

# Athlete Categorisation Framework

## Nomination Guidelines

As prescribed by the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), athlete categorisation is a national framework to identify, track and prioritise athletes at each stage of the Performance Journey, to support Australia consistently winning medals at major international events. Athlete Categorisation will be used to determine an athlete's dAIS level as well as to inform planning and to prioritise support to best achieve system targets.

This document outlines the agreed minimum performance criteria established for the respective athlete categories for which athletes will be considered, together with the process and timeframe for the allocation of athletes to these categories.

The support provided to athletes as a result of the categorisation process enables athletes to pursue a commitment to performance excellence. Importantly, to be prioritised for support, **an athlete must demonstrate potential for future success – past results alone will not ensure support.**

### 1. Glossary of terms

For the purpose of clarity, outlined below are a number of terms, words and abbreviations used throughout this document:

TERM	EXPLANATION
<b>Pinnacle and Benchmark Events</b>	The pinnacle events are the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games. The annual benchmark events will be the Senior World Championships for seniors and the relevant age World Championship for underage athletes.
<b>Olympic/Paralympic Boat Class</b>	Refers to a specific boat class that is offered on the Olympic/Paralympic Program. These boat classes are: Olympic - M1x, M2x, M4x, M2-, M4-, M8+, LM2x, W1x, W2x, W4x, W2-, W4-, W8+, LW2x. Paralympic - PR1M1x, PR1W1x, PR2Mix2x, PR3Mix2x, PR3Mix4+.
<b>Olympic/Paralympic Discipline</b>	Discipline refers to a category of rowing. These categories include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Olympic - Women's Sweep, Women's Sculling, Men's Sweep, Men's Sculling, Lightweight Women's Sculling, Lightweight Men's Sculling.</li> <li>Paralympic – Women's PR1, Men's PR1, Mixed PR2 and Mixed PR3.</li> </ul>
<b>National Training Centre Program (NTC)</b>	An NTC is one of two centres operated by Rowing Australia – the Hancock Prospecting Women's National Training Centre and the Reinhold Batschi Men's National Training Centre.
<b>Pathway Centre</b>	A Pathway Centre is a state-based program, underpinning the NTCs, and includes those categorised athletes not housed at an NTC.
<b>Domestic Preparation</b>	Refers to the period of time between the conduct of a pinnacle event and national team selection.
<b>International Preparation</b>	Refers to the period of time between national team selection and the conduct of a pinnacle event.
<b>Daily Training Environment (DTE)</b>	Refers to the daily training location for an individual athlete. Reference may also be made to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International DTE which is the location for the preparation of a national team crew between national team selection and the conduct of a pinnacle event; or</li> <li>Domestic DTE which is the training location of an athlete between pinnacle event and selection of national team crews</li> </ul>
<b>ILPP</b>	Individual Learning and Performance Plan
<b>RA</b>	Rowing Australia
<b>IPM</b>	Individual Performance Monitoring

### 2. Talent Pathway

Rowing Australia's long-term high performance plan's centre pieces are the two centralised National Training Centres and a bespoke state-based pathway programs, working with schools, clubs, and states to enhance the development of young athletes.

These programs have a clear goal of developing athletes capable of transitioning into the national training centres and assisting RA achieve its aim of being a leading rowing nation in the world. The programs have a broad focus that includes traditional pathway development incorporating talent identification, a greater focus on national team retention and outcomes, and the US-Based Australian Program. The primary delivery mechanism for senior level athletes is via the RA Men's and Women's NTCs.

### 3. Overview of Athlete Categories

a. **Athlete Categories:** The National Performance Categorisation consists of the following tiers and criteria:

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Description &amp; Criteria</b>
<b>Podium</b>	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.
<b>Podium Ready</b>	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.
<b>Podium Potential</b>	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.
<b>Developing</b>	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.
<b>Emerging</b>	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.

**b. Rowing Athlete Categories – the National Performance Categorisation will be applied to Rowing using the following sport-specific matrix:**

Category	Rowing Criteria
1. Podium	Athletes finishing in the Top 3 at the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, or Senior A World Championships in the past 24 months, in an Olympic/Paralympic boat class. Athlete must also demonstrate a performance trajectory consistent with winning a medal at the next Olympic or Paralympic Games.
2. Podium Ready	Athletes finishing 4 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> at the most recent Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, or Senior A World Championships in an Olympic/Paralympic boat class. Athletes must also demonstrate a performance trajectory consistent with winning a medal at the next Olympic or Paralympic Games.
3. Podium Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes finishing <u>9+</u> at the most recent Olympic Games, Paralympic Games or Senior A World Championship in an <u>Olympic boat class</u></li> <li>OR</li> <li>• Athletes achieving <u>finish positions 1-3</u> at the most recent Senior A World Championship in a <u>Non-Olympic/Paralympic boat class</u></li> <li>OR</li> <li>• Athletes achieving a gold medal performance at the most recent Under 23 World Championships and recommended by the Pathways Head Coach;</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• NTC athletes not already categorised</li> </ul> <p>Athlete must also demonstrate a performance trajectory consistent with progressing to Podium Ready.</p>
4. Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes achieving finish <u>position 1-6</u> at the most recent Under 23 World Championship</li> <li><u>OR</u></li> <li>• Athletes deemed capable of progressing to <i>Podium Potential</i>, typically in the next 2 – 4 years and by recommendation of state Head Coach and/or program administrator, will have performances assessed against RA benchmarks in on and off water monitored activities, that may include time trials and ergometers;</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• Athletes achieving a gold medal performance at the most recent Under 19 World Championships and recommended by the Pathways Head Coach.</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• Athletes selected onto the National Under 23 Team for a particular year who are not already categorised <u>MAY</u> be considered for inclusion at this tier.</li> </ul> <p>Discussions regarding ILPPs between state leads, the National Pathway Head Coach, National Pathway Science Lead, coaches, and athletes themselves must be conducted in order to be considered at this level.</p> <p>Athletes must also demonstrate a performance trajectory consistent with progressing to Podium Potential.</p>
5. Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete achieving finish <u>position 1-6 at the most recent Junior World Championship</u> and recommended by Deputy Performance Director and Pathways Head Coach</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• Athlete deemed capable of progressing to <i>Podium Potential</i>, typically in the next four years and by recommendation of state Head Coach and/or program administrator, will have their performances assessed against RA benchmarks in on and off water monitored activities, that may include time trials and ergometers.</li> </ul> <p>Discussions regarding ILPPs between state leads, the National Pathway Head Coach, National Pathway Science Lead, coaches and athletes themselves must be conducted in order to be considered at this level.</p> <p>Athlete must also demonstrate a performance trajectory consistent with progressing to Developing or above.</p> <p>Inclusion at this tier may be considered for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes selected onto the National Junior or U21 Team for a particular year (who have not currently been categorised) may be considered at this level on a case-by-case basis and will be assessed against performance standards and recommendation of state Head Coach and/or program administrator;</li> <li>• Athletes deemed capable of progressing to <i>Developing</i>, typically in the next two years, and by recommendation of state Head Coach and/or program administrator, will have their performances assessed against RA benchmarks in on and off water monitored activities, that may include time trials and ergometers.</li> </ul>

## 4. Pre-Eligibility Requirements

In order to be considered for categorisation, and in turn receive support, athletes must comply with the following criteria:

- Be an Australian citizen\*, eligible and available to represent the Australian Rowing Team in international competition.
- Be actively training towards and seeking selection for the relevant pinnacle event.
- Be a registered member of Rowing Australia or a member state association.
- Have completed all necessary documentation and requirements for individual SIS/SAS, where relevant.
- Comply with all anti-doping and other policy requirements of Rowing Australia and Sport Australia
- Agree to be bound by and comply with all Rowing Australia policies available at <https://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/rowing-australia-policies/>, including without limitation the Member Protection Policy, Anti-Doping Policy, National Policy on Match-Fixing and NTC Invitation Guidelines.
- If requested to do so by Rowing Australia, sign a Rowing Australia Participant Agreement. Athletes acknowledge that it is a condition of eligibility for categorisation that RA may make such a request.
- Complete all medical screening requirements.
- Maintain a lifestyle conducive to sporting excellence
- Abide by the rules and spirit of the sport of rowing
- Maintain the high standard of personal behaviour expected of an athlete representing Australia or seeking to represent Australia
- Not bring the sport of rowing, Rowing Australia, or Sport Australia into disrepute.
- Para athletes should hold a *review* or *confirmed* status international classification. The international classification must align with the sport class for which they are categorized. Any para athlete without an international classification cannot be categorized higher than *Level 5 – Emerging*.

**If, at any given time, an athlete receives an offer for a position at one of Rowing Australia’s NTCs and declines that invitation, the athlete’s Categorisation and any associated support provided in the DTE will be reviewed if an exemption has not been granted based on exceptional circumstances. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.**

**\*Note: If an athlete is actively pursuing Australian citizenship, an exemption to this requirement may be granted by:**

- In the case of Senior athletes, the Performance Director; and
- In the case of underage and pathway athletes, the Deputy Performance Director.

## 5. Athlete Support

In order to ensure appropriate support to categorised athletes, as well as ensuring maximisation of medal performances at pinnacle events, consideration has been given to the number of athletes that can be supported within the Athlete Categorisation process.

Note that the provision of services is subject to available resources. The membership of a particular category does not automatically entitle an athlete to receive support, and athletes within the same category may not receive the same level of support. The prioritisation of this support is at the discretion of Rowing Australia.

## 6. Categorisation Review Periods

The categorisation process will be led by the Deputy Performance Director and signed off by the Performance Director. The categorisation of athletes will be subject to ongoing reviews, and based upon those factors listed in the sport-specific matrix; that is, assessment of performances against RA benchmarks in on and off water monitored activities, such as time trials and ergometers, for example, and ILPPs as discussed between state leads, the National Pathway Head Coach, National Pathway Science Lead, coaches and athletes themselves.

Membership of the program will be formally reviewed on two occasions throughout the year, at which time athletes may be added, removed or moved to a different category. The first review is conducted in October so as to ensure a commencement of the domestic preparation of athletes in any given year. This review refers to the section of the criteria table “Rowing Criteria – Domestic” and is based on performance in a pinnacle event. The second system-wide review is conducted in May following the selection of National Teams. This review refers to the section of the criteria “Rowing Criteria – International”.

Recognising that the development and progression of athletes varies greatly between individuals, Rowing Australia has the flexibility to consider the categorisation of athletes outside of these formal review periods on a case-by-case basis. Requests to be considered on this basis will be generated by state Pathway Programs and will take into consideration assessment of performances against RA benchmarks in on and off water monitored activities, such as time trials and ergometers and ILPPs as discussed between state leads, the National Pathway Head Coach, National Pathway Science Lead, coaches and athletes themselves.

**Ongoing Individual Performance Monitoring** – Athletes will be assessed against their “Individual Learning and Performance Plan” (ILPP) within their Daily Training Environment. If following a review an athlete is deemed not to be progressing, they will be provided opportunity to address any concerns within a three-month period. Failure to address concerns in an appropriate manner may result in the level of support being changed or an athlete being removed completely from the support program.

Any athlete who at any point in time fails to meet the pre-eligibility requirements may also be subject to review of support.

## 7. Selection, appeal and review process

The process for reviewing, considering and finalising the categorisation of athletes will involve:

- state-based applicant screening and selection discussions
- forwarding of state recommendations to Rowing Australia
- conduct of a National Moderation Meeting including Rowing Australia, state Program Leads and a representative from the AIS
- final Categorisation recommendations forwarded to the AIS for approval
- publication of confirmed Categorisation list

The table below outlines the specific dates for these processes in the current Categorisation period:

Athlete Categorisation Selection - Timeline	
Date	Activity
23 May, 2023	Categorisation sent to each state for applicant screening and selection discussion
5 June, 2023	State recommendations forwarded to Rowing Australia
8 June, 2023	National Categorisation Moderation Meeting, recommendations to the Performance Director
12 June, 2023	National Categorisation recommendations forwarded to AIS
	Confirmation and publication of Categorisation

The consideration of adding or removing individual athletes from the Categorisation list will be conducted outside of these timelines.

The appeal process for any Senior athlete unsatisfied with the Categorisation outcomes is in accordance with the Rowing Australia SNR Appeals Policy which is published on the Rowing Australia website.

## 8. Expected Progression

Underpinning inclusion is the expected progression of athletes. In reviewing athletes’ inclusion significant weight will be given to the progression of an athlete in their on-water performances over time together with their progress against other factors addressed in their Individual Learning and Performance Plan.

## 9. Indicators of Future Potential

The primary measure of future potential is in boat performances in Underage Teams. Senior age athletes are benchmarked against historical data in making a determination on potential for future success. The ILPP is an important piece in determining the future ‘medal’ potential of an athlete.

## 10. Special Consideration

Should an exceptional circumstance prevent an athlete from achieving the required result for Podium or Podium Ready levels at a pinnacle event and there is compelling evidence that the athlete should be included in one of these categories, the personal and individual circumstances of such athletes can be taken into consideration.

## 11. Key Contacts

Should you have questions or require further information, please see the list of key contacts below:

ROLE	NAME	DETAILS
Performance Director	Paul Thompson	<a href="mailto:pthompson@rowingaustralia.com.au">pthompson@rowingaustralia.com.au</a> ; 0459 224 464
Deputy Performance Director	Jaime Fernandez	<a href="mailto:jfernandez@rowingaustralia.com.au">jfernandez@rowingaustralia.com.au</a> ; 0427 271 297
Head Coach - Men's NTC	Rhett Ayliffe	<a href="mailto:rayliffe@rowingaustralia.com.au">rayliffe@rowingaustralia.com.au</a> ; 0488 090 622
Head Coach - Women's NTC	John Keogh	<a href="mailto:jkeogh@rowingaustralia.com.au">jkeogh@rowingaustralia.com.au</a> ; 0448 777 339
Head Coach - Para Rowing	Chad King	<a href="mailto:cking@rowingaustralia.com.au">cking@rowingaustralia.com.au</a> ; 0424 588 260
Head Coach - Pathways	Jason Lane	<a href="mailto:jlane@rowingaustralia.com.au">jlane@rowingaustralia.com.au</a> ; 0458 769 631
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