



SQUASH AUSTRALIA ATHLETE CATEGORISATION FRAMEWORK

NATIONAL ATHLETE CATEGORISATION FRAMEWORK

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. 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.

SQUASH AUSTRALIA ATHLETE CATEGORISATION CRITERIA

The Squash Australia (SqA) Athlete Categorisation criteria identifies the athletes with the greatest potential to contribute to the targets of Australia's National High Performance Sport Strategy. SqA uses the tiered categorisation of athletes to inform the allocation and prioritisation of resources and support services provided by SqA, the AIS and system partners in the NIN. The criteria includes a combination of performance benchmarks, talent identification and talent confirmation measures to ensure the categorisation process identifies athletes with the greatest potential to achieve future success.

SQUASH AUSTRALIA SPORT-SPECIFIC CATEGORISATION MATRIX

Category	AIS Description and Criteria	SqA Criteria & Key Performance Indicators	Time in Category
Podium	Athletes have won a medal at the Commonwealth Games, World Championships or agreed event in the previous 24 months AND must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to win a medal at the next Commonwealth Games.	<p>Compulsory for category consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletes who have won a medal at the World Championships, Commonwealth Games, World Team Championships or World Doubles Championships in the last 24 months. <p>And have demonstrated they are on a medal-winning trajectory for the next international benchmark event based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profile of World Ranking relative to Squash Australia's WITW World Ranking Standards; and/or Ongoing completion of Key Priorities and Performance Objectives in the athlete's Individual Performance Plan. 	Undefined – until no longer meeting the KPIs for Podium categorisation.
Podium Ready	Athletes have placed 4-8 th at the most recent Commonwealth Games, World Championships or agreed event AND must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to PODIUM level, targeting a medal at the next Commonwealth Games.	<p>Compulsory for category consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletes who have placed 4th – 8th at the World Championships, Commonwealth Games, World Team Championships or World Doubles Championships in the previous 24 months. <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have met the Podium Ready world ranking standards as per <i>Squash Australia's WITW World Ranking Standards</i>. <p>And have demonstrated they are on a medal-winning trajectory for the next international benchmark event based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing completion of Key Priorities and Performance Objectives in the athlete's Individual Performance Plan. 	Undefined – until progressing to Podium categorisation; or until no longer meeting the KPIs for Podium Ready categorisation.



<p>Podium Potential</p>	<p>Athletes will have achieved agreed performance benchmarks which, alongside international competition performances, reliably indicate their future potential for podium success. Athletes must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to at least PODIUM READY level within the agreed sport- specific matrix timeframes.</p>	<p>Compulsory for category consideration: Athletes who have demonstrated they are on a medal-winning trajectory for the future international benchmark events based key performance indicators listed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes who on target to achieve a top 40 world ranking within the next six years, based on achieving the Podium Potential world ranking standards as per Squash Australia's WITW World Ranking Standards. <p>And have demonstrated they are on track to progress to Podium Ready based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing completion of Key Priorities and Performance Objectives in the athlete's Individual Performance Plan. 	<p>Undefined – until progressing to Podium Ready categorisation; or until no longer meeting the KPIs for Podium Potential categorisation.</p>
<p>Developing</p>	<p>Athletes have progressed through a reliable national talent confirmation phase and placed within a dedicated national development program. Athletes must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to at least PODIUM POTENTIAL level within the agreed sport-specific matrix timeframes.</p>	<p>Compulsory for category consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes who have met the Developing world ranking standards as per Squash Australia's WITW World Ranking Standards. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes who are part of Squash Australia's <i>Elite Player Support Program</i> having achieved the <i>Junior Performance Criteria</i> for this program. <p>And have demonstrated they are on track to progress to Podium Potential based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing completion of Key Priorities and Performance Objectives in the athlete's Individual Performance Plan. ○ Being considered active on the PSA Tour by competing in a minimum of six PSA events over the previous 12 months (for players who are no longer juniors). 	<p>Athletes may stay in this category up to the year they turn 24 years of age. After this point, athletes must have met the criteria for Podium Potential to remain categorised.</p>



Emerging

Athletes have been identified by an NSO via a valid and reliable talent identification profiling method (agreed in advance and with future Podium Potential characteristics identified) and are going through a set, time-limited talent confirmation period.

Compulsory for category consideration:

- Athletes who have been selected a *National Junior Talent Squad* by satisfying the performance and/or talent identification criteria outlined in the *National Junior Talent Squad Selection Criteria*.
- AND**
- Have demonstrated their ability to achieve a Top 50 finish at a future World Junior Championships based on their age and performance trajectory.

And have demonstrated they are on track to progress to *Developing* based on:

- Ongoing completion of Key Priorities and Performance Objectives in the athlete's Individual Performance Plan.
- Being considered active on the PSA Tour by competing in a minimum of six PSA events over the previous 12 months (for players who are no longer juniors).

Athletes may stay in this category up to the year they turn 22 years of age. After this point, athletes must have met the criteria for *Developing* to remain categorised.



PROCESS

1. Categorisation Panel

- a) The SqA Categorisation Panel shall be made up of key members of SqA Staff including members being:
- High Performance Director (Chair)
 - National Coach
 - National Pathways Coach
 - AIS Performance Program Consultant (Observer)

2. Nomination process and timeframes

- a) The panel will meet in May each year within the 2024 - 2028 cycle to confirm categorisation status;
- b) At this time, athletes may be added, removed, or moved to a different category;
- c) Athletes will remain in an Athlete Category until such time as they are moved or removed;
- d) Athletes must continue to demonstrate progression and improvement in areas of performance that shall be identified in their IPP. Athletes who fail to progress may be removed from the Athlete Categories at the sole discretion of SqA;
- e) The panel may at its discretion, request a review of an athlete at other times (e.g. following an event or if an athlete is not actively training or demonstrating the required commitment levels as determined by SqA).

Note: This is not a national selection document

3. Communications

- a) The Squash Australia High Performance Director will update the AIS with the names of those athletes who meet the above criteria after each categorisation review meeting.



ASSOCIATED CATEGORISATION POLICIES

Athletes who are recognised as capable of contributing to Squash Australia's Performance Objectives at the next pinnacle event, though do not meet the compulsory criteria for category consideration in the sport-specific matrix, will still be considered for categorisation where one of the following applies:

- a) An athlete is recovering from a major injury or illness
- b) An athlete is taking time away from competition
- c) An athlete is transitioning into squash from another sport; and
- d) An athlete is pregnant.
- e) An athlete is transitioning out of squash competition

a) Athlete Recovering from a major injury or illness

An athlete recovering from a major injury or illness will be categorised at the same level as they were pre-injury or illness providing they meet the following criteria.

Category	Performance Requirement
Podium	The athlete achieved a Podium result at the most recent Commonwealth Games or at a World Championship event in the past two years.
Podium Ready	The athlete achieved a Top 8 finished at the most recent Commonwealth Games or at a World Championship event in the past two years.
Podium Potential	The athlete has represented Australia at a senior international level in the past two years.
Developing	No performance requirement.
Emerging	No performance requirement.



Athletes categorised under this policy must also meet the following conditions to remain categorised:

- The athlete has an Individual Performance Plan with a return to competition focus and timeframes outlined – including working with Squash Australia's AW&E Manager;
- The athlete is meeting the requirements of the agreed rehabilitation plan;
- The athlete is tracking against rehabilitation benchmarks to achieve pre-injury/illness performance outcomes.

b) Athlete taking time away from competition

An athlete who has taken time away from competition for family, health, wellbeing and/or any personal reason will be categorised at the same level as they were prior to taking time away from competition providing they meet the following criteria.

Category	Performance Requirement
Podium	The athlete achieved a Podium result at the most recent Commonwealth Games or at a World Championship event in the past two years.
Podium Ready	The athlete achieved a Top 8 finished at the most recent Commonwealth Games or at a World Championship event in the past two years.
Podium Potential	The athlete has represented Australia at a senior international level in the past two years.
Developing	No performance requirement.
Emerging	No performance requirement.



Athletes categorised under this policy must also meet the following conditions to remain categorised:

- The athlete has an Individual Performance Plan focusing on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing as it aligns to the needs of squash and its performance objectives;
- The athlete has an agreed return to sport and competition plan including timeframes and regular pre-determined meetings scheduled with the National Performance Director and;
- The athlete maintains contact with Squash Australia's AW&E Manager on a regular basis to ensure they are focused on maintaining their wellbeing.

c) Athlete transitioning into squash from another sport

An athlete who is transitioning to squash from another sport will be categorised at the same level as they were in their previous sport, providing they meet the following conditions:

- The athlete was categorised in their previous sport in the past 24 months;
- The athlete has an Individual Performance Plan focusing on contributing to Squash Australia's performance objectives within a 4-year period;
- The athlete has an Individual Performance Plan with Squash Australia, with agreed milestones and is meeting progression targets.

An athlete transitioning to squash from another sport will be subject to the same *Time in Category* requirements for the respective categories as are defined in the sport-specific matrix.



d) Athlete is pregnant

An athlete who is pregnant will be categorised at the same level as they were prior to taking time away from competition providing they meet the following criteria.

Category	Performance Requirement
Podium	The athlete achieved a Podium result at the most recent Commonwealth Games or at a World Championship event in the past two years.
Podium Ready	The athlete achieved a Top 8 finished at the most recent Commonwealth Games or at a World Championship event in the past two years.
Podium Potential	The athlete has represented Australia at a senior international level in the past two years.
Developing	No performance requirement.
Emerging	No performance requirement.

Athletes categorised under this policy must also meet the following conditions to remain categorised:

- The athlete has an Individual Performance Plan focusing on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing as it aligns to the needs of squash and is informed by specific medical advice as it relates to pregnancy;
- The athlete has an agreed return to sport and competition plan including timeframes and regular pre-determined meetings scheduled with the National Performance Director and;
- The athlete maintains contact with Squash Australia's AW&E Manager on a regular basis to ensure they are focused on maintaining their overall wellbeing.



e) An athlete is transitioning out of squash competition

An athlete who is transitioning out of squash competition, who has a history of contributing to the sport, will be recommended for dAIS nomination by Squash Australia providing they meet the following conditions:

- Prior to transitioning out of squash, the athlete was categorised as a Podium, Podium Ready or Podium Potential athlete within Squash Australia's sport-specific categorisation matrix and received dAIS support in the past 12 months;
- The athlete has developed a transition plan with Squash Australia's AW&E Manager and meets regularly, focusing on maintaining their wellbeing during the transition; and
- The athlete has an agreement with Squash Australia to provide a level of mentoring to Developing and Emerging category junior players for 12 months as they transition out of competitive squash.

Athletes who are transitioning out of competitive squash will be eligible to continue to receive non-financial support from Squash Australia's support services. The level of this support is dependent on the athlete's category and is outlined in the table below.

Category	Ongoing Support
Podium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to AW&E Manager services for 12 months.• Access to SSSM team services for 6 months, including development of a transition physical plan from Squash Australia's S&C service provider.
Podium Ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to AW&E Manager services for 12 months.• Access to SSSM team services for 6 months, including development of a transition physical plan from Squash Australia's S&C service provider.
Podium Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to AW&E Manager services for 12 months.
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to AW&E Manager services for 12 months.
Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to AW&E Manager services for 6 months.

