

Athlete categorisation is an initiative implemented through the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) that is used to “identify, track and prioritise athletes at each stage of the Performance Pathway”. The National Athlete Categorisation Framework outlines the five categorisation levels recognised by the AIS in determining the prioritisation of resources. Importantly, athletes identified within the performance pathway through categorisation must demonstrate the potential to contribute to future medal success over the next 4yr, 8yr or 12yr Olympic cycles.

From late 2021, Paddle Australia will utilise Athlete Categorisation to inform National Squad selection. Throughout the Paris cycle, the following National Squads will exist within the performance pathway.

Please note: this is a subtle but important shift from previous years when National Team selection was closely linked to Athlete Categorisation and Squad selection. (i.e..it may be possible to miss selection to a National Team but obtain Categorisation/Squad Selection, or vice versa, gain selection to a National Team but miss Categorisation/Squad Selection as compared to other Team members).

NATIONAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (NCE) SQUAD (3-6 YEAR HORIZON)

The primary objective of the NCE Squad is to facilitate podium performances at Olympic Games and World Championships.

The Squad will be selected based on the Athlete Categorisation criteria which is largely determined by objective performance data and aligned with the AIS guidelines for Podium, Podium Ready and Podium Potential.

Focussing on supporting athletes who can contribute to medal success over the next 3-6 years (Paris24 Cycle). The squad will receive prioritised resourcing, including access to world class coaching, whitewater access in Penrith, performance support services, as well as direct athlete funding support (whilst living in Penrith).

Whilst all squad members will have access to quality service provision and funding, there remains a differential between categorisation levels with Podium and Podium Ready athletes receiving increased support over athletes categorised at Podium potential.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE ACADEMY (NPA) (6-9 YEAR HORIZON)

The primary aim of the newly established National Performance Academy squad is to support young developing athletes between 17 and 23 years who have demonstrated high performance potential to reach international performance levels that would make them eligible for selection to the NCE.

The Squad will be selected based on the Athlete Categorisation criteria (Developing level) which is largely determined through a combination of International and Domestic results with consideration of performance standard percentages, demonstrable talent, commitment, physical and mental aptitude.

The Academy is largely a camps-based program providing domestic and international training and competition opportunities with high quality coaching. The Academy will create a learning

environment and exposure to higher levels of training and competition to assist the transition into the NCE squad.

With a 6-9 year (LA28 Cycle) horizon, the NPA Squad will largely be for U23 athletes categorised as Developing who demonstrate the potential to contribute to medal success. The squad will have exposure to both NCE and Development training sessions (including whitewater and coaching), whilst in Penrith. Extended domestic and international camp opportunities will also be supported to provide identified athletes with increased exposure to high level training and competition.

To be clear there may be athletes who are aged over 23 years who are categorised as Developing, who may be provided access to whitewater and coaching but will not receive the additional opportunities as those identified as NPA athletes.

NATIONAL EMERGING SQUAD (NES) (9-12 YEAR HORIZON)

The aim of the NES is to provide targeted training camps with high level coaches to improve technique and experience of identified development level athletes aged U21.

The Squad will be selected based on the Athlete Categorisation criteria (Emerging level) which is largely determined through a combination of International and Domestic results with consideration of performance standard percentages, demonstrable talent, potential, commitment, physical and mental aptitude.

The Squad is a camps-based program with monitoring of training throughout the year. The objective is to enhance the foundations for skills, attitude, and physical development to move up to the NPA.

The NES Squad, which has a 9-12 year horizon and is focussed on athletes who are U21, will have access to domestic camps, along with a Performance Pathway Coach whilst in Penrith during prearranged times in the season.

To be clear there may be athletes who are aged over 21 years who are categorised as Emerging, who may be provided access to whitewater and coaching but will not receive the additional opportunities as those identified as NES athletes.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SQUAD (NDS) (9-12 YEAR HORIZON)

The aim of the NDS is to identify U21 athletes who narrowly miss being categorised but are identified as having the potential to progress to NES. It will largely be a self-funded squad who will be provided some development opportunities focussed on building the required foundation skills, experience and education towards being a high performance athlete.

The State performance pathway coaches will be principally responsible for supporting these athletes in their daily training environments as well as during domestic camps and competitions.

Domestic camps as well as access to Development sessions in Penrith during prearranged times in the season will be made available.

Selection will be largely based on domestic performances, standardised physical assessment, along with coach assessment of potential, skills, commitment and attitude.

Categorisation	Performance Horizon	National Squads	Criteria*	Squad Benefits
Podium	Current	National Centre of Excellence (NCE)	International Podium at a BME	\$24k/yr Direct Athlete Funding Support ^{\$} \$2k/yr Equipment Allowance in second Class [~] Full access to DTE Servicing Support [#] Full domestic and international camp/competition support
Podium Ready	1-3 years		International Top 10 at a BME	\$16k/yr Direct Athlete Funding Support ^{\$} \$2k/yr Equipment Allowance in second Class [~] Full access to DTE Servicing Support [#] Full domestic and international camp/competition support
Podium Potential	3-6 years		International Top 20 Jnr/U23 Top 10	\$12k/yr Direct Athlete Funding Support ^{\$} \$2k/yr Equipment Allowance in second Class [~] Full access to DTE Servicing Support [#] Full domestic and international camp/competition support
Developing	6-9 years	U23 National Performance Academy (NPA)	International S/F Performance Jnr/U23 Top 20	Domestic and International camp support Access to DTE Servicing Support when visiting Penrith [#]
Emerging	9-12 years	U21 National Emerging Squad (NES)	Jnr/U23 S/F Performance	Domestic camp support Access to restricted support when visiting Penrith [^]
n/a	9-12 years	U21 National Development Squad (NDS)		Semi-funded domestic camp support [%]

*further definitive performance criteria is contained within the Athlete Categorisation criteria

^{\$} subject to residing in Penrith (to be used for equipment purchases and incidental living expenses)

[~] athlete must have achieved categorisation of Podium Potential or above in the second Class to be eligible for this allowance

[#] includes: NCE Coaching, NCE Whitewater, S&C, Physio/Massage, Nutrition, Psychology

[^] includes: Subsidised 'Open' Whitewater, limited NCE Whitewater, Pathway coaching

[%] includes: Partially subsidised 'Open' Whitewater, limited Pathway coaching