



American Canoe Association Canoe Sprint Athlete Selection Procedures - 2026 Pan American Championships

Date of current version: February 1, 2026

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

These procedures outline the pathway for selection to the USA Senior Canoe Sprint Team for the 2026 Pan American Championships, which is the qualifying event for the 2027 Pan American Games.

The focus of National Team Selection is to field the best possible team to maximize our chances at qualification of quota spots and deliver strong performances leading into and at the 2027 Pan American Games.

Selections will align with and support the targeted events and boat class priorities identified for 2027 and aims to support the longer-term goals of the sprint strategy to 2028.

In cases where senior athletes or crews are also eligible for U23 teams, the Selection Committee reserves the right to prioritize competitions and selections to support appropriate periodization and long-term performance planning.

SECTION 2: ATHLETE REQUIREMENTS

1. Nationality/Passports Requirements:

- 1.1. Have a valid USA passport at the time of selection that does not expire for six months after the conclusion of the Event.

2. ICF requirements:

- 2.1. Abide by the rules of the International Canoe Federation (ICF).
 - 2.2. Comply with all rules and policies implemented by the Local Organizing Committee.
 - 2.3. Each athlete must meet ICF eligibility rules outlined in the ICF Canoe Sprint Competition Rules section 1.3 found here:
https://www.canoeicf.com/sites/default/files/2025_icf_canoe_sprint_competition_rules_final.pdf
 - 2.4. Each athlete must be at least 15-years old by December 31st, 2026.
3. ACA Requirements:
- 3.1. Athlete must have an active ACA competition membership.
 - 3.2. Athlete must be in good standing with ACA at the time of the National Trials and all National and International competitions.
 - 3.3. Comply with the ACA Athlete Agreement.
 - 3.4. Comply with the ACA Athlete Code of Conduct.
(<https://americancanoe.org/athletecodeofconduct/>)
 - 3.5. Comply with the ACA SafeSport Policy ([LINK](#)) and the [U.S. Center for SafeSport Code](#) including education and training requirements.
 - 3.6. Any athlete age 18 or older is required to undergo a background screening in accordance with the current ACA Background Check Policy.
 - 3.7. Athlete does not have an active suspension from the U.S. Center for SafeSport that would make the Athlete ineligible to participate in the Event.
 - 3.8. Athlete does not have an active sanction for an anti-doping rule/policy violation that would make the Athlete ineligible to participate in the Event.
 - 3.9. Meet all health and safety protocols, to include vaccine requirements and/or testing requirements set forth by the government, local laws, USOPC, ICF and/or the Local Organizing Committee.
4. Anti-Doping Requirements:
- 4.1. Agree to be bound by and adhere to all WADA, ICF, USADA and USOPC antidoping protocols, policies and procedures, as applicable. This includes participation in Out-of-Competition Testing and an agreement to be bound to the results management authority of the WADA, ICF, USADA, or other Anti-Doping Organization as applicable.

SECTION 3: EVALUATIVE EVENTS

1. Selection Events

1.1. ACA Sprint National Trial, 16 – 17 April 2026, Chula Vista, CA

1.2. Team Boat Seat Racing Trial, 18 – 19 April 2025, Chula Vista, CA

2. Qualification for the events listed in 1.1 and 1.2.

2.1. The 2026 USA Sprint National Team Trials are open to all ACA members meeting the requirements stated in Section 2.

2.2. Athletes will be selected for the Team Boat Seat Racing Trial (days 3 and 4 of the trials) based on performances during the K1/C1 and K2/C2 racing on days 1 and 2. The selection system is described in Section 4.2.

SECTION 4: SELECTION PROCESS

4.1. Competition events:

The selection criteria are intended for selection of teams representing the USA / ACA at the following events:

- 2026 Pan American Championships (July 6-7)

4.2. Selection Process

Structure of the ACA National Sprint Trial

Day 1 and 2 – K1/C1 and K2/C2 events:

Women's Canoe - C1 200, C1 500, C2 500

Women's Kayak – K1 200, K1 500, K2 500

Men's Canoe – C1 200, C1 500, C1 1000, C2 500

Men's Kayak – K1 200, K1 500, K1 1000, K2 500

Day 3 & 4 - Team Boat Seat Racing

Men's and Women's K4

4.2.1. Kayak Team Selection Process

Women's K1 Selection Procedure

K1 500m: The winner of the Women's K1 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

K1 200m: The winner of the Women's K1 200m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

K1 1000m: The winner of the Women's K1 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

Men's K1 Selection Procedure

K1 1000m: The winner of the Men's K1 1000m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

K1 500m: The winner of the Men's K1 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

K1 200m: The winner of the Men's K1 200m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

Women's K2 Selection Procedure

K2 500m: The winner of the Women's K2 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

Men's K2 Selection Procedure

K2 500m: The winner of the Men's K2 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

K4 Selection Procedure

The same process will be followed for men's kayak and women's kayak.

The top 2 K2's will be nominated to the team boat pool.

The top K1's in the K1 500m event will be nominated to the team boat pool to a maximum of 6 paddlers in the pool

If any athlete in either of the 2 qualifying K2s declines, the next best placed K2 will be included.

If any K1 paddler declines to be a part of the team boat pool, the next best placed K1 will be included, to have a maximum of 6 paddlers in the pool.

If there are only 4 athletes available, then those 4 will be nominated to paddle K4. If less than 4 athletes are available, then there will be no K4 racing at the competition events.

Seat Trials Procedure:

The Sprint High Performance Director of the ACA will choose a coach to be the Kayak Selection Lead. The Kayak Selection Lead will facilitate the seat racing and selection process. While the Sprint High Performance Director will invite additional coaches to form the Panel to collaborate, provide insight and support the selection process, the Kayak Selection Lead will make the final decisions on athlete combinations and seat orders.

There will be 3-4 Seat Trials which will be spaced 2 hours apart; all time trials will be videoed and timed. Wind and weather conditions, and feedback from the athletes will be noted.

Seat Trial #1: Top 2 K2's from the K2 500m

Seat Trial #2: Top 4 K1's from the K1 500m

Seat Trial #3: Top K2 and 2 K1's

Seat Trial #4: Coach's discretion

At the conclusion of seat racing, the coaching panel will use the time differences between the boats as well as observations of the athletes' strengths and compatibilities to determine which K4 combination is fastest. The Kayak Selection Lead will provide a written recommendation to the Selection Committee containing the seat racing procedure that was used, the complete results of the seat racing and the identified strengths and compatibility of the athletes. They will present the K4 combination they determine to be the fastest. This boat is the provisional nomination for the K4 events at Senior level races in 2026. They will also provide the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fastest combinations, supported by similar reasoning and data. Upon approval by the Selection Committee, the provisional K4 will become the official nomination and will be given the right of first refusal to race the K4 event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

4.2.2. Replacement of Kayak Athletes

The replacement procedure will be the same for Men's and Women's kayak.

Replacement of Athletes to the K1 Events

- If the athlete(s) selected to race the K1 200m, K1 500m or K1 1000m declines the opportunity to race at any of the regattas, the next ranked athlete in the qualification event will be given the opportunity to race if they are within 5% of the winner of the corresponding event at the trials.
- If the next ranked athlete is greater than 5%, no one will compete in that event.

Replacement of Athletes to the K2 Events

- If the K2 declines the opportunity to race at the Pan American Championship, the next ranked boat in the qualification event will be given the opportunity to race.

Replacement of Athletes to the Selected K4

- If an athlete in the selected K4 declines their position, the next fastest combination will be selected for that event.
- If fewer than four athletes in the team boat pool accept the K4 nomination, there will not be a K4 entered at that event.

4.2.3. Canoe Team Selection Process

Women's C1 Selection Procedure

C1 200m: The winner of the Women's C1 200m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

C1 500m: The winner of the Women's C1 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

Men's C1 Selection Procedure

C1 1000m: The winner of the Men's C1 1000m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

C1 500m: The winner of the Men's C1 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

C1 200m: The winner of the Men's C1 200m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

Women's C2 Selection Procedure

C2 500m: The winner of the Women's C2 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

Men's C2 Selection Procedure

C2 500m: The winner of the Men's C2 500m will be given the opportunity to race the event at the 2026 Pan American Championships.

4.2.4. Replacement of Canoe Athletes

The replacement procedure will be the same for Men's and Women's canoe.

Replacement of Athletes to the C1 Events

- If the athlete selected to race the C1 200m, C1 500m, or C1 1000m declines the opportunity to race, the next ranked athlete in the qualification event will be given the opportunity to.

Replacement of Athletes to the C2 Events

- If the C2 declines the opportunity to race at any of the regattas, the next ranked boat in the qualification event will be given the opportunity to race.

Section 5: Discretionary Criteria to Nominate Athletes

5.1 Rationale for utilizing discretionary selection:

Discretionary criteria will be used if there is a situation where an athlete is injured or ill and cannot take part in the 2026 National Sprint Trials.

5.2 Define the discretionary criteria to be used:

If an athlete is injured or ill at the time of the 2026 National Sprint Trial, the athlete will be considered for the team if he/she meets the following criteria:

- The athlete qualified for the A Final of the 2025 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships
- They present a medical note signed by a licensed personal physician explaining the illness / injury keeping them from competing at the National Trial

5.3 Selection Committee

The committee that will be responsible for making discretionary selections or other decisions and recommendations directly impacting athletes in the selection process.

Committee Name: Canoe Sprint World Championships Selection Committee

- ACA Executive Director
- ACA Sprint High Performance Director
- Athlete Representative

SECTION 6: MANDATORY TRAINING AND/OR COMPETITION

Athletes shall be notified of all National Team training camps and/or competitions in April, 2026.

While waivers for mandatory training will not be unreasonably withheld, all athletes should arrange for appropriate time off from school, work or other obligations in advance of all mandatory training. Waivers will primarily be granted for injury or other similar incapacity or for a personal/family emergency. Requests for a waiver must be submitted in writing to the Sprint High Performance Director as far in advance as possible. A medical waiver is required to be signed by a licensed personal physician.

SECTION 7: DATE OF TEAM NOMINATION

The Nomination of the USA National Team Athletes will occur directly after the final race of the 2026 Team Boat Seat Racing Trials.

Athletes will accept their nomination by signing the ACA National Team Athlete Agreement and paying their deposit by (date TBD).

SECTION 8: REMOVAL OF ATHLETES FROM THE TEAM

NGB Jurisdiction

- a. An athlete who is nominated to the Team may be removed for any of the following reasons, as determined by NGB:
 - i. Voluntary withdrawal. Athlete submits a written letter to the NGB CEO or Sprint High-Performance Director requesting to voluntarily withdraw from the Team.
 - ii. Injury or illness. A physician (or medical staff) approved by NGB provides certification that the Athlete has a debilitating condition. If Athlete refuses to provide verification of their illness or injury by a physician (or medical staff), their injury will be assumed to be debilitating, and they may be removed from the Team.
 - iii. Failure to participate. Athlete does not participate in all Mandatory Training and/or Competition as defined in these procedures.
 - iv. Code of Conduct Violation. Athlete violates the NGB Code of Conduct: <https://americancanoe.org/athletetcodeofconduct/>
 - v. Athlete Agreement. Athlete violates a term in their signed NGB Athlete Agreement.
 - vi. Non-compliance. Athlete does not meet the athlete eligibility requirements listed in Section 2 of these selection procedures.

- b. An Athlete may be removed as a nominee to the Team or from the Team if found to have violated WADA, ICF, USADA and/or, the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code and the NGB SafeSport Policy, as applicable.

SECTION 9: REPLACEMENT OF ATHLETES

9.1 Should a replacement be necessary, the procedures outlined in Section 4.2.2 will be used to nominate a replacement athlete in a kayak event, and Section 4.2.4 will be used to nominate a replacement athlete in a canoe event

9.2 All replacement athletes must meet all requirements listed in Section 2.

SECTION 10: RIGHT TO A HEARING

An athlete who is removed from the Team has the right to a hearing per the NGB's complaint procedures (<https://americancanoe.org/grievance-process/>) and the USOPC Bylaws (applies only for a Protected Competition), Section 9 (<https://www.usopc.org/governance/dispute-resolution>).

SECTION 11: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The following documents are required to be signed by an athlete as a condition of nomination to the Event:

- [NGB Code of Conduct](#)
- NGB Athlete Agreement

SECTION 12: DISCLAIMERS

These procedures are based on ICF rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the selection procedures caused by a change in ICF rules and regulations, or COPAC event rules and criteria will be distributed to the affected athletes immediately. The selection criteria are based on the latest information available to NGB, if any new information emerges that has a change to the competition program, these selection procedures may require revisions.

However, the selection criteria are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency. If

any force of nature, pandemic, or force majeure, should cause the alteration or cancellation of any of the selection events listed in this document, these selection procedures may require revisions.

SECTION 13: QUESTIONS REGARDING ATHLETE SELECTION PROCEDURES

NGB

Athletes may contact the individuals listed below for information about these selection procedures

Name: Michele Eray

Position: Sprint High Performance Director

Email: meray@americancanoe.org

Name: Casey Eichfield

Position: Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative

Email: caseyeichfeld@gmail.com

ATHLETE OMBUDS

The Team USA Athlete Ombuds serves as a safe, independent, confidential place for Team USA Athletes to seek advice about any sport-related rule, policy, or process; how to navigate raising or responding to concerns; or access legal and mental health resources.

Team USA Athletes may contact the Athlete Ombuds:

PHONE: (719) 866-5000

EMAIL: ombudsman@usathlete.org

WEBSITE: usathlete.org

SECTION 14: GRIEVANCES

The NGB Grievance Procedures can be found here: [ACA Grievance Policy](#)

Section 9 of the USOPC Bylaws provides a process for an athlete to file a complaint with the USOPC against an NGB alleging that he or she has been denied, or threatened to be denied, with the opportunity to participate in a Protected Competition, as defined in the USOPC bylaws. Additional information on how to file a complaint can be found here: <https://www.usopc.org/governance/dispute-resolution>.

SECTION 15: NON-RETALIATION

The USOPC and NGB have zero tolerance for retaliation against people who make good faith reports of potential ethical, policy, or legal violations, or who cooperate with investigations of those reports. That means no USOPC or NGB staff, Board or Committee member, or volunteer may threaten, harass, discriminate against, or take any negative employment or related action (e.g., discharge, demotion, suspension, negative review) on that basis.

SECTION 16: DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL & CERTIFICATION OF SELECTION PROCEDURES

The following committee of individuals developed these selection procedures.

NAME	ROLE
Mark Parrish	Sprint Competition Committee - Chair
Anuar Akchurin	Sprint Competition Committee - Athlete Representative
Greg Barton	Sprint Competition Committee – Vice Chair, Athlete Representative
Lia Sowers	Sprint Competition Committee - Athlete Representative
Brian Ecker	Sprint Competition Committee
Michele Eray	HP Director
Joeseeph Harper	Head Canoe Coach

Jerzy Dziadkowiec	Men's Kayak Coach
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The following individual approved these selection procedures and through their signature, certifies that the procedures comply with the standards and criteria set by the ICF. The following individual further certifies that the information provided herein regarding Athlete Selection Procedures represents the method approved by the NGB and that these selection procedures will be posted on the NGB's website.

POSITION	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
ACA Chief Executive Officer	Beth Spilman	<i>Beth Spilman</i>	3/5/26

The following individual affirms that they have read and understand the selection procedures.

POSITION	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Team USA Athletes Commission Representative*	Casey Eichfield	<i>Casey Eichfield</i>	3/5/26

* If the Team USA Athletes' Commission Representatives have delegated authority to another 10 Year Athlete Representative to sign the Selection Procedures, attach a letter from the Team USA AC Representative indicating the reason they have delegated authority.

* Signature by the Athlete Representative constitutes that they have read and understand the Selection Procedures. If the Athlete Representative reads and does not agree with the Athlete Selection Procedures being submitted by the NGB, they may submit those reasons in writing to their USOPC Sport Performance Team.

* If, for some reason, a sport does not have an elected Team USA AC Representative, the NGB must designate a 10 Year Athlete from that sport to review and sign the Selection Procedures.

Revision History

Date	Revisions
Month Date, Year	Original document published

APPENDIX A – COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

AAC – Athletes’ Advisory Council

AC – Athletes’ Commission

Act or TSOASA – Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act

APC – Americas Paralympic Committee

CAS – Court of Arbitration for Sport

Center or CSS – U.S. Center for SafeSport

CF – Continental Federation

IMS – Internally Managed Sport (sport managed by the USOPC)

IOC – International Olympic Committee

IPC – International Paralympic Committee

IF – International Federation

LOC – Local Organizing Committee

NGB – National Governing Body

NOC – National Olympic Committee

NPC – National Paralympic Committee

OCOG – Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games. The OCOG refers to the Organizing Committee of the Paralympic Games as well.

PAG – Pan American Games

Panam Sports or PASO – Pan American Sports Organization

PPAG – Parapan American Games

PSO – Paralympic Sport Organization

Team USA AC – Team USA Athletes’ Commission (formerly USOPC AAC)

USADA – United States Anti-Doping Agency

WADA – World Anti-Doping Agency

APPENDIX B – GLOSSARY

Contingency means a future event or circumstance which is possible but cannot be predicted with certainty.

Delegation Event means the Olympic Games, the Olympic Winter Games, the Paralympic Games, the Paralympic Winter Games, the Pan American Games, and the Parapan American Games.

Force Majeure means an event or effect that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled (e.g., hurricane, tornado, etc.).

Grievance Procedures means the process that enables an athlete to file a complaint with the NGB or USOPC.

Jurisdiction means the power or authority to make decisions and judgments.

Nominated means an athlete, coach or staff member whose name has been submitted by the Selection Committee to the NGB.

Protected Competition means a Delegation Event or a Qualifying Competition.

Qualifying Competition means either of the following:

- i. **NGB Qualifying Competition:** Any competition or activity organized or approved by the NGB where the athlete's performance or results are considered in the published selection criteria to represent the United States in a Delegation Event.

- ii. **International Qualifying Competition:** Any international sport competition where (i) athletes represent the United States against athletes representing other nations, (ii) the NGB officially designates entrants, as required by the competition organizers, and (iii) athlete results or performance are included in the published criteria to qualify, or be selected, to represent the United States in a Delegation Event.

Selected means an athlete, coach or staff member whose name has been submitted by the NGB to the LOC at the final submission date, as determined by the LOC.

APPENDIX C – ATHLETE RESOURCES

ATHLETE OMBUDS

The Team USA Athlete Ombuds serves as a safe, independent, confidential place for Team USA Athletes to seek advice about any sport-related rule, policy, or process; how to navigate raising or responding to concerns; or access legal and mental health resources.

Team USA Athletes may contact the Athlete Ombuds:

PHONE: (719) 866-5000

EMAIL: ombudsman@usathlete.org

WEBSITE: usathlete.org

SafeSport Helpline

The SafeSport Helpline provides crisis intervention, referrals, and emotional support specifically designed for athletes, staff, and other SafeSport participants affected by sexual violence. Through this service, support specialists provide live, confidential, one-on-one support that is available 24/7. Individuals can call the Helpline at 866-200-0796 or visit www.safesporthehelpline.org.

TEAM USA ATHLETES' COMMISSION (Team USA AC) *(Formerly Athletes' Advisory Council)*

The Team USA AC is responsible for broadening communication between the USOPC and active athletes and serves as a source of input and advice to the USOPC Board of Directors.

WEBSITE: www.usopc.org/teamusa-athletes-commission

TEAM USA MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

For those in need of mental health support, USOPC Psychological Services is available at psychservices@usopc.org, or you can connect with a licensed mental health provider 24/7 through the USOPC Psychological Services Support Line at 719-866-2255. You can also visit <https://www.usopc.org/mental-health> for information about all available resources or complete our referral link at go.teamusa.org/referrals to get connected.

USOPC DISPUTE RESOLUTION UNIT (DRU)

For Protected Competitions, USOPC's DRU oversees the administration of dispute resolution services to athletes and other members of NGBs for grievances under the USOPC's jurisdiction to ensure the complaints are heard in a timely and fair manner. For more information about this process, please visit the [dispute resolution website](#).

USOPC ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

USOPC's Ethics and Compliance team is responsible for ensuring the USOPC and NGBs comply with the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, their own bylaws and policies, and any other applicable laws or regulations. Any individual may report concerns confidentially, or anonymously, online using the [USOPC Integrity Portal](#) or individuals may call the USOPC Integrity Hotline at 1-877-404-9935 to report their concern over the phone.

USOPC SECURITY AND ATHLETE SAFETY REPORTING PORTAL

Athletes can report an incident of emotional, physical, or sexual misconduct, a violation of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) or a general security incident or concern through the [Safety Reporting Portal](#). Athletes may also report to the USOPC over the phone at 719-866-3869.