

Paddle UK 2025 Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross World Class Programme Qualification Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Paddle UK World Class Programme (**WCP**) is a partnership programme funded by UK Sport and run by Paddle UK, with the purpose of enabling athletes to achieve excellence in the pursuit of future medal winning performances at the Los Angeles 2028 (**L.A**) and Brisbane 2032 (**Brisbane**) Olympic Games as well as other significant Senior Championship events.
- 1.2. The 2025 Canoe Slalom (also referred to as **CSL**) & Kayak Cross (also referred to as **CSLX**) World Class Programme Qualification Policy (**Qualification Policy**) sets out the process that will identify the best athletes in each Slalom discipline towards these objectives and to qualify to the Paddle UK World Class Programme from 1 January 2025.
- 1.3. This Qualification Policy sets out how the level of funding provided to athletes qualifying onto the WCP will be determined if offered a WCP place.
- 1.4. The WCP has an agreed level of funding from UK Sport until 31 March 2025. The level of UK Sport funding available to Paddle UK for the period 1st April 2025 to 31 March 2029 will not be known until December 2024. For the Los Angeles cycle, funding for athlete WCP places are projected to be reduced from the level of the Paris cycle (which is up to 24). This Qualification Policy is being published in May 2024 to share the principles upon which decisions on future programme places will be made. By sharing this information in advance of the 2024 International season, athletes know what performance data will be used to assess athlete performance for the purposes of this Qualification Policy.
- 1.5. This Qualification Policy is subject to ongoing review and Paddle UK reserves the right to make amendments to reflect changes in circumstances, including but not limited to, funding changes and the outcome of the Los Angeles 2028 funding award from UK Sport.
- 1.6. This is not a team selection policy. Paddle UK GBR Team Selection will be determined by the relevant Selection Policies and is separate from WCP membership.

2. Principles

- 2.1. Paddle UK seeks through subjective decision making based on evidence informed insight to select a strong, balanced group of athletes to target medals in all six Olympic medal events at the L.A and Brisbane Olympic Games. In assessing athlete performance, the overall profile of an athlete is primarily established through performance trajectory data. Achieving a 'matrix result' in itself is only a mechanism for consideration of a programme place.
- 2.2. WCP membership is put in place to support an athlete's future performance(s) and is not a reward for past performance(s).

- 2.3. Athletes are assessed for membership of the WCP on an annual basis. Subject to the provisions of Section 10, an athlete will be offered a WCP Place for a period of up to 12 months and will not be guaranteed membership from one year to the next.
- 2.4. WCP membership is optional. By accepting membership of the WCP and associated Athlete Performance Award (APA) funding, the athlete is agreeing to the monitoring procedures and conditions outlined in the Athlete Agreement.
- 2.5. This Qualification Policy operates in conjunction with the UK Sport APA Policy issued 10 March 2021 (subject to ongoing review) and all relevant Paddle UK policies including, but not limited to, Equality Policy, Anti-Doping Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Transgender Policy, Data Protection Policy, Declaration of Interests and Anti Bribery Policy.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1. To be considered for a WCP place, athletes must:
 - 3.1.1. meet the Paddle UK eligibility criteria and those of the IOC, the BOA and UK Sport (as appropriate) to represent the British Team at the Olympic Games including holding a British Passport;
 - 3.1.2. meet the criteria as set out in [UK Sport's Eligibility and Rules Policy](#) for athletes in receipt of public funding and/or publicly funded benefits;
 - 3.1.3. be a member of Paddle UK, or one of the National Paddling Associations in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and remain so during their time on the Programme; and
 - 3.1.4. not be serving a ban from participation in the sport for any reason (such as a result of being found guilty of a doping offence).
- 3.2. Athletes meeting the eligibility requirements at 3.1 will then only be considered under this Qualification Policy if they:
 - 3.2.1. achieved selection to a GBR Canoe Slalom and/or Kayak Cross Team in 2024 AND achieved one of the results listed in the Athlete Matrix table at Appendix 3 ; **OR**
 - 3.2.2. were a member of the WCP in 2023 or 2024; **OR**
 - 3.2.3. are one of up to four athletes who have not met the criteria at 3.2.1 or 3.2.2 but are identified by the Performance Director at their discretion as having the potential to achieve excellence within the WCP.

4. WCP Places

- 4.1. The maximum number of athlete places available on the WCP split between Podium (A&B APA levels) and Academy (C, D & E APA Levels) will only be determined following confirmation of UK Sport funding levels in December 2024. The number of athlete places offered under this programme will be influenced by the available places, the ability of the WCP to support and resource the needs

of athletes in priority order and the level of athlete performance. This Qualification Policy does not require all possible WCP places to be filled.

- 4.2. Where WCP places become available during WCP year the Performance Director may make a recommendation to UK Sport for further athlete nomination(s) for WCP inclusion ahead of the annual review. Any nominations would be made in line with the principles of this Qualification Policy and are subject to UK Sport approval.

5. WCP Nomination Panel

- 5.1. The WCP Nomination Panel (WCPNP) will consist of the Performance Director, Lead Coach Academy Programme, Performance Support Lead and Head of Performance Operations. Each member of the WCPNP will have one vote with the Performance Director chairing the WCPNP and having the casting vote. A member of the Governance Team may attend as a non-voting observer and, at the Performance Director's discretion, non-voting observers including but not limited to the BEAA and UK Sport may be invited to attend WCPNP meetings.
- 5.2. The WCPNP have sole discretion in making subjective decisions in line with the policy principles and overall objectives.

6. Nomination Objectives

- 6.1. The nomination process will seek to:
 - 6.1.1. select the strongest overall squad of athletes to target the medals in all 6 Olympic medal events;
 - 6.1.2. prioritise the selection of athletes with greatest likelihood of contending for medals in the 2028 L.A. Olympic Games whilst also identifying athletes with greatest likelihood to become senior medallists in the Brisbane cycle and therefore likely to be contending for medals at the Brisbane Olympic Games;
 - 6.1.3. prioritise athletes with Slalom and combined Slalom and Kayak Cross profiles;
 - 6.1.4. consider the long-term development of athletes towards L.A. and Brisbane objectives; and
 - 6.1.5. prioritise athletes with a multi-Olympic cycle age profile where possible.

7. Nomination Process

7.1. Stage 1. WCPNP Ranking

- 7.1.1. The WCPNP will create an initial ranking order through assessment of all eligible athletes' trajectory (as described in Appendix 1 for Canoe Slalom and Appendix 2 for Kayak Cross). All eligible athletes will receive a copy of their individual trajectory data.

- 7.1.2. The WCPNP will then consider the eligible athletes' highest counting Athlete Matrix Result attained through 2024 results in line with the table at Appendix 3 and may adjust the initial ranking order to reflect this.
- 7.1.3. The WCPNP will then conduct individual athlete assessments and may make further changes to the ranking order to consider other factors that in the reasonable opinion of the WCPNP are relevant to selecting the strongest overall squad aligned to the Nominations Objectives, which may include the following non-exclusive factors:
 - 7.1.3.1. Progress and commitment against goals;
 - 7.1.3.2. The level of clarity and confidence in their performance plans towards the Olympic Games the WCPNP identify as the targeted games for that athlete;
 - 7.1.3.3. Their likelihood to engage and thrive in the WCP environment, taking into account previous evidence of engagement;
 - 7.1.3.4. Adherence to any conditions of ongoing funding/WCP place;
 - 7.1.3.5. Any exceptional circumstances considerations arising from section 11 of this Policy.

7.2. Stage 2: Review of initial ranking list with WCP coaches

The WCPNP will engage WCP technical coaches and identified performance support team staff in a review of the initial ranking and supporting rationale. The WCPNP may then adjust the initial ranking order to reflect outcomes of this review against the Nomination Objectives and criteria at 7.1.

7.3. Stage 3: Further Review

The WCPNP may identify any athletes where further context, data or insight is needed to complete the ranking. Where identified, the WCPNP may then meet with athletes, performance support team members and/or coach(es) and/or review further data or insight gathered. The WCPNP may then adjust the initial ranking order to reflect outcomes of this review against the Nomination Objectives and criteria at 7.1.

7.4. Stage 4: Nomination

- 7.4.1. The WCPNP will finalise the athlete ranking and recommend the number of WCP places to be filled and the athletes nominated to these places with the Director of Paddlesport for their approval.
- 7.4.2. The Director of Paddlesport, on behalf of the Paddle UK Board, will approve the list of athlete nominations to be put forward to UK Sport.
- 7.4.3. All nominations are subject to final approval from UK Sport and will be communicated to athletes in writing (via email) following confirmation from UK Sport.

8. Athlete Performance Award (APA)

- 8.1. Athletes qualifying and being approved by UK Sport for a WCP place will be entitled to direct funding to contribute to their living and sporting costs (Athlete Performance Award, or 'APA').
- 8.2. Athletes will be nominated for APAs at the levels aligned to the bandings set out in the Athlete Matrix at Appendix 3.
- 8.3. All APA levels and payments are subject to UK Sport's ability to pay and the provisions of UK Sport's APA Policy, including means testing.
- 8.4. All stated APA award values in Appendix 3 are subject to review and confirmation by UK Sport.

9. Conditions upon athletes in receipt of UK Sport lottery funding

- 9.1. Qualification and continued retention of a WCP Place is conditional upon the athlete signing an Athlete Agreement and adhering to its terms. Failure to sign the Athlete Agreement will result in the withdrawal of an Athlete's WCP place. Subsequent failure to adhere to the terms of the Athlete Agreement may result in an Athlete being removed from the WCP.
- 9.2. Any new or returning Athlete nominated for a WCP athlete place for 2025 will be required to undertake a medical screening process, attend a meeting with an academy programme coach and also need to take part in an induction process prior to final acceptance onto the WCP.

10. WCP Term

- 10.1. Athletes qualifying under this Qualification Policy are entitled to a WCP Place for a period of up to 12 months commencing on 1st January 2025 subject to the following exceptions:
 - 10.1.1. The Performance Director may nominate an athlete who achieved a medal at the Paris Olympic Games for more than 12 months subject to the athlete demonstrating clear and compelling evidence-based performance data indicating World Championship and/or L.A. Olympic Games medal performance and compliance with objectives or actions agreed with the Performance Director.
 - 10.1.2. The Performance Director may nominate an athlete achieving A or B band APA funding through Paris Olympic Games or World Championship performances to receive the same level APA funding for two years subject to the athlete demonstrating clear and compelling evidence-based performance data indicating World Championship and/or L.A. Olympic Games medal performance and compliance with objectives or actions agreed with the Performance Director.
 - 10.1.3. The Performance Director may nominate a new junior athlete transitioning into U23's as a confirmation athlete for a period of up to 2 years subject to

satisfactory engagement and/or progress within the programme prior to full confirmation as an academy athlete.

10.2. Paddle UK reserve the right to withdraw an Athletes WCP Place and associated APA funding if any of the following non-exhaustive factors apply:

10.2.1. The Athlete fails to meet the eligibility criteria at section 3 of this Qualification Policy;

10.2.2. A Paddle UK Disciplinary Panel determine the WCP place should be withdrawn in accordance with Paddle UK's Athlete Disciplinary Policy or Safeguarding Procedure;

10.2.3. Specific performance targets provided within the athlete WCP place offer letter are not met by the Athlete; or

10.2.4. The Athlete, pursuant to section 10 below, is not considered fit to train and/or compete for a period exceeding three consecutive months or it is considered that continued participation in the WCP would constitute an unacceptable risk of causing injury or illness as assessed by Paddle UK's Sports Science and Medicine Staff. In such cases, an athlete would be given at least 3 months' WCP support and funding before their WCP place ended.

10.3. Athletes who held a WCP place in 2024 who have not qualified for a WCP Place in 2025 under this Qualification Policy or whose WCP place ends for any reason except those detailed in 9.2.1 or 9.2.2 above, will be communicated with directly by the Lead Academy Coach or Performance Director and will receive a minimum one-month notice period and will continue to have access to performance lifestyle support for up to 6 months after their last APA payment. Athletes are also entitled to additional transitional funding from UK Sport at their APA award level dependent on the total continuous period of programme membership. This additional transitional funding will be provided as follows:

10.3.1. More than 1 year but less than 2 years = 1 month transitional award;

10.3.2. More than 2 years but less than 3 years = 2 months transitional award;

10.3.3. More than 3 years = 3 months transitional award.

11. Exceptional Circumstances

11.1. It is recognised that there may be exceptional circumstances affecting an athlete's ability to meet the qualification requirements set out within this policy but who can still demonstrate, in both training and racing, an evidence-based performance profile towards L.A. and/or Brisbane Olympic Games.

11.2. If an athlete considers they have a case for exceptional circumstances they must apply for consideration of these in writing to the Performance Director setting out:

11.2.1. Full details of the exceptional circumstance(s);

11.2.2. The impact of these exceptional circumstances during the season;

11.2.3. How the circumstances were raised and managed with their coach during 2024;

11.2.4. How the athlete demonstrates an evidence-based performance profile towards the L.A or Brisbane Olympic Games: And

11.2.5. The supporting evidence they wish to rely on (which may include medical evidence or performance data).

11.3. Any application for consideration under this clause MUST be received by the Performance Director mark.ratcliffe@paddleuk.org.uk by midday on 11th October 2024.

11.4. Any request for exceptional circumstances will be considered by the Performance Director at their absolute discretion. If the Performance Director considers exceptional circumstances apply, this will be considered in the Ranking Order Adjustment process at 7.1.

12. Long term injury and illness (physical and mental)

12.1. In the event of injury/illness (both physical and mental), and specifically in cases where an athlete is considered likely to recover to full fitness for training and competition, an athlete may continue to receive their full APA up to three months immediately following the point the injury/illness occurred.

12.2. If after a period of three months the athlete remains unavailable for full selection or training the WCPNP and Sports physician/medical team will review the athlete's individual circumstances and assess the likelihood of the athlete returning to full training and to the desired level of performance. They will also consider the athletes adherence to prescribed rehabilitation and timelines for projected return.

12.3. Each case will be considered on its own merits and further expert opinion may be sought to inform the decision. The Athlete's progress will need to be reported to UK Sport every three months thereafter, until the athlete has resumed full training or the WCP membership ends.

12.4. Subject to satisfactory evidence of likely return to training and performance level, the APA may continue to be paid for up to a period of one year from initial occurrence. The final decision to continue funding will be made by the Performance Director at their absolute discretion.

12.5. Where there is informed opinion that the injury/illness will affect the performance level of the athlete or the athlete has not been able to show progress nor commitment to the agreed rehab programme, the athletes WCP membership will end following a notice transition period which will be communicated by the Performance Director.

13. Athlete Pregnancy

Being pregnant and an elite athlete should not be mutually exclusive. To ensure support is provided for athletes who wish to have a child whilst they are in membership of our WCP and in receipt of an APA, the following policy will apply:

13.1. Athletes in receipt of APA funding will remain eligible to access their full APA (subject to means testing) for the duration of the pregnancy at the APA level they

were on at the time of becoming pregnant and for up to nine months post childbirth. Continued access to the APA post childbirth will be dependent on:

- 13.1.1. The athlete's intention to return to the sport and the programme being discussed and confirmed no later than six months post childbirth
- 13.1.2. At the point where the intention of the athlete is clear, forming a mutually agreed plan/timetable for return to training and competition – this plan will acknowledge the athlete's experience of pregnancy, the impact on them physically and mentally and the nature of the event they are returning to
- 13.1.3. Monitoring, reviewing and confirming that the athlete has made the necessary commitment to this plan and is on track to return.
- 13.1.4. If the level of commitment and or progress against this plan are not demonstrated, the athlete would be given notice and offered a period of transition before the APA funding stops (see athletes Leaving the Programme).
- 13.1.5. At nine months post childbirth the potential of the athlete will be assessed and confirmed to UK Sport in order to continue to access the APA. This assessment will indicate the athlete's future medal potential and not necessarily performance outcomes.
- 13.1.6. An athlete who announces retirement from their sport during pregnancy or in the initial six months post childbirth, will not be given a further period of notice before the APA terminates.
- 13.1.7. In the event of complications either during the pregnancy or post childbirth, this policy will be flexed as is reasonable to accommodate these circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

14. The Appeals Procedure

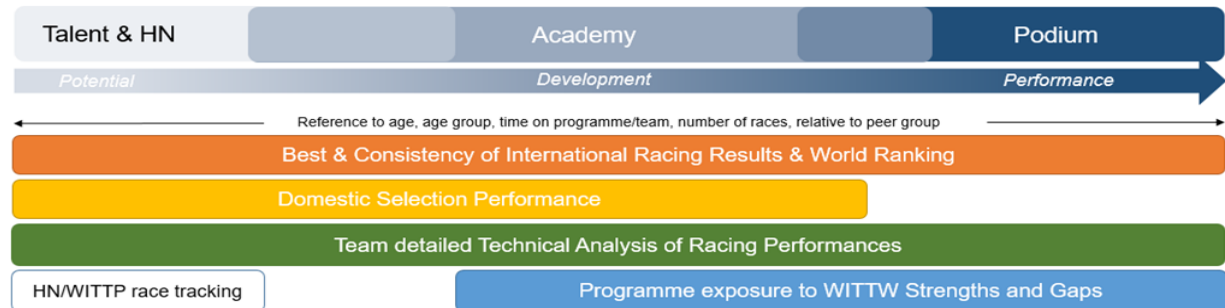
- 14.1. In the event of an athlete wishing to Appeal against a decision under this policy, they may appeal in accordance with the Appeals Procedure in place at the relevant time. The Appeals Procedure can be found [here](#).
- 14.2. The British Elite Athletes Association (BEAA) can provide independent advice and support to WCP Athletes via support@britisheliteathletes.org Further information can be found [here](#).
- 14.3. Athletes may also access support through the Paddle UK Governance Team.

- End of policy -

Appendix 1: Canoe Slalom: How an Athlete’s Olympic Trajectory is Assessed

Analysis of previous senior and Olympic athletes has informed the key markers which underpin both the **2024 performance matrix** and **athlete trajectory information**.

Athletes are profiled primarily against 2028 (and 2032) in line with their age and stage of development. Information collated for assessment as in the broad areas shown below:



Previous GBR Olympic cohorts indicate that 5 years from your first games (2023 for L.A.) you are more ‘likely’ to be in contention if you are:

- In the GBR Senior team already & achieving Senior final standard performance at international races

At 5-9 years out before your first games there is not a ‘consistent’ story to describe the trajectory of Olympians. However since 2009 all athletes making the SNR team for the first time have:

- Been U23 at the time of making the senior team (with an average age of 20) & have represented the Junior team at least once

Athlete trajectory through race information is assessed in line with the performance markers outlined & through the lens of, but not limited to, the example questions below:

Los Angeles/Brisbane trajectory

- Has the athlete performed within the top 3 in class as a Jnr or U23 OR shown performance levels needed to make GBR teams? (%)
- Has the athlete’s performances (%) at selection shown progression towards SNR team?
- Has the athlete’s round placings at Age group events shown the potential to make Finals? E.g., Top 10 placings in Heats & Semi Finals
- Is the athlete tracking within or towards the average trajectory of SNR medallists and has an age profile for L.A. and beyond?
- Has the athlete produced Age level WITTP race standards OR Showing SNR Final WITTP standards?

Los Angeles trajectory

- Has the athlete made the GBR Senior team?
- Is the athlete performing inside the Senior Top 10 at international events? E.g. in Heats and Semi Finals OR in the Senior Team
- Is the athlete tracking within or towards the average trajectory of SNR medallists and has an age profile for Los Angeles?
- Has the athlete produced SNR Gold or Medal WITTP standards within splits and Full runs?

Appendix 2: Kayak Cross: How an Athlete’s Trajectory is assessed

For Kayak Cross the lack of historical Olympic Games data and the rapid evolution of the rules means that it is not possible to conduct a similar type analysis to that completed for Canoe Slalom (CSL). Despite this, cross sectional analysis of performance results from Kayak Cross (CSLX) informs indicators for progression in the discipline. For example, since the 2022 season:

Kayak Cross medalist profile across 2022-23 seasons		
CSL final standard: What % of KX medalists have achieved this standard in either Kayak or Canoe across career at SNR races.		
TT rank: Where have KX medalists placed in the TT in race where the medal was won (% in each bracket).		
	Male	Female
CSL Final Standard	73%	95%
TT Rank	Top 20	93%
	Top 10	69%
	Top 5	48%

Early indications for the Olympic Qualification System (OQS) for Los Angeles shows the predominant route to Olympic representation in Kayak Cross will be via Canoe Slalom quota spots, emphasising the link between the disciplines. However, the Kayak Cross only quota places may provide a route for single class Kayak Cross paddlers, albeit likely to need to deliver a medal performance at a World Cup event. Therefore, the following are examples of indicators (but not limited to) for progression towards Los Angeles outside of final race ranking:

- Top 3 in GBR Senior CSL Selection OR makes GBR team at CSLX selection or has opportunity to race Senior events in 2024
- Position with Time Trial e.g., Top 20 or Top 5 performance at SNR International races
- Evolving What It Takes To Win (WITTW) race analysis
- Delivery of CSL performance in Senior International races

The process of understanding the indicators for progression towards Los Angeles is still evolving in line with the principles above. Paddlers demonstrating the ability to make GBR teams for competitive opportunities, deliver time trial performance and show an ability to perform tactically to produce positive head-to-head outcomes at races at international races at JNR/U23/SNR level will be assessed as showing progression. Given the apparent interrelationship between performance ability in CSL and CSXL, having positive indicators in both will be considered to strengthen an individual’s profile.

WITTW and trajectory information will be assessed to guide decisions where needed. Examples including but not limited to;

For example- Where two athletes with a similar matrix result may be separated via a stronger Selection performance e.g., in %’s or overall ranking within class. OR

For example- Where an athlete may need to evidence a medal trajectory towards L.A. for age. OR;

For example- Where two athletes with similar matrix results can be separated on their trajectory towards Senior team/Senior Final standard or criteria for podium support. One athlete is not closing the gap to senior team the other is showing progression or is at a stronger stage of development at a younger age

Appendix 3: 2025 Athlete Matrix Table:

2025 Athlete Matrix					
2024	Level	APA		Rank	Canoe Slalom programme- matrix race profile
L.A. results profile	Podium	A+/A	£28K/	1	Olympic Medallist
			£26.5K		
		B+/B	£23K/	2	Medal at Senior CSL / CSLX European Championships
			£21.5K	3	Top 8 at CSL / CSLX Olympic Games
L.A. Potential	£19k	4	Current Podium athletes not achieving Podium result with evidence of L.A. profile/nominated Olympic boat without Podium result		
Brisbane results profile	Academy	Podium Potential	C	16K	6 Top 12 at CSL European Championships
					7 Top 8 at Senior CSLX European Championships
					8 Top 10 at Senior CSL World Cups
					9 Top 8 at Senior CSLX World Cups
					10 Medal at U23 CSL / CSLX World / European Championships
			D	13k	11 Top 20 at CSL Senior European Championships (U22)
					12 Top 16 at CSLX Senior European Championships (U22)
					13 Top 20 at CSL Senior World Cups (U22)
					14 Top 16 at CSLX World Cups (U22)
					15 Top 10 at U23 CSL World / Top 12 at European Championships (U22)
	16 2nd Medal at Junior CSL / CSLX World / European Championships in any category (Must be in 2 separate years)				
	17 Top 8 at U23 CSLX World / European Championships (U22)				
	Confirmation	E	7.5k	18 Top 16 at U23 CSL World / European Championships (by U20)	
				19 Top 16 at U23 CSLX World / European Championships (U20)	
				20 Top 10 result at CSL Junior World / Top 12 at CSL European Championships	
				21 Top 8 result at CSLX Junior World / Top 8 at CSLX European Championships	

Note the following points that form part of the UK Sport policy framework:

- To qualify for A+ and B+ level, the respective band must be achieved in 2 different competitive seasons and does not need to be achieved in the same event/discipline (e.g. results from both kayak cross and canoe slalom can be considered proving they are attained in different competitive seasons).
- Los Angeles Potential awards based on strong L.A. trajectory can only be made for one year.
- Academy places are not available for previous Podium level athletes unless changing event or discipline.
- Current C, D and E band athletes not achieving a matrix result may be recommended for a programme place with evidence of L.A./Brisbane trajectory based on an athlete’s primary identified Games.
- APA amounts shown above are indicative only based on 2024 levels and subject to review.