

Athlete Categorisation Guidelines – Australian Fencing

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In delivering the National High Performance Sports Strategy (NHPSS), Athlete Categorisation is used to identify, track, and prioritise athletes at each stage of the Performance Pathway, to support Australia consistently winning medals at major international events (inc. Olympic, World Championship and Commonwealth Games level). Athlete Categorisation will be used by stakeholders including the National Institute Network (NIN) and National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) to inform planning and to prioritise support to best achieve system targets.
- 1.2 The Australian Fencing Federation (AFF) has developed a sport-specific matrix (the Matrix) and has done so in collaboration with the AIS Performance Pathways Team.
- 1.3 The Matrix defines each of the five categorisation levels for the sport of Fencing in Australia.
- 1.4 Fencing athletes will be categorised annually, against the Matrix, in line with the annual review process managed by the AFF's High Performance Commission (HPC).

2. Minimum eligibility requirements for Categorisation

- 2.1 In order to be eligible for Categorisation, an athlete must satisfy all the following requirements:
 - a) Be an Australian Citizen or on a committed path to obtaining Australian Citizenship.
 - b) Satisfy all relevant International Fencing Federation (FIE) and International Olympic Committee (IOC) eligibility and nationality rules, where they apply.
 - c) Be actively training to compete in a fencing event that is to be contested at the 2024 Olympic Games or Paralympic Games.
 - d) Be a member of the AFF's National Squad.
 - e) Be not in breach of their Athlete Agreement

3. Athlete Categorisation Panel

- 3.1 Athlete categorisation will be determined by the Athlete Categorisation Panel (ACP) which has the following members:
 - Is a sub-committee of the HPC.
 - Its Chair is the Chair of the HPC.
 - A representative of Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Performance Panel
 - Its membership comprises the members of the HPC and other invited guests as the HPC determines from time to time. This composition ensures there is sufficient knowledge and capability required to make informed athlete categorisation decisions.
- 3.2 In addition to the members of the HPC, the HPC may also invite from time to time (but is not limited to inviting) the:
 - AFF President
 - Head of the AFF Athlete Commission.

The ACP will endeavor to reach decisions on a consensus model. However, if a decision based on consensus cannot be reached:

- Only members of the ACP who are members of the HPC are eligible to vote.
- The Chair of the ACP will have a casting vote.

4. Conditions of Categorisation

- 4.1 To be categorised and/or maintain categorisation, an Athlete must comply at all times with the following conditions:
- a) Sign and adhere to the AFF Athlete Agreements (as amended from time to time) as part of being a member of the National Squad.
 - b) Complete, sign and return paperwork as required, committing to the requirements for AIS categorisation.
 - c) Engage in the review of their High-Performance Individual Program Plan (IPP) following key events.
 - d) Commit to compete in domestic events as outlined in their IPP.
 - e) Commit to compete (if selected) at International Championships and HPC Designated Events (as defined by the AFF Selection Policy) for Australia as outlined in their IPP, which will also set out a minimum number of International Events that are to be attended.
 - f) Maintain the high standard of personal behaviour expected of an athlete representing Australia, abiding the AFF's policies, and HPC instruction.
 - g) Maintain a lifestyle conducive to sporting excellence; and,
 - h) Commit to be a part of a team and contribute to a culture that inspires and fosters respect and success.
 - i) Abide by both the rules and spirit of the sport of Fencing.
 - j) Not bring the sport of Fencing, the AFF, or any stakeholders into disrepute.
 - k) Comply with all anti-doping, gambling, integrity, and anti-match fixing requirements for Fencing, Sport Integrity Australia (SIA), and Sport Australia (SA) including the completion of e-learning modules and updates as requested from time to time.

5. Factors considered in Categorisation

- 5.1 In determining an Athlete's current performance standard and future Olympic/Paralympic/World Championship podium potential, the ACP will consider the following factors in assessing Athletes who have the best chance of contributing to the achievement of the AFF's High Performance goals:
- a) Must be an ongoing member of the AFF's National Squad.
 - b) Recent international competition performance measured against the relevant Key Performance Indicators as set out in Schedule 1 with a particular emphasis on the quality of opposition, percentage of wins and placing achieved.
 - c) The FIE and Australian Ranking position of the athlete as factors.
 - d) Consider any specific guidance from the AIS (as advised from time to time) on Athlete categorisation.
 - e) During the 12 months prior to categorisation the extent to which the athlete has:
 - i. demonstrated a strong commitment to training and working together with the AFF's HPC and National Coaching Team in progressing with their IPP; and

- ii. if funded (i.e. any contribution to travel and accommodation), participated in all international competitions and camps for which the Athlete has been selected in line with their IPP; and
 - iii. an Athlete's compliance with the conditions above.
- 5.2. The ACP may, at its sole discretion, use several additional factors in assessing an Athlete's potential for future Olympic/Paralympic or World Championship podium success, including (without limitation):
- a) Consistency in results and ability to repeat World Class results and deliver performances under pressure.
 - b) An Athlete's technical, tactical, physical, and mental performance and ability as determined by the ACP through assessment against the AFF's High Performance Commission's Performance Pathway Outline.
 - c) An Athlete's ongoing commitment and application, including communication with the AFF's National Coaching Team, adherence to IPPs, motivation to succeed and use of available resources within a daily training environment to increase performance.
 - d) An Athlete's commitment to the level of training necessary to achieve the desired performance.
 - e) The depth and quality of talent in each event here in Australia in comparison to our international competitors.
 - f) The athlete's age, with a particular and increased focus on Junior international results (World Championships, Asian Championships, HPC Designated Events) in informing decisions for categorisation at Emerging and Developing.
- 5.3. Depending on the stage in the Olympic cycle, the ACP may, in its sole discretion, give greater weighting to factors.

6. Athlete Circumstances

- 6.1. An athlete who is pregnant and is taking time away from the sport will be identified within the Athlete Categorisation matrix, if they meet the following minimum criteria:
- a) Prior to becoming pregnant, the athlete was categorised AND was receiving dAIS support in the past 12 months.
 - b) Has an IPP focusing on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing as it aligns to the HP needs and informed by specific medical advice as it relates to pregnancy.
 - c) Has an agreed return to sport and competition plan including timeframes and regular predetermined meetings scheduled with the HPC and
 - d) Maintains contact with AW&E staff (or equivalent).
- 6.2. An athlete may still be a contributor to national performance targets at the next pinnacle event despite suffering/recovering from a major injury or illness. An athlete who falls into this category will be identified within the Athlete Categorisation matrix, if they meet the following minimum criteria:
- a) Pre-injury/illness the athlete is categorised AND was receiving dAIS support.
 - b) Has an IPP with a return to competition focus and timeframes outlined – including working with the HPC and the AW&E team member (or equivalent);
 - c) Is meeting the requirements of the agreed rehabilitation plan; and
 - d) Is tracking against rehabilitation benchmarks to achieve pre-injury/illness performance outcomes.
- 6.3 The AFF's High Performance Commission recognises that on occasion, to contribute to national performance targets at the next pinnacle event, an athlete may require some time away from competition for family, health and/or wellbeing reasons. Athletes who fall into this category will be identified within the Athlete Categorisation matrix, if they meet the following minimum criteria:

- a) Prior to taking some time away, the athlete is categorised AND was receiving dAIS support in the past 12 months.
- b) Has an IPP focusing on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing as it aligns to the sports needs and performance standards.
- c) Has an agreed return to sport and competition plan including timeframes and regular predetermined meetings scheduled with the HPC and
- d) Maintains contact with AW&E staff (or equivalent) on a regular basis to ensure athletes are focused on maintaining their wellbeing.

6.4. The AFF's High Performance Commission recognises that some athletes may be transitioning out of competitive sport but still contributing to the program. Where an Athlete still meets the following requirements, they will be considered for categorisation:

- a) Prior to transitioning out of competitive sport, the athlete was categorised as podium, podium ready or podium potential within the sports athlete categorisation matrix AND was receiving dAIS support in the past 12 months.
- b) The athlete has developed a transition plan with the HPC and AW & E and meets regularly focusing on maintaining their wellbeing during the transition; and
- c) The AFF may require that the athlete contributes to the sport in a specific way, speaking at camps, promo material for upcoming events, inclusion in formal or informal mentoring programs.

7. Timing of Reviews

- 7.1. Athlete categorisation will take place every 12 months (season-end process in August), as determined by the AFF's High Performance Commission, and is applicable to the following season. It is expected that most athletes will enter, move between, or exit categories in line with this schedule. The list of Categorised athletes will be published on the AFF's website following each round of categorisation.
- 7.2. In special circumstances, the ACP may (in its sole discretion) approve Athletes entering, moving between categories, or exiting the categories at other times. Such circumstances may include (without limitation) failing to comply with these Guidelines, retirement, arrival from overseas but with eligibility to compete for Australia, substantial performance gains etc.

8. Appeals

- 8.1. A notification of categorisation made by the AFF to an Athlete is taken to be an Original Decision as defined in the AFF's Tribunal Appointment and Procedure Policy (TAPP). The TAPP applies with respect to dealing with an appeal of an Original Decision.

9. Amendments

- 9.1. These Guidelines may be varied by the Australian Fencing Federation from time to time.

Schedule 1

Athlete Categories 2024 - 2028

ATHLETE PROGRESSION



	NSO Identified 1	NSO Identified 2	Emerging	Developing	Podium Potential	Podium Ready	Podium
Performance Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top 64 Junior World Championships/World Cup L3 OR Top 32 Cadet World Championships/EFC OR 2 AYC Gold; OR International podium at HPC Youth event; OR 2 or more podium for AFC/Nationals past 12 months; OR Top 3 AUS Ranking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top 32 at Junior World Championships/ Junior WC L3; OR Top 16 at Cadet World Championships EFC; OR # of AFC or National Championship Gold medals ; Top 2 Ranking at end-of-season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> #1 AUS Ranking/Highest FIE Rank at end-of-seasons OR Top 16 at Junior World Champs/Junior World Cup (L3) last 12 months OR Top 8 at Cadet World Champs last 12 months OR Top 16 at Senior Asian Champs last 12 months OR Top 8 at Junior Asian Champs OR Top 64 at Senior World Cup last 12 months in Individual Weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top 8 at Senior Asian Champs last 12 months OR Top 32 at Senior World Cups last 12 months OR Top 8 at Junior World Champs/Junior World Cup L3 last 12 months O 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top 16 at Senior World Champs OR Top 8 at Senior World Cup/Grand Prix AND At least 2 Top 16s at Senior World Cup/Grand Prix AND At least 2 wins against Top 16 WR opponents AND [OR] Podium at Senior Asian Championships in Individual Weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top 8 at Senior World Champs OR Top 8 at Olympic Games last 12 months OR World Cup Podiums last 12 months AND At least 2 wins against Top 8 WR opponents last 12 months in Team OR Individual Weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medallist at Senior World Champs OR Medallist at Olympic Games last 24 months in Team OR Individual Weapons
Programs & Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows IPP (technical, strategic, S&C, nutrition, mindset) NS Member, training 3 times per week Competes all AYC/AFC Competes internationally at # strong competitions (NAC, Marathon) and achieves strong results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows IPP (technical, strategic, S&C, nutrition, mindset) Trains at least 3 times per week. Competes all domestic events Camps/mobile sparring Competes internationally (HPC Designated, World Champs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows IPP (technical, strategic, S&C, nutrition, mindset) Trains at least 4 times per week (lessons/sparring) Camps/mobile sparring Competes all domestic events International exposure - spends time overseas Competes Internationally (World Champs, World Cup, Grand Prix - cadet/junior, and senior) - at least 7-10 events p.a including 2-4 senior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows IPP (technical, strategic, S&C, nutrition, mindset) 4-5 Training per week Camps/mobile sparring Some time training overseas, if not based overseas. Competes all to some domestic events Competes Internationally (World Champs, World Cups/Grand Prix- at least 8-10 events if across age groups; senior events 6 p.a. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has elite performance mindset toward fencing program. Trains 5/6 times per week ~ 1/3 time training internationally camps/mobile sparring Competes Internationally (World Champs, World Cups/Grand Prix- at least 8-10 events if across age groups; senior events 6+ p.a. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has elite performance mindset toward fencing program. Trains 5/6 times per week 1/2 time training internationally Camps mobile sparring Competes Internationally (World Champs, World Cups/Grand Prix- at least 8-10 events if across age groups; senior events 7+ p.a. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has elite performance mindset toward fencing program. Trains 5-6 times per week Full time training internationally Competes Internationally (World Champs, World Cups/Grand Prix- at least 8-10 events if across age groups; senior events 7+ p.a.
Ideal Age	10 - 15	14 - 18	15-19	18 - 21	19 - 24	22-27+	22-29+

*Levels (L1 to L3) of Junior World Cups will be determined by the AFF's High Performance Commission and published at the beginning of the season in August on the AFF's website. The L3 events will also be confirmed with ACP at the time of categorisation.