



**2026 ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
(AAP)  
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

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## 1. ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (AAP)

The purpose of this document is to outline the mechanism that allows Canadian weightlifters to qualify for the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program (AAP). Weightlifting Canada Haltérophilie (WCH) provides the technical assistance to Sport Canada for the carding approval process by providing nominations that are in accordance with the approved carding criteria. Sport Canada approves or rejects the candidature submitted. Funding for National Team Programs in Canada is largely focused on generating podium performances at international events. For more information on the AAP program, please consult the Sport Canada website:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/athleteassistance.html>

### 1.1 AAP PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The AAP is a federal government grant program that provides direct financial assistance to Canadian high-performance athletes and is one of three Sport Canada programs designed to assist in the development of high-performance sport. In particular, the AAP complements Sport Canada's Sport Support Program, which provides support to National Sport Organizations (NSOs) and Canadian Sport Institutes for activities such as National Team training and competition, coach salaries and the provision of sport science and sport medicine services.

The AAP contributes toward improved Canadian performances at major international sporting events such as the Olympic/Paralympic Games and World Championships. The AAP recognizes the commitment that athletes make to the National Team training and competitive programs provided by their NSO and seeks to relieve some of the financial pressures associated with preparing for and participating in international sport. The AAP financial assistance provides support to athletes in the form of a living and training allowance, plus tuition and supplementary AAP support. The living and training allowance is intended to offset some, but not all, of the living and training expenses athletes incur as a result of their involvement in high-performance sport, while tuition support is intended to help athletes obtain a post-secondary level education. The AAP is the only Sport Canada program that provides direct financial support to athletes.

Eligible Athletes who are approved for funding and are financially supported through the AAP are referred to as carded athletes. AAP support is also known as carding.

The AAP has three kinds of cards:

- Senior International Cards (SR1 (1<sup>st</sup> year) and SR2 Cards (2<sup>nd</sup> year))
  - Athletes who meet the International Criteria are eligible to be nominated by their NSO for two consecutive years; the first-year card is referred to as SR1; the second, SR2. Eligibility for an SR2 card is contingent on the athlete maintaining a training and competitive program approved by the NSO, on being re-nominated by the NSO, on signing an Athlete/NSO Agreement and completing an AAP Application Form for that year.
- Senior National Cards (SR Cards)
  - National Criteria identify athletes who have the potential to achieve International Criteria. Senior cards based on National Criteria are normally awarded for one year and are referred to as SR Cards.
  - An athlete is normally expected to improve each year to maintain a Senior Card based on the national criteria.
- Development Cards (D Cards)
  - Due to the low number of cards available, WCH does not nominate individuals for Developmental Cards.

## 1.2 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ATHLETES TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE AAP

- Athletes must have availability and commitment to represent Canada in major international competitions, including World Championships and Olympic Games (OG); participation in preparatory and annual training programs; and adherence to their Athletes/WCH agreement.
- The athlete must be a 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.
- The athlete, under the eligibility requirements of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) as it pertains to citizenship, must currently be eligible to represent Canada at major international events, including World Championships.
- Athletes and their coaches must be members in good standing with a Provincial / Territorial Sport Organization that is a member in good standing with WCH.

## 1.3 DOPING VIOLATIONS

Athletes must respect and comply with the Canadian Policy against Doping in Sport, as well as the Canadian Anti-Doping Program of the Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport (CCES), as a condition of funding under AAP. Athletes under a provisional suspension for violations of the WADA Code and/or the Canadian Anti-Doping Program may not be eligible for carding or may have their carding status revoked.

For more information on sanctions related to anti-doping, refer to section 12 of the Sport Canada's AAP Policies and Procedures:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/Canadian-heritage/services/funding/athleteassistance/policies-procedures.htm1#a13>

## 1.4 GENERAL INFORMATION

- On an annual basis, Sport Canada reviews the carding quotas for all sports. This may impact the number of cards allocated to weightlifting for any given year. We are committed to allocating all funding provided through the AAP program.
- The qualification period will extend over one calendar year every year (from January 1 to December 31) and the carding will be allocated for twelve (12) months, from January 1 to December 31.
- The attribution of cards will be done regardless of athlete gender (combined ranking men & women). However, a minimum of one athlete from each gender will be nominated for carding support, provided there is at least one athlete from each gender that meets the carding criteria.
- There will be a maximum of two (2) athletes nominated for senior cards (SR1, SR2, & SR), in each weight class.
- An athlete must compete in an AAP qualifying competition in each bodyweight category for which they wish to be considered for the AAP.
- To be nominated, the athlete must meet the senior international criteria, or the senior national criteria as described in the following sections.
- Appeals of an NSO's AAP nomination/re-nomination decision or of a NSO's recommendation to withdraw carding may be pursued only through the NSO's review process, which includes an application to the Sport Dispute Resolution Center of Canada (SCRCC). Appeals of AAP Decision made under Section 6.

(Applications for and Approval of Cards) or Section 11 (Withdrawal of Carding Status) may be pursued through the AAP Policies, Procedures document found [HERE](#)

## 2. CONDITIONS FOR CARDING

The top-ranked athletes from the list of designated international competitions will be considered for carding.

WCH will use the following procedure to identify the athletes eligible for consideration:

- For ranking and selection purposes, athlete rankings will be based on the average of their 2 highest totals achieved from the list of designated international competitions (Section 2.6), expressed as a percentage of the 2025 AAP Senior Markers (see appendix A), calculated to three decimal places.
- Rankings will be published in descending order from highest to lowest regardless of gender.

To be considered for nomination, athletes must achieve a minimum of 85% of the 2025 AAP Senior Marker.

If an athlete qualifies for carding in two bodyweight categories, WCH will use the latest performance which qualifies the athlete for carding to establish the category of the athlete. For example, if an athlete competed in two designated competitions in one weight class and two different designated competitions in another weight class, the most recent performance will be used to determine the weight class used toward the calculation of the athlete's ranking for AAP carding. Even if the higher percentage of marker was achieved in the other weight class, the most recent performance (if done in a different weight class) will be used for ranking.

In case of a tie in the same weight category, WCH will compare each athlete's best individual total from their average. If there is still a tie in the individual total, the athlete that achieved the total first will be ranked higher. In case of a tie between different weight categories, WCH will compare each athlete's best individual total's percentage of marker. The athlete with the higher percentage of marker will be ranked higher. If there is still a tie, the athlete that achieved it first will be ranked higher.

### 2.1 SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CARD (SR1/SR2):

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ATHLETES MUST ATTAIN THE FOLLOWING SPORT CANADA INTERNATIONAL CRITERIA TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CARD (SR1/SR2):

- Athletes must place in the top 8 **and** top half (1/2) of the athletes that record a total in their category at the 2025 IWF World Championships - Norway.
- Athletes must be in an Olympic weight category
- Athletes who meet international criteria may be recommended by WCH for two consecutive years. For the second year, athletes must continue to meet the conditions described above. Athletes should be continuously trying to improve their results with podium finishes at major events being a primary measure of success.
- Qualified athletes must also:
  - Be recommended by WCH
  - Ensure that a competition and training program approved by Sport Canada and WCH is followed
  - Sign the Athlete/ WCH agreement and complete an AAP form for the year concerned.
- Results used for qualification at the international level can only be from events that are on the program of the upcoming Olympic/Paralympic Games

## 2.2 SENIOR NATIONAL CARD (SR):

### ATHLETES MUST ATTAIN THE FOLLOWING APPROVED CRITERIA TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE SENIOR NATIONAL CARD (SR):

To be considered for nomination, athletes must achieve a minimum of 85% of the 2025 AAP Senior Marker at least once during the carding cycle. The athlete must compete in no fewer than two of the designated competitions listed in Section 2.6, as more specifically described therein.

Qualified athletes must also:

- Be recommended by WCH
- Ensure that a competition and training program approved by Sport Canada and WCH is followed
- Sign the Athlete/ WCH agreement and complete an AAP form for the year concerned.

## 2.3 NUMBER OF YEARS FOR THE SENIOR NATIONAL CARD

Athletes who have reached the IWF senior age may hold a senior national card (SR) for a maximum of 6 years. Athletes are expected to consistently demonstrate an improvement toward the required performances to obtain a senior international card each year.

To be eligible for a 7<sup>th</sup> year or more at this level, the athlete must meet the national Senior criteria and must place in the first half (top half) of her or his category at the Senior World Championships. The athlete must demonstrate an improvement toward the required performances to obtain a senior international card and be recommended by WCH.

To determine if the athlete has finished in the top half, the results of all athletes that record a total in their respective categories will be calculated. For example, if 24 athletes compete, and only 21 athletes have achieved a total in their respective categories, the athlete must place 10<sup>th</sup> or better in that category.

If an athlete does not participate or does not achieve the required rank at the Senior World Championships, the athlete must attain or exceed the minimum of 90% of the applicable AAP Senior Markers in all qualifying competitions in which they compete.

The number of years carded at senior national level (SR) when the athlete is of IWF junior age will not count in the 6-year maximum period referred to in 2.3, nor will the year carded at the C1 level.

## 2.4 PRIORITY IN THE ALLOCATION OF CARDS:

AAP Cards will be distributed according to the final athlete rankings at year end. Where an athlete achieves the SR1 Criteria and meets the minimum threshold as identified in this document for obtaining and maintaining an AAP card, they will be placed at the top of the list, regardless of their placement in the overall WCH rankings. AAP Cards will be allocated up to the maximum allowable budget provided by Sport Canada.

## 2.5 FAILURE TO MEET RENEWAL CRITERIA FOR HEALTH-RELATED REASONS

An Internationally carded athlete (SR1) who at the end of the carding cycle has not achieved the standard required for the renewal of carding status because of strictly and solely health-related reasons may be considered for re-nomination for the upcoming year provided the following conditions are met:

- the athlete has fulfilled all reasonable training and rehabilitation requirements aimed at a speedy return to full high-performance training and competition during the period of his or her injury, illness or pregnancy or is continuing a rehabilitation program approved by WCH;
- In the view of WCH, the athlete's failure to attain the applicable carding standards is strictly related to the injury, illness, or pregnancy;
- The athlete, provides to WCH in writing, a letter from a mutually agreed upon qualified physician or equivalent indicating the nature of the injury, and estimated timeline for return to high performance sport;
- WCH, based on its technical judgement and the information provided by a physician or equivalent, in the previous bullet, indicates in writing to Sport Canada the expectation that the athlete will achieve at least the minimum standards required for carding during the upcoming carding period;
- The athlete has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate his or her long-term commitment to high-performance training and competition goals, as well as his or her intention to pursue full high-performance training and competition throughout the carding period for which he or she wishes to be renewed despite not having met the carding criteria.

## 2.6 CONDITIONS TO OBTAIN AND MAINTAIN CARDING STATUS

In order to obtain consideration for carding in 2026 or maintain your 2025 card, an athlete must compete in two (2) international competitions in the same body weight category *and* the 2025 Canadian Senior Championships. The designated competitions to meet these criteria are outlined below. If a designated international competition takes place within 30 days of the 2025 Canadian Senior Championships, the athlete can opt out of participating at the 2025 Canadian Senior Championships and compete at the designated international competition instead. For clarity, an athlete *cannot* opt out of a 2<sup>nd</sup> designated international competition because they attended the 2025 Canadian Senior Championships.

The athlete will be ranked on their average total from either (a) their best 2 designated international competitions, or (b) 1 designated international competition and the 2025 Canadian Senior Championships. The 2 totals must come from the same weight category.

The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) announced new weight categories that will be implemented for IWF events effective June 1, 2025. The only international competitions that will be under the old weight categories are the 2025 IWF World Youth Championships and the 2025 IWF World Junior Championships. Totals from these competitions will count against the new markers in the following scenarios:

1. Athletes in either the w87+ or m109+ will use new markers in the w86+ and m110+;
2. Athletes can use the markers in the weight category above their current category, for example: an athlete that competes as an m81 can use the marker from the m88kg; and
3. Athletes can only use the marker in the weight category below their current weight category if they weigh-in and make weight in the new weight category, for example: an athlete that competes as a f59 can use the marker from the f58, provided that they weigh-in at 58.0 kg or less

The designated international competitions will include the following:

- 2025 Pan American Championships (Cartagena, Colombia)
- 2025 Pan American Junior Championships (Havana, Cuba)
- 2025 Pan American Youth Championships (San Luis Potosi, Mexico)
- 2025 IWF World Youth Championships (Lima, Peru)
- 2025 IWF World Junior Championships (Lima, Peru)
- 2025 IWF World Championships (Forde, Norway)
- 2025 Commonwealth, Youth, Junior and Senior Championships (Ahmedabad, India)
- 2025 Pan American Junior Games (Asuncion, Paraguay)

Each athlete is responsible to ensure that they are eligible to participate in, and that they qualify for, these designated international competitions. Athletes must also submit training plans per the criteria outlined in Appendix B

If these conditions are not met, WCH may recommend to Sport Canada the withdrawal of the athlete’s card status.

**APPENDIX A – 2025 Senior Markers (new weight categories)**

Senior Men	60kg	65kg	71kg	79kg	88kg	98kg	110kg	110+kg		
Marker	293	310	328	350	371	390	408	450		

Senior Women	48kg	53kg	58kg	63kg	69kg	77kg	86kg	86+kg		
Marker	186	200	213	225	237	251	263	295		



## APPENDIX B TRAINING PLANS

The athlete must provide the High-Performance Manager with an electronic copy of their annual training plan. This plan will include the following:

- monthly training plan for the carding period, with monthly reports to follow by email
- any adjustments made in case of injury or adjustments required because the athlete is unable to compete
- list of anticipated competitions

These documents must accompany the signed WCH Athlete Agreement. The athlete's coach must sign the monthly training report (Monthly Athlete Monitoring Form – WCH).

WCH will conduct ongoing and mid-season reviews of individual athlete plans and will confirm the athlete's commitment to the originally approved training and competition plan. If at any time during the AAP carding cycle an athlete does not provide the required training report by the dates indicated below or does not meet the minimum training and competition expectations as described in the WCH Athlete Agreement, WCH may take the following measures:

- 1) First breach of commitment: a written warning by the WCH President, with an e-mail sent to the coach. The warning will explain to the athlete what is wrong, how to rectify the situation, and the timelines to do so (typically within 2 weeks of delivery of the written warning).
- 2) Second breach of commitment or non-compliance the 1<sup>st</sup> warning: a second written warning. The second written warning will include what is wrong, how to rectify the situation, the timelines to do so typically within 2 weeks of delivery of the written warning). The written warning will also indicate the implications for not complying with the first warning. A copy of the written warning must be sent to the coach.
- 3) Non-compliance with second written warning: a final written warning. The final written warning will indicate that if within the 2 weeks of delivery of the final written warning the athlete does not comply with the requirements, the WCH will recommend to Sport Canada the withdrawal of the athlete's carding status. The WCH must send a copy of the final written warning to the athlete's coach.

All warnings, including verbal, will be documented in the athlete's file with WCH.