

# British Canoeing

## 2024 Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross World Class

### Programme Qualification Policy

#### **1. Purpose and Principles**

- 1.1. The British Canoeing World Class Programme (WCP) is a partnership programme funded by UK Sport and run by British Canoeing, with the purpose of enabling athletes to achieve excellence and be capable of medal winning performances at the Paris and Los Angeles Olympic Games as well as other significant Senior Championship events.
- 1.2. The 2024 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 be followed during 2023 to identify the best athletes in each Slalom discipline towards these objectives and to qualify to the British Canoeing World Class Programme from 1 Jan 2024.
- 1.3. This Qualification Policy also sets out how the level of funding provided athletes qualifying onto the WCP will be determined.
- 1.4. Athlete place decisions will be made on the agreed principles laid out within this Qualification Policy and the final decision will be subjective in nature based on evidence informed insight.
- 1.5. Athletes are assessed for membership of the WCP on an annual basis. Subject to the exceptions detailed in 8.1.1 and 8.1.2, an athlete will be offered a WCP Place for a period of 12 months and will not be guaranteed membership from one year to the next.
- 1.6. WCP membership is put in place to support an athlete's future performance(s) and is not a reward for past performance(s).
- 1.7. 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.
- 1.8. This is not a team selection policy. British Canoeing GBR Team Selection will be determined by the relevant Selection Policies and is separate from WCP membership.
- 1.9. This Qualification Policy is subject to ongoing review and British Canoeing reserve the right to make amendments to reflect changes in circumstances, including but not limited to, funding changes and the outcome of the annual investment review with UK Sport.
- 1.10. This Qualification Policy operates in conjunction with all relevant British Canoeing policies including, but not limited to, Pregnancy Policy, Equality Policy, Anti-Doping Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Transgender Policy, Data Protection Policy, Declaration of Interests and Anti Bribery Policy.
- 1.11. This Qualification Policy operates in conjunction with the UK Sport APA Policy issued 10.3.2021

#### **2. Eligibility**

- 2.1. To be considered for a WCP place, athletes must:
  - 2.1.1. Meet the British Canoeing 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;
  - 2.1.2. 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;
  - 2.1.3. Be a member of British Canoeing, or one of the National Canoeing Associations in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and remain so during their time on the Programme;
  - 2.1.4. 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).

- 2.2. Athletes meeting the eligibility requirements at 2.1 will then only be considered under this Qualification Policy if they:
  - 2.2.1. achieved one of the results in the Canoe Slalom programme - matrix race profile of the athlete matrix table at 5.1.5 below in 2023 ('Athlete Matrix Result'); **OR**
  - 2.2.2. were a member of the WCP in 2022 or 2023; **OR**
  - 2.2.3. are one of up to 2 athletes who have not met the criteria at 2.2.1 or 2.2.2 but are identified by the Performance Director at their discretion as having the potential to achieve excellence within the WCP.

### **3. WCP Places and Overview of Qualification Criteria**

- 3.1. There are a maximum of 24 athlete places available on the Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross WCP split between Podium (A&B APA levels) and Academy (C, D & E APA Levels).
- 3.2. A maximum of 4 of these athlete places will be allocated to athletes who solely achieve an Athlete Matrix Result in the Kayak Cross discipline where no Canoe Slalom profile exists.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. Athletes selected onto the WCP will be determined through the processes outlined in Section 5 of this Qualification Policy.
- 3.5. The level of APA funding allocated to WCP athletes will be determined by the provisions outlined in Section 6 of this Qualification Policy.

### **4. World Class Programme Nomination Panel**

- 4.1. The World Class Programme Nomination Panel (WCPNP) will consist of the Performance Director, Lead Coach Academy Programme, 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. Nomination Process**

#### **5.1. Stage 1. Initial Ranking**

- 5.1.1. Eligible athletes are ranked in an initial order based on their highest counting Athlete Matrix Result attained through 2023 results in line with the table below at 5.1.5 and inclusion on the WCP for 2024 by virtue of section 8.1 below.
- 5.1.2. Athletes achieving the same level matrix race profile will be ranked by prioritising Olympic results first, then World Championship results, then European Championship results, with World Cup results being afforded the lowest priority.
- 5.1.3. Athletes achieving the same level race profile will be ranked by Canoe Slalom results first and then Kayak Cross results.
- 5.1.4. This initial ranking ensures consideration for a WCP place but is not a guarantee of any offer of a WCP place.

### 5.1.5. Athlete Matrix Table:

Athlete Matrix						
2023	Level	APA		Rank	Canoe Slalom programme- matrix race profile	
Paris results profile	Podium	A+*/A	£28K/ £26.5K	1	Olympic Medallist	
				2	Medal at Senior CSL / CSLX Worlds Championships	
		B+*/B	£23K/ £21.5K	3	Medal at Senior CSL / CSLX European Championships	
				4	Top 8 at CSL / CSLX Olympic Games / Senior Slalom World	
				5	Current Podium athletes not achieving Podium result with evidence of Paris profile / nominated Olympic boat without Podium result	
	Paris Potential**	£19k	C	16K	6	Medal at CSL / CSLX World Cup
					7	Top 15 at Senior CSL World /European Championships
					8	Top 8 at Senior CSLX European Championships
					9	Top 10 at Senior CSL World Cups
					10	Top 8 at Senior CSLX World Cups
					11	Medal at U23 CSL / CSLX World / European Championships
L.A. results profile	Academy***	Podium Potential****	D	13k	12	Top 20 at CSL Senior World / European Championships (U23)
					13	Top 16 at CSLX Senior World / European Championships (U23)
					14	Top 20 at CSL Senior World Cups (U22)
					15	Top 16 at CSLX World Cups (U22)
					16	Top 10 at U23 CSL World / European Championships (U22)
					17	2 <sup>nd</sup> Medal at Junior CSL / CSLX World / European Championships
					18	Top 8 at U23 CSLX World / European Championships (U22)
					Confirmation	E
	20	Top 15 at U23 at CSL World / European Championships (by U20)				
	21	Top 10 at CSL Junior World / European Championships				

#### Notes:

\*To qualify for A+ or 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 (i.e., results from both kayak cross and canoe slalom can be considered provided they are attained in different competitive seasons).

\*\*Paris Potential awards based on strong Paris trajectory can only be made for one year.

\*\*\*Academy places are not available for previous Podium 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 based on their trajectory data for Paris / LA in alignment with Stage 2 Assessment Phase.

## 5.2 Stage 2 Assessment Phase

5.2.1 The WCPNP, technical coaches and invited practitioners will assess all eligible athletes' Olympic 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.

5.2.2 WCPNP, technical coaches and invited practitioners may also conduct an individual athlete assessment and consider the following non-exclusive factors:

5.2.2.1 Progress and commitment against goals;

5.2.2.2 The level of clarity and confidence in their performance planning;

5.2.2.3 Their likelihood to engage and thrive in the WCP environment;

5.2.2.4 Adherence to any conditions of ongoing funding/WCP place;

5.2.2.5 Any exceptional circumstances considerations arising from section 9 of this Policy.

- 5.2.3 The WCPNP, in consultation with technical coaches, will also consider the requirements for strength and depth across all 6 Olympic events within the WCP, the need to balance Paris 2024 and L.A. 2028 objectives, and the limitations of this policy to allow 4 WCP places for Kayak Cross specialists as specified at 3.2 above.
- 5.2.4 The WCPNP, in consultation with technical coaches, may then adjust the initial ranking order to reflect the assessment undertaken against 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.

### **5.3 Stage 3 Nomination**

- 5.3.1 Following completion of Stages 1 and 2, the final Ranking Order will then be determined by the WCPNP to recommend which athletes should be nominated for a WCP place.
- 5.3.2 The Director of Paddlesport, on behalf of the British Canoeing Board, will approve the list of athlete nominations to be put forward to UK Sport.
- 5.3.3 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.

### **6. Athlete Performance Award (APA)**

- 6.1 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').
- 6.2 Athletes will be nominated for APAs at the levels aligned to the bandings set out in the Athlete Matrix in section 5.1.3.
- 6.3 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.

### **7. Conditions upon athletes in receipt of UK Sport lottery funding**

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. Further detail on the Athlete Agreement and expectations of a WCP athlete can be found on the [Wellbeing pages](#) of the British Canoeing Website.
- 7.3. Any new or returning Athlete nominated for a WCP athlete place for 2024 will be required to undertake a medical screening process prior to final acceptance onto the WCP and also need to take part in an induction process.

### **8. WCP Term**

- 8.1. Athletes qualifying under this Qualification Policy are entitled to a WCP Place for a period of 12 months commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 subject to the following exceptions:
  - 8.1.1. The Performance Director may nominate an athlete who achieved a medal at the Tokyo Olympic Games for more than 12 months subject to the athlete demonstrating clear and compelling evidence based performance data indicating World Championship and/or Paris 2024 medal performance and compliance with objectives or actions agreed with the Performance Director.
  - 8.1.2. The Performance Director may nominate an athlete achieving A or B band APA funding through Tokyo 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 Paris 2024 medal performance and compliance with objectives or actions agreed with the Performance Director.

- 8.2. British Canoeing reserve the right to withdraw an Athletes WCP Place and associated APA funding if any of the following non-exhaustive factors apply:
  - 8.2.1. The Athlete fails to meet the eligibility criteria at section 2 of this Qualification Policy;
  - 8.2.2. A British Canoeing Disciplinary Panel determine the WCP place should be withdrawn in accordance with British Canoeing's Athlete Disciplinary Policy or Safeguarding Procedure;
  - 8.2.3. Specific performance targets provided within the athlete WCP place offer letter are not met by the Athlete; or
  - 8.2.4. 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 British Canoeing 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.
- 8.3. Athletes who held a WCP place in 2023 who have not qualified for a WCP Place in 2024 under this Qualification Policy or whose WCP place ends for any reason except those detailed in 8.2.1 or 8.2.2 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:
  - 8.3.1. More than 1 year but less than 2 years = 1 month transitional award;
  - 8.3.2. More than 2 years but less than 3 years = 2 months transitional award;
  - 8.3.3. More than 3 years = 3 months transitional award.
- 8.4. Any new athlete entering the programme, will do so as a funded confirmation athlete and will complete a 'probationary period' of up to 2 years prior to full confirmation as an academy athlete.

## **9. Exceptional Circumstances**

- 9.1. 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 Paris 2024 and/or Los Angeles 2028.
- 9.2. 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:
  - 9.2.1. Full details of the exceptional circumstance(s);
  - 9.2.2. The impact of these exceptional circumstances during the season;
  - 9.2.3. How the circumstances were raised and managed with their coach during 2023;
  - 9.2.4. How the athlete demonstrates an evidence-based performance profile towards Paris 2024 and/or Los Angeles 2028; and
  - 9.2.5. The supporting evidence they wish to rely on (which may include medical evidence or performance data).
- 9.3. Any application for consideration under this clause **MUST** be received by the Performance Director [mark.ratcliffe@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:mark.ratcliffe@britishcanoeing.org.uk) by midday on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

- 9.4. 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 5.2.2.

#### **10. Long term injury and illness (Physical and Mental) and athlete pregnancy**

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. If after a period of three months the athlete remains unavailable for full selection or training the WCPNP and CMO 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.
- 10.3. 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.
- 10.4. 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.
- 10.5. 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.
- 10.6. In the case of an athlete pregnancy, we will follow the [UK Sport pregnancy Guidance](#).

#### **11. The Appeals Procedure**

- 11.1. 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](#).
- 11.2. The British Elite Athletes Association (BEAA) can provide independent advice and support to WCP Athletes via [support@britisheliteathletes.org](mailto:support@britisheliteathletes.org) Further information can be found [here](#).
- 11.3. Athletes may also access support through the British Canoeing Performance Wellbeing Coach [zofia.campbell@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:zofia.campbell@britishcanoeing.org.uk).

- 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 **2023 performance matrix** and **athlete trajectory information**.

Athletes are profiled against 2024 and 2028 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 (2019 for Paris) 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 (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 and through the lens of, but not limited to, the example questions below:

### **Los Angeles 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 Final's? 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.?
- Has the athlete produced Age level WITTW race standards OR Showing SNR Final WITTW standards?

### **Paris 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 Paris?
- Has the athlete produced SNR Gold or Medal WITTW standards within splits and Full runs?

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

For Kayak Cross the lack of previous Olympic Games appearance means that it is not possible to conduct a similar type analysis to that completed for Canoe Slalom. Despite this, cross sectional analysis of performance results from Kayak Cross informs indicators for progression in the discipline. For example, from the 2021 season:

- 80% of male and female Senior International Kayak Cross medals were won by paddlers that have previously achieved Canoe Slalom World Cup final level or better performances
- Over 95% of medallists come from top 20 in the Time Trial top 20
- Over 50% of medallists from the Time Trial top 5

As indicated in draft OQS for Paris 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 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 Paris 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 2023
- 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 strength 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 Paris 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