



## **SPORT CANADA Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) ROWING CANADA AVIRON AAP Policy**

---

Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) provides financial assistance to Canadian high-performance athletes to improve Canadian performances at major international sporting events such as the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Pan American Games, and World Championships.

Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA), the national governing body for Rowing in Canada and a recognized National Sport Organization by Sport Canada, is tasked by Sport Canada with the management of the Rowing AAP policy. Rowing Canada Aviron and Sport Canada officials meet annually to review the athlete nominations for AAP support and to determine adjustments to the policy.

Sport Canada minimum requirements for athlete AAP eligibility are as follows:

- Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada on the date of the beginning of the carding cycle, and the athlete shall 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;
- In good standing with FISA, the international rowing federation, and eligible to represent Canada at World Championships or Olympic Games;
- Meeting the carding criteria as a member of a Canadian Team at international events sanctioned by Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) for such purposes.
- Following a three-year period as a permanent resident, continued eligibility to receive AAP support is contingent on becoming eligible to represent Canada at the Olympic Games.

Athletes achieve eligibility for nomination to the AAP through identified national and international performances each year. RCA determines nominations to Sport Canada for AAP consideration in the upcoming year, but it is Sport Canada that provides final approval of AAP "support" to athletes for the year in question. AAP nomination, and possible support, is predicated on the following expectations:

- That the athlete has the potential to meet the stated national or international performance objectives in the year of AAP support, or in the near future.
- That the athlete meets all the RCA mandated training and monitoring requirements throughout the AAP cycle.

(See "Criteria for all AAP Applicants" for further detail)

**AAP support is not achieved through previous year performances; such performances only allow an athlete eligibility for nomination for the following year.**

Upon approval of support, athletes will be awarded AAP cards as of **January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year** following an Olympic Games or World Championship.

Athletes are eligible for two levels of AAP support:

**1. Senior Cards (SR) (\$1,500 per month)** – awarded on the basis of **two** different sets of criteria:

**A. International Criteria:**

Sport Canada sets the criteria for Senior Cards. Athletes who meet the international criteria are eligible to be nominated by RCA for two consecutive years, with the card for the first year referred to as **SR1** and the card for the second year referred to as **SR2**. The second year of carding is contingent on the athlete being re-nominated by RCA and a training and competitive program approved by RCA and Sport Canada being maintained. The athlete must also sign an Athlete/RCA Agreement and complete an AAP Application Form for the year in question.

Only athletes who compete in the international competitions that are identified for SR eligibility shall be eligible for such carding. Athletes who are reserves or spares and do not participate in the competition will not be considered.

Athletes selected to the Canadian National Team, and who compete at the World Rowing Senior Championships in an "Olympic Event", or athletes selected to the Canadian Olympic Team and who compete at the Olympic Games shall be eligible for SR nomination for two consecutive years (SR1 and SR2) according to the following criteria:

- Top 8 Finish and top 1/2 of field at the World Rowing Senior Championships.
- Olympic Events are:

Heavyweight Women	1x, 2x, 4x, 2-, 8+
Lightweight Women	2x
Heavyweight Men	1x, 2x, 4x, 2-, 4-, 8+
Lightweight Men	2x, 4-

**B. National Criteria (SR):**

RCA sets the national criteria for Senior Cards. Senior Cards based on national criteria are awarded for one year and are called **SR** cards.

Senior cards awarded to athletes who meet national criteria for the first time are called **C1** cards and are funded at the Development Card level (**\$900/month**).

The following are the performance criteria required for Rowing Canada Aviron's SR Card eligibility:

1. Any athlete selected to compete in an Olympic event (including spares) at the World Rowing Senior Championships but who does not meet the International Criteria.
2. Any athlete selected to compete in a non-Olympic event at the World Rowing Senior Championships who wins a medal.

Athletes can retain SR card status for a maximum of four years only, by the end of which SR1/SR2 card status should have been attained. This four-year period may be extended if an athlete is demonstrating improvement towards SR1/SR2 status and, after a thorough review, is recommended by RCA and approved by Sport Canada. Any extension would be for a one-year period only.

## **2. Development Cards (\$900 per month):**

Athletes may be nominated for AAP support based on **Development (D) Card** criteria outlined below. The number of cards allocated is dependent on quotas set by Sport Canada. The criteria for nomination as a D card are:

- a) Athletes winning a medal at the World Rowing U23. .
- b) Athletes winning a medal at the World Rowing Junior Championships who will be eligible to compete at the U23 level in the carding year upcoming.
- c) Athletes relative ranking by coaches using results from the National Championships (or its equivalent) and the results from the November 6km national team ergometer test will be eligible to receive carding.

It is the intention of Sport Canada that the criteria for D Cards support developing athletes with the potential to meet SR and SR1/SR2 criteria. It is Sport Canada's policy that once athletes have progressed to the SR card level, they normally cannot go back to a D Card. Athletes may revert to D cards if they are in the U23 program. Special circumstances may be considered by RCA, at the discretion of the VP High Performance, to allow post U23 athletes to return to a D Card.

An athlete must obtain SR carding status within **four years of first being carded as a D Card**. An athlete who has not achieved an SR card by the end of the four years shall no longer be eligible for Development Carding.

## **3. AAP ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS:**

In November of each year, a relative ranking of athletes will be developed after the National Championships (or its equivalent) and the receipt of results from the November 6km national team ergometer test. Athletes will be nominated by RCA for AAP support based upon the published criteria for SR1/SR2, SR and D Cards, results from the National Championships, the November national team ergometer test and a completed letter of intent indicating commitment for the upcoming racing season. RCA National Team Coaches, in conjunction with RCA national office staff, will develop the final AAP nomination ranking. This ranking will be presented to, and reviewed by the VP High Performance. **Please see section 14 – Important Dates**

The relative ranking of athletes may also include:

1. Other performances during the previous competitive season
2. Selection camps
3. National team ergometer testing
4. On-water rowing evaluations
5. The athlete's experience and his or her potential to make future Olympic Teams.

Nominations for AAP support in the upcoming year are restricted to the number of AAP Cards allocated to RCA from Sport Canada. Such totals are listed as SR card totals, but a portion may be transferred into Development Cards (2 SR Cards = 3 Development Cards) if RCA's quota exceeds the number of athletes that have met SR standards. As a result, Development Card quotas fluctuate annually and it is entirely possible that RCA may not be able to nominate all athletes that have met the Development Card standard due to number restrictions on the Development Card level.

Rowing Canada Aviron reserves the right to "hold" Cards within its total allocation for a portion of the year, pending an appropriate level of supervised training commitment to the National Team by nominated athletes. See 4(e) – "Criteria for All AAP Applicants".

#### **4. CRITERIA FOR ALL AAP APPLICANTS**

The decision to nominate an athlete or coxswain to Sport Canada for AAP consideration shall be made by the National Team Program Coaches and the VP High Performance and shall be based on the following criteria:

- a) RCA requires that athletes in the AAP shall be registered with the association during the application period and throughout the period of carding support.
- b) Athletes shall have commenced full training by **the first week of October** at a RCA national training centre or a training venue approved by the appropriate National Team Program Coach for carding support to become effective on January 1.
- c) Athletes who qualify for Under 23 or Junior programs for the identified carding year and wish to train at a venue other than a national training centre shall submit a written request to the National Team Co-ordinator and the appropriate program coach by **the first week of September** that outlines all relevant considerations. The request shall also state the date by which the athlete will be back in full training at a national training centre following the period away. The approval for the athlete to train at an alternate venue must be received in writing from the VP High Performance. Senior A program athletes are expected to be training at a national training centre.
- d) Athletes not having commenced training at a national training centre or an approved venue by the first week of October shall be considered for carding at the discretion of the RCA National Team Program Coach and the VP High Performance. Consideration will be given to those athletes who have exceptional circumstances. (Exceptional circumstances must be submitted in writing to the National Team Co-ordinator and the appropriate program coach for approval).
- e) Athletes training outside Canada:
  - Athletes will not normally be eligible for carding support during the period they are outside the country, at an NCAA school, or receiving an athletic scholarship of any kind.
  - Funding will be accessible upon return to the RCA High Performance program at a National Team Training Centre in Canada.
- f) Athletes in training at a venue approved by his or her National Team Program Coach shall be responsible for regularly communicating the details of their training programs to their respective Program Coaches.
- g) Athletes shall have competed in the most recent **National Championships** (or its designated equivalent) unless under special circumstances approved by the RCA VP High Performance.

- h) Following the National Championships (or its designated equivalent), athletes shall complete a 6km national team ergometer test under approved supervision and submit the result with other required information to the RCA National Team Coordinator.
- i) Athletes must provide a signed Athlete Agreement and a written declaration of intent to compete for a position on the Canadian National Rowing Team to the RCA National Team Coordinator. **Please see section 14 – Important Dates.**

Any exceptions to these criteria shall be at the discretion of the RCA VP High Performance.

## **5. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The RCA National Team Program Coaches will review any special cases related to injury, illness, prohibitive causes or extenuating circumstances that restrict an athlete's involvement in any of the Training Camps. Full details of the special situation must be provided in writing (Doctor's note required) to the National Team Program Coach and RCA National Team Coordinator, together with a prognosis for recovery (if injury or illness). **To be eligible for carding as a special case, an athlete must have been carded in the previous year's carding cycle.**

An athlete wishing to have a special circumstance reviewed should contact the RCA National Team Coordinator.

## **6. COXSWAINS**

Coxswains are eligible to be nominated for an SR1/SR2 or SR/C-1 card if they coxed at the most recent World Rowing Senior Championships and have submitted a written declaration of intent to compete for a position on the upcoming World Rowing Senior Championship team. In this situation, a coxswain may be nominated for an SR1, SR2 or SR/C-1 card depending on the finish of his or her crew at the World Rowing Senior Championships (see Senior Card Criteria). Coxswains may be nominated for a Development Card (depending upon their availability) for the next competitive season based upon their performance at the most recent World Rowing Senior or U23 Championships.

## **7. APPEAL PROCEDURE**

After the announcement of AAP nominations, athletes may appeal a decision to not nominate them for carding by adhering to the following procedure:

Step 1 (Review): A request for review of the decision must be delivered in writing to the RCA National Office (attention: National Team Coordinator) within three days of the announcement of AAP nominations. The request must set out the grounds for disputing the initial decision to not nominate the athlete. The National Team Coordinator will confer with the respective National Team Program Coach and the VP High Performance, and will respond to the individual in writing within one week of the request for review.

**THIS PROCESS IS NOT AN APPEAL – IT IS A REQUEST TO REVIEW THE DECISION.**

If the request for review is unsuccessful and the individual is dissatisfied with the decision and explanation received in Step 1, the individual may want to continue the appeal by following Step 2. Failure to follow Step 1 will negate any further appeal.

Prior to continuing the appeal, it is strongly recommended that the athlete seek advice from RCA's Athlete Representatives. The RCA National Team Coordinator can provide contact information.

Step 2: To lodge a formal appeal with RCA, the individual must follow the regulations outlined in the RCA Appeal Procedure. The detailed RCA Appeal Procedure can be accessed at the RCA website ([http://www.rowingcanada.org/member\\_services/policies](http://www.rowingcanada.org/member_services/policies)).

Step 3: A final appeal can be made to Sport Canada directly for AAP support consideration. The regulations for this process are outlined on the Sport Canada website ([http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/pol/athlete05/14\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/pol/athlete05/14_e.cfm)).

## **8. CARDING APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

- a) The RCA National Team Program Coaches submit to the RCA National Team Coordinator a long list of athletes meeting the AAP nomination eligibility requirements.
- b) Sport Canada confirms with RCA the number of AAP cards available for the year in question.
- c) The National Team Coordinator prepares the AAP nomination long list and works with the VP High Performance and the Program Coaches to produce a final AAP nomination list that reflects the number of cards RCA will receive from Sport Canada for the year in question.
- d) The National Team Coordinator prepares a detailed report on each athlete's performances throughout the season (including their intent to commit to the national team program for the upcoming year) and submits this information along with RCA's nominations for AAP support to Sport Canada for review.
- e) Representatives of Sport Canada and RCA meet to review the submission and determine final AAP support for athletes nominated.
- f) The National Team Coordinator sends out a confirmation letter, AAP carding applications and the RCA Athlete Agreement to athletes that have been approved for AAP support and confirms their carding level.
- g) Athletes complete their annual Sport Canada AAP application forms, sign the RCA Athlete Agreement and return them to RCA.
- h) Following the return of all documents as noted above, Sport Canada issues carding cheques to the athletes. Athletes normally receive carding cheques every two months in advance for support over a two-month period.

## **9. ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Maintenance of AAP support requires athletes to commit to the responsibilities listed below:

- a) Adhere to the competitive and training programs and administrative requirements specified by RCA throughout the carding cycle. This includes being in a national training centre by the first week of October. (see Section 4 - Criteria for all AAP Applicants).

- b) For those athletes granted permission to train at an approved other venue, maintain, at a minimum, weekly contact with the respective RCA National Team Program Coach. It is an athlete's responsibility to initiate this contact.
- c) Refund any assistance provided if the individual's eligibility status changes or carding status is withdrawn.
- d) Abide by the Canadian Policy on Doping in Sport and RCA's Doping Policy, especially relating to the use of banned substances, doping controls and sporting contacts with other countries.
- e) Participate in sport-related, non-commercial, promotional activities on behalf of the Government of Canada. Sport Canada usually makes the request for participation, and RCA generally makes the detailed arrangements. Such promotional activities do not normally involve more than two working days per athlete per year.
- f) Immediately advise the RCA National Office of any address change. This is needed to ensure the athlete's timely receipt of AAP cheques and program information.
- g) Initiate any AAP-related appeal directly to RCA. An athlete may request that Sport Canada review such AAP-related decisions after an appeal to RCA has been completed.
- h) Comply with AAP policies and procedures, including those dealing with AAP-related disputes with Sport Canada.
- i) Actively participate in all program evaluation activities. Athletes will co-operate fully in any evaluation that may be conducted by the Minister or anyone authorized to act on the Minister's behalf and provide such data as the person conducting the evaluation considers necessary for the proper conduct of the evaluation.
- j) Provide true statements in their application and supporting documentation and to verify these statements if requested by Sport Canada.
- k) Indicate if they are current or former federal government employees, and if so, confirm that they are in compliance with the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service or the Conflict of Interest and Post-employment Code for Public Office Holders.

## **10. RCA's RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) Communicate with athletes both orally and in writing in the official language of their choice (French or English).
- b) Produce and provide a copy of the AAP guidelines (in the form of an athlete handbook), carding criteria for the following season, a selection document for the upcoming competitive season, and discipline and appeal procedures in the official language of the athlete's choice.
- c) Submit all nominations for carding in the December preceding the commencement of RCA's carding cycle on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year.
- d) Provide athletes with forms required for the AAP, including tuition vouchers and application forms.
- e) Review and recommend requests for special-needs assistance and deferred tuition.
- f) Ensure that each athlete adheres to RCA's approved training and competition plan throughout the carding cycle.
- g) Ensure that those athletes training at an approved other venue maintain, at a minimum, weekly contact with the respective RCA National Team Program Coach.
- h) Advise Sport Canada immediately if a carded athlete fails to honor his/her AAP commitments.
- i) Inform Sport Canada in a timely manner of an athlete's retirement and all anti-doping rule violations resulting from international testing. If RCA fails in this regard and the athlete subsequently receives excess AAP benefits, it is the responsibility of RCA to facilitate return

of that overpayment to Sport Canada. RCA is also responsible for facilitating the return of any funding provided to an athlete that is the result of a false application or fraudulent misrepresentation on the part of the athlete or RCA.

- j) Develop discipline and appeal procedures based on due process that include access to independent arbitration through the Sport Dispute Resolution Center of Canada (SDRCC).
- k) Provide Sport Canada with written confirmation that all carded athletes have signed their Athlete/NSO Agreement. This must occur within two (2) months of the start of RCA's carding cycle. The Agreement is not considered signed if any sections have been deleted or altered in any way. Athletes for whom Sport Canada has not received signed confirmation from RCA may have their AAP payments suspended until RCA confirms in writing that the Agreement is signed. The decision to suspend AAP payments of athletes who have not signed their Agreement will be made in consultation with RCA, and RCA will advise Sport Canada why the Agreement has not been signed.
- l) Actively participate in all AAP program evaluation activities. RCA will co-operate fully in any evaluation that may be conducted by the Minister or anyone authorized to act on the Minister's behalf and provide such data as the person conducting the evaluation considers necessary for the proper conduct of the evaluation.

## **11. SPORT CANADA'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) Communicate with athletes both orally and in writing in the official language of their choice (French or English).
- b) Review all nominations for AAP support endorsed by RCA.
- c) Approve nominations in accordance with AAP policies and arrange payments in accordance with AAP policies and procedures.
- d) Advise RCA and athletes regarding the development and approval of carding criteria, athlete agreements, appeals procedures and due process, athlete monitoring and other areas of athlete assistance and related services as requested by RCA, the athletes or both.
- e) Provide RCA with AAP materials (application forms; the booklet *Athlete Assistance Program and Policies*, tuition vouchers; etc.)
- f) Ensure that RCA adheres to carding criteria in the selection of athletes for athlete assistance.
- g) Provide a review procedure to both athletes and RCA on any AAP operational decision as per section 13 of the AAP Policies and Procedures ([http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/pol/athlete05/14\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/pol/athlete05/14_e.cfm)).

## **12. WITHDRAWAL OF CARDING STATUS**

Athletes may withdraw from the AAP by expressing to RCA their wish to do so. This may involve retiring permanently or temporarily foregoing the commitments of carded status.

### **RCA may recommend the withdrawal of carding status for the following reasons:**

- Non-renewal of carding status
- Failure to meet training or competitive commitments
- Violation of the Athlete Agreement
- An athletes' failure to meet responsibilities outlined in the AAP guidelines
- Gross breach of discipline, including contravention of RCA policies

- Fraudulent misrepresentation
- Doping violations

### 13. SPECIAL REINSTATEMENT

Following an Olympic Games, an athlete who has competed in those Games may wish to follow a year of maintenance training, foregoing participation on the Senior Team for one competitive season, and then rejoin the national program for the second season after the Olympics with the intention of competing in the subsequent Olympics. This athlete would not receive carding support for the carding cycle commencing on January 1<sup>st</sup> following the Olympic Games. Upon the athlete's return to regular training at the start of the next carding cycle, the athlete would be given a six week period to demonstrate appropriate performance levels, after which the Head Coach could recommend full reinstatement of the athlete to **D card** status. **This opportunity for Special Reinstatement shall only be available to athletes who competed on the preceding Olympic team.**

### 14. IMPORTANT DATES

#### 2007

September 7 <sup>th</sup>	Alternate Training request to RCA
October 1 <sup>st</sup>	Training Camp opens
November 1 <sup>st</sup>	Special Case request delivered to Program Coach and NTC
November 1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>	National Rowing Championships
November 16 <sup>th</sup>	6km Ergometer score to NTC
November 15 <sup>th</sup>	Letter of intent to RCA National Office
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	RCA Ranking published
November 28 <sup>th</sup>	AAP review meeting with Sport Canada

#### 2008

January 1 <sup>st</sup>	Carding initiated
January 31 <sup>st</sup>	Athlete Agreement to RCA National Office

For additional information on AAP services and support, please review the RCA Athlete Handbook.