



**SPEED
SKATING
CANADA**

HIGH PERFORMANCE BULLETIN 211

**Athlete Assistance Program
Carding Criteria**

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1. PURPOSE

The fundamental strategic purpose of the High Performance Bulletins (HPB) for the long track program is to establish provisions that are designed to select athletes to teams who will perform at the highest level and achieve the best possible results for Canada at Olympic Games and World Single Distance Championships.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS & MODIFICATIONS

Speed Skating Canada (SSC) will issue Bulletins periodically throughout the season communicating any relevant information to athletes, coaches, the Sport Development Committee, other SSC Committees and SSC Branches of updates and/or changes with respect, but not limited, to selection criteria and/or competitions.

The Chair reserves the right to modify or change the policies and criteria contained herein in the event that exceptional circumstances arise and that any such changes are, in the opinion of the Chair, in the best interests of the High Performance program. In these situations, athletes and coaches will be advised of any changes as soon as is feasible after such decisions have been made.

3. CARDING CRITERIA

3.1 General Information

This is the description of the criteria that will be used by Speed Skating Canada (SSC) for nominating athletes for Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) for the 2025-26 carding cycle (July 2025-June 2026).

The Sport Canada policy and procedures which govern the AAP and the establishment and application of criteria can be found on Sport Canada's website: [Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program - Policies and Procedures](#) (Nov. 2022).

As the number of cards available for the collective SSC program (both short track and long track) could be unknown, the High Performance program(s) will determine the division of cards between

the two programs. This division will be based on the number of cards received, and the needs and capacity of each program to deliver International results.

Sport Canada's AAP is responsible for reviewing all nominations of eligible athletes for the AAP support made by National Sport Organizations (NSO), approving nominations in accordance with AAP policies and approving the published AAP compliant carding criteria.

In addition to the Sport Canada requirements to be eligible for nomination for AAP carding (as per 3.3), the athlete must:

- Be named to SSC's National Program Athlete Pool or be selected to SSC's National Team Training Partner Pool;
- Train within a Long Track High Performance/Elite Athlete Pathway Program in the National Training Centre – Calgary, National Training Centre – Quebec, or any other elite training environment within the SSC system (i.e., Provincial and Territorial Sport Organization (PTSO) programs);
- Be led by a coach based in a Canadian program that is approved and monitored by SSC.

The athletes must meet the carding criteria in an event that will be on the 2026 Olympic program. The standard must be met during the 2024-2025 competitive season, except for athletes meeting the Sport Canada SR2 card criteria. SR2 carding refers to the second year of a Senior International Card. Please refer to [Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program – Policies and Procedures](#) (Nov. 2022) for further information regarding AAP carding criteria.

Speed Skating Canada will request Sport Canada to freeze carding payments for the lowest two priority cards for SSC Sport Canada AAP nominated athletes until any appeals related to carding nomination or eligibility is closed.

AAP support is subject to the athlete's eligibility to represent Canada in international competitions, including World Cups, World Championships and Olympic Games. The athlete must be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada on the date of the beginning of the carding cycle, and all permanent residents of Canada must have been a legal resident in Canada (student status, refugee status, work visa or permanent resident) for a minimum period of one year before being considered for AAP support.

*Note: The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) Registered Testing Pool (RTP) will be expanded to the SSC Long Track Elite Athlete Pathway to include additional athletes who may not already be identified.

3.2 SSC Carding Quota

SSC will receive an updated allocation by Sport Canada for both Long Track and Short Track programs after the 2025 World Speed Skating Championships. The division of cards between the two programs will be decided at the Sport Canada Review and will be based on the needs and capacity of each program to deliver podium results at the 2026 Olympic Games in Milano Cortina, Italy.

3.3 Carding Eligibility

As per Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program Policies and Procedures for carding eligibility, carding eligibility information has been included below. In the event that changes are made to the Sport Canada policy, the text found on the official website of Sport Canada will prevail.

To be eligible for carding, the following requirements must be met:

- i. The athlete must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada at the beginning of the carding cycle for which the athlete is being nominated (for Speed Skating, this begins on July 1, 2025). Permanent residents must live in Canada for the full year preceding the carding cycle for which the athlete is being considered for AAP support. All athletes are expected to have participated in NSO-sanctioned programs during that time period;
- ii. The athlete must be available to represent Canada in major international competitions, including World Championships and/or Olympic Games. Any withdrawal from any international competitions is subject to approval of the High Performance Director/Manager;
- iii. The athlete must also be eligible according to citizenship or residency status requirements of the International Skating Union (ISU) to represent Canada at major international competitions, including World Championships, at the beginning of the carding cycle for which the athlete is being nominated;
- iv. For athletes who have been permanent residents of Canada for three years or more, continued eligibility to receive AAP support is contingent on the athlete becoming eligible to represent Canada at the Olympic Games;
- v. The athlete must meet the published SSC approved, AAP compliant sport specific carding criteria;
- vi. The athlete must participate in SSC's National Program and/or Long Track Elite Athlete Pathway preparatory and annual training programs.

Athletes who are ineligible to receive carding include:

- i. Athletes who have been ruled ineligible to participate in sport for two years or more as a result of an anti-doping violation and who have not, in the case of pre-2004 violations, subsequently been reinstated;
- ii. Athletes who are serving an anti-doping rule violation sanction of less than two years or sport ineligibility at the start of the carding cycle;
- iii. Athletes who meet the carding criteria as members of another national team;
- iv. Athletes competing in World Championship events that are not on the Olympic program are not eligible for carding based on performance in those events.

3.4 Transfer Cards

An athlete who has been previously carded at the Senior International level for at least 3 years and who has met the Senior International level criteria for the upcoming season may request permission to transfer their card from one speed skating sport to the other. Athletes who decide to change programs (from Short Track to Long Track or vice versa) will be evaluated on the carding criteria of the program they are joining unless otherwise agreed to by both High Performance Advisory Councils.

- i. Provided these evaluations are favorable, the athlete will be permitted to benefit from a senior level card for one year in order to train and eventually compete in the new sport. The

High Performance programs of both sports may add additional requirements specific to this transition season.

- ii. Before being assured carding, the athlete and the High Performance programs must come to an agreement to the terms for the year.
- iii. To be eligible for carding in any subsequent year, the athlete must meet the usual carding requirements in the given discipline.
- iv. The athlete can be eligible for such a transfer card only one time in their career from Short Track to Long Track or vice versa.

In addition, an athlete who has represented Canada at the Olympic Games in the past, whether in speed skating or in another sport, and is transferring to speed skating may be nominated for Senior (SR) or Development (D) carding in Long Track with the recommendation of their respective program's High Performance Advisory Council and the athlete's coach if:

- i. There is rationale, based on data from training and/or competitions, that the athlete can be a top-8 contender in long track speed skating at the upcoming 2026 Olympic Games;
- ii. The athlete has committed to following the individual performance plan designed by the athlete's coach.

Speed Skating Canada has the right to reserve one Long Track card to accommodate for potential transfer athletes if cards are not already distributed.

3.5 Injury/Illness/Pregnancy Card

The Chair of the High Performance Advisory Council may add an athlete to a National Program Athlete Pool according to past performances (as per SSC High Performance Program selection policies). A carded athlete whose health-related reasons compromise their participation in one or more ranking competitions, may be nominated for carding based on the **AAP policy 9.1.3. Failure to Meet Renewal Criteria for health-related reasons**. For nomination purposes, the Athlete will be ranked in the National Program Athlete Pool based on the performance of the previous year.

An athlete is ineligible for consecutive nomination for an injury card and can only be the recipient of a maximum lifetime total of three (3) injury cards while part of the Long Track National Program.

Note: the first injury year will not count towards the maximum number of years of eligibility for Senior National or Development carding. Subsequent injury years will count towards the maximum number of years of eligibility within the appropriate card limitations.

3.6 Prioritization of Nominations

Eligible athletes will be nominated in the following priority order:

- i. Senior International cards;
- ii. Senior National cards
- iii. Development cards

Please note that if fewer athletes in a program qualify for carding than the number of cards available in this program, then the unused cards may be transferred to the Short Track Program or vice versa. A minimum of 4 months of carding support must be available to provide AAP support to the last athlete on the nomination list.

3.7 Tie Breakers

If a tie exists after the application of the specific carding priority process, and there is a need to separate two or more nomination comparisons, the Chair of the HPAC-LT will refer to performances of the respective skaters from the most recent; 1) ISU Individual Distance rankings and 2) if there is still a tie, or the ISU Individual rankings cannot be used, then Canadian Long Track Championships will be used. In this instance, the final ranking of each athlete will be compared using each of the respective distances, and the best result will be used to break the tie.

3.8 Senior International Card Criteria

Athletes who place in the top 8 and top ½ of the field in an Olympic event at the 2025 World Speed Skating Championships as indicated by distance will qualify for nomination for a Senior International Card. Athletes who meet this criteria will be prioritized based on their final ranking in the event for which they have qualified. Athletes who have the same placing, in different events, will be prioritized by the percentage difference from the winner in each of the respective events. Mass Start athletes will be prioritized by their best 1500m or 3000m (Women)/5000m (Men) ranking.

Athletes who qualify for carding under the Senior International carding criteria are eligible for two years of AAP support, with the card in the first year referred to as an SR1 Card and the card in the second year referred to as an SR2 Card. The second year is subject to the athlete being re-nominated by Speed Skating Canada, following a training and competitive program approved by Speed Skating Canada and Sport Canada and signing the AAP application and SSC Athlete agreement.

3.9 Senior National Card Criteria

Senior National cards are intended to support athletes with the potential to reach Senior International card status. Athletes are expected to improve each year to maintain Senior National card level.

Eligible athletes will be nominated in the following priority order:

Priority 1: Athletes who placed 9th – 16th (9th – 12th 5000m (women)/10000m (men)) in an individual Olympic distance event at the 2025 World Speed Skating Championships. Athletes who meet this criteria will be prioritized based on their final placing in the event for which they have qualified, within this carding criteria, at the 2025 World Speed Skating Championships – Single Distance Format. Athletes who have the same placing, in different events, will be prioritized by the performance percentage difference from the winner in each of the respective events.

Priority 2: Athletes who placed in the top 20 in an individual Olympic distance event in the final ISU Individual Distance ranking for the 2024-2025 competitive season. Athletes who meet this criteria will be prioritized based on their position on the final ISU World Cup ranking. Athletes who have the same placing, in different events, will be prioritized by the percentage difference from the winner in each of the respective events.

Priority 3: The top ranked athletes who are below the line¹ on the 2024-2025 Canadian Ranking List – Individual Distance Final Classification after Canada Cup Final will be ranked by using performance percentage to the 2024 CLT Senior time standard.² Winner of the Mass Start must meet the Mass Start profile (Bulletin 209, Section 3.3.2) and will be ranked within this group based on the best performance percentage of the 1500m or 3000m (women) / 5000m (men) to the 2024 CLT Senior time standard.³

Maximum number of years at Senior National card level: Once an athlete has reached the International Federation (IF) senior age, the athlete is generally expected to be Senior National carded for no more than five (5) years, at which time the athlete is expected to have satisfied the Senior International criteria. After such time, the Long Track High Performance program will conduct a comprehensive and thoroughly documented review of the athlete’s performance over the previous five years in order to demonstrate progress toward the performance equivalent to the Senior international criteria and to justify nomination to Senior National card status for an additional year. This process must be followed for all subsequent years that the athlete is nominated at this level.

For an athlete changing programs, there may be a different maximum number of years at the Senior National card level. This number will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the respective High Performance Advisory Council. The athlete will be informed by SSC of this requirement the first year he/she enters the new program.

Should an athlete currently holding a Senior National Card not meet the Senior National Card Criteria listed above in Section 3.8 or 3.9 in Bulletin 211 (and there remains carding quota following the June nomination), an athlete may be eligible for a late Senior National Card nomination in December 2025 for up to the final six (6) months of the carding cycle. In the case of a tie between two or more athletes who are eligible for late nomination, Section 3.7 will be applied to break the tie and rank the eligible athletes. Eligible athletes may be nominated in the following order of priority:

Priority 1: Athletes who finish ranked in the top eight (8) in an individual Olympic distance event in the official 2026 Winter Olympic Games Qualifying Criteria (SOQC) after World Cup 4.

Priority 2: Athletes who have pre-qualified for the 2026 Winter Olympic Games to the pre-qualification criteria outlined in the relevant Internal Nomination Procedure describing the 2026 Olympic Team Nomination.

¹ When a skater is ranked “above the line”, they have satisfied nomination to the National Team as per HPB 212, Section 2.3, Priority 1 and 2 only. When a skater moves above the line they will be removed from the Canadian Ranking List. Any Canadian Ranking List points a skater above the line has earned through the season will not be redistributed to skaters below the line.

² **IMPORTANT:** As of December 3, 2024, in order for a time to be considered a qualifying time for any of the competitions included in this High Performance Bulletin 211, SSC requires, in addition to and notwithstanding any ISU rule or any rule in the SSC Procedures and Regulations (the “Red Book”), that the time: i) must have been achieved in an ISU-sanctioned event or at an event run under the applicable ISU Technical Rules and Special Regulations where wind or air-flow conditions and the ventilation system of the track is controlled so as to avoid unequal conditions due to differences in air-flow on the level of the competition track; ii) must have been achieved in a race held at an ISU-sanctioned event or at an event run under the applicable ISU Technical Rules and Special Regulations in which skaters raced in the ISU defined gender categories as specified in ISU Rule 39(c)(i) of the ISU Technical Rules and Special Regulations; and iii) will be subject to normalization where applicable (i.e., if the race is held at altitude; see Noordhof, Dionne & Mulder, Roy & de Koning, Jos & Hopkins, Will. (2015) *Race Factors Affecting Performance Times in Elite Long-Track Speed Skating*. International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance. 11.10.1123/ijsp.2015-1071).

³ See footnote 2 immediately above.

3.10 Development Card Criteria

After the application of the Senior International and Senior National card criteria, the remaining card quota in Long Track will be allocated to athletes eligible under the Development Card criteria. Development Cards are intended to support the developmental needs of NextGen athletes who clearly demonstrate the potential to achieve the Senior International Carding criteria but are not yet able to meet the Senior National Card criteria.

Eligible athletes will be nominated in the following priority order:

Priority 1: Athletes who placed 17th –24th (in an individual Olympic distance event at the 2025 World Speed Skating Championships). Athletes who meet this criteria will be prioritized based on their final placing in the event for which they have qualified, within this carding criteria, at the 2025 World Speed Skating Championships. Athletes who have the same placing, in different events, will be prioritized by the performance percentage difference from the winner in each of the respective events.

Priority 2: Athletes who place 21st to 24th in an individual Olympic distance event in the final ISU Individual Distance ranking for the 2024-2025 competitive season (final ISU Individual Rankings are combined for women’s 3000m/5000m and men’s 5000m/10000m). These athletes will be prioritized based on the actual respective distance ranking.

Priority 3: Athletes who placed in the Top 8 and Top 1/3 of the field at the 2025 World Junior Championships in an individual distance event or who win a medal in the Team Pursuit or Mass Start at the 2025 World Junior Championships. These athletes will be prioritized based on the individual distance classification. If there is a tie between 2 or more athletes, the results in the overall classifications will be used to break the tie.

Priority 4: Any remaining card quota may be used to nominate athletes selected to the “NextGen” and/or National Program (if applicable under the card quota) and prioritized in order of rank, and according to the number of available cards.

Priority 5: Any remaining card quota may be used to nominate athletes selected to the National Team Training Partners Pool (if applicable under the card quota). Training Partners may be eligible for up to 4 months of development carding support based on the number of available cards.

A senior age athlete is expected to be eligible for a Development card for no more than two (2) years at senior age (S1-S2). A senior age athlete who has received a Development card (Priority 1-4) for two years will be ineligible for a Development card their third year as a senior aged athlete unless the Long Track High Performance program determines that such athlete’s performance progression is heading towards the performance equivalent of the Senior National card criteria and can justify nomination to Development card status for an additional year. This process can only be applied once to such athletes who have reached their third year of senior age (S3).

Normally, a Development Card cannot be allocated to an athlete previously carded at the Senior Card level (SR, SR1, SR2) for more than two years, except in the following circumstances:

- For an athlete carded as a Senior National card while still competing at the Junior international age level; or

- An athlete carded as a Senior National card who has been identified as a Training Partner and has met Section 3.10 Priority 5.
- An athlete carded as a Senior International card as a result of his or her results In the Team Pursuit.

Normally, an athlete receiving a Training Partner Development Card will not affect the maximum number of years of carding, except in the following circumstances:

- An athlete previously carded at the Senior Card level (SR, SR1, SR2) for more than two years is eligible for a maximum of two years of Training Partner carding; or
- A senior age athlete who has received a Development card via Priority 1 through 4 for two years is eligible for a maximum of two years of Training Partner carding.

An athlete who is eligible for a Training Partner Development Card (Priority 5) is ineligible for nomination to the National Program (that is the National/NextGen Team) within the same carding cycle.

4. SSC PROGRAM SUPPORT

Athletes who are nominated to the SSC National NextGen Program but who do not receive AAP carding support from Sport Canada may be considered to receive replacement funding from SSC (budget permitting) at half the Developmental Card level of funding for the same duration and carding cycle in effect.

If approved, SSC may only provide “replacement” funding for half the stipend of the AAP Training and living allowance. Replacement funding does not apply to Training Partner Cards. SSC will not provide any of the other AAP financial benefits such as tuition support, relocation assistance, etc. SSC support for an athlete who does not receive AAP carding support will be limited to a maximum of 2 years. Additional years may be added in exceptional circumstances evaluated by the Chair of the HPAC-LT.

5. WITHDRAWAL OF CARDED STATUS POLICY

Athletes may have their carded status withdrawn under the following conditions:

- i. Violation of the SSC National/NextGen Team Athlete Agreement; or

- ii. Failure to meet athlete responsibilities outlined in the Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) Policies and Procedures.

SSC may make the recommendation that carded status be withdrawn; however, Sport Canada may also withdraw carded status without a recommendation from SSC. The procedure and specific reasons for which carding may be withdrawn are described in the Sport Canada policy (Section 11 Withdrawal of Carded Status).

6. APPEALS

Appeals of SSC's AAP nomination/re-nomination decisions or of SSC's to withdraw carding may be pursued only through SSC's review process, which may include an application to the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC). Appeals of AAP decisions made under Section 6 (Application for and Approval of Cards), or Section 11 (Withdrawal of Carding Status) may be pursued through Section 13 of the AAP Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.

7. LANGUAGE

This HP Bulletin 211 was originally drafted in English and was translated into French. In the event of a discrepancy between the English and French versions, the English version shall be used to understand the intended drafting of the provision(s) in question. Should such a situation arise, Speed Skating Canada will ensure that any discrepancies are corrected as soon as possible and will assist any impacted individuals with resolving the matter.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – CARDING CRITERIA OVERVIEW

The following Carding Criteria Overview is to be used in conjunction with the text in Bulletin 211 and not to be applied on its own.

