

LTA WHEELCHAIR ELITE PROGRAMME SELECTION POLICY 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy explains how players will be selected to the Wheelchair Performance Pathway (WCPP) Elite Programme for 2024. The following players are eligible to be considered:

- Male and female players who are achieving major tournament success and have the potential to win Grand Slam titles and Paralympic medals.

Players selected for the WCPP Elite Programme will be required to enter into a formal player contract with the LTA which will detail their grant and their responsibilities, commitments, and accountabilities (such as agreeing an Individual Development Plan (IDP), structuring daily training and planning annual schedules) to the LTA's WCPP Elite Programme.

2. CONSIDERATION FOR SELECTION (SHORTLISTING)

To be considered for selection, players must:

- a) meet the shortlisting ranking criteria (2.1), or
- b) meet the exceptional circumstances requirements (2.2) or
- c) be currently (2023) receiving support through the WCPP Elite Programme

And players must:

- d) meet the Eligibility Criteria set out below.

Eligibility criteria

Players are only eligible to be considered for selection onto the WCPP Elite Programme provided the following is true:

- i. He/she is eligible to compete for Great Britain at the Paralympic Games (i.e., is a British Passport holder and meets ITF Rules relating to Paralympic Games participation); and
- ii. He/she is not currently serving a suspension for a doping violation and/or a breach of the anticorruption rules*

*Where a player is serving such a suspension, but the suspension is due to end during the period for which selections are being made, the Selection Panel may, at its discretion, choose to consider the player for selection. Should the player be selected, they would only be part of the WCPP Elite Programme once their suspension has ended.

2.1 Shortlisting ranking criteria

Any players who have met the following singles ranking criteria at any point between Sunday 1 January 2023 and Monday 13 November 2023 will be considered for selection. These shortlisting targets have been established using multiple evidence sources to determine likely competitive performances at Grand Slams, Paralympic Games and Super Series level events.

Division	Shortlisting Criteria
Women's	7
Men's	7
Quads	7

All players who have met these criteria will be automatically considered for selection. If you do not wish to be considered, please email Chantal Cunningham (Chantal.cunningham@lta.org.uk) by 5pm on Thursday 16 November 2023.

For all key dates in this selection process, please see appendix 1.

2.2 Exceptional circumstances – Injury/illness

If a player has had a long-term injury / illness (minimum of 3 consecutive months) during 2023, or has missed a minimum of 3 consecutive months of the 2023 season, then they must supply in writing to the Wheelchair Tennis Operations Manager - WCPP (via email Chantal.Cunningham@lta.org.uk), by 5pm on Thursday 16 November 2023:

- Details of the injury / issue including the full period missed; and
- Medical / physio or other reports confirming the injury and / or reason for absence

The Head of Wheelchair Performance Pathway, and WCPP Head Coach (or their nominees), will then consider the evidence and impact of the injury or issue and decide whether this factor alone prevented the player from meeting the shortlisting targets. Evidence will include match observations, progress against a player's Individual Development Plan (IDP) and ranking progress in 2023. Where this is not available, match observations from the previous 12-24 months will be considered together with their ranking profile and ranking trajectory for their age and years in the sport prior to the period of absence.

If it is deemed to be the case that the impact of the injury or issue was the sole factor that prevented the player from meeting the shortlisting targets, then the player will be shortlisted due to exceptional circumstances. If not, then they will be notified accordingly. For the avoidance of doubt, players with exceptional circumstances do not need to have met the ranking targets. Players will be informed by Monday 20 November 2023 if they have or have not been shortlisted due to exceptional circumstances.

All shortlisted players will then be considered for selection by the Selection Panel.

3. THE SELECTION PROCESS

3.1 The Selection Panel

The Selection Panel will comprise of the Head of Wheelchair Performance Pathway and the following (or their nominees):

- WCPP Head Coach
- A WCPP National Coach

The Selection Panel may also have an independent professional wheelchair tennis expert (typically a leading coach, senior administrator, or former player). The Head of Wheelchair Performance Pathway will chair the Selection Panel. The Chair may nominate additional members of the LTA's Wheelchair Performance Pathway (WCPP) Team to the Selection Panel to provide further relevant expertise from time to time, but this person shall not have voting rights.

A member of the LTA's legal team may attend meetings of the Selection Panel to advise on procedural issues and adherence to the Policy but shall not have voting rights. A member of the LTA Performance Operations Team may also be invited by the Chair to attend to record the selection decisions.

At the start of the Selection Meeting the Selection Panel members will declare any potential conflicts of interest. The Chair will decide if there is a conflict of interest. If there is, that Selection Panel member must leave the meeting during the consideration of that player.

3.2 Selection criteria

All players shortlisted for the WCPP Elite Programme will be considered by the Selection Panel in a formal selection meeting during the week commencing 20 November 2023. Each player will be considered against two types of criteria:

- Type 1: – a set of ranking and results factors which suggest the player is on the right trajectory of winning Grand Slam titles and Paralympic medals and
- Type 2: – a set of development and performance-based criteria which take into account the player's overall development and performance profile and likelihood of continuing to achieve the WCPP Elite programme selection criteria.

There are two ways a player can meet the selection criteria:

- 1) The player achieves both the Type 1 criteria or
- 2) The player achieves one of the Type 1 criteria and a minimum of five of the Type 2 criteria.

Type 1:

Players must have achieved the Type 1 criteria at any point between 1 January 2023 and Monday 13 November 2023. Players will be assessed upon the following two performance outcome factors:

- A. Ranking – the player's current ranking and their career ranking trajectory over time indicate the player remains on track to maintain elite player status. The player's ranking

progress over time will be assessed against World ranking data of current and previous Grand Slam winners and Paralympic Medallists.

- B. Results – the player’s recent results (typically within the respective calendar year) against higher ranked opponents indicates likely future competitiveness at that level. The player’s results over the year (and in some cases, previous years) will be assessed to determine the likelihood of achieving greater consistency of performance at a higher level in the near future.

Type 2:

The following Type 2 criteria will be applied and therefore performances in relation to Top 7 players will be the primary factors for consideration:

- 1. First Contact / Starting the Point:** the player has the ability to consistently create pressure when serving and returning
- 2. Optimal Game style – Weapons:** the player has the ability to build pressure & create opportunities and has the ability to convert opportunities
- 3. Optimal Game style – Physical Attributes:** the player is maximising mobility and power to support “weapons” and court coverage and has the physical attributes and profile which positively impacts execution of their optimal game style
- 4. Matchplay Competitor:** the player has the ability, skills and behaviours to adapt and thrive in match play situations & the competition environment
- 5. Go Long:** the player has the ability to sustain high level performance in matches, through competitions and thrive on tour
- 6. Optimal Training:** the player has a consistent and optimal training and competitive programme, and the player is proactive and open to learning both in a self-directed way & with the support of their team

3.3 Using evidence and expert opinion to support decision making

The following sources of evidence and expert opinion will be used to inform the decision making during the selection meeting:

- Match reports captured by the LTA WCPP Team;
- Match footage and statistics from video captured by the LTA Performance Analysis Team, LTA WCPP Team, or other verified sources (e.g. ITF / IBM etc.);
- WCPP Head Coach and WCPP National Coaches expert judgement;
- Consideration of a ranking trajectory against WITTW model for Grand Slam success and Paralympic medallists, which establishes a level of probability that a player will reach a certain ranking in future based on their years in the sport, current age and ranking; and
- LTA Physical testing data and relevant match / training monitoring information.

In the case of a tie as to whether a particular criterion has been met, the Chair will have the casting vote.

3.4 Finalising numbers

If more players meet the selection criteria than there are places available and budget allows, a priority order will be applied to establish a rank order of candidates and the distribution of budget.

If players are tied on the number of criteria, they have met and there are more players than there are places (and budget) available the Chair will have the casting vote. In doing so, the Chair will consider, considering the evidence presented to and the deliberations of the Selection Panel and which players he or she believes are most likely to achieve the objectives of the WCPP Elite Programme.

3.5 Calculating the level of support

Once selection decisions have been reached, the Selection Panel will consider the level of financial grant and length of contract that will be offered to each successful player.

The level of the financial grant will take into account all the evidence presented to the Selection Panel with specific consideration being given to the probability of the player to win Grand Slams and Paralympic Medals based on current age, years in the sport and ranking, and the expert judgement of the WCPP Head Coach. In addition, consideration will also be given to the players training and competition plan (and commitment to this plan) and the overall WCPP budget. The level of support available may therefore only be confirmed after the player's IDP has been discussed and agreed. Based on all of the above, the level of support available may differ from player to player.

All selected players will be offered an initial 1-year term.

The Selection Panel may also set conditions and targets for each player on the WCPP Elite Programme as part of their Individual Development Plan (IDP). Progress against these will be reviewed and monitored within the quarterly IDP meetings and twice-yearly reviews to maintain their place on the WCPP Elite Programme. In addition, all agreements will be subject to annual review against agreed IDP targets.

3.6 Reselection and non-renewal of existing Elite players

At the end of each player's agreement period (normally November), each player will be formally reviewed by the Selection Panel in the selection meeting. A player will then either have their agreement renewed or not. In making this decision the Panel will be asked to consider:

1. The performance-based selection criteria as outlined in section 3.2; and
2. A player's progress against their IDP.

As per the player's contract, funding levels may be reviewed as part of this process.

4. RECORDING AND COMMUNICATION OF DECISION

Each decision to select or not to select will be recorded.

The Chair of the Selection Panel will make reasonable efforts to ensure that all shortlisted players are notified within one week of the conclusion of the selection meeting through the LTA WCPP Team (or their nominee).

The decisions that will be formally notified to athletes are:

- (i) Confirmation of selection or reselection onto the WCPP Elite Programme
- (ii) Confirmation that an existing WCPP Elite Programme player has not been selected
- (iii) Confirmation that a shortlisted player has not been selected

5. ELITE INDUCTION AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

5.1 Induction

The induction for all players will normally take place during December/January and is mandatory for all players. This will be a multi-disciplinary induction and will be led by the WCPP Team. This will clearly explain the relationship the LTA would like to have with the player and their support team for the duration of the player's involvement on the programme. It will also explain what players and their support teams should expect from the LTA WCPP Team as well as provide important information on areas such as safeguarding, wellbeing & player representation. Players are expected to attend the induction.

5.2 Individual Development Plan (IDP)

At the end of each year (normally December) each player, together with their team and an assigned LTA Wheelchair Performance Pathway National Coach, will be required to develop and agree an IDP with three clearly defined and detailed development goals and ranking targets for the following year. This will form the basis for allocating and finalising support, as well as tracking and monitoring progress during the year.

All players will then be expected to sign a player contract before any funding will be released. Players are not expected to have signed the agreement before attending the induction.

6. APPEALS

Shortlisted players who have not been selected by the Selection Panel are entitled to appeal against the Selection Panel's decision. Such an appeal is to be made in writing (with full reasons and supporting evidence) within 7 days of the applicant receiving his/her selection decision to the nominated member of the LTA Executive Team or their nominee (the Appeal Chair) but only on one or both of the following grounds:

- a) There has been a failure by the Selection Panel to follow this selection policy (i.e. there has been a procedural defect); and / or
- b) The decision has been reached on the basis of an error of fact.

The Appeal Chair can decide, based on the written appeal and any supporting written evidence provided, to either:

1. To set aside the Selection Panel's decision as it was based on an error of fact or procedurally flawed and remit the matter to the Selection Panel for reconsideration; or
2. To uphold the Selection Panel's decision.

The applicant will be informed of the appeal decision in writing.

Should a decision be set aside and be re-considered by the Selection Panel which has an effect on a selection decision taken in relation to another player, that decision in relation to the other player may also be re-considered and changed if necessary.

For the avoidance of doubt, players who are not shortlisted for any reason, including exceptional circumstances (as outlined in 2.2) are not eligible to appeal.

7. CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS TO THIS PROCEDURE

The LTA will be entitled to amend this procedure from time to time and such amendments will take effect from the first date of publication of the complete amended procedure on the LTA website.

Appendix 1 – Key dates in WCPP Elite Programme Selection process (all 2022)*

Date	Milestone
Between 1 January – 13 November	Players need to achieve the shortlisting ranking criteria during this period.
Thursday 16 November @ 5pm	Deadline for players with exceptional circumstances to inform the Performance Operations Manager via e-mail (Chantal.cunningham@lta.org.uk) (as outlined in section 2.2)
Thursday 16 November @ 5pm	Deadline for players to email Chantal.cunningham@lta.org.uk if they meet the shortlisting criteria but do not wish to be considered.
Monday 20 November	Players will be informed by this date if they have or have not been shortlisted due to exceptional circumstances
Week commencing 20 November	WCPP Elite Programme selection meeting
Within one week of the selection meeting	WCPP Elite Programme communication of decisions
Within one week of the selection decisions being communicated	Deadline for any appeals to be submitted to Chantal.cunningham@lta.org.uk
TBC	WCPP Elite Programme player induction (NTC)

* Please note all dates are provisional and remain subject to change