

Paracanoe Structure and Pathways Plan

Whether simply participating for recreational purposes, or competing at a club, state, national or international level, paracanoe provides opportunities for persons with a disability. Since its inception, more and more athletes have commenced participating and competing in paracanoe around the world.

Paddle Australia have implemented a paracanoe development pathway, which is aimed at assisting athletes, parents, coaches to better understand, and maximize, the available pathway from participation right through to high performance.

Adapted from the current canoe/kayak framework, the paracanoe pathway takes into consideration the needs of athletes of varying disabilities, some of which require little deviation from the current framework to those likely to benefit from a more modified structure.

The primary objective of this document is to ensure that both existing and future paracanoe participants are provided with clear and defined pathways that fully support a range of individual goals. For some, paracanoe may simply be a means of participating in a friendly sport and social environment at a foundation level, whilst others may wish to learn about the skills and strategies associated with the more competitive environment and test themselves at the highest level of competition available to them.

The key to successful structures and pathways in sport are appropriate entry and exit points, ongoing opportunities for development, accessible, cost-effective and well resourced programs, as well as the potential to aspire to the highest level of competition, which in paracanoe's case is the Paralympics.

Active Lifestyle

Sport

Sport Excellence



M¹ **Mastery**
Sustained Success

E² **Elite**
Success

E¹ **Elite**
Representation

T⁴ **Talent**
Breakthrough and Reward

T³ **Talent**
Practising and Achieving

T² **Talent**
Verification

T¹ **Talent**
Demonstration of Potential

HIGH PERFORMANCE

F³ **Foundation**
Sport Specific Commitment and/or Competition

F² **Foundation**
Extension and Refinement of Movement

F¹ **Foundation**
Learning and Acquisition of Basic Movement



FOUNDATION – ENTRY POINT

Foundation programs have traditionally been more focused on providing an introduction to a particular sport rather than producing elite level athletes, however the reality is that all elite athletes must start somewhere. In the case of paracanoe, foundation participation is absolutely vital in providing an initial introduction to the sport, as well as ensuring participants continue to stay involved for many years to come.

Paracanoe 'foundation' is aimed at all levels of disability and is designed to provide participants with a positive first experience in the sport. It is a club level, participation orientated program, which can be utilized as an introductory program for those participants who may wish to progress into more structured, skill-based sessions.

The purpose of this level is to engage the local community and provide access to opportunities for involvement at the recreational level. It seeks to expose people with a disability to the sport in a safe and friendly environment, whilst facilitating the development of the most basic skills.

It is important to remember that not all athletes participating in these programs are classifiable and therefore the Paralympic pathway may not be applicable for some. There is also likely to be some variation in the motives for participation (some athlete driven, some support worker/carer/parent driven), and as a result the focus of these programs has generally been on providing an introduction to the sport of paracanoe and facilitating ongoing participation through positive social experiences. Irrespective of this, there is likely to be athletes who have the desire and commitment to progress further and continue learning, and therefore it is imperative that further structures are developed and implemented in order to support this progression.

The technical and tactical skills developed at the Foundation level include:

- Water Safety (capsize drills)
- Technique
- Boat Handling Skills

The physiological development of the Foundation level should include:

- General movement, balance and coordination development
- General aerobic capacity
- General strength

Considerations for the Foundation stage of development include:

- Adaptations and prosthesis
- Athlete goals

Continued Participation – Pathway Program

The following level of involvement in paracanoe is termed 'Pathway Progression', is designed to support continued participation in the sport. The over-arching goal of the pathway is to ensure the provision of opportunities for athletes to learn and develop skills and abilities to successfully compete in regattas at state, national and international level paracanoe events.

TALENT – PARACANOE PATHWAY

The aim of the paracanoe 'Talent' level is to develop the athlete to be able to successfully compete at a club, state and national level. The technical, tactical and mental skills developed at the 'Talent' stage include:

- Continue to develop aerobic capacity
- Technique efficiency at varying stroke rates and speeds
- Introduction of speed and speed endurance training sessions
- Race plans and tactics
- Goal setting for main competitions
- Continue to develop boat handling skills
- Understand Paddle Australia rules and regulations
- Psychological skills training for racing

The physiological skills developed include:

- General aerobic capacity
- Speed
- Speed endurance
- Core stability
- Strength
- Flexibility
- Initiate role of recovery on the effects of training and racing ability

Considerations for the 'Talent' level include:

- Refine adaptations and prosthesis
- Individual goals
- Training volume and intensity depending upon disability and social circumstances (work/study)
- National level classification by a classification panel prior to national competition

Competitions

- Club events
- State Championships
- National level events (Grand Prix events and National Championships)

ELITE & MASTERY- HIGH PERFORMANCE PATHWAY PROGRESSION

The aim of the paracanoe 'Elite' level is to develop athletes to compete successfully on an international level, focusing primarily on the World Cup, World Championships and the Paralympics Games.

The technical, tactical and mental skills developed at the 'Elite' level include:

- Optimum technique for the individual
- Race tactics and race plans for all racing conditions
- Race tactics and race plans for International level racing
- Goal setting for competition outcomes
- Refine boat handling skills
- Understand International Canoe Federation Rules and Regulations
- Psychological periodization skills training

The physiological skills developed at the 'elite' level include:

- Race Specific:
- Endurance base
- Speed endurance
- Speed and maximum speed
- Acceleration
- Core stability
- Strength
- Power
- Optimal recovery

Considerations for the 'elite' level include:

- Biomechanical input to adaptations and prosthesis
- Use of sport science and sports medicine for optimal training periodization and recovery monitoring
- Individual goals
- Specific training volume and intensity depending upon disability and social circumstances (work/study)
- Classification by an International Panel

Competitions

- Club events
- State Championships
- National level events including Grand Prix events and National Championships
- International competitions including World Cups, World Championships and Paralympic Games

Paracanoe 'mastery' is athletes who demonstrate the ability to perform at the podium level at International level competitions on regular occasions.

Involvement in the above-mentioned pathway, with the exception being 'foundation', essentially requires participants to display a certain level of skill and commitment, ability to understand and learn skill and strategies of the sport and a willingness to implement them.

The entire environment has a performance focus, with the primary emphasis being on the attitude and performance of the athlete.

Those athletes selected to participate in the 'Talent, Elite and Mastery' programs will ideally have a desire to compete in paracanoe at the highest level and, as a general rule, display some of the characteristics required to be successful at higher levels of competition.

The paracanoe 'Elite' and 'Mastery' level will be delivered in accordance with the High Performance Plan delivered by Paddle Australia, and will be overseen by the Paracanoe Program Manager.

Linking the Pathway

The purpose of the pathway is to support and enable potential young athletes to develop the skills and abilities associated with each level before progressing to the next. It will also ensure better guidance is provided as to the areas of development required, whilst still allowing for the fast tracking of athletes were required/beneficial.

The Paracanoe '**Foundation**' level is aimed primarily at introducing participants to the sport and facilitating a positive experience. For some, this may be all they are after, however for others they may wish to take their involvement to the next level.

The paracanoe '**Talent**' level is targeted towards those participants who are interested in learning more about the sport and beginning to compete in structured competitions. Progression from '**Talent**' to '**Elite**' is likely to be determined by the relevant coach, and will be based on characteristics such as skills developed/required, capacity to learn and develop, and motivation/desire to progress (this is an extremely subjective assessment and one that is best carried out in consultation with the athlete/parent/guardian).

The paracanoe '**Elite**' level will be more structured and based on a prescribed set of criteria determined by Paddle Australia. Paracanoe '**Mastery**' is an extension of the '**Elite**' level and is demonstrated by the ability to be on the podium at an international level frequently.

STRUCTURE & PATHWAY CHARACTERISTICS

<i>FTEM Stages</i>									
Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)			Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)				Elite (Senior International)		
<i>Phases and Description</i>									
F 1	F 2	F 3	T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4	E 1	E 2	M 1
FOUNDATION			TALENT				ELITE		MASTERY
Basic movement foundations	Extension and refinement of movement foundations	Sport specific commitment and/or competition	Demonstration of potential	Talent verification	Practicing and achieving	Breakthrough and reward	Senior National Team representation	Podium success	Sustained success at E2
<i>An Athlete is:</i>									
Learning basic movement patterns, strength, balance and control	Paddling and keeping a canoe kayak upright and moving	Attending coaching and/or competitions in any paddle sport	Demonstration of HP potential from training/competition and/or talent ID	Potential verified and athlete is invited to participate in a National Talent Squad (NTS)	Embedded in pre-elite, daily training environment	Embedded in National Development camps (possible 2 nd entry athletes to World Cup/World Championships)	Competition at World Cups, World Championships or equivalent	Finishes on podium at World Cups, World Championships or equivalent	Consistent podium success over four or more years
<i>Daily Training Environment</i>									
Formal or informal physical education at home or at school or similar	Paddling a craft of some description for fun or recreation	Involved in a paddle sports club and paddling regularly	Active member of a Pathway Program Accredited (PPA) Club or similar		Active member of a PPA Club and working with an elite program (SIS/SAS)		Actively involved in SIS/SAS or NCE training program		
<i>Competition Target</i>									
Not competing		Club and Schools' events	State and National Championships			World Cups, World Championships or equivalent and/or Paralympic Games			
<i>Athlete Category</i>									
N/A			Emerging		Developing		Podium Potential		Podium

Integrating AWD Requirements

In order to develop a cohesive, functional and comprehensive AWD pathway, it is imperative to embed the various processes and requirements of AWD sport into the existing structures and frameworks that have already been put in place by Paddle Australia.

As is the case with the majority of sports, there are 4 main functional areas that are considered a fundamental part of development with these being:

- Coaching
- Education
 - Coaches
 - Officials
- Community Engagement and Awareness
- Talent Identification

It is envisaged that the AWD components/requirements associated with the above mentioned areas should integrate seamlessly into the existing process developed to cater to the needs of able-bodied canoeing.

However, in order to effectively support the provision of participation opportunities and the broader development of paracanoe, there is the additional element of classification that needs to be catered for.

Authorized classifiers according to the classification guidelines for the sport, which are determined by the International Canoe Federation, perform the classification of athletes in paracanoe.

Classification Opportunities

Classification opportunities will be created at the State Competition level. Currently, all classification for paracanoe is undertaken at a national level event or on a 'as required' basis via a remote system (for a provisional classification) and until assessed in person. This process is subject to change as paracanoe develops and participation numbers increase.

The exact details of how the classification process will integrate into the various structures will be determined through consultation between relevant APC staff, Paddle Australia, key contacts in each state/territory and other relevant stakeholders.

Paracanoe Organisational Structure

