

Athlete Categorisation Guidelines – Taekwondo (2021 – 2024)

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, Paralympic, World Championship and Commonwealth Games level). Athlete Categorisation will be used by the National Institute Network (NIN) and National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) to inform planning and to prioritise support to best achieve system targets.

The Combat Institute of Australia (CombatAUS), in collaboration with Australian Taekwondo (AT) and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), has developed a sport-specific matrix that defines each of the five categorisation levels for the sport of taekwondo in Australia. The AIS Performance Pathways Team has assisted in developing contemporary sport-specific identification, confirmation and development profiling and assessments for each level. This matrix will be agreed in advance of athlete nominations as part of the planning process for the next pinnacle event cycle.

Taekwondo athletes will be categorised annually, against the sport-specific matrix, in line with an agreed annual review process led by CombatAUS, in collaboration with the AT Performance Pathways Program.

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 be on a committed path to obtaining Australian Citizenship to be eligible to compete for Australian at the next Pinnacle event.
 - b) Satisfy all relevant World Taekwondo (WT) and International Olympic Committee (IOC) eligibility and nationality rules.
 - c) Be actively training to compete in a category that is to be contested at the 2024 Olympic or Paralympic Games
 - d) Be a registered member of AT.

Athlete Categorisation Panel

- 3.1 Athlete categorisation will be determined by the National Categorisation Panel (NCP). The NCP comprises key members of the Combat Institute of Australia (CIA) High Performance program and the Australian Taekwondo. The composition of the NCP ensures the knowledge and capability required to make informed athlete categorisation decisions.
- 3.2. Current members of the NCP are the CombatAUS National Performance Coach, the CombatAUS Performance Director, AT National Performance Pathway Lead, CombatAUS Performance Pathways Manager, and an appointed Australian Taekwondo Coach.

Conditions of Taekwondo 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 CombatAUS and/or AT Athlete Agreements (as amended from time to time).
 - b) Complete, sign and return paperwork as required, committing to the requirements for AIS categorisation.
 - c) Sign and adhere to an Individual Performance Plan (IPP)
 - d) Engage in a review of their IPP following every key event.
 - e) Maintain and update personal details (i.e., address, email, phone number) with the AIS, CombatAUS and AT.
 - f) Commit to participate in National training camps as required.
 - g) Commit to compete in all domestic events as outlined in their IPP.
 - h) Commit to compete (if selected) at international events for Australia as outlined in their IPP.
 - i) Maintain the high standard of personal behaviour expected of an athlete representing Australia.
 - j) Maintain a lifestyle conducive to sporting excellence; and
 - k) Commit to be a part of a team and contribute to a culture that inspires and fosters respect and success.
 - l) Abide by both the rules and spirit of the sport of taekwondo.
 - m) Not bring the sport of Taekwondo, CombatAUS, AT, AIS or any stakeholders into disrepute.
 - n) Comply with all anti-doping, gambling, integrity, and anti-match fixing requirements of Sport Integrity Australia (SIA), CombatAUS, AT and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) including the completion of e-learning modules and updates as requested from time to time.

Factors taken into account in Categorisation.

- 5.1 In determining an athlete's current performance standard and future Olympic/World Championship podium potential the NCP must consider the following factors in assessing Athletes who have the best chance of contributing to the achievement of CombatAUS and AT's High-Performance goals:
- a) 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.
 - b) Any specific guidance from the AIS (as advised from time to time) on Athlete categorisation.
 - c) During the 12 months prior to categorisation the extent to which the athlete has:
 - i. Demonstrated a strong commitment to all national training and attended all national camps to which invited.
 - ii. If funded (i.e., any contribution to travel and accommodation), participated in all international competitions and camps for which selected; and
 - d) An Athlete's compliance with the conditions set out in paragraph 4.1 (above).

5.2. The NCP may, at its sole discretion, use several additional factors in assessing athlete's potential for future Olympic, Paralympic and World podium success, including (without limitation):

- a) Consistency in results and ability to repeat World Class results and deliver performances under pressure.
- b) Rankings of and performance against opponent on the WT World Ranking List (WRL)
- c) An Athlete's technical, tactical, physical, and mental performance and ability as determined by the NCP through assessment against the AT Podium Profile.
- d) An Athlete's ongoing commitment and application, including communication with national coaches, adherence to IPPs, weight management, motivation to succeed and use of available resources within a daily training environment to increase performance.
- e) An Athlete's commitment to the level of training necessary to achieve the desired performance.
- f) The depth and quality of talent in each category here in Australia in comparison to our international competitors.
- g) The athlete's age, with a particular and increased focus on junior international results (World Championships, European and Asian competitions) in informing decisions for categorisation at Emerging and Developing. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- h) Variance in depth/strength of field between weight categories and genders – there are notable differences in the number of competitors between different divisions (e.g., between 58kg males and 80kg males, or between flyweight men compared to flyweight women). This difference occurs locally (i.e., in Australia and Oceania), but also to a slightly lesser extent internationally. As a result, it is difficult to compare directly between categories - i.e., a top 16 finish in one weight division in a competition may mean something very different from a top 16 finish in another weight division at the same competition.

5.3 Depending on the stage in the Olympic cycle and given the impact of COVID-19 on national and international activity, the NCP may, in its sole discretion, give greater weighting to factors. Competition results from 2019/2020 and performance at National High Performance and Performance Pathway Camp activities may be considered by the NCP to assess an athlete's potential.

5.4 The 'Associate' category is not a formally recognised category according to the AIS National Athlete Categorisation Framework. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that there may be certain athletes who fail to achieve the necessary performance criteria but add significant value to the performance pathway within either the DTE or national team or squad.

Associated Policies

6.1. The NCP recognise athletes who are identified as contributing to the performance outcomes of the sport at the next pinnacle event (Olympic & Paralympic Games) where one of the following may apply:

- a) An athlete is recovering from major injury or illness.
- b) An athlete is taking time away from competition.
- c) An athlete is transitioning into a sport from another;
- d) An athlete is pregnant; or
- e) An athlete is transitioning out of competitive sport (retirement or non-selection resulting in non-categorisation)

a) **Athletes recovering from major injury or illness**

The NCP recognise that 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.

It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category should still be identified, and therefore eligible for dAIS nomination, if they meet the following minimum criteria:

- Pre-injury/illness the athlete is categorised AND was receiving dAIS support;
- Has an individual athlete performance plan with a return to competition focus and timeframes outlined – including working with the AW&E team member (or equivalent).
- Is meeting the requirements of the agreed rehabilitation plan; and
- Is tracking against rehabilitation benchmarks to achieve pre-injury/illness performance outcomes.

b) **Athletes taking time away from competition**

The NCP recognise 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.

It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category should still be identified, and therefore eligible for dAIS nomination, if they meet the following minimum criteria:

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

c) Athlete transitioning into a sport from another

The NCP recognise that on occasion, high performing athletes may transition into a sport from another with the expectation they will contribute to national performance targets at the next pinnacle event of the new sport. Usually, a high performing athlete would only transition into a new sport if there was a strong likelihood of success.

It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category should be identified within the NEW sport, and therefore eligible for dAIS nomination, if they meet the following minimum criteria:

- the athlete was categorised in the previous sport in the past 24 months.
- Has an individual athlete performance plan focusing on contributing to the national performance targets at the pinnacle event within a 4-year period; and
- The athlete has an individual performance plan with the new sport, agreed milestones and is meeting progression targets.

d) Athletes who are pregnant

The NCP recognise that athletes may take some time away from intense training and competition when they become pregnant or have recently given birth. These athletes may still be on track to contribute to national performance targets at the next pinnacle event.

It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category should still be identified, and therefore eligible for dAIS nomination, if they meet the following minimum criteria:

- Prior to becoming pregnant, the athlete was categorised AND was receiving dAIS support in the past 12 months.
- Has an individual athlete performance plan focusing on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing as it aligns to the sports needs and informed by specific medical advice as it relates to pregnancy.
- Has an agreed return to sport and competition plan including timeframes and regular pre-determined meetings scheduled with the sport PD (or equivalent); and
- Maintains contact with AW&E staff (or equivalent) on a regular basis to ensure athletes are focussed on maintaining their overall wellbeing.

e) Athletes who are transitioning out of competitive sport (retirement or non-selection resulting in non-categorisation).

Athletes in this category, with a history of contributing to sport outcomes, may be eligible for half an allocation of dAIS on the recommendation of the NCP.

It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category may still be eligible for dAIS for a period of 6 months if they meet the following minimum criteria:

- Prior to transitioning out of competitive sport, the athlete was categorised as podium, podium ready or podium potential AND be receiving dAIS support in the past 12 months.

- The athlete has developed a transition plan with a member of the sport specific AW&E team (or equivalent) and meets regularly focussing on maintaining their wellbeing during the transition; and
- The NCP require that the athlete contributes to the sport in a specific way as part of being nominated for dAIS e.g., speaking at camps, promo material for upcoming events, inclusion in formal or informal mentoring programs, developing a plan to transition to sport specific coaching/administration/support services etc.

Timing of Reviews

- 7.1. Athlete categorisation will take place every 12 months (year-end process) 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 CombatAUS and AT websites following each round of categorisation.
- 7.2. In exceptional circumstances, the NCP 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

- 8.1. Only athletes who have previously been categorised may request reconsideration of the decision regarding their exit from categorisation or their change of categorisation level (Request). This Request must be put in writing to the CombatAUS High Performance Director. In their Request, the athlete must address either or both of the following grounds for reconsideration, namely that the NCP (a) made an error of fact, or (b) failed to consider a relevant performance standard. The Request must be made within seven days of the notification to the affected athlete.

Upon receipt of a valid Request, the CombatAUS High Performance Director will ask the Independent Observer to review the athlete's Request. Following this review, the Independent Observer may invite the NCP to reconsider their decision or may request the NCP to provide further detail to the athlete addressing its concerns and/or the reasons for the NCP panel's decision. The Independent Observer should provide reasons for their decision to the affected athlete and NCP.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- a) The Independent Observer is not entitled to make or substitute selection decisions; any changes would need to be made by the NCP.
- b) Athletes are not entitled to appeal against the categorisation of any other athlete.
- c) There is no further avenue of appeal.

Amendments

- 9.1. These Guidelines may be varied from time to time by CombatAUS. Any updates will be published on the CombatAUS and AT websites.

Schedule 1: Athlete Categories 2021 – 2024

Category	Category Description	Performance Indicators	Time in Category
Podium	<p>Medallist at Olympic Games/Paralympic Games/ 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/Paralympic 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 Grand Prix Final • # Of medal performances at Grand Prix events • # Of wins against Top 10 WRL ranked 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 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/Paralympic Games.</p>	<p>Compulsory for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 8 placing at last benchmark event. • Top 8 on the WT Senior Olympic Ranking <p>Additional considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 8 at Grand Prix Final • Medallist at Grand Prix events • # Of wins against Top 10 WRL ranked 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>

<p>Podium Potential</p>	<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, and are deemed capable of a podium outcome at future Olympic/ Paralympic Games</p>	<p>Compulsory for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 8 at Grand Prix Event • Top 16 at Senior World Championships having won a minimum of two fights. <p>Additional considerations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Of medals at high-quality G 1/2 Senior events (dependent on depth of field) in previous 12-month period. • # Of wins against Top 10 WRL ranked athletes within last 12 months • WT Olympic Ranking (list including all comps to November 2021), with reference to ranking points achieved outside of Oceania. • Positive international performance trend • Win/loss % across all international events (excluding Oceania). • Physical, technical competencies, and performance behaviours as considered against the AT Podium Profile 	<p>May stay at this category for up to 4 years.</p> <p>Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP</p>
<p>Developing</p>	<p>Athletes that have progressed through a reliable national talent confirmation phase, including achievement of relevant international competitions performance outcomes.</p>	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 16 at Grand Prix event in previous 12-month period • Medallist at Junior World Championships • # Of medals at high quality G 1/2 Junior and Senior events (dependent on depth and quality of field) in previous 12-month period. 	<p>May stay at this category for up to 4 years.</p> <p>Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP</p>

	<p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.3 and are deemed capable of a podium outcome at future Olympic/ Paralympic Games and Senior World Championships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Of wins against Top 40 Olympic ranked athletes within last 12 months • Win/loss % across all international events (excluding Oceania) • Physical, technical competencies, and performance behaviours as considered against the AT Podium Profile • Maximum upper age limit of 24 years 	
Emerging	<p>Athletes who have been identified by AT/CombatAUS 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 against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.3, and are deemed capable of progressing to Developing within prescribed timeframes</p>	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 8 at Cadet or Junior World Championships having won a minimum of two fights. • # Of Top 8 placings at Junior and Senior Continental Open events (excluding Oceania Championships and dependent on depth and quality of field) • # Of wins against Top 60 Olympic ranked athletes within last 12 months • Performances at National Championships • Positive performance trend • Physical, technical competencies, and performance behaviours as considered against the AT Podium Profile • Maximum upper age limit of 21 years 	<p>Cadet/Junior athletes may stay at this category for up to 4 years.</p> <p>Senior athletes may stay at this category for a maximum of 2 years.</p> <p>Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP</p>

Athlete Categorisation – Non-Podium Pathway Category			
Category	Category Description	Performance Indicators	Time in Category
Associate	Athlete who does not fulfil the categorisation criteria but demonstrates potential and/or contributes and adds value to the DTE. Selection at the absolute discretion of the National Categorisation Panel (NCP).	Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletes selected for a National Team to compete at a BME and do not fall in the above categories; or whose performance standards do not currently demonstrate medal potential for future BME Identified athletes who add significant value to the DTE 	Undefined - until progressing into the Podium Pathway; or until no longer meeting the KPIs for Associate. Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP