

Para Nordic Athlete Assistance Program (AAP)

Paralympic Stream - Selection Criteria

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. General Information.....	3
2. Carding Quota	4
3. Carding Definitions.....	5
4. AAP Carding Selection Criteria	6
5. Selection Guidelines.....	7
6. Eligibility	7
7. Progression Criteria.....	8
8. Failure to Meet Renewal Criteria for Health-Related Reasons.....	9
9. Health Cards Related to Pregnancy.....	11
10. High Performance Director (HPD) Discretion	11
11. Withdrawal of AAP Funding	12
12. Definitions	13

1. General Information

1. The purpose of this document is to describe the process and criteria that will be used by Nordiq Canada to nominate Paralympic stream athletes for Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) for the 2026-27 carding year.
2. The AAP is funded by Sport Canada and provides financial support to identify high-performance athletes to help them achieve international success at events like the Paralympic Games, World Championships, and World Cups. This support includes a monthly living and training allowance and, when applicable, post-secondary tuition assistance, enabling athletes to focus on training, competition, and preparing for life after sport.
3. 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](#).
4. It is the athlete's responsibility to read and understand the contents of this document and other supporting documents and policies.
5. This document is created in accordance with Nordiq Canada's [Team Selection, Nomination and Announcement Policy](#).
6. Nordiq Canada's High-Performance Director (HPD) makes the final nomination recommendations to Sport Canada based on Nordiq Canada's carding criteria.
7. Sport Canada is responsible for approving nominations in accordance with their AAP policies and this Nordiq Canada AAP selection criteria.
8. Nordiq Canada's AAP nomination/re-nomination decisions or recommendation to withdraw carding may be appealed under the [Nordiq Canada Dispute Resolution and Appeals Policy](#). Any such appeals shall be brought directly to the SDRCC to be heard pursuant to the Canadian Sport Dispute Resolution Code.
9. Appeals shall be filed with the SDRCC within three (3) days of the nomination Synopsis and Rationale being posted to the Nordiq Canada website.
10. The Nordiq Canada HPD, or their designate, has the authority, and reserves the right to amend this document prior to the selection date under the following circumstances:
 - a. If unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of Nordiq Canada prevents the HPD from fairly and objectively implementing this selection criteria.
 - b. When new information is provided by external parties, including, without limitation, an event organizing committee, Sport Canada, the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC),

the International Ski Federation (FIS), the International Biathlon Union (IBU) or any other relevant organization and Nordiq Canada determines that it is relevant to the fair application of and rationale of this selection criteria.

- 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.

2. Carding Quota

1. In 2026-27, Nordiq Canada has been allocated the equivalent of ten (10) Senior Cards, a total of \$261,000. This allocation may be split into Senior or Development Cards. The number of cards allocated by Sport Canada is subject to change, in which case, there may need to be adjustments to the allotment of cards.
2. The qualification period for AAP support under this selection criteria is November 1, 2025, to March 24, 2026. The twelve-month carding cycle for all cards is from June 1, 2026, to May 31, 2027.
3. If more athletes qualify under the AAP carding criteria outlined in Section 4 and meet all Sport Canada and Nordiq Canada AAP requirements than there are available cards, not all eligible athletes will receive carding. Carding will be awarded in priority order as specified in Section 4.
4. Athletes approved for carding must be nominated a minimum of four (4) months, and can be nominated up to a maximum of twelve (12) months of carding support.

3. Carding Definitions

1. **International Criteria (SR1/SR2):** International Criteria recognize and reward Canadian athletes for outstanding performance at World Championships or the Paralympic Games. In Paralympic sports, only results from events that are on the program of the upcoming Paralympic Games will be considered for carding under the International Criteria. Athletes who meet the International Criteria are eligible to be nominated by Nordiq Canada for two consecutive years; the first-year card is referred to as SR1; the second, SR2.
2. **Senior National Criteria (SR):** Senior National Criteria identifies athletes who have the potential to achieve International Criteria. Senior cards based on National Criteria are normally allocated for one year at a time and are referred to as SR Cards. Nordiq Canada follows the AAP Policy requirements to establish the Senior National Criteria based on designated competition performances. SR carded athletes are eligible for up to one year of AAP support.

3. **Development Card Criteria (D):** Intended to support the development needs of athletes who clearly demonstrate the potential to achieve the International Criteria (SR1/SR2) but are not yet able to meet the Senior Card (SR) criteria. Development card athletes are eligible for up to one year of AAP support.
4. **Senior Card Health-Related Circumstances (SRH):** Nordiq Canada will consider re-nominating Athletes for health-related reasons in accordance with Section 8 of this document.

Carding Status	Monthly Allowance (min of 4 months, up to 12 months)
Senior Card (SR1, SR2, SR)	\$2,175
Senior Card Health-Related Circumstances (SRH)	\$2,175
Development Card (D, DH)	\$1,305

4. AAP Carding Selection Criteria

Each section below is in priority order, as are the criteria for nomination for carding. This means that, if Nordiq Canada's carding allocations are exhausted at the end of a specific section, or when applying the criteria within a specific section, athletes that are otherwise eligible for carding under subsequent sections will not be nominated for AAP support.

1. INTERNATIONAL CRITERIA– SR1/SR2	
a.	SR1: Top eight (8); and top half of the field at the 2026 Paralympic Winter Games (PWG)
b.	Athletes with an SR1 card for the 2025-26 carding cycle are eligible for nomination for an SR2 card for the 2026-27 carding cycle, provided they meet all eligibility requirements as per section 6 and section 7.
c.	SRH: Athletes carded at the SR2 level for the 2025-26 carding cycle who meet the policy on Failure to Meet Renewal Criteria for Health-Related Reasons as described in section 8.
Note:	Athletes that are eligible for an SR1 card will be ranked in accordance with their single best individual final finish race result at the 2026 PWG. A tie will be resolved as per section 5.3. Athletes that are eligible for an SR1 card under criteria 1.b (SR2) and 1.c. (SRH) will be prioritized based on their AAP-qualifying results from the 2024–2025 competition season.
2. SENIOR NATIONAL CARD – SR	
a.	Top three (3) WC individual final finish race result, with equal to or less than sixty (60) PN FIS or PN IBU points.

b.	Health-Related Reasons as described in section 8 for athletes who received SR carding in the 2025-26 carding cycle.
c.	One (1) individual final finish race result with equal to or less than sixty (60) FIS/IBU points.
d.	Two (2) individual final finish race results with equal to or less than one hundred twenty (120) FIS/IBU points.
e.	HPD Discretion as described in section 10.
Note:	If multiple athletes meet criteria under the same priority, they will be ranked in order of the lowest average PN FIS/PN IBU points using the qualifying races. A tie will be resolved as per section 5.3. Athletes qualifying under criteria 2.b (SRH) will be prioritized based on their AAP-qualifying results from the 2024–2025 competition season.
3. DEVELOPMENT CARD - D	
a.	Two (2) individual final finish race results with equal to or less than two hundred forty (240) FIS/IBU points.
b.	Health-Related Reasons as described in section 8 for athletes who received D carding in the 2025-26 carding cycle.
c.	HPD Discretion as described in section 10.
Note:	If multiple athletes meet criteria under the same priority, they will be ranked in order of the lowest average PN FIS/ PN IBU points using the qualifying races. A tie will be resolved as per section 5.3. Athletes qualifying under criteria 3.b (DH) will be prioritized based on their AAP-qualifying results from the 2024–2025 competition season.

5. Selection Guidelines

- Only events listed in this document are considered for selection rankings and standards.
- Athletes will only be nominated for carding after eligibility requirements have been verified by Nordiq Canada and Sport Canada.
 - Athletes that do not satisfy the eligibility requirements set out in Section 6 below will be ineligible for a carding nomination to Sport Canada until they satisfy the relevant and applicable condition(s).
 - Non-FIS penalty points will be used for PN Continental Cup (COC) races as per section 12.
 - Only World Cup events which meet the depth of field definition as per section 12 will be considered eligible for AAP nomination.
- In the event of a tie after the selection criteria has been applied, athletes will be ranked by the priorities in the following order:
 - Their single best individual final finish result within the qualification selection criteria. If there is still a tie it will move to 2nd, 3rd, etc. best result.

- b. If there is still a tie, the HPD will make the final decision. Depth of field will be required and considered for each event used to tie break.

6. Eligibility

1. 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 for which 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. Under the eligibility requirements of the FIS/IBU as it pertains to citizenship or residency status, the athlete must be eligible to represent Canada at major international competitions, including the World Championships and Paralympic Winter Games, at the beginning of the carding cycle for which the athlete is being nominated.
 - 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 Paralympic Winter Games.
 - d. The Athlete must meet Nordiq Canada's AAP compliant sport specific carding criteria.
2. To be considered for AAP selection by Nordiq Canada, athletes must:
 - a. be a Nordiq Canada member in good standing¹ including, without limitation, not having any outstanding debt toward Nordiq Canada.
 - b. agree and sign the Nordiq Canada National Ski Team and AAP Carding Athlete Contract;
 - c. be registered with a Nordiq Canada club;
 - d. have a valid Nordiq Canada race license;
 - e. have a valid Canadian PN FIS or PN IBU license;
 - f. complete the Athletes Assistance Program application form; and
 - g. complete all CCES, Safe Sport, True Sport Clean and Sport Canada - Athlete Assistance Program courses, at the beginning of each new carding cycle and at times thereafter as required by Sport Canada;
3. AAP Carding is available for Guides of Visually Impaired athletes (who have met their own AAP requirements) if they meet all Sport Canada and Nordiq Canada AAP requirements and the following conditions:
 - a. Meet all criteria set by Sport Canada and Nordiq Canada as per 6.1 and 6.2;
 - b. Agree and sign a Nordiq Canada Visually Impaired Guide contract;
 - c. The guide will be considered for AAP support based upon the results and awarding of AAP support for the visually impaired athlete they are guiding as per section 4;
4. Only during a Paralympic Games year can more than one guide be nominated for Sport Canada AAP support. Each guide must have a full training and competition schedule and be fully integrated with the Visually Impaired athlete's program. Sport Canada must approve additional guides for AAP support. Any subsequent Guides will only receive the equivalent of four (4) months of SR carding.

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

7. Progression Criteria

1. **Senior National cards (SR):** An athlete is expected to continuously progress towards a SR1/SR2 card in order to be renominated for a Senior National Card.
 - a. 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 documented review of the athlete's performance over the past eight (8) years to demonstrate progress toward meeting the SR1/SR2 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.
 - b. Note: Health related circumstances cards will not count towards an athlete's years of SR carding.
2. **Development cards (D):** An athlete is expected to continuously progress towards a Senior National card in order to be re nominated for a Development Card.
 - a. Five (5) years is the maximum an athlete will be carded at the development level after which time Sport Canada will require a comprehensive documented review of the athlete's performance demonstrating progress toward meeting the senior national criteria (SR), which then may warrant nomination of D card status for an additional year at this level.
 - b. Note: Health related circumstances cards will not count towards an athlete's years of D carding
 - c. Normally, an athlete previously carded at the Senior Card level (SR, SR1, SR2) for more than two (2) carding cycles 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 (2) 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.

8. Failure to Meet Renewal Criteria for Health-Related Reasons

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 a 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 the athlete has a positive prognosis with a Nordiq Canada approved plan to return within 8 to 12 months of their injury or illness.

2. An SR1/SR2/SR or D carded Athlete who met the 2025-26 National High Performance Program (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 seven (7) days following the incident or occurrence, submit to the HPD a report which includes:
 - i. 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;
 - ii. documentation confirming diagnosis by a licensed medical practitioner in a field that is relevant to the Athlete's injury or illness;
 - iii. a Nordiq Canada-approved return to training and competition plan for the current and upcoming season; and
 - iv. supporting documentation of the Athlete's treatment by an accredited and approved Nordiq Canada professional (e.g., physiotherapist/ massage) that supports the return to training and competition plan.

IMPORTANT: for the purpose of invoking this Section 8 to seek a carding nomination, an Athlete's previous application where a health-related circumstance has prevented them from meeting criteria (i.e., nomination to compete during a World Cup or at the World Championships) shall not be considered for carding nominations. New applications must be submitted by each Athlete in accordance with this Section 8 for the purpose of a carding nomination.

3. 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.
4. If an Athlete competes in a qualifying event, they may not invoke Section 8 in respect to the qualifying event in which they 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 and may not make an application pursuant to this Section 8 for an event (or events) in which they competed.

5. The Athlete may be nominated for a SR1/SR2, Senior (SR) or Development Card (D) on the grounds of injury, a medical condition 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 Nordiq Canada IST Lead;
 - d. evidence of the Athlete's level of performance prior to injury;
 - e. the strength of the Athlete's Nordiq Canada-approved 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.
6. Any documentation required under this Section 8 must be submitted to the HPD by March 26, 2026, 11:59 PM of the time zone where the Athlete resides.

9. Health Cards Related to Pregnancy

1. Nordiq Canada may nominate athletes for AAP Carding for a health card specifically related to pregnancy at the Senior (SR) level.
2. A health card specifically related to pregnancy at the Senior (SR) level is an additional card on top of Nordiq Canada's allocated quota and does not impact the overall quota.
3. Nordiq Canada may consider allocating a second cycle of a health card related to pregnancy under this section should the achievement of a nomination under the sport-specific AAP criteria not be met due to ongoing health circumstances related to the pregnancy and/or birth of the child.
4. If, after two cycles of a health-related card due to pregnancy, the Athlete is not able to meet the sport-specific AAP criteria, the Athlete will be decarded and will be required to meet the sport specific standards for the following cycle.
5. Other considerations:
 - a. A health card that is designated for pregnancy will not count against sport specific policies around restrictions to the number of years carded for health-related circumstances at SRH or the number of consecutive years carded for health-related circumstances at SRH;

- b. An Athlete who is supported under [Sport Canada's AAP Policies and procedures 9.1.4](#) and who has most recently been carded at the SR1 level, may be carded at the SRH level rather than the SR2 level for that cycle;
6. For a nomination for a health card related to pregnancy, it must be clear that the Athlete was tracking towards meeting the criteria and the program commitments but was unable due directly to their pregnancy.
7. Any documentation required under this Section 9 must be submitted to the HPD by March 26, 2026, 11:59 PM of the time zone where the Athlete resides.

10. High Performance Director (HPD) Discretion

1. HPD discretion will only be applied in exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances the HPD will consult with the High-Performance Committee (HPC), and a decision as to whether an athlete could be considered for nomination will be reached by majority consensus.
2. When assessing an athlete for discretionary nomination to the AAP, the HPD will review the athlete's results from the season immediately prior to the season that ended before the start of the qualification period (the "Prior Season"). The HPD will evaluate such results against the objective criteria in the current selection criteria to determine whether the athlete should be nominated to the AAP for the upcoming season. The HPD may also use the following evidence:
 - a. Current and historical results
 - b. Current and historical testing data
 - c. Current and historical training data

11. Withdrawal of AAP Funding

1. The HPD may recommend the withdrawal of an Athlete's carding to Sport Canada, under the following conditions:
 - a. the Athlete has not fulfilled their responsibilities with respect to mandatory training camps, testing, or competitions;
 - b. the Athlete has not fulfilled their responsibilities as identified in the Nordiq Canada National Ski Team and AAP Athlete Contract;
 - c. the Athlete is no longer considered in good standing with Nordiq Canada;
 - d. the Athlete has been found to have breached Nordiq Canada's Code of Conduct and Ethics, the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS), or any other Nordiq Canada, FIS or CPC policy, or the policy of any other sport organization with authority over the Athlete, and such behaviour could have a detrimental impact to Nordiq Canada's Culture of Excellence;

- e. the Athlete has not adhered to their anti-doping responsibilities; or
 - f. fraudulent misrepresentation to the AAP program.
2. The procedures for the withdrawal of carding by Nordiq Canada are:
- a. Provide a verbal warning to the Athlete, including the steps and timelines to remedy the situation and the consequences of a failure to correct their behaviour.
 - b. Follow-up with a written warning to the Athlete if the verbal warning is not respected.
 - c. If the above steps are not successful in resolving the matter and Nordiq Canada still wishes to recommend withdrawal of a carded status, Nordiq Canada 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 Nordiq Canada's recommendation to withdraw carded status before the SDRCC as provided for in Section 1(9).

12. Definitions

- 1. PWG – Paralympic Winter Games
- 2. WC – World Cup
- 3. FIS – International Ski Federation
- 4. IBU – International Biathlon Union
- 5. SDRCC – the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada
- 6. PN – Para Nordic
- 7. HPD – High Performance Director
- 8. HPC – High Performance Committee
- 9. Individual Final Finish Race Result - The final time and ranking attributed to an athlete at the completion of an entire individual event, i.e., time of day, qualification heats, or prequalification times are not considered individual final finish race results. An athlete must complete the race and obtain FIS/IBU points for any result to be considered a race result.

10. Team Final Finish Race Result: The final time and ranking attributed to a team at the end of an entire team event, i.e., qualification rounds are not considered. A team must complete the race and obtain a final finish time to be considered a race result.
11. Depth of Field - For an individual final finish World Cup or Paralympic race result to be used for qualification, the field must include at least 2 athletes who have fewer than 20 FIS/IBU points or at least 3 athletes who have fewer than 40 FIS/IBU points on the FIS/IBU points overall rankings in that sport class (i.e. sit, stand, visually impaired) on the date of competition.
 - a. If an event does not satisfy the Depth of Field requirement, individual race results may be utilized by the HPD to determine if the result can be considered.
12. Single Best Equivalent FIS/IBU Points - Lowest points achieved in an individual FIS/IBU sanctioned race.
13. Non-FIS/IBU penalty points – FIS/IBU point calculations done internally by Nordiq Canada for Continental Cup events to determine equivalent FIS/IBU points for an athlete in an individual event by removing the event penalty and using the race winner's actual FIS/IBU points on the current FIS/IBU points.