



## 2024 - 2025 National Aerial Team Selection Criteria

August 5, 2023

## 1. Preamble

This document defines the procedures used by Freestyle Canada (FC) to select athletes to the 2024 – 2025 National Aerial Team (Groups A & B) and the National NextGen Aerial Team.

A separate document is published each season, the “Aerial Team World Cup Spot Allocation Guidelines”, which outlines how FC will allocate quota spots to Canadian athletes for FIS World Cup Aerial competitions.

## 2. Freestyle Canada High Performance Program Goals

Mission:

*To develop athletes in a safe and ethical manner, who win medals at both the Olympic Winter Games and FIS World Championships.*

FC's high-performance staff will support, prepare and assist identified athletes in achieving their goals through a variety of mechanisms including:

- Gap Analysis which will identify each athlete's strengths and areas of improvement to prescribe appropriate technical, physical, and mental training programs
- Gaining competitive experience on the international stage where they can hone their tactical and psychological skills

Athletes identified as National Team A & B Group have shown evidence that they are on track to win a medal at a major event within four years. Athletes identified in the NextGen Group have shown evidence they are on track to win a medal at a major event within eight years.

FC expects that athletes in the program are committed to improvement and will continue to track along FC's Long-Term Athlete Development model.

## 3. Definitions and Roles

Title	Acronym	Role
Freestyle Canada	FC	Governing body for Freestyle skiing in Canada
Chief Executive Officer	CEO	Top staff member of FC; answerable to the Board of Directors
High Performance Program / High Performance Director	HPP / HPD	Performance stream within FC and the Director
Long-Term Athlete Development	LTAD	Pathway for development of freestyle skiers from grass roots through sport for life
International Ski Federation	FIS	Governing body for Freestyle skiing internationally
FIS World Cup, NorAm	WC, NorAm	FIS competition series
Major Events: World Championships and Olympic Winter Games	WCh and OWG	Multi-sport events with specific selection criteria.
NextGen	NG	Athletes showing evidence of medal potential for the subsequent Olympic Winter Games (up to 7 years ahead)
Sport Science, Sport Medicine, and Innovation	SSSMI	Category of performance services for medical, paramedical, and applied research aimed at enhancing athlete performance
Own the Podium	OTP	Technical agency who makes recommendations to Sport Canada on the funding for all Canadian sports

## 4. National Team Structure

### 4.1 National Team

The National Aerial Team is composed of (up to) three groups of skiers:

- The “A” group athletes who receive priority entry into WC events and the highest level of FC funding support.
- The “B” group athletes who receive the next priority entry into WC events and enhanced FC funding over NextGen athletes.

#### **AND**

- The “NextGen” group of athletes for athlete development, tiering and funding purposes.

The HP Committee will determine the overall national team size and the size of each of its three groups. Team sizes may change depending on the year of the quadrennial, depth of the athlete pool as well as budget and funding considerations.

- All team selections are for a one-year period only.
- The national team will usually be named by May 15<sup>th</sup> each year.
- FC will strive to maintain gender equity.

### 4.2 Prospect Team (RBC Training Ground)

Each year FC staff members work with RBC representatives to identify potential aerial athletes through the RBC Training Ground initiative. Prospects are athletes who have trained and competed at a high-level acrobatic sport (other than aerials). These athletes are committed to an aerial training plan, are part of the RBC Training Ground program and have showed progression in aerial training (physically, trampoline, ski, water ramps, air bag and on/or snow jumping).

Athletes identified for the RBC Training Ground group will have personalized programs that he or she will follow. Those athletes will be required to meet their specific individual benchmarks by October 15<sup>th</sup> each year to determine their ongoing training plans for the winter season. These athletes are not part of the HPP but will work alongside the NextGen Group to expedite their training.

Athletes who were identified as part of the RBC Training Ground group will meet with their coach(es) after October 15 each year to determine their training plans for the upcoming season.

## 5. Selection Authority and Process

The selection of athletes to the FC's HPP is the responsibility of the CEO, acting on the recommendations of the HPP Aerial High Performance (HP) Committee (the “HP Committee”).

### 5.1 Aerial HP Committee

Under the authority of the CEO, the HP Committee is responsible for all team selections and the allocation of competitive opportunities, as well as providing program guidance to the HPD. Team selection and FIS World Cup spot allocation details are as described in this document; selection for major events will be published in separate document aligned with each event’s specific timelines and selection requirements.

The HP Committee shall, as its regular business:

- Select athletes to be offered positions on the National Team and within team groups (i.e., A, B and NextGen).
- Allocate HPP athletes with competitive opportunities for targeted FIS events.

The HP Committee will consist of:

- Three voting members: the National Team Head Coach, the NextGen Program Head Coach and the HPD (Chair – tie breaking vote).
- Non-voting members: Other national aerial program coaches (if applicable), the Sport Science, Sport Medicine and Innovation Director, the Sport Development Director, and the CEO.

When relevant, the HP Committee will seek input from content experts, such as the HPP Manager, mental training consultants, strength and conditioning trainers, medical team members or others.

Meetings of the HP Committee shall be open to members of the committee and invited content experts only. HP Committee members shall abstain from voting on matters that directly affect members of their immediate families.

HPP staff will notify program athletes of HP Committee decisions. Delicate information will be relayed from the coach to the athlete directly (i.e., an athlete not being selected); summary decisions will be distributed to all affected parties.

## 5.2 Selection Process

Usually before May 15 each year, the HP Committee will meet to select the subsequent year's team.

- Team positions are offered for one calendar season (May through the following April).
- The 2024 – 2025 National Aerial Team qualification period runs from December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, through April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, inclusively.
- The HP Committee will review the HPP Aerial Ranking list and determines if there are any special ranking considerations and audits for mistakes in the data entry. Corrections will not be made after May 15<sup>th</sup> for that selection period.
- Eligible athletes are identified and ranked for nominations.
- Athletes who would qualify for Exceptional Circumstances (i.e., an injury) are identified and ranked appropriately.
- The National Team is identified and nominated in the following order:
  - a. The A group, then
  - b. The B group, then
  - c. The Nextgen group
- The HP Committee will identify any athletes who should be identified as additional prospects. These athletes are identified for the purposes of tracking for OTP and are not part of the HPP.
- Nominated athlete will be officially notified and have a period of 10 days to accept or decline the offered position.

## 5.3 HPP Aerial Rankings

The HPP Aerial Ranking criteria is explained in Section 8. The HPD coordinates the HPP Aerial Ranking calculations. These rankings are presented to the HP Committee for their input and consideration. HPP coaches will report on each athlete's skill level and overall progression and commitment over the past 12 months. For an athlete to be ranked, they must normally have competed at least five jumps in at least two different FC eligible competitions during the current season.

## 5.4 Major Games Selection Considerations

During an OWG or FIS WCh qualification period, athletes who have a reasonable chance at selection may be given priority in the allocation of WC opportunities. Major Games selection criteria is created for each major Games in a separate policy which is then posted on the FC website.

## 5.5 Score Anomalies

In some circumstances, there are three to four competitive, qualifying events on the same course within a short period of time, often with the same panel of judges. Circumstances such as these can skew rankings (positively or negatively). Scenarios such as these will be reviewed by the HP Committee and may warrant out of order selections.

## 6. Eligibility

To be eligible for selection to the 2024-2025 National Aerial Team program, an athlete needs to meet both general and performance eligibility criteria.

### 6.1 General Eligibility

- An athlete must be a FC member in good standing.
- Be able to obtain a Canadian passport.
- Have their skill / performance capability curve trending upward.
- Have the FIS age requirement to compete at FIS World Cup level events for 2024-2025.
- If requested by Freestyle Canada, agree to be subject to any proceedings taken under the UCCMS, including, without limitation, signing a UCCMS Participant consent form and accepting the jurisdiction of the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner/Abuse-Free Sport.

### 6.2 Performance Eligibility

OTP provides two restricted envelopes of program funding to FC:

1. Enhanced Excellence: To support athletes who have shown evidence they are on track to medal at the upcoming Olympic Winter Games and
2. NextGen: For the program that supports athletes who are showing evidence they are on track to medal at the subsequent Olympic Winter Games.

To be eligible for selection to the National Aerial Team, athletes are ranked on recent historical performances; these results will be used to formulate the HPP Aerial rankings. Athletes are selected to the A and B groups based on their individual aerial results; NextGen athletes are selected based on the ranking results. The following criteria outlines the performance requirements for each level:

#### 6.2 a National Aerial Team - A Group ("Podium Excellence" - LTAD stage: Train to Win)

Athletes will be selected to this group based on the 2023 - 2024 HPP Aerial Ranking<sup>1</sup> and meeting the following performance benchmarks:

- One podium at a 2023 – 2024 FIS World Cup or World Championship Aerial event (excluding team events & downgraded DD events), or
- Two top 5 results at 2023 – 2024 FIS World Cup or World Championship Aerial events (excluding team events & downgraded DD events).

#### 6.2b National Aerial Team - B Group ("Performers" - LTAD stage: Learn to Win)

Athletes who are ranked in the top four by gender (including A Group athletes) in the Final 2023 - 2024 HPP Aerial Ranking will be considered for selection to this group based on also meeting the following:

- Included two different types of jumps (i.e., FFF, L2FF) in the composition of their Aerial Ranking score.
- Have made a minimum of one WC final in the 2023-24 season.
- Are able to meet the following Minimum Skill Levels:
  - Men – Have competed a double twisting triple and a triple twisting triple with an execution score of 25.8/30 or higher.
  - Women – Have competed a single twisting double and a double twisting double with an execution score of 26.3/30 or higher.

The total number of athletes named to the A and B teams in each gender will be based on available resources and will be revisited each season.

#### 6.2 c National Aerial Team - NextGen Group (LTAD stage: Train to Compete & Learn to Win)

The HP Committee will select athletes to this group guided by the FC Gold Medal Profile framework and will consider

a multitude of athletic traits specific to the discipline of aerials such as fitness level, acrobatic skills, and attitude.

In addition, the HP Committee will consider athletes who have met the following Minimum Skill Levels:

- Men – Perform at the minimum of snow jump level 4.3 (Appendix 1: LF and FF) with an execution score of 26.3/30 or higher; skiers are not restricted from performing more difficult tricks.
- Women – Perform at the minimum of snow jump level 3.2 (Appendix 2: LT and bF) with an execution score of 25.8/30 or higher; skiers are not restricted from performing more difficult tricks.

*Please note that the intent of these minimum standards is to ensure that each athlete is performing at the level expected to join the High Performance Program.*

The HP Committee will select athletes to this group by considering the following variables:

- The size of the NextGen team will be determined after the A & B groups of athletes are identified and funding from partners is confirmed (team size is a function of coach capacity, available resources, and safety)
- The athletes will be ranked using the 2023-2024 HPP Aerial Rankings; the HP Committee may choose to end selections at the point where a large drop in points occurs between athletes on the ranking list.
- The HP Committee may select athletes out of ranking order base on skills and/or injury status.
  - Skill assessment can occur throughout the season by any of our national program coaches or during spring training camp(s).
  - Skills will be assessed based on the framework outlined in FC's Gold Medal Profiles.

## 6.2 d Probation

Newly selected athletes to the team are considered provisional until the completion of the first camp at which time the athlete's performance and compliance will be reviewed to make sure they are a fit with the team.

The HP Committee may nominate provisional athletes. Provisional members of the 2023 – 2024 NextGen group are athletes who have reached the minimum skills level, but that have not demonstrated technical and athletic traits outlined in the FC Gold Medal Profile framework. Provisional athletes will be required to meet specific individual benchmark by October 15th each year to determine if they will continue as members of the NextGen group.

## 7. Competitive Opportunities

FIS provides competitive opportunities to FC which in turn can enter athletes into competitions.

- FC is not required to fill all FIS World Cup (or FIS World Championship) quota spots.
- WC opportunities will be prioritized for National A & B group athletes and then appropriate non-A & B group athletes (NextGen or others), as determined by the HP Committee based on current team ranking or special considerations.

Details regarding the allocation of competitive opportunities for FIS World Cup spots is available on the FC Website ([WC Aerial Spot Allocation Guidelines](#)).

## 8. Ranking Detail

### 8.1 QUALIFYING COMPETITIONS

For the 2023 - 2024 season, the following events will count towards the HPP Aerial Rankings.

#### 2023-2024 Eligible Aerial Competitions:

<b>World Cup Level:</b>	<b>Continental Cup Level:</b>
World Cups	NorAm
FIS World Ski Championships	Jr. World Championships
	Senior Canadian Championships
	Select Europa Cup events
	FIS Junior World Ski Championships
<b>Potential COVID Consideration</b>	
Should there be an inadequate number of competitive opportunities ahead of select WC opportunities due to COVID restrictions, the HP Aerial Committee will look to create specific competitive opportunities for selection purposes.	

### 8.2 HPP Aerial Rankings

Athletes are ranked in descending order (i.e., the higher the sum of five jump scores, the higher the ranking) based on the sum of their five (5) best individual, single-jump scores over the selection period.

- 8.2.1 Total scores (Judges score: Take off score + Air and Form score + Landing score multiply by the degree of difficulty of the jump) of each individual single jump from eligible competitions will be used.
- 8.2.2 The HP Committee may recommend a change in the number of jumps used to select the National Aerial Team depending on the competition schedule or other extraneous factors.
- 8.2.3 Other than in Exceptional Circumstances, scores must be taken from competition held during the just concluded season.

### 8.3 World Cup Selection Process

World Cups opportunities will be offered by the HP Committee as outlined in a separate document posted on the [Freestyle Canada website](#).

## 9. Exceptional Circumstances

An athlete who is progressing positively in their career but has a setback due to a physical or psychological injury, a death in the family or similar life experience could be afforded additional flexibility when it comes to HPP Aerial Ranking calculations, WC spot allocation and other FC decisions; these situations are referred to as “Exceptional Circumstances”. The maximum backwards extension of eligible result consideration shall ordinarily be one competition season.

Competitions missed due to situations such as a mandatory COVID isolation/quarantine protocols will be considered “Exceptional Circumstances”.

The FC HPP Aerial program expects that each athlete will be competing jumps in which they are capable of landing 75% of the time. Staff generates an HPP Ranking score for each athlete based on the assumption that each athlete will have eight data points (or eight “jumps starts”) available. As noted in Section 8.2, the five best jumps will count towards an HPP Aerial Ranking score; considering eight jumps, allowing a 62.5% landing percentage to have five “good” jumps. If an athlete is unable to achieve eight jumps in a selection period in which they were qualified to compete, jumps from the previous period will be added sequentially to count to eight. If an athlete has eight jumps in the current period, jumps from that period will be used for HPP Aerial Ranking.

An athlete cannot choose to opt out of an event (“jump start”) and have this clause applied without meeting the requisite conditions of medical and FC approval in advance. Any injury must be evaluated and validated by a FC

medical staff member. The purpose of the medical assessment is to confirm the degree of the athlete's injury and the anticipated time of the athlete's recovery.

Within specific parameters, the HP Committee has the flexibility to select athletes "out of order". Please see Section 11.

Only athletes who are members of the HPP program are eligible to use the "Exceptional Circumstances" clause. Provincial athletes who have suffered injury may be brought into the HPP through the mechanism of an "out of order" selection should sufficient evidence be available to justify.

The HP Committee has the discretion to use the Exceptional Circumstance clause for special cases. This is more likely for athletes with a significant body of recent WC results (medals, top 6, or top 16 at major games). This may include expanding the backwards extension of the selection period, or other adjustments to meet the special case.

The Selection Committee, with input from medical experts, may prevent an athlete from entering an event if the pace of the athlete's rehabilitation from injury warrants doing so.

An athlete vying for a spot in the high performance aerial program who is not capable of competing in the National Championships (if they are held in a specific year) due to injury or other Exceptional Circumstances, must request permission, in writing from the HPD; the HPD may require medical documentation.

It may occur that some or all events in a selection period are interrupted and there are fewer than eight available jumps. When this is the case, the HP Committee may alter the assumptions used for the ranking of the team. If this is done, it will be done to find more data for ranking purposes.

## 10. Injured Athlete Carryover from Previous Season

It may occur that it is inappropriate for a High-Performance Program athlete, by reason of a health-related curtailment of activities, to participate in HPP training and competition activities for an entire program year. In such a situation, the following shall apply:

- Any such determination shall be made collectively by the athlete, the athlete's personal physician, the FC HPD, and the FC's Chief Physician.
- The athlete shall remain a member of the High-Performance Program and shall purchase a FC membership and an International Competitor's License.
- The athlete shall remain eligible for HPP clothing and other supplier pool goods, shall continue to be promoted in the FC Media activities, and shall continue to be eligible for Sport Canada carding and Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network (COPSIN) services.
- A rehabilitation program for the athlete shall be developed jointly, by the athlete and the FC. The rehabilitation program shall be monitored by the FC and evaluated on a regular basis. The athlete's return to full HPP participation shall be, in part, dependent on satisfactory completion of the rehabilitation program.
  - The rehabilitation program may include formal HPP training and entry into competitions as well as physiotherapy, individual training, and other rehabilitative measures.
  - Any formal HPP training or entry into competitions shall be for rehabilitative purposes only. Evaluations or results from such training or entry into competitions shall not be used for the ranking of the athlete for HPP Team selections.
  - The athlete shall be eligible to return to full HPP participation only after the FC determines that the rehabilitation program has been successfully completed.



## 11. Special Ranking Considerations

The HP Committee may in some cases choose to select athletes out of the initial ranking order. In such case, the HP Committee must record in detail the reasons for its decision. These reasons must support the program goals outlined at the beginning of this document.

Special ranking considerations include, but are not limited to the following examples:

- Athletes who have reached major event podiums in recent years (i.e., Olympic Winter Games and/or FIS World Championships)
- An athlete who is showing excellent results and increasing her or his performance results may be moved higher than their calculated ranking.
- An athlete who shows excellent physical characteristics (measurable in testing) and / or technical capability; may be moved higher than her or his calculated ranking. This is more likely to happen early in an athlete's career. Rational: in some stages of development an athlete may focus on training and not perform as well at competition.
- An athlete who has had opportunities and is not advancing towards the program goal may move lower than her or his calculated ranking; written rational from the HP Committee will be provided.
- When there is a relatively narrow point spread between two athletes, there is greater chance of "out of order" selection.
- An athlete with strong work ethic and commitment to training opportunities may move ahead of an athlete who has not demonstrated these traits.

## 12. General

Issues not otherwise covered by this document are subject to the decision of the CEO of the FC, in consultation with the Selection Committee.

## 13. Hearing and Appeal Process

FC is bound by the mandate of our organization, and in some cases our performance partners; every attempt is made to make decisions that are in line with those parameters. If an athlete feels an error was made in the application of this criteria, they should immediately contact their HPP Director. If the situation is not resolved through this discussion an athlete may file an appeal through the regular FC process ([Appeal Policy](#)).