

Athlete Categorisation Guidelines – Australian Fencing

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. The AFF is supported by the Combat Institute of Australia (CombatAUS).
- 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).

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.

Athlete Categorisation Panel

- 3.1 Athlete categorisation will be determined by the Athlete Categorisation Panel (ACP) which:
 - Is a sub-committee of the HPC.
 - Its Chair is the Chair of the HPC.
 - 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.
 - CombatAUS representative.

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.

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 individual AFF High Performance Program Plan (HPPP) following key events.
 - d) Commit to compete in domestic events as outlined in their HPPP.
 - 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 HPPP.
 - f) Maintain the high standard of personal behaviour expected of an athlete representing Australia.
 - 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, AFF, CombatAUS, AIS or any stakeholders into disrepute.
 - k) Comply with all anti-doping, gambling, integrity, and anti-match fixing requirements for Fencing, Sport Integrity Australia (SIA), AFF, CombatAUS, and Sport Australia (SA) including the completion of e-learning modules and updates as requested from time to time.

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) The Australian Ranking position of the athlete as a critical factor.
 - c) 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.
 - 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 HPPP; 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 HPPP; 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 HPPPs, 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.

Timing of Reviews

- 6.1. Athlete categorisation will take place every 12 months (year-end process), as determined by the AFF's High Performance Commission, and is applicable to the following calendar year. 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.
- 6.2. 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.

Appeals

- 7.1. 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.

Amendments

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

Schedule 1.

Athlete Categories 2021-2024

Category	Category Description	Performance Indicators	Time in Category
Podium	<p>Medalist at Olympic / Paralympic or Senior World Championships in the previous 24 months.</p> <p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.3, and are deemed capable of a podium outcome at the next Olympic Games</p>	<p>Compulsory for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medal at Olympic / Paralympic Games. • Medal at Senior World Championships. <p>Additional considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medal at HPC Designated Event. • Medal at Int Non-Des Events^. 	<p>Undefined – until no longer meeting the KPIs for Podium categorisation.</p> <p>Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP.</p>
Podium Ready	<p>5th-8th at latest Olympic / Paralympic / Senior World Championship.</p> <p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.3, and are deemed capable of a podium outcome at the next Olympic Games=</p>	<p>Compulsory for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 16 at Olympic / Paralympic Games. • Top 16 at Senior World Championships. <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of Top 16 performances at HPC Designated Events* within last 24 months (dependent on depth and quality of field). • Achieved a Top 8 at HPC Designated Events or Int Non-Des Event. • # Of wins against Top 10 FIE ranked international athletes within last 12 months. 	<p>Undefined – until no longer meeting the KPIs for Podium categorisation.</p> <p>Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP.</p>

Podium Potential	<p>Senior athletes that have achieved defined international competition performance benchmarks that reliably confirm their world standard.</p> <p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.3, based on their ability to deliver Podium outcomes in future Olympic/Paralympic cycles.</p>	<p>Compulsory for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # 32 at Senior World Championships (OG?) or HPC Designated Event or Int Non-Des Event. <p>Additional considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top 16/32 placing at HPC Designated Events or Int Non-Des Events. Medal performance at HPC Designated Event for Junior or Junior World Championships (depending on depth and quality of field). Podium Cadet World Championships. Wins against quality international opponents. 	<p>May stay at this category for up to 4 years.</p> <p>Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP.</p>
Developing	<p>Athletes that have progressed through a reliable national talent confirmation phase, including achievement of relevant international competitions performance outcomes.</p> <p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.3, based on their ability to deliver performance outcomes at current Benchmark event and/or future Olympic/Paralympic cycles.</p>	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> #Top 64 at Senior World Championships or HPC Designated Events (Senior) or Int Non-Des Events. At least 1 Top 32 at either Senior World Championships or HPC Designated Event or Int Non-Des Events. Top 16 at Asian Senior Championships. Top 32 at Junior World Championships or # HPC Designated Events. Top 16 at Cadet World Championships. Wins against quality international opponents. 	<p>May stay at this category for up to 4 years.</p> <p>Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP.</p>
Emerging	<p>Athletes who have been identified by the ACP via a valid and reliable talent identification profiling method and are going through a set, time-limited talent confirmation period.</p> <p>Athletes are assessed predominantly against the factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.3 and are deemed capable of progressing to Developing within prescribed timeframes.</p>	<p>Additional considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality performances at Junior and Senior International events (International Championships, HPC Designated and Non-designated). Wins against quality international opponents. AFC Podium as Cadet/Junior. Gold – AFC/National Championships. 	<p>Athlete may stay at this category for up to of 4 years.</p> <p>Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP.</p>

*HPC Designated Events has the same definition as in the AFF Rankings Policy, and usually includes World Cup and Grand Prix at Senior Level; Junior World Cup at junior Level.

^Intl Non-Des Events has the same definition as in the AFF Rankings Policy, and usually includes World Cup and Grand Prix at Senior Level only