



2025-2026 WPC SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM SELECTION CRITERIA & PROCESS

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to describe the selection criteria and process for the 2025-2026 Senior National Team Talent Pool of the Senior Men's and Senior Women's National Team Programs. The criteria and process are a combination of objective and subjective evaluations and will be aligned with the objectives for the Senior National Team Program and Water Polo Canada's Strategic Plan goal of Reaching International Excellence.

2. OVERVIEW:

- a. The 2025-2026 competitive season will run from the original naming of the new Senior National Team Talent Pool (by October 1st 2025) to the end of September 2026.
- b. Selection to the Senior National Team Talent Pool (SNTTP) will be completed using mainly results from the 2024-2025 season at Senior, Junior and Youth National Team activities, domestic competitions and scouting completed by the National Team Coaching staff during the 2024-2025 season. The overall SNTTP will not be limited to a specific number of athletes and WPC may make additions throughout the 2025-2026 season depending on athlete availability, and is reliant on in-person scouting and other assessments by the National Team Staff where a final SNTTP will be established as of May 1, 2026 for any remaining events that remain for the 2025-2026 Season.
 - i. Any updates to the SNTTP will be communicated by publication to the Water Polo Canada Website as soon as possible.
- c. Athletes not selected to the 2025-2026 SNTTP and who wish to try out for the Senior National Team 2025-2026 can refer to Appendix A - Senior National Team Tryout.
- d. Athletes selected to the SNTTP may be selected to participate in the training camps and competitions of the Senior National Teams for the 2025-2026 season.
- e. Eligibility will be limited to athletes who meet the Eligibility Requirements as described in this document.

3. AUTHORITY FOR SELECTION:

- a. Water Polo Canada's Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) have delegated the authority for all decision-making under this process to the High Performance Director

(HPD) and the Senior National Team Head Coaches of the Men's and Women's National Teams. The HPD and the Senior National Team Head Coaches, at their sole discretion, may solicit any feedback from additional technical experts and officials during any part of this selection process.

- b. Medical Bye: If an athlete is unable to participate in or complete any part of the selection process due to an injury or illness, Senior National Team Head Coaches have the authority to add that athlete to the Athlete Pool if they believe this is appropriate based on the athlete's ability as demonstrated through training and results during the 2024-2025 and/or current season and if it is aligned with the objectives for the SNTTP and the Strategic Plan Vision. A Medical Bye requires a signed and dated letter from the Senior National Team Sport Medicine Physician stating that the athlete is unable to participate for a medical reason.
- c. Family Emergency Bye: If an athlete is unable to participate in or complete any part of the selection process due to a family emergency, the Head Coaches have the authority to add that athlete to the 2025-2026 SNTTP if they believe this is appropriate based on the athlete's ability as demonstrated through training and results during the 2024-2025 and/or current season and if it is aligned with the objectives for the 2025-2026 SNTTP and the Strategic Plan Vision. A family emergency is defined as:
 - i. Death, injury, or medical emergency relating to the following family members: a parent, step-parent, grandparent, step-grandparent, brother, sister, step-brother, step-sister, son, daughter, spouse / partner / significant other.
- d. Professional Commitment Bye: If an athlete is unable to participate in or complete any part of the selection process due to a professional commitment with a Pro Water Polo Club, Senior National Team Head Coaches have the authority to add that athlete to the Athlete Pool if they believe this is appropriate based on the athlete's ability as demonstrated through training and results during the 2024-2025 and/or current season and if it is aligned with the objectives for the SNTTP and the Strategic Plan Vision.
- e. The HPD and SNT-HC have the discretion to determine if another unforeseen circumstance justifies a bye.
- f. Furthermore, the HPD is responsible for ensuring that the process outlined in this document is properly followed and that the selection process is fair and equitable for all athletes.

4. APPEALS PROCESS:

- a. Selection decisions for the SNTTP may be appealed under the Water Polo Canada Appeals Policy.

5. AMENDMENTS AND UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

- a. Changes to these Selection Process and Criteria will only take place with the approval of Water Polo Canada's Chief Executive Officer, to be added as an addendum if approved.
- b. In the event of unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of Water Polo Canada that prevents the fair implementation of these Selection Criteria and Process as written, the HPD will provide their recommendation to the Water Polo Canada CEO who shall have the full discretion to resolve the matter as they see fit, taking into account factors and circumstances that they deem relevant.
- c. All changes will be communicated via publication on the Water Polo Canada website. Athletes are responsible to stay informed of any amendments to the SNTTP, to the current Selection Process and Criteria, and to the terms of any applicable Athlete Agreement.

6. ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

- a. Be a registrant in good standing with Water Polo Canada;
- b. Be in good standing and not have any outstanding fees/fines payable to Water Polo Canada, a Provincial Territorial Section or a registered club;
- c. Be training in an environment that is deemed suitable by the Senior National Team Head Coach and the HPD, including having an approved professional league contract as per Annex A of Water Polo Canada's Athlete Agreement;
- d. Be a Canadian citizen or in the process of becoming a citizen or permanent resident at least 6 months before the end of the current Olympic cycle. (Note: any otherwise eligible athlete in the process of becoming a Canadian citizen or permanent resident must demonstrate proof of that at point of entry into the selection process and their final selection on the team will be dependent on their eligibility to compete for Canada as per World Aquatics (AQUA) rules.);
- e. Be eligible to compete for Canada as per AQUA Rules;
- f. Hold a valid passport that does not expire on or before March 1st of the upcoming year;
- g. Not be subject to a judicial or criminal investigation that may be detrimental to Water Polo Canada, at Water Polo Canada's discretion;
- h. Have signed the WPC Consent form (as applicable) and WPC Athlete Agreement (as requested), which references the WPC Code of Conduct, as well as being a registrant under the Canadian Safe Sport Program.

7. DISMISSAL FROM THE SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM TALENT POOL

- a. In collaboration with Senior National Team Head Coach, the HPD and the CEO, an athlete may be removed from the SNTTP. Reasons for dismissal include, but are not limited to:
 - i. inability to meet performance expectations;
 - ii. inability to meet minimum physical and / or high training standards;
 - iii. inability to demonstrate progress since the beginning of the 2025-2026 season;

- iv. inability to perform due to injury, illness, or for other medical reasons, as determined by Water Polo Canada's Medical Lead (Team Doctor & Physiotherapist);
- v. Violation of the Water Polo Canada Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure (found at: <https://waterpolo.ca/content/policies-and-bylaws>)
- vi. Violation of Team rules
- vii. Failure to adhere to the anti-doping rules or requirements of any anti-doping organization with authority over the athlete
- viii. Exhibiting any conduct that is detrimental to the image of Water Polo or the National Team Program;
- ix. Voluntary withdrawal/retirement;
- x. Committing fraudulent misrepresentation;
- xi. Failure to uphold the Water Polo Canada Athlete Agreement.

8. SELECTION OF SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM TALENT POOL

- a. The SNTTP will consist of athletes eligible to represent Canada who have demonstrated the potential to earn a position on the Water Polo Canada Senior National Team. Changes to the athlete pool may be made from time to time at the discretion of the Head Coach of each of the men's and women's teams.
- b. Factors that will be considered in assembling the athlete pool include:
 - i. Previous and current performance in international competition;
 - ii. Previous and current performance outside of international competition (i.e. Canadian club system, National Championship League, National Provincial Championships, university/college (NCAA), national training center, high performance league, etc.);
 - iii. Present and projected development and / or improvement;
 - iv. Technical Ability;
 - v. Tactical Ability;
 - vi. Physical Ability;
 - vii. Intangible qualities including but not exclusive to: composure, attitude, work ethic, peer influence, leadership skills, team dynamics, travel mentality, coachability, performance under pressure;
 - viii. Demonstrated commitment to a lifestyle conducive to the training and preparation for, and playing of, international water polo;
 - ix. Demonstrated ability to play within a team environment, including contribute to and enhance team performance;
 - x. Adherence to the Senior National Team monitoring protocol;
 - xi. Ranking in depth chart (by position);
 - xii. Compliance with WPC Athlete Agreement and Code of Conduct.
- c. The above factors are not weighted, are not listed in an order of importance and may be revised from time to time to ensure short term and long-term success in international competition for Canada.

- d. Documents such as Water Polo Canada's internal depth charts, team evaluations and Gold Medal Profile shall be considered to support the selection of the SNTTP.

9. SELECTION TO SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM TRAINING CAMPS AND COMPETITIONS

- a. Once the SNTTP has been established, final rosters will be selected for specific competitions up to the conclusion of the season. While some objective criteria will be used to select teams, the primary selection criteria will be subjective. The following factors will be considered along with any other factors which, in the sole and absolute discretion of the National Team Head Coaches, are deemed relevant. The subjective elements involved in team selection will include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Positional requirements (both starters and reserves);
 - ii. Competition requirements (i.e. opponents, location, etc.);
 - iii. Team dynamics;
 - iv. Attitude;
 - v. Leadership ability & contribution to the overall team chemistry;
 - vi. Other such considerations

Furthermore, and more specifically, in selecting athletes for final event rosters, the National Team Head Coach will consider elements in the following areas:

- the dynamics of the team as a whole and how the candidates for selection fit into this dynamic
- individual and team-play characteristics of the candidates for selection
- WPC's objectives for the LA 2028 Olympic Games and beyond
- Personal attributes examples:
 - Demonstrated commitment to playing international water polo for Canada.
 - Demonstrated commitment to a lifestyle conducive to the training and preparation for, and playing of, international water polo.
 - Demonstrated positive attitudes towards the sport, the National Team, and WPC.
 - Demonstrated commitment to travel, training sessions, competitions, and any activities, commitments and functions related to the National Team.
 - Demonstrated cooperative and team-oriented attitudes.
 - Demonstrated positive attitude including coachability, desire to improve personal skills, and desire to contribute to team objectives.
 - Demonstrated self-motivation, confidence, determination and goal-oriented nature.
 - Demonstrated resilience as well as flexibility and adaptability to change.
- Sport Specific Examples:
 - Demonstrated athletic ability, including size, speed, quickness, agility and strength.
 - Demonstrated water polo and position-specific skills.
 - Demonstrated field of play decision-making abilities.
 - Demonstrated aggressive and assertive play.

- Proven competitive experience playing water polo at the international level, including the ability to train and compete through the rigors of international travel, and the ability to handle the emotional and personal demands of extended travel in foreign countries.
- Team Play Examples:
 - Demonstrated ability and willingness to work effectively and cooperate within the team environment.
 - Demonstrated ability to play within a team environment, including the ability to contribute to and enhance team performance.
 - Demonstrated ability to contribute to overall team cohesiveness and to communicate effectively with coaching staff and other players both on and off the field of play.
 - Demonstrated ability and willingness to implement the coaching staff's game plan.
 - Demonstrated ability to contribute to the team setting, both on and off the field of play, by attaining the performance standards and expectations established and communicated to the athletes by the National Team coaching staff.
- b. The evaluation of these elements will be an ongoing process from the identification of the SNTTP up to the selection date for the Senior National Team training camp or competition.
- c. The above factors are not weighted, are not listed in an order of importance and may be revised from time to time to ensure short-term and long-term success in international competition for Canada.
- d. It is the responsibility of the Head Coaches to select the best possible team for each individual competition, in accordance with program priorities and objectives. To fulfill this responsibility, the Head Coaches will have a high degree of discretion and flexibility.
- e. Although selection to events prior will be examined in the selection of the final roster, all objective and subjective criteria will be reviewed by the Head Coach with the goal of selecting the team that will achieve the best result in competition for Canada.
- f. Team selections for the Lima 2027 Pan Am Games and Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games will be determined in accordance with the Internal Nomination Procedures that will be published for these events.

10. LANGUAGE

- a. Where there is a difference in interpretation between the French and English versions of this document, the English version shall prevail.

11. TIMELINE

- a. Every program year (October-September), WPC will attempt to respect the following SNTTP timeline and administrative cycle:

- i. **Sept 15-30.** National Team Head Coaches' and Lead Coaches complete AAP prioritization & SNTTP selection with an updated National Team depth chart.
- ii. **By October 1.** High Performance Manager will inform identified athletes of their potential status with Water Polo Canada.
- iii. **By October 31.** Publication of the Water Polo Canada SNTTP.
- iv. **Ongoing** Updates to the SNTTP.

APPENDIX A
- Senior National Team Tryout -

PROCESS TO REQUEST A TRYOUT FOR THE CANADIAN SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM

An athlete who is currently not a member of the Senior National Team Talent Pool (SNTTP) may request a tryout for the Senior National Team before April 1st, 2026, which must be completed by May 1st, 2026, upon meeting Eligibility Criteria and accepting the Conditions of the Tryout.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Has competed at an AQUA World Championships as part of a 16U, Youth (18U), Junior (20U) or Senior National Team of any National Federation and placed within the top-10 teams in the tournament;
2. Is an active athlete playing within a league that is recognized by Water Polo Canada;
3. Was not removed by the SNT Coaching Staff from a previous Senior National Team Program and/or SNTTP;
4. Be a registrant in good standing with Water Polo Canada;
5. Not have any outstanding fees/fines payable to Water Polo Canada;
6. Be a Canadian citizen or in the process of becoming a citizen or permanent resident at least 6 months before the end of the current Olympic cycle;
7. Be eligible to compete for Canada per AQUA Rules;
8. Hold a valid passport that does not expire on or before March 1st of the upcoming year;
9. Pay any required fees.

Note: any otherwise eligible athlete in the process of becoming a Canadian citizen or permanent resident must demonstrate proof of that at point of entry into the selection process and that their final selection on the team will be dependent on their eligibility to compete for Canada as per AQUA rules (item c.).

CONDITIONS OF THE TRYOUT

1. The athlete will not be eligible to compete in the 2025-2026 season unless selected to SNTTP by the Senior National Team Head Coach and approved by the High Performance Director;
2. The Senior National Team will determine a timeframe of a minimum of five (5) days and a maximum of fourteen (14) days for the athlete to tryout;
3. The athlete requesting the tryout will be responsible for any expenses and fees incurred for the duration of the tryout;
4. The athlete will submit the following forms one month before the camp via email to the High Performance Manager (email addresses available on Water Polo Canada's website):
 - a. A letter from a doctor informing Water Polo Canada that the athlete is cleared to participate in the tryout.
 - b. Proof of completion of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) True Sport clean and Canadian Safe Sport Program courses for the year in which the tryout is taking place.

5. The athlete is prepared to meet any of the below conditions established jointly by the HPD and Senior National Team Head Coach, as applicable:
 - a. Relocation to the National Training Center in Montreal
 - b. Relocation to compete with an approved professional league club
 - c. Relocation to a location that is deemed acceptable by the Senior National Team Head Coach, including following an enhanced training program.

TRYOUT REQUEST PROCESS

1. The request of the athlete should be sent directly to the High Performance Director, with a copy to the Senior National Team Head Coach and High Performance Manager (all email addresses are available on Water Polo Canada's website).
2. If the request for a tryout is accepted, the Senior National Team Head Coach and High Performance Director shall jointly determine a time for an athlete to complete a tryout at the National Training Center in Montreal (or another National Team training location if / as appropriate).
3. The High Performance Manager shall communicate with the athlete to provide any logistical information for the tryout.