in category or removed from the categorisation list altogether.

3.   ELIGIBILITY

3.1   Athletes seeking selection to the Athlete Categories must:

a)   Be a current member of PA, eligible and available to represent Australia in ICF sanctioned international competition and actively training towards the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games or the World Championships.

b)   Have submitted to PA a signed Athlete Agreement and an IPP endorsed by the Coach (NCE or SIS/SAS Head Coach or nominated delegate), and attend athlete development meetings with the NPD, National Performance Pathway Lead – Sprint, or their nominated delegate, and other PA or NIN high performance staff as required;

c)   Comply with all anti-doping requirements of PA;

d)   Maintain a lifestyle conducive to sporting excellence, as outlined in the PA Athlete Agreement;

e)   Abide by both the rules and the spirit of the sport;

f)   Maintain the high standard of personal behavior expected of an athlete representing Australia; and

g)   Not bring PA, or any of its partners into disrepute.

4.   ATHLETE CATEGORY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

4.1   The Athlete Categories determined by the AIS consist of five levels (Podium, Podium Ready, Podium Potential, Developing and Emerging). Generally, the higher level of categorisation, requires greater evidence and objective performance criteria than the lower levels of categorisation. For selection to

all levels, recent performance must be supported by evidence that the athlete demonstrates progression towards meeting PA's performance targets within a defined time period. Schedule A outlines the performance standards that will be used when considering athlete categorisation for Sprint Canoe/Kayak and Paracanoe.

4.2   A level of discretion may be applied, particularly for categories Emerging, Developing and Podium Potential. Greater discretion may be afforded in the earlier years of an Olympic cycle, whilst the criteria will be applied with less discretion (particularly for Podium Potential category), the closer to the Olympic/Paralympic Games.

4.3   For the purposes of the above Athlete Categories:

a)   Only athletes competing in Olympic or Paralympic disciplines and events are eligible for the PA Athlete Categories.

b)   Athletes with performances in Non-Olympic/Paralympic events may be included only where there is clear evidence that performance in a Non-Olympic/Paralympic event will contribute to the performance targets in Olympic or Paralympic events.

c)   Athletes who do not satisfy any of the Podium Pathway category criteria but has earned selection for the national team or squad preparing for the NSOs benchmark event may also be considered for a level of categorisation which will be assessed on a case by case basis.

d)   Should an exceptional circumstance prevent an athlete from achieving the benchmark event criteria for Podium potential or above, and there is compelling evidence that the athlete would otherwise meet the criteria for that level, PA may take into consideration extenuating circumstances. In particular, PA will consider the Athlete's likelihood to qualify to a future Olympic/Paralympic Games and contribute to PA performance targets.

4.4   Athletes in an Athlete Category are expected to show a continual progression in performances and results. A detailed review will be undertaken of all categorised Athletes. Athletes should be able to demonstrate improvement each year, e.g. an improvement in their personal best, or maintenance of a medal winning position.

4.5   From 2020, percentage of prognostic speeds across different age categories will be utilised as a way of benchmarking athletes against International standards and will be used heavily throughout the categorisation process.

4.6   Importantly, percentage of prognostic speeds for the purpose of categorisation, will only be considered in Olympic K1 or C1 events. MK1 500, MK1 200 and WK1 200 may also be considered if there is additional evidence to support inclusion (e.g team boat performances). Times must be completed in neutral conditions (approx. +/- 0-1ms).

4.7   Where an athlete achieves a 'one off' prognostic time and there remains some uncertainty as to their ability to repeat that performance, based on the Selection Panels assessment of that athlete, they may be selected in a lower category.

4.8   It is acknowledged that athlete progression is not always linear and therefore performance plateaus and regression may be considered. Generally, affordance to maintain categorisation levels will be provided for a period of 18-24mths, but only when there is evidence of strong athlete commitment and compliance to continuous improvement.   For instance, an athlete who fails to qualify for a BME event or a particular event, but still demonstrate strong signs of performance progression may be maintained at a certain category, despite not achieving the objective performance targets. Athletes

who fail to progress or demonstrate the commitment will be removed or demoted from the Athlete Categories.

4.9   Athlete Categorisation will ultimately be used to prioritise PA's and the high performance system's resources, including PA financial support and access to Performance Support Services. Athletes in higher categories can expect to receive a greater level of support than those in lower categories. In all cases, the provision of services to athletes in the Athlete Categories is subject to available resources.

4.10   Selection to a certain category does not automatically entitle an athlete to receive servicing and/or financial support, and athletes within the same category may not receive the same level of support. In particular, the AIS Direct Athlete Support (dAIS) criteria may not align directly with the Athlete Categories.

4.11   Separate to the official AIS Categorisation criteria, Paddle Australia acknowledges that there may be certain athletes who fail to achieve the necessary performance criteria but add significant value to the performance pathway within either the SIS/SAS DTE or national team or squad. Hence, Paddle Australia will identify, in conjunction with each respective SIS/SAS program, additional athletes under an 'Associate' category. These athletes will not be formally recognised as being 'Categorised' but rather identified and may be treated at the discretion of each SIS/SAS jurisdiction, to a maximal resource allocation limit equivalent to an Emerging athlete, until a 'confirmation' performance can be achieved.

5.   EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES & SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

5.1   The Selection Panel should take into consideration the potential of an athlete to assist PA in achieving its performance targets. The Selection Panel may consider a range of circumstances in determining whether an Athlete should be included or maintained in an Athlete Category, including but not limited to the following:

a) In particular, special consideration may be given to maintain a Podium Athlete in the Podium Category for two years, where there is clear evidence that this will assist the potential of PA to achieve its performance targets.

b) A young, developing athlete who demonstrates evidence of future potential, but has for various reasons, not been afforded the opportunity, or has been unable to fulfill the criteria for various reasons.

5.2   If an **exceptional circumstance** prevents an otherwise eligible athlete from satisfying the criteria for an Athlete Category, PA, in its absolute discretion, may allow for special consideration. Such circumstances could include illness at the time of the benchmark event, an athlete returning from injury or an expected reduction in the international competitiveness of the discipline (e.g. competitor retirement).

SCHEDULE A

Paddle Australia Athlete Categorisation – Performance Standards

Level	AIS Categorisation Description	CANOE SPRINT	PARACANOE

Podium	**Olympic/Paralympic Pathway** – Athletes have won a medal at an Olympic/Paralympic Games, World Championships or agreed event in the previous 24 months AND must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to win a medal at the next Olympic/ Paralympic Games.	▪ Podium in at least one of the past two most recent Senior BME Olympic Event;
		▪ and, athlete is capable of a medal at the next BME event.
		▪ As a guide, the following percentages of prognostic speed apply to Podium level categorisation but a 'confirmation' BME result is also required:
		  ▪ SNR: 98%
		  ▪ U23: 97.5%
		  ▪ U21: 97%
		  ▪ JNR: 96.5%
			▪ Podium at Para BME Paralympic Event within the last 24 months; and,
			▪ Finish in the Top 50% of their competitors; and,
			▪ Capable of a medal at the next BME event

Podium Ready	**Olympic/Paralympic Pathway** – Athletes have placed 4-8th at the most recent Olympic/Paralympic Games/World Championships OR by exception an agreed equivalent alternative (ie an objective, data verified performance or World Ranking) AND must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to **PODIUM** level, targeting a medal at the next Olympic /Paralympic Games.	▪ Place 4th – 8th in at least one of the past two most recent Senior BME Olympic Event;
		▪ and, athlete is capable of a medal at a BME in the next 4 years.
		▪ As a guide, the following percentages of prognostic speed apply to Podium Ready level categorisation but a 'confirmation' BME result is also required:
		  ▪ SNR: 96.5%
		  ▪ U23: 96%
		  ▪ U21: 95.5%
		  ▪ JNR: 95%
			▪ Place 4 - 8th at most recent Para BME Paralympic Event; and,
			▪ Finish in the Top 50% of their competitors; and,
			▪ Capable of a medal at a BME in the next 2 years.

Podium Potential	Athletes will have achieved agreed performance benchmarks which, alongside international competition performances, reliably indicate their future potential for podium success. Athletes must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to at least **PODIUM READY** level within the agreed sport-specific matrix timeframes.	▪ Place 9th – 12th in at least one of the past two most recent Senior BME Olympic Events; and finish in the Top 50% of their competitors; or,
		▪ Podium in at least one of the past two most recent U23 BME Olympic Events; or,
		▪ Achieve the following percentages of prognostic speed:
		  ▪ SNR: 95%
		  ▪ U23: 94%
		  ▪ U21: 93%
		  ▪ JNR: 92%
		▪ and, athlete is capable of progressing to Podium Ready in the next 3 years.
			▪ Place 9 - 12th at most recent Para BME Event; and,
			▪ Finish in the Top 50% of their competitors;
			▪ Achieve an International Performance Standard Time in a national domestic competition;
			▪ and, capable of a medal at a Senior BME event in the next 4 years.

		▪ Where either the Senior or U23 BME result was achieved in a K4, athletes must have also demonstrated the ability to achieve a percentage of prognostic speed. ▪ Absolute Discretion of the Selection Panel, through a moderation process. National Performance Director to hold the casting vote if there is indecision. ▪ Discretionary decision to also consider the future potential of the athlete and the ability of the athlete to benefit from, as well as contribute to, the NCE sprint kayak program.	

Developing	Athletes have progressed through a reliable national talent confirmation phase and placed within a dedicated national development program.
	
	Athletes must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to at least **PODIUM POTENTIAL** level within the agreed sport-specific matrix timeframes.
		▪ Place 1st - 9th at the most recent Junior, or, 4th - 9th at the most recent U23, BME Olympic Event; and finish in the Top 50% of their competitors; or,
		▪ Achieve the following percentages of prognostic speed:
		  ▪ SNR: 94%
		  ▪ U23: 93%
		  ▪ U21: 92%
		  ▪ JNR: 90%
		▪ and, athlete is capable of progressing to Podium Potential in the next 3 years.
		▪ Where either the Junior/U23 BME result was achieved in a K4, athletes must have also demonstrated the ability to achieve a percentage of prognostic speed.
		▪ Absolute Discretion of the Selection Panel, through a moderation process. National Performance Pathway Lead – Sprint to hold the casting vote if there is indecision.
			▪ Identified National Development Squad member;
			▪ Absolute Discretion of the National Paracanoe Coach and relevant SIS/SAS Coach.
			▪ and, capable of progressing to Podium Potential in the next 2 years.

Emerging	Athletes have been identified by an NSO via a valid and reliable talent identification profiling method (agreed in advance and with future podium potential characteristics identified) and are going through a set, time-limited talent confirmation period.	▪ Achieve the following percentages of prognostic speed:
		  ▪ SNR: n/a
		  ▪ U23: 91%
		  ▪ U21: 90%
		  ▪ JNR: 88%
		  ▪ U17: 87%
		  ▪ U16: 86%
		▪ and,athlete is capable of progressing to Developing in the next 3 years.
		▪ Absolute Discretion of the Selection Panel, through a moderation process. Relevant SIS/SAS Coach to hold the casting vote if there is indecision.
			▪ Absolute Discretion of the National Paracanoe Coach and relevant SIS/SAS Coach.

Note: BME = Benchmark Event. This refers to the single highest level of International competition within in each year for each respective age category (Senior/U23 and Junior). Typically it refers to the World Championships and in the Olympic/Paralympic year, it refers to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
* Percentage of prognostic speeds must be achieved in Olympic K1 or C1 events. MK1 500, MK1 200 and WK1 200 may also be considered, where there is additional evidence to support inclusion.
 # Times must be completed in neutral conditions (approx. +/- 0-1ms).