



**2025 - 2026 National Aerial Team Selection Criteria**

December 12, 2024

## 1. Preamble

This document explains how Freestyle Canada (FC) selects athletes for the 2025-2026 National Aerial Team. FC's High Performance Program (HPP) focuses on preparing athletes to achieve podium results at the Olympic Winter Games and FIS World Championships.

FC's high-performance staff will assist athletes by providing:

- Personal assessment that will feed a plan to identify each athlete's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Competitive experience on the international stage to refine technical, tactical and psychological skills and strategies.

## 2. Definitions and Roles

<b>Title</b>	<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Role</b>
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 / Director
FC Leadership Team		Includes FC's CEO, COO, Director of Sport Science, Sport Medicine and Innovation, High Performance (HP) Director, and HP Manager.
Long-Term Athlete Development	LTAD	Pathway for development of freestyle skiers from grass roots through sport for life
Health Curtailment		A health status or situation approved by the FC Medical team that causes an athlete to miss training or competitive opportunities.
International Ski Federation	FIS	Governing body for Freestyle skiing internationally
FIS World Cup, NorAm	WC, NorAm	FIS competition series
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 / IST	Performance services for medical, paramedical, and applied research aimed at enhancing athlete performance
Own the Podium	OTP	Technical agency who makes funding recommendations to Sport Canada for Canadian sport

### 3. Selection Authority and HPC Responsibilities

The Aerial High Performance Committee (HPC) oversees team selection and ensures alignment with FC's goals. The committee also allocates competitive opportunities and advises the HP Director.

Voting members include the:

- National Team Aerial Head Coach,
- NextGen Head Coach,
- HP Director (chair, tie-breaking vote).

Non-voting members may include other national aerial program coaches, FC's CEO, and other FC staff members. The HPC may seek input from other IST members. Meetings are open to committee members and invited experts only. Members abstain from votes impacting their immediate family members.

Team selection details are described in this document; FIS World Cup spot allocations and selection for major events (examples: Olympic Winter Games and World Championships) will be published in separate documents aligned with each event's specific timelines and selection requirements.

### 4. Selection Process

Team selection covers the FIS season from May to the following April (qualification period: November 1, 2024, through April 15, 2025).

1. The HPC reviews athlete performance and rankings by May 15 each year.
2. Athletes are nominated to tiers (Podium, A, B, NextGen); these nominations are provided to the HP Leadership team for final review.
3. Sensitive decisions (e.g., non-selection) will be communicated directly by the athlete's coach.
4. Nominated athletes have 10 days to accept or decline.

In making recommendations to the teams, the HPC will consider gender inclusion in selections. An athlete who may qualify for consideration because of an exceptional circumstance will be considered.

### 5. Selection Eligibility

OTP provides support under two programs:

1. Enhanced Excellence (World Cup): for athletes on track to medal at the next Olympic Winter Games.
2. NextGen: for athletes projected to medal within eight years.

To be eligible for selection to the 2025 - 2026 National Aerial Team program, an athlete needs to meet the following eligibility criteria. An athlete must:

- be a FC member and be current with their personal FC financial account.
- hold a Canadian passport.
- show an upward sport-specific performance trajectory.
- meet FIS age requirement for FIS World Cup competition.
- if requested by FC, 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.

### Minimum skill and/or score performance guidelines for National Team Selection.

Team	Men	Women
<i>World Cup</i>	Have competed a double twisting triple and a triple twisting triple with an execution score of 25.8/30 or higher.	Have competed a single twisting double and a double twisting double with an execution score of 26.3/30 or higher.
<i>NextGen</i>	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.	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.*

## 6. HPP Aerial Ranking

Athletes are ranked based on their top five single-jump scores from eligible competitions. Rankings consider event quotas, budgets, and long-term performance goals.

- 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.
- The HPC 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.
- Other than in Exceptional Circumstances, scores must be taken from competition held during the just concluded season.

Athletes are expected to progress throughout the program, with ranking adjusted for injuries and special circumstances.

The High Performance Director coordinates the HPP Aerial Rankings related to the selection of the National and NextGen teams, which are presented to the HPC. HP coaches report on each athlete's skill level and overall progression and commitment over the season.

Athletes will be nominated for selection to the HPP by the HPC. The FC Leadership Team will review the nominations and discuss any concerns with the HPC. Once satisfied with the nominations, the leadership team will ratify them and release staff to contact the athletes with the offer to join (or rejoin) the program.

[2024-2025 Aerial Competitions](#) that will be used for Ranking Calculations.

World Cup Level:	Continental Cup Level:
World Cups	NorAm
FIS World Ski Championships	FIS Junior World Ski Championships
	Senior Canadian Championships
	Select European Cup events

## 7. National Team Tiering and Standards

Athletes will be selected to compete in Aerial events.

World Cup Team Tiers:

Podium, A & B athletes are expected to be on track to win a major event within four years.

- **Podium Tier:**
  - **Criteria:** Three World Cup podium finishes in the 2024-2025 season.
  - **Benefit:** Priority entry into World Cup (WC) events (quota availability permitting) and the highest level of FC funding support.
  
- **A Tier:**
  - **Criteria:** One World Cup podium finish OR two top 5 results in the 2024-2025 season.
  - **Benefit:** Priority entry into WC events and a high level of FC funding.
  
- **B Tier:**
  - **Criteria:**
    - At least one WC (or WCh) final in the 2024-25 season and specific skill levels:
      - Men: Compete a double twisting triple and a triple twisting triple with an execution score of 25.8/30 or higher.
      - Women: Compete a single twisting double and a double twisting double with an execution score of 26.3/30 or higher.
  - **Benefit:** Next priority entry into WC events and enhanced FC funding compared to NextGen athletes.

The formation of the team is contingent on resource availability. The HPC may add athletes as discretionary spots or otherwise adjust the team sizes by tier based on skills and circumstances.

- **Next Gen Team (NextGen):**
  - The NextGen team is for athletes showing medal potential within eight years. Selection is based primarily on the HPP Aerial Ranking list, but the HPC may consider factors like return from injury or exceptional skills.
  - This team size will be determined after the World Cup team athletes are identified.
  - The HPC 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.
  - The HPC may decide to reduce the team size at the point where a large drop in points occurs between athletes on the ranking list.

NextGen athletes are expected to progress to the World Cup team within four years of being first named to the team. Athletes not showing appropriate progression in performance or skill level may not be offered a renewal of their NextGen position.

**Conditional Nomination Status\*:**

- A nominated athlete may be offered a spot on the team on a conditional basis, pending assessment by FC's medical team to ensure they have no underlying injuries or physical limitations that could affect their training or performance.
- Newly selected athletes will remain provisional until their performance, compliance, and integration are reviewed during their first training camp.

**Provisional Nomination by the HPC:**

- The HPC may provisionally nominate athletes to the NextGen group. These athletes have met the minimum skill standards but have not yet demonstrated all the technical and athletic traits outlined in FC's Gold Medal Profile framework.
- Provisionally nominated athletes will be given the opportunity to train with the group, with their full selection status to be reviewed following the first training block.
- Provisional athletes must meet their assigned individual benchmarks by October 15 each year to retain their position in the NextGen group.

\*Conditional Status is intended for skiers moving into the HP Program for the first time; skiers returning to the program have history with the FC IST staff.

**National Team Affiliate – the 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.

## 8. Exceptional Circumstances and Special Ranking Considerations

**Special Ranking Considerations:** The HPC may select athletes out of order for exceptional reasons (i.e., exceptional skill performance, physical capability, or work ethic). Decisions are documented to ensure alignment with program goals. Within specific parameters, the HPC has the flexibility to select athletes “out of rank order”.

**Exceptional Circumstances:** Health issues or family matters may allow for ranking flexibility but must be documented and approved by FC leadership. Placings from the previous season may substitute for missed events, as outlined below, if the situation that caused the athlete to miss the opportunities are documented and approved by FC leadership. If an athlete voluntarily misses a competition, it does not entitle them to count results from the previous season.

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 rank order” selection should sufficient evidence be available to justify.

Each athlete’s HP Ranking score is calculated assuming that he or she will have six “jumps” that will provide data for the ranking. If an athlete is unable to achieve six starts in which they were qualified to compete because of a documented Health Curtailment circumstance, jumps can be brought forward from the previous season to meet up to six.

The HPC 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.

Any injury or other Health Curtailment situation must be evaluated and validated by a FC medical team member and/or HP staff (as appropriate to the situation). 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. An athlete cannot choose to opt out of an event and have this clause applied without meeting the requisite conditions of medical and FC approval in advance.

The HPC, 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.

Any issues not covered by this document will be decided by the FC Leadership Team in consultation with the HPC.

## 9. 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, the FC SSSM Director and 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 any available HPP clothing and other supplier pool goods, shall continue to be promoted through 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.

## 10. Appeal and Hearing Process

Athletes may appeal a selection decision through [Freestyle Canada's Appeal Policy](#). They should first contact their coach or the HP Director to discuss concerns. If unresolved, a formal appeal can be filed.