

Para
Performance
Programme
Qualification
Criteria
2025-2026

'People come before Podiums'

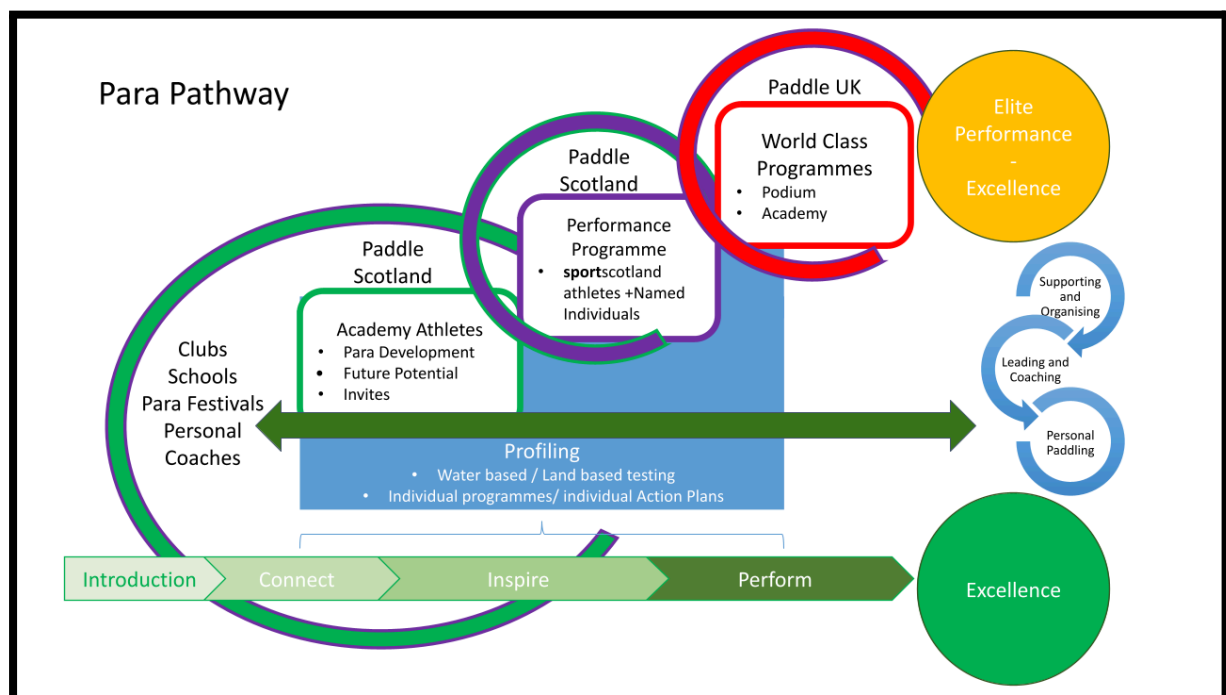
Purpose

Our programme purpose is to support talented athletes, coaches and clubs to be the best they can be, to support success in paddling & life, and ultimately leave all those who pass through the programme as better, more rounded individuals.

Participation at every level in our pathway presents numerous opportunities and challenges that can positively impact upon our aspiring athletes in the long term, regardless of their eventual level of achievement within the sport. We want to identify and nurture promising athletes whilst ensuring the overall experience is positive and rewarding for all. It is hoped that some paddlers will become world class performers, however for those who do not, through supporting their development we hope to build a level of competence and enjoyment of the sport in a way that has a positive impact on their development as a person.

Performance Programme

The Paddle Scotland Performance Programme is divided into a tiered, progressive structure with clearly defined levels, each with its own defined Performance Criteria and capacity, this is illustrated below:



Academy Athletes- The purpose of this group aims to develop and prepare athletes in a manner which assists them to accelerate onto the **sportscotland** sponsored element of the programme, by offering Inclusive Training and development opportunities for athletes at different venues. Outside of a coach there is no funding for this part of the programme. Ultimately this group will be about creating a critical mass to further nurture individuals and help them to learn as a group and get quality time on task. Invites to this group will be liaison with the Talent Transition Lead Coach and Clubs.

Scottish Performance Programme (SPS) - Primarily supporting athletes aged 15-30 who have an eligible impairment. The SPS aims to support athletes to qualify onto GB teams and make the Para World and European Championship finals (top 10 results). Up to 10 boats from Para classes can be selected in total.

Eligibility

To be eligible to be part of the Paddle Scotland Performance Programme from 2025-2026 an athlete must be a Scottish member of Paddle Scotland and satisfy the following:

- Have been born in Scotland or;
- Resident in Scotland or;
- Have a parent who was born in Scotland.

Classification

The three eligible impairment types for paracanoe are:

- Impaired Muscle Power
- Impaired Passive Range of Motion
- Limb Deficiency

Specific impairments that have been classified in the national and international paracanoe circuit are lower limb amputations, spinal injuries, spina bifida, and other lower limb impairments such as talipes. Please note that cerebral palsy does not classify in paracanoe.

Upper limb impairments are not yet included in the international circuit, however the research that goes into parasports classification is taking place and we hope this will become a classifiable impairment type. Aspiring paracanoe athletes with an upper limb impairment are encouraged to pursue the sport so if or when upper limb impairments become classifiable you are ready to chase your ambitions.

Paracanoe Assessment Criteria

Given the developmental nature of the paracanoe pathway within Scotland the inclusion of paracanoe athletes within the performance squads setup will be taken on a case by case basis and will require the agreement of the HoPP, Sprint Squad coaches and the Talent Transition Coach Lead. The decision making process will be focused around the following factors:

1. **Performance based:** Is the athlete's paddling standard at such a level that they can integrate into squad sessions without impacting on the overall feasibility of running sessions?
2. **Trajectory:** If not currently achieving comparable performance percentages of MWT to squad paddlers then do they have the potential to achieve this standard within 1-2 years?
3. **Need/suitability:** Would inclusion in the squad set up support their development at the current time?

Paracanoe Programme Qualification Criteria

This provides an overview of the performance standards and athlete progression expectations required for programme qualification.

Squad inclusion is not based on the criteria in isolation; but it does present a primary, first filter. Other areas that will be considered are as follows, and the opportunity to demonstrate will be given during the application process:

Environment

Academic/professional ambitions

- Balance of sport and academic/professional commitment to ensure continuous improvement
- Capacity to succeed in both sport and education
- Capacity to make decisions to achieve sport success

Support

- Support from family
- Support from Local Performance Environment (LPE)
- Support from group of friends and other
- Performance support

Training location

- Level of coaching
- Access to facilities

- Performance culture

Mindset

Developing a Growth Mindset

- Embracing challenges
- Persisting in the face of set back
- Seeing effort as a path to mastery
- Listening to feedback in order to improve
- Being inspired by the success of others

Operating in a group environment

- Capacity to train alongside other squad members and collaborate to develop enhanced performances
- Being active in the team tasks (on and off water)

Curiosity and engagement

- Willingness to explore and understand the different areas of canoeing and performance

Process

Time on Task

- Competition background
- Training background

Level of Professionalism

- Quality and availability of equipment
- Preparation around the training sessions
- Training session management
- Consistency in the training plan

Level of awareness

- Understanding of personal standard compared to World Class age group standard
- Capacity to articulate basic technique and training principles

Outcome

Technical

- Range of techniques available
- Appropriate use of techniques in environments

Tactical

- Range of race tactics available
- Managing competitive race plan vs achievable race plan

Physical

- Capacity to physically cope with the demand (training and racing programme)
- Level of Strength and Conditioning aligned with racing level (world class benchmark)

Psychological

- Capacity to mentally cope with the demand (training and racing programme)
- Capacity to apply the right mental skills during key phases of the competition

Note: The Athlete Profile is what the coaching panel looks at when considering an athlete's potential progression over the different stages of the pathway and it is this information that the Performance Group ratifies. This approach follows research into talent development - as today's achievements alone are not a sufficient indicator of tomorrow's success at world class level.

Further information

Please be aware that the cost of running Paddle Scotland Performance is mainly met through **sportscotland** investment. The exact level of investment is set on a yearly period from April to the end of March the following year. The level of support and the design of the Paddle Scotland Performance Programmes are strongly dependent on a number of factors including the level of investment and the evolution of our partnerships and the opportunities to progress from Paddle Scotland into UK programs. The size of each programme is based on the coaching resources, logistical constraints and programme investment available, based on available data.

The Performance Group oversees the Paddle Scotland Performance Programme operation in the relevant Olympic disciplines including athlete inclusion, performance support to selected athletes, progress against targets, pathway activities and targeted coach education.

The Performance Group nominates athletes into the different programmes on a class by class basis in each discipline as detailed in its terms of reference. The priority for the Performance Group is to build consistent groups of athletes to allow quality of work and a competitive environment among everyone. The Programme seeks to achieve a balance across classes to make sure it is competitive on all medal targets set by Paddle UK (PUK). All nominations for support will be based upon evidence demonstrating a clear profile for future World Class performance delivery. Support from partners such as Scottish Institute of Sport (SIS) sport science and medicine, winning students and international collaboration is provided through agreements negotiated with those organisations and meeting their T&Cs.

Inclusion into Paddle Scotland Performance programmes is primarily based on achievement in singles classes. The qualification criteria consider the overall athlete profile together with the achievement criteria.

For athletes taking part in the Paddle Scotland Performance Programme activities (Camps and Race support) a financial contribution will be required.

In addition to the Paddle Scotland support areas, athletes should be aware of our close links with PUK. For athletes that have made the GB team or with similar standards, we are keen to look at opportunities to join and train at PUK High Performance Centres. Details will be worked out on an individual basis with athletes concerned.

Athletes, Parents, Coaches and Support Staff behaviours should meet a high standard. All should act as role models following respective codes of conduct. In the event of a breach of the Paddle Scotland Performance Code of Conduct, the Inclusion Panel can decide to withdraw athletes from the programme in which they are nominated with immediate effect. In case of deselection, participation fees paid towards the programme will be reimbursed after adjustment for the expenditure already incurred for activities.

Athletes, coaches and support staff should abide by all relevant PUK policies when attending trips, events or programmes organised by PUK.

Athletes must hold a British passport or should be in the process of acquiring one. (British nationality is required to be on a UK funded programme and to represent Great Britain at the Olympic Games).

Exceptional circumstances

This Qualification Criteria has been written to set out the principles, and create a transparent process for selection of athletes at each level in the pathway. Whilst the principles will be adhered to, there may need to be some flexibility in this criteria to ensure we create effective training squads, take account of differing levels of biological development and any other exceptional circumstances including, but not limited to, injury, significant illness or bereavement.

At the discretion of the Head of Pathways and Performance, in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with coaches, an athlete can be nominated as an “invite” to participate in Paddle Scotland Performance activities. Athletes can be invited based on proven progress towards performance standards or if they contribute to enhancing the quality and the competitiveness of the training environment. The terms and conditions of the invitation will be agreed on a case by case basis.

In the exceptional case of cancellation of races leading to insufficient opportunities for athletes to demonstrate a performance standard in relation to the Achievement Criteria, alternate results/competitions or assessment processes will be used. These will be determined by an emergency meeting of the Performance Group and the changes will be communicated through the Paddle Scotland website

Conflicts of Interest

Paddle Scotland is committed to upholding high standards of integrity, and as such any person who is part of the decision making process shall declare any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest, and shall refrain from participation in the discussion in respect to qualification, in which they have a material conflict of interest. For the avoidance of doubt and for the purposes of this Qualification Criteria, a material conflict of interest does not necessarily include the fact that a person who is part of the decision making process may know an athlete or have specialist knowledge and experience of athletes as part of their role. If a person is unsure whether they have a conflict or potential conflict they should consult the Director of Governance.

Data Protection

Paddle Scotland is a privacy conscious organisation and is strongly committed to an individual’s right to privacy. All data gathered during the course of any qualification consideration process will be processed and stored in compliance with the Paddle Scotland Data Protection Policy and in

accordance with all applicable Data Protection laws in effect at the time of publication of this document, including but not limited to, the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Further information on Paddle Scotland approach to privacy and data protection, can be found [here](#) and the Data Retention Policy can be found [here](#)

Appeals

Appeals regarding decisions made by the Performance Group Panel, should be made to Mike.Chandler@Paddlescotland.org.uk within 5 working days of being informed of the Performance Group decision. Appeals will be looked at by a case by case basis.