



VOLLEYBALL AUSTRALIA

2021-2024 ATHLETE CATEGORISATION POLICY



Introduction

- 1.1. The Volleyball Australia (**VA**) Athlete Categorisation Guidelines are in support of the Australian Institute of Sport's (**AIS**) drive to reposition Australia as a world leader in elite sport performance.
- 1.2. The driving principle behind the AIS's investment approach to high performance sport is to ensure that available resources are positioned to support Australia's most talented athletes. The AIS recognises that it is equally important to strive to have a strong and sustainable high-performance sector to ensure that Australia continues to deliver success into the future.
- 1.3. Each National Sporting Organisation (**NSO**) has worked in conjunction with the AIS to develop Athlete Categories that help identify the athletes with the greatest potential for podium success at Olympic and Paralympic level and track performances over time to inform prioritisation of support for these athletes.
- 1.4. This document outlines the Athlete Categories and guidelines that will be used by Volleyball Australia for athlete categorisation.

Minimum eligibility requirements for VA Categorisation

- 2.1. To be eligible for VA Categorisation, an Athlete must satisfy all of the following requirements:
 - a) be an Australian Citizen (or on a committed path to obtaining Australian Citizenship);
 - b) be a current member of VA, having paid all requisite membership fees owed for the relevant membership period;
 - c) a current and signed VA Athlete Agreement;
 - d) be eligible and available to compete for Australia as per VA/FIVB rules (as amended from time to time) at international events.

VA Athlete Categorisation Panel

- 3.1. Athlete categorisation will be determined by the VA Athlete Futures Group (AFG). This Group comprises key members of the VA High Performance program and the VA Performance Pathways Program, as well as representatives of each NIN who assist in delivering VA high-performance programs. The composition of the AFG ensures the knowledge and capability required to make informed athlete categorisation decisions.
- 3.2. Current members of the AFG are the VA National High-Performance Director, and designated staff and relevant coaches from each of the pathways and senior National programs.



- 3.3. For each round of categorisation, the AFG will elect a Chair. All decisions of the AFG shall be by majority vote. Each member of the AFG shall have one vote. In the event of a deadlock in voting, the Chair's vote shall determine the decision.
- 3.4. The AFG is subject to change due to the nature of volunteers. The VA Chief Executive Officer will notify the VA membership of any changes in membership of the AFG via an announcement on the VA website at the earliest opportunity.

Conditions of VA Categorisation

- 4.1. To be categorised and/or maintain categorisation, an Athlete must comply at all times with the following conditions:
- a) sign and adhere to the VA Athlete Agreement (as amended from time to time);
 - b) conduct oneself in a manner that complies with the VA Code of Conduct (as amended from time to time);
 - c) sign and adhere to an Individual Performance Plan (**IPP**) and/or Team Performance Plan (**TPP**) that has been agreed between the Athlete, their coach and the VA National High-Performance Director;
 - d) complete, sign and return paperwork as required, committing to the requirements for categorisation;
 - e) provide to the HP Team the Athlete's current contact details (name, address, email address, best telephone/mobile number, passport number and expiry date, contact details of parent/guardian of Athlete (if the Athlete is under 18 years of age)) and promptly advise the HP Team of any changes to these contact details;
 - f) participate in VA Training Camps (as required);
 - g) compete in domestic events as outlined in their IPP and/or TPP;
 - h) compete at international events for Australia as outlined in their IPP and/or TPP;
 - i) compete (if selected) for any Benchmark Event for Australia;
 - j) maintain personal private health insurance to ensure access to medical services as required;
 - k) comply with all anti-doping and requirements for VA, the FIVB and the ASC including completing of e-learning modules and updates as requested from time to time.



Factors considered in VA Categorisation.

5.1. In determining an athlete's current performance standard and future Olympic/Paralympic podium potential the AFG must consider the following factors in assessing Athletes who have the best chance of contributing to the achievement of VA's High-Performance goals:

- a) recent international competition performance measured against the relevant Key Performance Indicators as set out in Schedule 1 with a particular emphasis on the quality of opposition, percentage of wins and placing achieved;
- b) any specific guidance from the AIS (as advised from time to time) on Athlete Categorisation;
- c) during the 12 months prior to categorisation the extent to which the athlete has:
 - i. demonstrated a strong commitment to all national training and attended all national camps to which invited;
 - ii. if funded (i.e., any contribution to travel and accommodation), participated in all international competitions and camps for which selected; and
- d) an Athlete's compliance with the conditions set out in paragraph 4.1 (above);

5.2. The Athlete Futures Group may, at its sole discretion, use a number of additional factors in assessing athlete's potential for future Olympic/Paralympic podium success, including (without limitation):

- a) consistency in results and ability to repeat World Class results and deliver performances under pressure;
- b) rankings of and performance against opponents on the FIVB World Ranking list;
- c) an Athlete's technical, tactical, physical, and mental performance and ability as determined by the AFG;
- d) an Athlete's ongoing commitment and application, including communication with national coaches, adherence to IPPs and/or TPPs, motivation to succeed and use of available resources within a daily training environment to increase performance;
- e) an Athlete's commitment to the level of training necessary to achieve the desired performance;



- f) the depth and quality of talent in each event here in Australia in comparison to our international competitors;
- g) the athlete's age, with a particular and increased focus on junior international results (World Championships and Asian Championships) in informing decisions for categorisation at Emerging and Developing;
- h) noting that Volleyball is a sport which is very demanding in terms of physical load on the body and hence has a relatively high incidence of periods of injury and drop-out, the impact of any serious physical injury on the Athlete's ability to compete during the 12-month period prior to categorisation. It is the responsibility of any Athlete to notify the VA HP Team of any serious physical injury that may be impairing their ability to compete.

5.3 Depending on the stage in the Olympic cycle, the AFG may, in its sole discretion, give greater weighting to particular factors.

5.4 The AFG should take into consideration the potential of an athlete to assist Volleyball Australia achieving its performance targets. The AFG may consider a range of circumstances in determining an athlete should be included or maintained in an Athlete Category, including but not limited to:

- a. Special consideration may be given to maintain an athlete in the Podium or Podium Ready Category for more than one year, where it is clear evidence that this will assist the potential of Volleyball Australia to achieve its performance targets;
- b. If an extraordinary circumstance prevents an otherwise eligible athlete from satisfying the criteria for an Athlete Category and there is compelling evidence that the athlete should be included in one of the categories, the AFG, in its absolute discretion, may allow for special consideration and use any additional factors in assessing an athlete's categorisation. Such circumstances could include:
 - i. illness/injury at the time of the benchmark event,
 - ii. an athlete returning from injury or
 - iii. a worldwide pandemic that affects competition and/or training opportunities.

Timing of Reviews

6.1. Athlete categorisation will take place annually. It is expected that most athletes will enter, move between, or exit categories in line with this schedule. The list of VA categorised athletes will be published on the VA website following each round of categorisation.

6.2. In exceptional circumstances, the AFG may (in its sole discretion) approve Athletes entering, moving between categories, or exiting the categories at other times. Such circumstances may



include (without limitation) failing to comply with these Guidelines, retirement, arrival from overseas but with eligibility to compete for Australia, substantial performance gains etc.

Appeals

7.1. The Athlete Categorisation by the AFG will be final. If an Athlete does not agree with their categorisation, there shall be no further right of review or appeal.

Amendments

8.1. These Guidelines may be varied from time to time by VA. Any updates will be published on the VA website.

Schedule 1: Athlete Categories 2020 – 2024

Podium Pathway Category	Athlete Category Description	Key Performance Indicators	Time in Category
Podium	<p>Medallist at Olympic/Paralympic Games or Senior World Championships in the previous 24 months</p> <p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.4, and are deemed capable of podium outcomes at the next Olympic/Paralympic Games</p>	<p>Compulsory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medallist at Olympic Games OR • Senior World Championship <p>Additional considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of medal performances at podium equivalent events within last 24 months • # of wins against Top 10 FIVB world ranked teams within last 12 months • Positive performance trajectory • Demonstrates the behaviours required to maintain and improve performance for next Olympic Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undefined – until no longer meeting the KPIs for Podium categorisation. • Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP and/or TPP.
Podium Ready	<p>4th to 8th at the most recent Olympic/ Paralympic Games or Senior World Championships, and/or Top 8 on the FIVB world rankings at the time of categorisation</p> <p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.4, and are deemed capable of podium outcomes at the next Olympic/ Paralympic Games</p>	<p>Compulsory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 8 placing at the last benchmark event OR • Top 8 at podium equivalent events <p>Additional considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of wins against Top 10 FIVB world ranked teams within last 12 months • Win/loss % across all International events • Positive performance trajectory • Demonstrates the behaviours required to maintain and improve performance for next Olympic Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undefined – until progressing to Podium categorisation; or until no longer meeting the KPIs for Podium Ready categorisation. • Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP and/or TPP.
Podium Potential	<p>Senior athletes that have achieved defined international competition performance benchmarks that reliably confirm their world standard.</p> <p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.4, and are deemed capable of podium outcomes at future Olympic/ Paralympic Games</p>	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medallist at most recent Senior Asian Championships • Top 16 at most recent Senior World Championships • # of top 16 placings at podium equivalent events • Win/loss % across all International events • Must show improvement in the priorities identified in the IPP and/or TPP demonstrates the behaviours required to maintain and improve performance for future Olympic Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May stay at this category for up to 4 years.
Developing	<p>Athletes that have progressed through a reliable national talent confirmation phase in a high-quality training environment, including achievement of relevant international competitions performance outcomes.</p> <p>Identified by the Athlete Futures Group.</p>	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medal performances and/or wins against higher ranked teams, and/or performances against highly ranked opponents in international competition. • Top 8 at Youth Commonwealth Games or Youth Olympics events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May stay at this category for up to 4 years. • Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP.



	<p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.4 and are deemed capable of a podium outcome at future Olympic/ Paralympic Games and Senior World Championships.</p>	<p>Top 8 at Age-Group World Championships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of top 8 placings at Asian Championships events (Senior and Age-Group) • Win/loss % across all International events • Demonstrates the behaviours required to maintain and improve performance for future Olympic Games. 	
Emerging	<p>Athletes who have been identified by Volleyball Australia via a valid and reliable talent identification profiling method and are going through a set, time-limited talent confirmation period in a high-quality training environment.</p> <p>Included at the discretion of the Athlete futures coach's panel.</p> <p>Athletes are assessed against factors outlined at 5.1 through 5.4, and are deemed capable of progressing to Developing within prescribed timeframes</p>	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Abilities and Attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthropometry measures: Height, Arm span, sitting height (to allow calculation of peak height velocity) • Speed and Power; 10m sprint, Agility tests, Countermovement jump peak power (on force-plate), spike reach, spike jump, block jump. • Demonstrates the behaviours required to maintain and improve performance for future Olympic Games. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior athletes may stay at this category for up to 4 years. • Senior athletes may stay at this category for a maximum of 2 years. • Must show improvement in the areas identified in the IPP





Key Definitions

Athlete:

Athlete Categorisation:

Volleyball Australia

National Sporting Organisation

Athlete Futures Group:

