

# Athlete Assistance Program

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Selection Criteria

**2025-26**



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## 1. General Information

- 1.1. This document establishes the criteria that will be used by Nordiq Canada for nominating Olympic stream athletes for Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) for the 2025-26 carding year.
- 1.2. The Sport Canada policy and procedures that govern the AAP and the establishment and application of criteria can be found on the Sport Canada website Sport [Canada Athlete Assistance Program](#).
- 1.3. This document is created following Nordiq Canada's *NST Selection, Nomination and Announcement* policy.
- 1.4. Nordiq Canada's High Performance Director (HPD) makes the final nomination recommendations to Sport Canada based on Nordiq Canada's carding criteria.
- 1.5. Sport Canada is responsible for approving nominations in accordance with their AAP policies and the published Nordiq Canada *Athlete Assistance Program* selection criteria.
- 1.6. Appeals of Nordiq Canada's AAP nomination/re-nomination decision or recommendation to withdraw carding, may be pursued through the Nordiq Canada's *Dispute Resolution and Appeal* policy. Appeals of the Sport Canada AAP decision made under Sport Canada's *AAP Policies and Procedures* (Section 6 or 11) may be pursued through Section 13.
- 1.7. The Nordiq Canada HPD, or the NSO assigned designate, has the authority, and reserves the right to amend this document prior to the selection date under the following circumstances:
  - a. In the event of unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of Nordiq Canada that prevents the HPD from fairly and objectively implementing these selection procedures.
  - b. When additional (or altered) information deemed relevant by Nordiq Canada to the criteria is provided by external parties, such as (but not limited to) an event organizing committee, Sport Canada, The Canadian Olympic Committee, FIS, or any other relevant organization.
  - c. To correct, clarify or amend any inconsistencies, errors or omissions in the criteria.
  - d. Occurrences pertaining to, but not limited to: race cancellations or rescheduling, any country border limitations, travel restrictions, travel limitations, inability to maintain safety of athletes, etc.

Changes to this document will be communicated as per the Nordiq Canada *NST Selection, Nomination and Announcement* policy. Nordiq Canada is not responsible or liable in any way to anyone as a result of any amendments.

- 1.8. Athletes and coaches are responsible for reading and understanding the contents of this and supporting documents and policies. For clarification contact the HPD.
- 1.9. The qualification period is November 1, 2024, to March 24, 2025. The twelve-month carding cycle, which includes development cards, is from June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026.
- 1.10. This policy does not require Nordiq Canada to select any or all athletes to the maximum number of allotted quota positions.
- 1.11. Athletes will only be nominated when eligibility requirements have been verified by Nordiq Canada and Sport Canada.
- 1.12. Athletes who meet criteria but are ranked lower than quota spots permit will not be selected.

## 2. Eligibility

- 2.1. To be considered for AAP selection, athletes must:
  - a. be a Nordiq Canada member in good standing<sup>1</sup>;
  - b. be registered with a Nordiq Canada club;
  - c. have a valid Canadian passport;
  - d. have a valid Nordiq Canada race license; and,
  - e. have a valid Canadian FIS license.
- 2.2. To qualify for AAP carding, an Athlete must meet the following criteria set by Sport Canada in the [Athlete Assistance Program Policy](#):
  - a. The Athlete must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada at the beginning of the carding cycle the athlete is being nominated. Permanent residents must live in Canada for the full year preceding the carding cycle for which the athlete is being considered for AAP support.
  - b. The Athlete must be available to represent Canada in major international competitions, including World Championships and Olympic Winter Games. Further, under the eligibility requirements of the sport's International Federation (IF) as it pertains to citizenship or residency status, the athlete must be eligible to represent Canada at major international competitions, including World Championships, at the beginning of the carding cycle for which the athlete is being nominated.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the Nordiq Canada Bylaws for a full description of member in good standing.

- c. For Athletes who have been permanent residents of Canada for three years or more, continued eligibility to receive AAP support is contingent on the athlete becoming eligible to represent Canada at the Olympic Winter Games.
- d. The Athlete must meet the published NSO approved, AAP compliant sport specific carding criteria.
- e. The Athlete must participate in national team preparatory and annual training programs as outlined by the NST coaching staff and HPD.

### **3. Failure to Meet Renewal Criteria for Health-Related Reasons**

- 3.1. Nordiq Canada will consider re-nominating Athletes for health-related reasons in accordance with section 9.1.3 of the Sport Canada AAP policy. The basic philosophy for selecting an Athlete by granting health-related request is that all things being equal, the Athlete nominated has clearly demonstrated superior performances in previous competition to other athletes being considered for an SR1, SR2, SR or D nomination. A health-related request is considered as the last means by which an Athlete can earn selection and is intended to provide for exceptional circumstances outside the normal selection criteria rather than being part of the normal means by which an athlete can earn selection. This provision only applies when performance is compromised because they have not been able to train or compete for an extended period and has a positive prognosis within 8 to 12 months.
- 3.2. A SR1/SR2/SR or D carded Athlete who met 2024-25 NHPP objective criteria (5.9 a-c, 5.10 a-c, 5.11 a-b, 5.13 a-b) who at the end of the carding cycle, has not achieved the standard required for the renewal of carding status strictly because of health-related reasons, may be considered for re-nomination for the upcoming year provided the following conditions are met:
  - a. An Athlete must, within 7 days following the incident or occurrence, submit to the HPD a report which includes:
    - i. Certificate of diagnosis;
    - ii. consistent communication of the Athlete's health and performance status to the HPD or designated Nordiq Canada coaching or IST staff during the time the athlete is unable to train or compete;
    - iii. documentation confirming diagnosis by a licensed, relevant, and medical practitioner;
    - iv. a return to training and competition plan for the current and upcoming season;
    - v. supporting documentation of the Athlete's treatment by an accredited professional (e.g., physiotherapist/ massage) that supports a return to training and competition plan.
  - b. In the case of injury or illness, no carding nominations will be made for injuries that are determined by the HPD in consultation with medical professionals to be career-ending.

- 3.3. If an Athlete competes in a qualifying event, they may not invoke Section 3 in respect to the qualifying event in which he or she competed. The intention of this provision is to ensure that Athletes who are injured, suffering from an illness, or medical condition do not compete, which could cause further ill health, or harm. **If an Athlete does compete, they must accept the race result they have achieved.**
- 3.4. The Athlete may be nominated for a Senior Card or Development Card on the grounds of injury, a medical condition (including pregnancy) or illness at the sole discretion of the HPD based on the following factors:
- a. the number of cards available within priority allocation;
  - b. the nature and details of the diagnosis and prognosis;
  - c. assessment and training data provided by the Athlete that is verifiable by the discipline coach and IST;
  - d. evidence of the Athlete's level of performance prior to injury;
  - e. the strength of the Athlete's rehabilitation and training plan as evaluated by the HPD;
  - f. the advice of medical experts provided to the HPD; and
  - g. the realistic expectation that the Athlete can return to competition ready performance and continue to demonstrate the potential to perform at the Top-8 level and progress toward the podium.

Documentation must be submitted to the HPD by **March 26, 2025, 11:59 PM of the time zone where the athlete resides.**

## 4. Types of Cards and Funding Allocation

- 4.1. At the time of publishing Nordiq Canada is awarded the equivalent of 18 Senior Cards or \$469,800 in AAP funding for the June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026, carding cycle. Sport Canada reviews its carding allocations regularly therefore this amount is subject to change.
- 4.2. There are two types of cards: Senior (SR1/SR2/SR) and Development (D).
- 4.3. A minimum of 4 months of carding support must be available to nominate an athlete for AAP.
- 4.4. Senior cards are \$26,100 (\$2,175 /month x 12). Development cards are \$15,660 (\$1,305/month x 12).
- 4.5. **Senior Cards** are awarded on two sets of criteria:
- a. International Criteria (SR1/SR2). Sport Canada sets these criteria.
    - i. Senior cards based on international criteria are awarded to recognize outstanding performance at the World Ski Championships or Olympic Winter Games.

- ii. Athletes achieving the criteria are eligible for two years of AAP support. The first carding year is a SR1 card and second is a SR2 card. The second year is subject to the Athlete meeting requirements in 2.0 Eligibility, completing the online anti-doping courses, signing an Athlete NSO Agreement, selection to the National Ski Team and adhering to an HPD approved training program.
  - b. National Criteria (SR)
    - i. Senior cards (SR) are awarded based on national criteria to athletes with the potential to reach international criteria.
    - ii. SR cards based on national criteria are awarded for one year.
- 4.6. **Progression criteria for Senior cards:** Eight (8) years is the maximum an athlete will be carded at the senior level based on national criteria. After which time, Sport Canada will require a comprehensive thoroughly documented review of the athlete's performance over the past eight years to demonstrate progress toward meeting the international criteria, which then warrants nomination of "Senior National" card status for an additional year. This process must be followed for all subsequent years that the athlete is nominated at this level.
- 4.7. **Development Cards (D)** are to meet the development needs of younger athletes who clearly demonstrate the potential to achieve the Senior card international criteria. Development cards are awarded for one year. Priority for Development Cards go to athletes in the U23 and U20 categories.
- 4.8. **Progression criteria for Development cards:** Three years (3) is the maximum an athlete will be carded at the development level (**this criterion applies once the athlete reaches the post-junior category**). After which time, Sport Canada will require a comprehensive document review of the athlete's performance demonstrating progress toward meeting the senior international criteria, which then may warrant nomination of D card status for an additional year at this level.
- 4.9. Normally, an athlete previously carded at the Senior Card level (C1, SR, SR1, SR2) for more than two years cannot be nominated for a Development Card. An exception may be made, at Sport Canada's sole discretion, for an athlete carded at the Senior Card level for more than two years. For example, an athlete carded as a Senior Card for two or more years while still competing at the Junior international level may be eligible for a development card

## 5. Carding Criteria

The following priorities constitute the sequential order for nominating eligible athletes until the funding allocation has been reached.

- 5.1. International Criteria (SR1/SR2) - International criteria recognize and reward Canadian athletes for outstanding performance at World Championships or the Olympic

Games. In Olympic sports, only results from events that are on the program of the upcoming Olympic Games will be considered for carding under the international criteria. The following are the current standards for International criteria:

- a. Finish in the top eight, counting a maximum of three entries per country; **AND** finish in the top half of the field.
- 5.2. Athletes with a SR1 card during the preceding carding cycle are eligible to be nominated for a SR2 card provided they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Section 2 and have shown compliance to an HPD approved training plan.
- b. Athletes with a SR1/SR2 card during the preceding carding cycle who fall under section 3.0 are eligible to be nominated for a SR2 card provided they:
    - i. meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Section 2, **AND**
    - ii. have documented their injury as per the requirements outlined in Section 3.0, **AND** are following an NSO approved return to competition plan.
- 5.3. Nominations for SR cards will be made in the following priority order:
- a. Athletes who qualified for the NHPP A Team on point 6.6 of the *2025-26 National High Performance Program Criteria* in order of NHPP qualification.
  - b. Athletes who qualified for the NHPP B Team on point 6.7 of the *2025-26 National High Performance Criteria* in order of NHPP qualification.
  - c. 2024-25 SR carded athletes with an accepted health-related reason as defined in Section 3.
- 5.4. Nominations for Development cards will be made in the following order.
- a. Athletes who qualified for the NHPP NG1 on point 6.8 of the *2025-26 National High Performance Program Criteria* in order of NHPP qualification.
  - b. 2024-2025 D carded athletes with an accepted health-related reason as defined in Section 3.
- 5.5. Allocation of remaining cards.
- For athletes not already nominated for carding through priorities 5.1 to 5.3, the allocation of any cards will be determined according to the following process:
- a. Winners of the 2024-25 Nordiq Canada Sprint Series will be nominated for a Senior card.  
  
Order of selection between gender will be based on total score achieved. Ties will be broken by the number of 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes; 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes and so on until the tie is broken.
  - b. Winners of the 2024-25 Continental Cup (COC) series will be nominated for a Senior card.



Order of selection between gender will be based on total score achieved. Ties will be broken by the number of 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes; 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes and so on until the tie is broken.

- c. The process in 5.4.a-b will be repeated for U26 athletes (born in or after 1999). Athletes will be nominated for a Development card.

Steps a and b will be repeated using the official series lists and point totals, removing all athletes born in or before 1998 (athletes point totals do not change), in an alternating manner until there is no remaining funding to nominate athletes for cards.

## 6. Withdrawal of AAP Funding

- 6.1. The High Performance Director may recommend the withdrawal of an athlete's carded status to Sport Canada, under the following conditions:
  - a. the athlete has not fulfilled his/her responsibilities with respect to mandatory training camps, testing, and competitions;
  - b. the athlete has not fulfilled his/her responsibilities as identified in the NC Athlete Agreement;
  - c. the athlete has not fulfilled his/her responsibilities as identified in the NC Code of Conduct or NC Discipline Policy;
  - d. the athlete has demonstrated repeated toxic behavior eroding the NC Culture of Excellence;
  - e. the athlete has not adhered to his/her responsibilities as they pertain to WADA, and CCES antidoping protocols;
  - f. fraudulent misrepresentation to the AAP program; and
  - g. gross breach of discipline.
- 6.2. The procedures for the withdrawal of carding by Nordiq Canada are:
  - a. Proved a verbal warning to the athlete, including the steps and timelines to remedy the situation and the consequences of a failure to heed the warning.
  - b. Follow-up with a written warning to the athlete if the verbal warning is not heeded.
  - c. If the above steps are not successful in resolving the matter and NC still wishes to recommend withdrawal of carded status, NC must send a letter to the Sport Canada Program Officer and the AAP Manager with a copy of the athlete's carded status. This letter must indicate:
    - i. The grounds on which the recommendation is being made;
    - ii. The steps already taken to address the issue (verbal warning followed by a formal letter of warning);

- iii. Provide notice to the athlete of the athlete's right to contest the NC recommendation to withdraw carded status through NC's internal appeal process within the prescribed time.