PADDLE CYMRU – Canoe Sprint Performance and Talent Pathway Selection policy 2026-27

PADDLE CYMRU

Table of Contents

Purpose of Programme 3

Performance Programme overview *3*

Minimum Standards for selection *4*

Regional Development Programme - 4

National Performance Programme 4

Eligibility *5*

Performance Programme Qualification Criteria 5

Further information 7

Exceptional circumstances 8

Conflicts of Interest *8*

Data Protection *9*

Appeals *9*

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 & 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. 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.

Performance Programme overview

The Paddle Cymru 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. Athletes need to apply for selection to each of our programmes. See selection criteria and process below (section 5):

Paddle Cymru Performance and Talent Pathway - Sprint

Minimum Standards for selection

Programme / Squad	Age Range	Ranking	Numbers in Squads
Regional Development Squads	U14-U18	Division C-B	Up to 10 athletes
National Performance Squad	Best Welsh athletes at Junior and U23 in their age classes, eligible from British Selection Races	Division B-A	Up to 6 athletes

Regional Development Programme -

The purpose of this group is to link regular club training activity with some performance programme support. The aim is to develop and prepare athletes in a manner which accelerate them onto the Sport Wales/Paddle Cymru sponsored element of the programme. It will do this by offering inclusive training and development opportunities for athletes at different venues. Outside of such coaching time there is no funding for this part of the programme. Ultimately this group will be about creating a critical mass to nurture individuals and help them to learn as a group and get quality time on task. Selection to this group will be done in liaison with the Sprint Lead Coach and Club Coaches.

- Weekly coaching support
- Coaching support at major regattas
- Regional camps
- UK Anti-doping support and education

National Performance Programme

National Performance Programme (NPP), primarily supporting athletes aged U18 and identified U23 athletes. The NPP aims to support athletes to qualify onto GB teams and make Junior and U23 World and European Championship finals (top 10 results).

Athletes on the NPP will benefit from additional support which will be as close to that provided by the World Class Programme as we can provide. It will include:

- Weekly coaching support
- Individualised Development plan (IDP)
- Regular access to a specialist S&C coach to develop an individualised S&C programme and to monitor progress through it
- Access to national development camps
- Coaching support at major regattas

- Access to nutrition, sport psychologist and other support services as outline in IDP
- UK Anti-doping support and education

Eligibility

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

Performance 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 race performance and ranking 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:

Mindset

Developing a Growth Mindset

- Embracing challenges
- Persisting in the face of set back
- Seeing effort as a path to mastery
- Listening to feedback 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

- 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)
- Nutrition to fuel effective training and competing

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 Cymru Performance is mainly met through Sport Wales 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 Cymru Performance Programmes are strongly dependent on several factors including the level of investment and the evolution of our partnerships and the opportunities to progress from Paddle Cymru 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 Cymru 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.

Inclusion into Paddle Cymru 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 Cymru Performance Programme activities a financial contribution will be required.

For the races season 2026-27 this will be £300 per annum for both levels of the programme. These fees will be payable in either annal, quarterly or monthly instalments. The preferred option can be decided upon selection. There will be additional optional programme activities e.g. overseas camps, these would incur additional costs.

In addition to the Paddle Cymru 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 Cymru 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 these 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 Cymru 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 Cymru website

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 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 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 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 sid.sinfield@PaddleCymru.org.uk within 2 working days of being informed of the Performance Group decision. Appeals will be looked at by a case-by-case basis.