Athletics Canada
2015-2016 Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) Policy
Paralympic Stream

1. General program description and purpose

The Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) is a federal government program administered by Sport Canada that provides financial assistance and tuition support to high performance athletes. Also referred to as ‘carding’, AAP funding is intended to contribute to an athlete’s living and training costs. It is not intended to serve as an athlete’s sole source of income. Under Athletics Canada’s policy, AAP funding is designed to support athletes for the upcoming year who have:

- Demonstrated an ability to finish in the Top 3 at an IPC World Championships in Athletics or a Paralympic Games, or
- Have been identified by Athletics Canada (AC) as progressing towards a finish in the Top 3 at future IPC World Championships in Athletics or Paralympic Games.

This policy was developed by AC’s National Team Committee (NTC) and was reviewed by Sport Canada before publication to ensure consistency with Sport Canada AAP Policies. The criteria in this policy are designed to enable AC to identify those athletes whose performances, progression, and training environment are indicative of the athlete’s ability to achieve future Paralympic medal performances.

This policy applies to the carding cycle beginning December 1, 2015 and ending November 30, 2016. It sets out the process and criteria that will be used to recommend nominations for carding for this carding cycle. There are two appendices associated with this policy, all of which form an integral part of this policy:

Appendix 1 – Categories of Cards
Appendix 2 – Application form

2. Eligibility for AAP

To be eligible to be considered for carding nomination, an athlete must meet these requirements:
- Must be a current registered member of AC, in good standing with a provincial branch.
- Must have participated in the 2015 National Outdoor Track and Field Championships unless a request for an exemption due to injury, illness, or other exceptional circumstances is approved, in advance, by the Head Coach – if applicable.
- Must possess Canadian citizenship by December 1, 2015 and must submit supporting documentation indicating that he/she will be eligible to compete for Canada in IPC events in 2015-2016.
- Must not be under suspension or other sanction for any doping or doping-related offense.
- Must commit to sign an Athlete Agreement approved by AC and the athlete representatives. This agreement can be modified as required to accommodate individual needs or situations.
- Must submit a 2015-16 Training and Competition Plan for approval by the Head Coach, before any funding will be released. Failure to submit an approved plan may result in AC withdrawing the nomination to Sport Canada.
• Must otherwise comply with all eligibility requirements set out by Sport Canada in Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) Policies and Procedures
• Must be in an event that is on the schedule for the upcoming 2016 Paralympic Games.
• Must have a minimum of national classification.
• Must not currently be injured or ill, except Medical card applicants.

3. Authority for Carding Decisions

AC does not make decisions to grant carding to athletes, but rather submits a list of nominations for carding that Sport Canada ultimately approves. The final decision on granting cards is made by Sport Canada. AC’s staff will apply the criteria contained within this document to recommend athletes for carding nomination to the NTC. The authority for final nominations for carding to Sport Canada rests solely with the NTC.

The NTC for the 2015-2016 carding cycle is comprised of:

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**Voting Members**
Chief Executive Officer, AC Technical Staff (one, appointed by the Head Coach), National Team Coaches (two, appointed by the Head Coach), Branch Representatives (two, as designated by Branch Council), Athlete Representatives (up to two, as designated by the Athlete Directors)

**Non-voting – present at NTC carding meeting**
AC Staff (ex-officio, support, appointed by the CEO)
AC coaching and IST staff as necessary, statistician, legal advisor, note-taker as required

4. Allocation of Cards

AC’s Paralympic Program has been allocated $576,000 for the 2015-2016 carding cycle. The breakdown of these funds into Senior Cards, Development Cards, NCAA Cards and Medical/injury Cards, is at the sole discretion of NTC in consultation with AC technical staff. Appendix 1 (attached) provides additional details about these different categories of cards, and specifies further requirements that must be fulfilled by athletes nominated in these categories, in addition to those eligibility requirements in Section 2.

5. The Carding Process

Nominations for carding will be made using a two phase approach, as follows:

**Phase 1 – General Carding Pool**

An athlete must first be in the General Carding Pool to be considered for carding, but this does not guarantee nomination. Phase 1 is simply a list of the athletes who will be considered in the process outlined in Phase 2.
The following athletes will be admitted to the General Carding Pool provided they submit a completed and signed Application Form (Appendix 2) and training and competition plan by the deadline date:

- Current SR1 or SR2 carded athletes;
- Athletes who achieved a performance* in 2015 with a minimum score of 900 points on the Athletics Canada point score table – using the most recent version at the time of the carding selection meeting - Click here for the score table
  *in an individual event/class according to the 2016 Paralympic program
- Athletes eligible for Development cards who achieved a performance* in 2015 with a minimum score of 750 points on the Athletics Canada point score table – using the most recent version at the time of the carding selection meeting - Click here for the score table
  *in an individual event/class according to the 2016 Paralympic program
- Athletes who competed in a relay event at the Doha 2015 IPC World Championships
- Athletes ranked top 3 by IPC at the end of the 2015 season with at least 10 nations representatives in the IPC rankings.
- Athletes introduced by the Head Coach under special circumstances
- Athletes who are currently carded and who have submitted a “Notification of Injury, Illness or Pregnancy” form to maintain their carding status during the carding cycle, and who have otherwise fulfilled all requirements to be considered for a Medical card

Phase 2 – Nomination to Sport Canada

During the fall of 2015, the NTC will meet to consider the athletes in the General Carding Pool, and to decide which athletes should be nominated for carding. In making its decisions, the NTC will consider athletes by proceeding through the following five steps in sequential order:

**Step 1** Athletes who won a Gold medal at the Doha 2015 IPC World Championships, AND who the NTC believes possess a realistic potential to win an individual medal at the 2016 Paralympic Games*.

**Step 2** Athletes who won a medal in an individual event and/or Relay events at the Doha 2015 IPC World Championships AND who the NTC believe possess a realistic potential to win an individual and/or Relay medal at the 2016 Paralympic Games**.

**Step 3** Athletes ranked in the IPC Top 8 (minimum 16 athletes ranked in the event) in an individual event in 2015, who are not eligible under Steps 1 or 2 AND who the NTC believe possess a realistic potential to win a medal at the 2016 Paralympic Games**. For events with less than 16 athletes on the IPC ranking – Athletes ranked in the top ½ of the field will be considered.

**Step 4** Athletes eligible for Development cards ranked in the IPC Top 16 (minimum 32 athletes ranked in the event) in an individual event in 2015 AND/OR who the NTC believe demonstrates realistic potential to win a medal in an individual event at the 2017/19 IPC World Championships and/or the 2020 Paralympic Games*. For events with less than 32 athletes on the IPC ranking – Athletes ranked in the top ½ of the field will be considered.
Step 5 If there are any nominations remaining, all athletes in the Carding Pool who have not been nominated through any of the above 4 steps will be considered based on the factors (outlined below) which identify an athlete’s realistic potential to win a medal at the (2016 or 2020 Paralympic Games and/or 2017 or 2019 IPC World Championships). In determining an athlete’s “realistic potential to win a medal”, as set out in the above steps, the NTC will consider the following factors:

- Athlete’s performance profile (progression over multiple years/“bridging the gap”)
- The athlete’s ability to consistently repeat performances, particularly at peak times in the season (major championships and championship trials)
- Training and competition plans,
- Performances at (Paralympic Games and/or World Championships)
- Head to head performances, where applicable, but particularly 1. National Teams and 2. Nationals
- The athlete’s medical history, in the case of injury cards
- The fulfillment of any previous conditions and/or targets set for the athlete, where applicable,
- The Athletics Canada point score table and IPC ranking,
- Any other information introduced by the Head Coach and deemed relevant by the NTC.

All NTC members will participate in this process provided that if a NTC member has a conflict of interest in relation to any athlete being considered he or she will declare it, and the Chair of the NTC will decide if that NTC member can participate in the deliberations of the NTC in relation to that particular athlete.

The Chair of the NTC will determine the order in which athletes will be considered for carding within each of the 5 steps described above. All members of the NTC will vote on carding nominations decisions. A member may abstain from voting but only if the member has declared a conflict of interest. The Head Coach will have a tie-breaking vote in the event there is a tie.

In determining carding nominations, the NTC will also have the discretion to determine the relative allocation of cards among the different categories of cards (Senior, Medical/Injury, Development).

6. Requirements to Remain Carded

All athletes approved by Sport Canada for carding will sign a final Athlete Agreement that stipulates obligations that the athlete must fulfill to remain carded. All carded athletes are expected to remain fully engaged with AC’s high performance programming, including ongoing communication with AC staff which may include signing any written agreements required by AC staff coaches.

7. Appeals

Athletes who are not nominated for carding may appeal, which will be heard in accordance with AC’s Appeal Policy (Rule 140). Appeals are restricted to those athletes who were eligible to be considered for carding by virtue of meeting the requirements set out in Section 2, who met the requirements to be admitted to the General Carding Pool as described in Section 5 and who fulfilled any additional requirements for the different categories of cards as specified in Appendix 1.
Appendix 1 – Categories of Cards

**Senior Cards**
- Senior cards are the top level of cards and are valued at $1,500 per month, except the first year of a Senior card that is referred to as a C-1 card and is valued at $900 per month. An athlete may only receive a C-1 card once.

- SR1 and SR2 cards are International cards granted to those athletes who reach the podium at the IPC World Championships or the Paralympic Games. Alternates in relays who do not compete are not eligible for this card.

- SR1 cards are typically awarded for two years (with the second year of the card termed SR2), provided the athlete adheres to an approved training plan, and achieves prescribed performance targets and benchmarks over the course of the two years.

- SR and C-1 cards are Senior level cards for those athletes who have qualified to be nominated for carding at the Senior level but not as a SR1 or SR2 card. An athlete may only continue to receive a C-1/SR card if they can show they are progressing towards a medal at a Paralympics Games or IPC World Championships in Athletics.

**Medical/Injury Cards**
- Athletes who are currently carded and who become ill, injured or pregnant must immediately submit a “Notification of Injury, Illness or Pregnancy” form to maintain their carding status during the carding cycle.

- To renew carding, the athlete must submit a medical doctor’s diagnosis and prognosis for the athlete’s return to high performance training and competition, and must include a rehabilitation and training program prepared by the athlete, coach and coordinating therapist which is acceptable to AC’s medical personnel.

- A request for a Medical/Injury card does not guarantee nomination. Athletes may be nominated for Medical/Injury cards at the sole discretion of the NTC based on the number of cards available, the nature and details of the diagnosis and prognosis, the documentation provided, the quality of the athlete’s rehabilitation and training plan, the advice of medical experts, and the realistic expectation that the athlete can continue to progress towards World Top 8 or Top 3, as the case may be.

- Athletes may only receive a Medical Card once.

**Development Cards**
- Development cards are valued at $900 per month. The purpose of Development cards is to support developing athletes who have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the NTC that they are on a path to earn a Senior card in the future.

- Athletes may only receive a Development card for a maximum of 4 years post-Junior before progressing to a Senior card.

- Athletes who have previously received Senior cards (including C1 card) are not eligible for Development cards.
Appendix 2 – Application Form

This form must be completed in its entirety (including coach and athlete signatures) and submitted to AC on or before **November 13, 2015** and must be accompanied by a Training and Competition Plan. The completed form and plan may be sent by courier or by post to the AC office or may be submitted electronically to carding@athletics.ca

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| Athlete Signature / Date | Coach Signature / Date |