

PADDLE CYMRU – CANOE SLALOM PERFORMANCE AND TALENT PATHWAY SELECTION POLICY 2025-26



PADDLE
CYMRU

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Figure 1- Gwion Williams - European Championship Silver Medal Winner Junior Men's Kayak Cross 2025

PADDLE CYMRU – CANOE SLALOM PERFORMANCE AND TALENT PATHWAY SELECTION POLICY

1. Purpose of Programme

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

Paddle Cymru receives funding from Sport Wales to develop athletes ready to represent Wales and GB at the Olympic Games. In doing this, we provide support to Welsh athletes in the Olympic disciplines of Slalom and Sprint and work within a broader GB pathway.

Our main goal is to prepare Welsh athletes for success at the British Team Selections at Junior and U23 level (figure 1). In doing this, we take young paddlers with very little experience through a pathway which provides structured training and competition experience up to the level where they can succeed at the Selections. Thus, the Pathway is structured with age-related criteria, progressively becoming more demanding as the paddler's age increases. This training structure runs alongside an annual competition plan, support from Paddle Cymru coaches, and a sport science programme developed by professionals in physiology, sport psychology, strength & conditioning and other disciplines.

2. Performance and Talent Pathway

The Paddle Cymru Slalom Performance and Talent Pathway is divided into a tiered, progressive squad structure with three clearly defined levels, each with its own defined qualification criteria and capacity.

Regional Development Programme

Aims to support athletes across the whole of Wales by breaking Wales down geographically into three regions: North, South and West Wales (as shown in Figure 2). This programme works with local clubs to provide coaching on a local basis with one weekly mid-week training session and one weekend training camp per month. Each region supports up to 12 athletes at this level. The focus of these Regional Development squads is to develop the paddlers up to the point where they are competent and robust in training and able to confidently train at white-water sites as used on the Talent programme. This programme is specifically aimed to prioritise younger athletes due to the time required to gain all the skills to be successful and progress along the pathway and onto the Talent and Performance Squads.



Figure 2: Map of Wales showing the Regional Development Squads

National Talent Programme

Aims to support promising athletes, as identified by the performance matrix, on a national programme, with mid-week training support and access to training camps across the best slalom sites in the UK at weekends and in school holidays. It will support the best athletes in Wales within each class for the age ranges from J12 through to J16. Up to 12 athletes can be selected for this programme from across all three regions. The focus is to prepare athletes to make the step up to the Performance Squad by supporting them to qualify for the Premier Division before the age of J16 and tracking in line with ranking trajectory and performance funnels.

National Performance Programme

Aims to support the most capable athletes on a National Programme, with mid-week training support and access to training camps across the UK at weekends and in school holidays. Training is more individualised, focussed and periodised around key British Selection races. The priority is to prepare the Juniors and U23 athletes to qualify onto the GB teams and to make Junior and U23 World Championship finals.

Programme / Squad	Age Range	Ranking	Numbers in Squads
Regional Development Squads	J10-J15	Division 3 to Division 1	Up to 12 athletes (per region)
National Talent Squad	J12-J16	Division 2 to Division 1	Up to 12 athletes
National Performance Squad	Best Welsh athletes at Junior and U23 in their age classes, eligible from British Selection Races	Division 1 to Premier	Up to 12 athletes

Figure 3: Structure of Paddle Cymru Performance and Talent Pathway

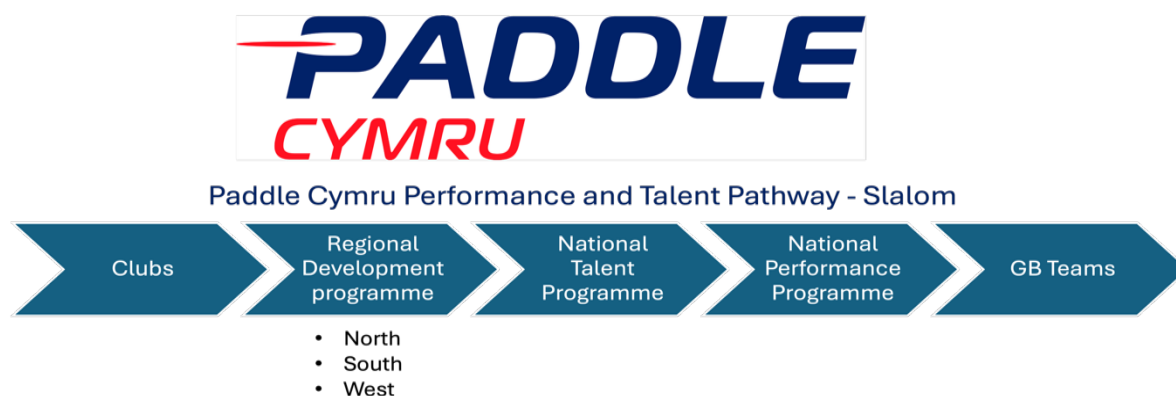


Figure 4: Summary of Paddle Cymru Performance and Talent Pathway Programmes

3. Pathway Eligibility for Programmes

To be included in the Paddle Cymru Squads, paddlers must be eligible (age depending) for Great Britain U18 / U23 age group selection as Paddle Cymru members. This means athletes will need to be:

- Born in Wales, *or*
- Have a parent born in Wales, *or*
- Have been full-time resident in Wales for two years, and living in Wales at the time of selection, *or*
- Fulfil selection criteria which includes having moved to Wales from outside the UK but have a permanent residence in Wales and be eligible for British selection.
- Not be training or competing for any other country or within another home nation talent programme

4. Selection Criteria for Programmes

Selection of Welsh programmes will be made by using the athlete's performances at National Divisional, British Open and GB selection races. The Standards an athlete needs to demonstrate to gain a place on the Welsh Performance Pathway will vary depending on their age and the squads they are eligible to apply for. In the follow sections the criteria for the Regional Development Squads, Talent Squad and Performance Squad are outlined. Only races in the current racing season can be used as part of the standards against the matrix.

For Regional Development Squads and the Talent Squad selection, the average points and/or ranking an athlete would need to achieve at national ranking races are listed (see the [UK Slalom Rules](#) section 6.6 for more information on how the divisional points system work).

For Performance Squad selection the Performance Standards are based upon the Best Single Run Score (BSRS) achieved by the class winner at a designated Prem race (Paddle ups will be used for those racing in Division 1). Performance Standards in all events are worked on scores (accuracy 0.01 seconds) as a % of the BSRS achieved on each race. **Please note that the standards are now relative to the winner of each class as opposed to the fastest single run of the race** (B% on UK Slalom web ranking). All the percentages used are in line with GB team selection.

Example percentage calculation on single run Class BSRS - K1W = 94.44 secs total; 5th place K1W: score = 105.93 secs total, thus 5th place K1W percentage: 112.20.%.

The best three race average will also be calculated. These will be used to inform decisions if two athletes from the same age category have equal BSRS scores.

Regional Development Squads

Squads selected from each of the three regional areas (North, West and South). You can only apply for the regional squad you live in (please see Figure 1.). If you are not sure which region you live in, please contact Paddle Cymru (admin@Paddlecymru.org.uk).

Minimum Standard for application is:

Div 2 for (J15, J14 and J13) and Div 3 for J12 and younger.

Each region can select up to the following numbers, but this must include at least one athlete from each class (12 in total):

- 4 x K1 Men Selected
- 4 x K1 Women Selected
- 2 x C1 Men Selected
- 2 x C1 Women Selected

Squads will be selected by ranking athletes against the Regional Development matrix with athletes being ranked depending on where they sit according to their age. **The GB slalom age leagues will be used in part to inform decisions.**

Regional Talent Matrix (see figure 4)

Points taken from the average of the best three points scored at national ranking races in the 2025 season from a minimum of 3 races.

If there is a tie between different athlete's position relating to the matrix, athletes in the lower age category are prioritised in the ranking. If athletes are in the same age class, then the athlete with the higher points average will be selected.

National Talent Squad

Minimum Standard for Applications are Div 1 for J16, J15, J14 and J13 and Div 2 for J12 and younger.

Maximum of 5 athletes per class with at least one selected from each class (K1M, C1M, K1W and C1W) where minimum standard demonstrated. Where an athlete doubles up the class mix of the squad will be used to inform selection i.e. if they rank equally in both disciplines their place may be secured in the underrepresented discipline allowing for a single discipline athlete to secure a place in the squad.

Squads will be selected by ranking athletes against the Talent Matrix with athletes being ranked depending on where they sit according to their age.

Talent Matrix (see figure 4)

Points taken from the average of the best three points scored at national ranking races in the 2025 season.

If there is a tie between different athlete's position relating to the matrix, athletes in the lower age category are prioritised in the ranking. If athletes are in the same age class, then the athlete with the higher points average will be selected.

National Performance Squad

Minimum standard for application is being eligible for Junior or U23 Selection for the next racing season.

Up to 12 athletes with a maximum of 2 x U23, with at least one athlete in each class (K1M, C1M, K1W and C1W) at Junior level where minimum standard is demonstrated.

Squads will be selected by ranking athletes against the Performance Matrix with athletes being ranked against where they sit according to their age.

Performance Matrix (see figure 4)

Percentages and ranking taking from the Lee Valley British Open Race or any British Junior/U23

or Senior Selection race in the racing year. Percentages will be taken off the BSRS achieved over the weekend in respect to the Class winner in that race.

If there is a tie between different athlete's position relating to the matrix, younger athletes are prioritised in the ranking, and if the athletes are the same age the athlete with best percentage or points average will be selected.

Performance Squad invitations

To maintain a healthy number of athletes within the performance squads and to ensure we support as many developing performance athletes as the programme allows, athletes who fall short of the Performance Squad criteria but rank at the top of the National Talent Squad rankings may be invited to take up any vacant places on the Performance Squad. These invited athletes will benefit from the same support as those who qualify directly into the Performance Squad whilst they continue to target Performance Squad matrix performances. As with the Performance Squad members their place on the programme will be reviewed after 4 months. Reviews will consider training engagement and ongoing athletics development. Places will be offered according to discipline profile and ranking overview of the athlete as outlined in the National Talent Programme selection above, with the places being offered to the highest-ranking athletes from any underrepresented disciplines first.

Example of Talent Squad Selection using the Matrix process:

Example Athletes

Athlete A: J14 500 points average in Division 1

Athlete B: J13 Ranked in Division 1

Athlete C: J15 950 points ranked in Division 1

Athlete D: J14 410 points average In Division 1

Athlete E: J15 410 points average in Division 1

Ranking of athletes with reasoning to show the process

1. Athlete C – Sits one place above in the Matrix relating to their age.
2. Athlete B – Hits Matrix but at J13 is younger than the two J14's also hitting matrix.
3. Athlete A – Hits Matrix as J14 but has a higher average point score than other J14.
4. Athlete D – Hits Matrix but has a lower average point score than the other J14.
5. Athlete E – Sits one place below in the Matrix relating to their age.

Kayak Cross

Paddle Cymru are keen to support in the development of Kayak Cross within Wales and are making steps to integrate this exciting new discipline into the Performance and Talent Pathway by providing training opportunities within the structure of the Canoe Slalom Programme. If you are outside of the slalom development pathway and interested in accessing any of these training opportunities, please contact our Performance Manager Sid Sinfield
sid.sinfield@Paddlecymru.org.uk

Regional Development Squads Matrix				
Age	K1M	K1W	C1M	C1W
J11	Div 3 Ranked	Div 3 Ranked	Div 3 Ranked	Div 3 Ranked
J12	Div 3 200 points	Div 3 200 points	Div 3 150 points	Div 3 150 points
J13	Div 2 Ranked	Div 2 Ranked	Div 2 Ranked	Div 2 Ranked
J14	Div 2 400 points	Div 2 400 points	Div 2 300 points	Div 2 300 points
J15	Div 1 Ranking	Div 1 Ranking	Div 1 Ranking	Div 1 Ranking
Talent Squad Matrix				
Age	K1M	K1W	C1M	C1W
J12	Div 2 Ranked	Div 2 Ranked	Div 2 Ranked	Div 2 Ranked
J13	Div 1 Ranking	Div 1 Ranking	Div 2 Ranking	Div 2 Ranking
J14	Div 1 400 points	Div 1 400 points	Div 1 Ranked	Div 1 Ranked
J15	Div 1 650 points	Div 1 650 points	Div 1 400 points	Div 1 400 points
J16	Div 1 900 points	Div 1 900 points	Div 1 800 points	Div 1 800 points
Performance Squad Matrix				
Age	K1M	K1W	C1M	C1W
J14	Premier Ranking	Premier Ranking	Premier Ranking	Premier Ranking
J15	122%	132%	127%	132%
J16	119%	129%	124%	129%
J17	116%	126%	121%	126%
J18	113%	123%	118%	123%
U20	111%	120%	115%	121%
U23	109%	117%	112%	119%

Figure 4. Performance matrix for all squads

– Please note – Divisional Rank must also include completed races within that Division

5. Selection and Application Process 2025-2026

All athletes will have to apply for their place on a Paddle Cymru programme. Applying for a place on the squad will be done by filling out an online application form advertised yearly on the Paddle Cymru website and social media channels. **Before applying, please read the Selection Policy and make sure that athletes applying meet the minimum standard for the squad and are able to fulfil the relevant squad training and competition commitments** (athletes are able to apply for more than one squad if they are eligible). The deadline for applications each year will be highlighted in the application process.

All applications that are received will be assessed by the Paddle Cymru Selection Committee and athletes will be ranked against the respective matrix tables. After taking into consideration all details provided in applications (including any accentuating circumstances) the squads will be selected. The squads will then be presented to the Paddle Cymru Performance & Talent Sub-committee to be ratified and published in due course.

Places on each programme have associated costs. These costs include regular contributions toward the coaching and support services access through involvement with the programme. These costs are to be paid in monthly or quarterly instalments. Additional costs will be incurred attending training camps and competitions e.g. travel and accommodation costs, water fees etc. Before applying for a place in the programme it is important that athletes and their parents/carers ensure they are aware of the level of these ongoing costs and that they are able to meet these over the duration of the year.

The annual costs for the 3 programmes for the 2025-26 season will be:

- Regional Programme £264
- Talent Programme £660
- Performance Programme £792

6. Athlete commitment and programme reviews

Unfortunately, our support is finite, and we must be selective to ensure we offer appropriate programme places to those individuals that show the greatest potential and show progression to the development opportunities afforded to them.

Where squad numbers allow, athletes who have narrowly missed out on a place within a squad may be considered for an informal invitation to attend specific training camps and sessions. This will be assessed on an individual basis against the outlined criteria, and each case will be considered on its own merits and does not create precedent for future cases.

The programme will operate on a 12-month basis from November until October, with the programme being reviewed in February and again in June. This will give athletes that have shown progression and are achieving matrix standard in the first half of the season opportunity to be selected or move squads. Equally, it could mean some athletes who are not showing the required commitment, or where progression has stalled, will lose their place on the programme.

The Paddle Cymru Performance and Talent Pathway is largely funded by Sport Wales and the support we can offer within the pathway is subject to the continuation of this funding. Funding is in place until March 2026, and we will be bidding for additional future funds. This support is therefore subject to additional funding being available beyond April 2026.

Training Groups/Training Hubs.

Upon selection an athlete will be assigned to a training group and a training hub in either North, South or West Wales. This will allow us to maximise the support we can offer. It is expected that athletes attend weekly squad training within these groups/hubs and meet other training commitments e.g. off the water training, training dairies etc.

Athletes applying for a squad place will be expected to complete a minimum of 80% of their training and attend suitable races in the season 2025-26. Injury and other extenuating circumstance e.g. exams, family commitments etc. will be considered in mitigation for missed sessions. These should be agreed in advance.

7. Conflicts of Interest

Paddle Cymru 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 conflict of interest. If a person is unsure whether they have a conflict or potential conflict, they should consult the Paddle Cymru Board.

8. Data Protection

Paddle Cymru is a privacy conscious organisation and is strongly committed to an individual's right to privacy. All data gathered during any qualification consideration process will be processed and stored in compliance with the Paddle Cymru 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 Cymru's approach to privacy and data protection can be found on the Paddle Cymru Website at <https://www.paddlecymru.org.uk/policies-and-procedures>

9. Communications

Paddle Cymru is committed to providing open and informative communication in relation to qualification and squad inclusion. All athletes will receive formal confirmation of the squad inclusion, and for those athletes who wish to discuss the outcome of decisions made, coaches will be available to speak informally to athletes and parents

10. Appeals Process

STAGE 1 REVIEW

- 1.1 A written request for a formal review is submitted, in the first instance, by the Athlete or Parent/Guardian to the Performance Manager who will carry out a review in consultation with the Paddle Cymru coaching group.
- 1.2 Appeals against the application of the selection policy will be considered. Appeals regarding

the selection policy itself will not. The time for such appeals is during the consultation process only. See 4.1 Grounds of Appeal below.

- 1.3 This request must be submitted within 48 hours of the selection being formally announced.
- 1.4 Within 5 working days the Performance Manager will advise in writing the outcome of the review and the decision reached.

STAGE 2 APPEAL

- 2.1 If following the formal review, the Athlete (or Parent) wishes to formally appeal the decision, then a written Notice of Appeal must be submitted by them to the Paddle Cymru CEO within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of the formal review.

NOTICE OF APPEAL

- 3.1 The Notice of Appeal will set out the grounds of the appeal and will include full details of which ground(s) detailed in 4.1 the appeal is based upon and the precise way the ground(s) have been met. The Notice of Appeal should be as comprehensive as possible as it will form the basis of the remainder of this procedure.

GROUND(S) OF APPEAL

- 4.1 An Athlete shall be entitled to appeal on any (either individually or cumulative) of the following grounds:
 - a) The decision was not in accordance with the Qualification Criteria as published;
 - b) The criteria have been misapplied or applied on no good evidence and/or in circumstances where the application of the criteria was unfair;
 - c) The decision maker has shown bias or the appearance of bias or the inclusion decision has otherwise been demonstrably unfair; and/or
 - d) Where the conclusion is one that no reasonable decision maker could have reached.
- 4.2 In order to ensure a timely and efficient appeals process only the grounds of appeal detailed in 4.1 will be permitted. The identity of the person(s) who carry out the review in accordance with clause 1.1 above is not open to appeal unless 4.1 (c) is being cited in The Notice of Appeal.

ROLE OF THE TALENT AND PERFORMANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

- 5.1 The CEO will convene a meeting of the Performance & Talent Sub-Committee as soon as is practicable to determine the appeal. The Athlete will be given the opportunity to challenge the composition of the sub-committee.
- 5.2 The CEO shall contact the Performance Manager to inform them of the Appeal, provide them with a copy of the Notice of Appeal and request that they provide any additional information they wish the Appeal Panel to consider within 48 hours of receiving the Notice of Appeal.
- 5.3 The Appeal Panel will ordinarily determine the appeal based on the written submissions of the Athlete and the Performance Manager without a hearing, the calling of witnesses or the giving of oral evidence. However, the Performance & Talent sub-committee will have the power to set its own processes and give directions including but not limited to, requesting further information, setting up a teleconference, determining if a hearing is required and if it is, establishing the date, time and place, and format to be followed in such a hearing.
- 5.4 The sub-committee will seek to reach its conclusion within 5 working days (or an earlier date if that has been decided and communicated by the CEO) of its appointment in accordance with 5.1 and will inform all interested parties in writing.

- 5.5 The sub-committee shall be entitled to:
- a) Rescind the inclusion decision and confirm the inclusion of the Athlete in circumstances where it is clear that the grounds of the Appeal have been upheld.
 - b) Confirm the inclusion decision and reject the Appeal.
 - c) Quash the inclusion decision and remit the matter back to the Performance Manager, identifying the errors they have found in the conduct of the inclusion process and requesting that a new decision is made within one week.

- 5.6 At its discretion the Appeal Panel may also make an award for appeal costs up to a maximum of £100 against either party.

FINAL AND BINDING

- 6.1 This is an accelerated process to enable any challenge to be resolved as quickly as is reasonably possible.
- 6.2 The aim of this process is to return a decision on an athlete's appeal in a timely manner. If the athlete fails to adhere to the time limits set out in this process, he or she will have lost their right of appeal under this procedure, save in wholly exceptional circumstances, which will be judged by the CEO of Paddle Cymru in their absolute discretion.
- 6.3 Furthermore, this appeal process is intended to be conclusive and therefore any athlete who enters this appeal process accepts that the decision will be final and binding.
- 6.4 Each appeal will be considered on its own merits.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROCEEDINGS AND PUBLICATION OF DECISION

- 7.1 Paddle Cymru and the Athlete are under an obligation of confidentiality in respect of any appeal proceeding under this Procedure. Save as permitted under this Appeals Procedure none of these Parties will make any public statement or disclosure of the contents of the Notice, or any other matter referred to by any of the parties during the course of these Proceedings.
- 7.2 Paddle Cymru shall be entitled to publish the decision of the Talent and Performance Sub Committee where it upholds the Appeal (or any element of it) in such manner and to such extent as is necessary to inform all properly interested and affected parties of the status of the Inclusion decision previously published and the resulting position as to Inclusion