

Canoeing Ireland



Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross Selection Policy

2026

All Ages

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1. Purpose

The Purpose of this selection policy is to outline the procedures for the selection of the best canoe slalom and kayak cross athletes to represent Ireland at the ICF World championships and World cups and ECA championships in 2026 for juniors and seniors. The selection policy is designed to allow athletes to maximize preparations and performances.

Canoeing Ireland has traditionally selected teams through a race selection series, ranking individuals based on their performance at specific points in the season using a points or percentage system. Looking ahead, the ICF propose that Olympic quota selection races be aligned with a number of ICF ranking events. To prepare for these changes, Canoeing Ireland is exploring the integration of the ICF World Ranking list and the LA28 Olympic Games Qualification system into its selection criteria, and this may impact on the selection of the 2027 team.

The 2026 CSL selection policy will support optimal performance delivery at international events through a robust system that athletes can benchmark their progress on. This 2026 CSL selection policy has been developed by the CSL/CSLX coaches, chaired by the Canoeing Ireland Performance Director (PPD). It has been ratified by the Canoeing Ireland CEO, HPU and the Board of Directors.

The final policy will be published before 16th January 2026.

2. Athlete Eligibility

To be eligible to compete for Ireland, athletes must meet and maintain for the duration of the 2026 competition season the following athlete eligibility criteria:

1. Be a current registered member of Canoeing Ireland who is eligible to represent Ireland at ICF CSL / CSLX events in accordance with ICF rules and have no outstanding debt to Canoeing Ireland or any of its technical committees.
2. Hold an Irish passport or be eligible to hold an Irish passport.
3. Is not under a doping violation investigation or serving a suspension/sanction for a doping violation.
4. Has attended the 2026 Canoeing Ireland Anti-Doping education course.
5. Is fit to perform to the best of their ability.
6. Has signed the athlete agreement and the subsequent athlete contract.

3. The Key Stakeholders and process outline

3.1 The Performance and Pathways Director (PPD) and the High-performance pathway representative are responsible for the development of selection policies.

3.2 Consultation - Athletes will be consulted, and their input sought on the first and final draft of the selection policy prior to publishing.

3.3 Oversight - The CEO, HPU and the Board of Canoeing Ireland will all have oversight of the CSL Selection Policy for 2026. The Board will have ultimate authority in approving the CSL Selection Policy for publication.

4. Applications

A process for online registration will be developed and published on the Canoeing Ireland website and official Canoeing Ireland social media channels. It will be hosted on the Canoeing Ireland Eventmaster site.

Athlete data (personal information, medical information) will be managed securely and Confidentially, under GDPR rules and regulations.

It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to complete their registration before the published closing date. Late entries will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Only athletes who register on or before the closing date will be allowed to compete in the selection event.

All paddlers registering to compete in CSLX must register and compete in CSL selection, completing two runs, while all paddlers competing in CSL selection, must complete two runs in CSLX.

5. Terms & Conditions

- a) Previous selection policies or criteria can have no bearing on this 2026 selection policy.
- b) No athlete can be considered for selection for the 2026 Irish CSL/ CSLX team if they do not meet and maintain the athlete eligibility criteria set out in section 2 above.
- c) An athlete who for any reason, fails to maintain eligibility may be removed from the 2026 Irish CSL / CSLX team. Eligibility issues will be communicated in the first instance by the PPD. Any athlete who has been removed from the 2026 Irish CSL / CSLX team will be replaced by the next ranked athlete, if applicable.
- d) Athletes for all major international events must comply with the International Canoe Federation (ICF) Rules and European Canoe Association (ECA) Rules. Entry to ICF and ECA events is restricted to members of the National Governing Bodies affiliated to the ICF and the ECA. In Ireland, the affiliated National Governing Body is Canoeing Ireland.
- e) The selection of an athlete for inclusion on the 2026 Irish CSL/ CSLX team shall be confirmed to that athlete in writing by the PPD within 7 days of the official team being agreed on and all appeals, if any, have concluded.
- f) If an athlete's selection is made subject to that athlete meeting further conditions, such further conditions will be communicated as soon as possible to the athlete.
- g) All entries of Irish CSL and CSLX athletes to events must be made through the Canoeing Ireland office following the selection of athletes pursuant to the 2026 selection policy.
- h) Proposals to amend this 2026 selection policy may be put forward if amendments are necessary and such amendments are determined to be in the best interest of athletes and Canoeing Ireland. Proposals to amend this policy will be submitted to the PPD. All proposed amendments must be ratified by the Canoeing Ireland CEO in the first instance and approved by the HPU and Board. All final amendments will be clearly identified and will be binding on all athletes.
- i) Canoeing Ireland reserves the right to deselect and suspend any athlete who is under investigation for disciplinary offences under Canoeing Ireland /ICF rules. Any athlete who is

serving an active sanction arising from a disciplinary matter will not be eligible for team membership. This includes doping offences.

6. The 2026 CSL Selection Process

6.1 Pre-Selection – CSL

No pre-selection for 2026.

6.2 2026 CSL Selection policy

6.2.1 Team size and categories

A representative team of up to 3 boats per class plus named non travelling reserves - C1M, C1W, K1M, K1W in CSL will be selected in senior, under 23 and junior (18) age categories will be named, subject to performance standards being met.

6.2.2 Selection race dates

The selection weekend will take place at Lucan on 18 / 19 April 2026, subject to suitable water levels.
Reserve venue – Clonmel.

6.2.3 Reserve date

The reserve date for senior / under 23 / junior selection will be 25/26 April 2026. Venue – Lucan.
Reserve venue – Clonmel.

6.2.4 Race format

The race format will be:

Day one (18.04.26) – course one: Race one – single counting run total, Race two – single counting run total.

Day two (19.04.26) – course two: Race three – single counting run total.

6.2.5 Ranking list

There will be a single ranking list for Senior / under 23 athletes, and a single ranking list for Junior athletes. It will be based on the best 2 from 3 results, with points available from each race as follows (1st = 30 points, 2nd = 27, 3rd = 25, 4th = 23, 5th=22, 6th = 21, 7th = 20 etc). A maximum of 60 points is available from the series. The 3rd race will act as a tie break. In the event of a further tie break being required, aggregate scores will be calculated from the three races.

6.2.6 Race cancellation

In the event of day, one being cancelled – two races will be run on day two, with both runs counting.
In the event of day two being cancelled – two races will count from day one, with both runs counting.

If both days are cancelled the race will be held on 25/26 April.

6.2.7 Performance criteria

Athletes will be required to attain a performance standard at one of the selection races, to be automatically selected for the 2026 teams. Athletes not attaining a performance standard can be selected using discretion by the HP selection panel.

Senior / Under 23

Performance standards will be based on the percentage of the fastest male (K1M / C1M) or female (K1W / C1W) boat at each race.

Under 23 / 22 / 21 age paddlers – percentages must be attained for automatic selection. If percentages are not gained by these athletes, under 20's can be selected for unfilled places at the discretion of the HP panel.

Juniors – Performance percentages will need to be attained by individuals for automatic selection for the World championships. If no percentage is gained, selection to this event is at the discretion of HP panel.

For selection to the senior and junior European championships, the 1st boat will be selected in each class (pending attainment of a minimum standard of performance at the selection series defined by the HP panel at the post-selection meeting), with other boats being selected pending attainment of performance standards / discretion of HP panel.

6.2.8 Performance standards

Performance percentages are detailed in Table 1 (see appendix).

6.2.9 Unfilled places

Unfilled places on senior / under 23 teams can be filled from the CSL ICF ranking list (2025 – 5, based on ICF ranking list), at discretion of HP panel.

6.2.10 CSL participation

All paddlers competing in CSL must register and complete two runs in CSLX selection races.

6.2.11 The selection of teams

Following completion of the selection weekend, the HP selection panel will convene to select the teams using the ranking list from selection series:

2026 Senior team (up to 3 boats per class). The senior team will be selected for World cup 1, 2 and 3 from the ranking list at selection.

Athletes will confirm their place on the World championship team with attainment of a top 30 result at World cup 1,2 or 3. Unfilled places will be filled at the discretion of the HP panel, using the ranking from the 2026 selection series.

The team for World cup 4,5 and the European championships will comprise of: Senior athletes who have attained a top 30 place at senior WC 1,2,3 or World Championships.

If places remain unfilled, they can be taken up, in order by:

Under 23 athletes who have attained a top 12 finish at the World or European under 23 Championships,

Under 18 athletes who have attained a top 12 finish at the World or European under 18 Championships and

Athletes nominated by the HP panel, using the senior ranking list from the 2026 selection series.

In the event of more paddlers being eligible for these races than places in the class, the ranking of the 2026 senior selection series will be used to rank the places on the teams for World cup 4, 5 and the European championships.

2026 Under 23 team (up to 3 boats per class)

The under 23 team will compete at the under 23 World and European championships.

2026 Junior 18 team (up to 3 boats per class)

The under 18 team will compete at the junior World and European championships.

6.3 2027 team selection

The LA 2028 Olympic qualification system is currently being developed. It is likely that individual paddlers will be required to score points across the 2026 and 2027 seasons. In this case Canoeing Ireland reserve the right to preselect paddlers who score more than a defined number (to be confirmed prior to the commencement of the LA28 OQS race series) of points at an Olympic quota qualifying race in the 2026 season to be selected for the 2027 team.

6.4 Annual governance review

Following selection, and delivery of the major races, a meeting will take place to review the selection process, to consider improvements and ensure transparency.

7. The 2026 CSLX Selection Process

7.1 Pre-Selection - CSLX

No pre-selection for 2026.

2026 CSLX Selection policy

7.2.1 Team size and categories

A representative team of up to 3 boats per class plus named non travelling reserves - K1M and K1W in CSLX will be selected in senior, under 23 and junior (18) age categories will be named, subject to performance standards being met.

7.2.2 Selection race dates

The selection weekend will take place at Lucan on 18 / 19 April 2026, subject to suitable water levels. Reserve venue – Clonmel.

7.2.3 Reserve dates

The reserve date for senior / under 23 selections will be 25/26 April 2026.

7.2.4 Race format

The race format will be:

19.04.26.

Race one – single run time trial,

Race two – single run time trial.

7.2.5 Ranking list

There will be a single ranking list for Senior / under 23 athletes, and a single ranking list for Junior athletes. It will be based on the best result counting from an individual's runs, The 2nd (non-counting) run will act as a tie break.

7.2.6 Race cancellation

In the event of both races being cancelled, the races will be run over the weekend 25 / 26 April 2026.

7.2.7 Performance criteria

Athletes will be required to attain a performance standard at one of the selection races, to be automatically selected for the 2026 teams. Athletes not attaining a performance standard can be selected using discretion by the HP selection panel.

Senior / Under 23

Performance standards will be based on the percentage of the fastest male (K1M) or female (K1W) boat at each race.

Under 23 / 22 / 21 age paddlers – percentages must be attained for automatic selection. If percentages are not gained by these athletes, under 20's can be selected for unfilled places at the discretion of the HP panel.

Juniors – The first boat in each class pending Performance percentages will need to be attained by individuals for automatic selection for the World championships. If no percentage is gained, selection to this event is at the discretion of HP panel.

7.2.8 Performance standards

Performance percentages are detailed in Table 2 (see appendix).

7.2.9 Unfilled places

Unfilled places on senior / under 23 teams can be filled from ICF ranking list (2025 – 5 X, based on ICF ranking list), at discretion of HP panel. Unfilled places on the junior teams can be filled from the CSL 2026 kayak selection ranking list, at the discretion of HP panel.

7.2.10 CSLX participation

All CSLX paddlers must compete in CSL selection, completing two runs.

7.2.11 The selection of teams

Following completion of the selection weekend, the HP selection panel will convene to select the teams, using the ranking list from selection series:

2026 Senior team (up to 3 boats per class)

The senior team will be selected for World cup 1, 2 and 3 from the ranking list at selection.

Athletes will confirm their place on the World championship team with attainment of a top 30 result at World cup 1,2 or 3. Unfilled places will be filled at the discretion of the HP panel, using the ranking from the 2026 selection series.

The team for World cup 4,5 and the European championships will comprise of:

Senior athletes who have attained a top 30 place at senior WC 1,2,3 or World Championships.

If places remain unfilled, they can be taken up, in order by:

Under 23 athletes who have attained a top 12 finish at the World or European under 23 Championships,

Under 18 athletes who have attained a top 12 finish at the World or European under 18 Championships and -

Athletes nominated by the HP panel, using the senior ranking list from the 2026 selection series

In the event of more paddlers being eligible for these races than places in the class, the ranking of the 2026 selection series will be used to rank the places on the teams for World Cup 4, 5 and the European Championships.

2026 Under 23 team (up to 3 boats per class)

The under 23 team will compete at the under 23 World and European championships.

2026 Junior 18 team (up to 3 boats per class)

The under 18 team will compete at the junior World and European championships.

7.3 2027 team selection

The LA 2028 Olympic qualification system is currently being developed. It is likely that individual paddlers will be required to score points across the 2026 and 2027 seasons. In this case, Canoeing Ireland reserve the right to pre-select paddlers who score more than a defined number (to be confirmed prior to the commencement of the LA28 OQS race series) of points at an Olympic quota qualifying race in the 2026 season to be selected for the 2027 team.

7.4 Annual governance review

Following selection, and delivery of the major races, a meeting will take place to review the selection process, to consider improvements and ensure transparency.

8. Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are unplanned, unexpected, unavoidable, and unforeseen. These include external forces, medically certified injuries and illness and other extenuating circumstances. If an athlete is unable to contest selection, Canoeing Ireland reserves the right to provide further opportunities to compete at international competitions and championships subject to further conditions. Only athletes who have met the stated performance-based criteria in the previous season (2025) can apply for selection under extenuating circumstances.

Applications via extenuating circumstances, including certificated evidence of illness or other exceptional circumstances must be submitted to the PPD no less than 24 hours prior to the commencement of the first selection race.

9. Discretionary Selection

If athletes are unable to attend the selection race series due to genuine and verifiable extenuating circumstances they may apply for discretionary team selection. Discretionary selection will only be used under the following conditions:

1. The class for which the athlete is applying has available boat spaces (e.g., only two boats race in selection of the class being applied for).
2. The class is contested at the selection event, but performance criteria have not been achieved by at least one boat (example, three boats race at selection, but only two boats make the criteria).
3. To be eligible for discretionary selection, a paddler must have achieved the criteria outlined in Table 2 (appendices) which uses ICF ranking release 2025.5.
4. Where discretion is applied by the Selection Panel or High-Performance Unit, the rationale and supporting evidence will be documented and retained. The Panel Chair will ensure that any discretionary decision is based on clear, objective information and is applied consistently across all athletes. A brief record of the decision and reasoning will be included in the post-selection report for review by the CEO and Board to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability.

10. Determining the results of the selection process

On completion of the selection process the following actions will occur:

- PPD will create a ranking list of results
- The selection panel will be convened
- The final ranking list for the participant athletes will be presented to the selection panel by the PPD
- The selection panel will meet and review the results and approve the selection of the team (provisional subject to appeals)
- All participants are informed of the results of the selection meeting
- Any non-selected athletes are permitted to appeal within the defined process
- If appeals are received, they are dealt with through the normal appeals process
- If no appeals are received within the period allowed the team selected is confirmed as final.
- The PPD will write to all successful athletes and inform them of their selection (provisional pending the signing of the athlete contract).

11. The Selection Panel

The Selection Panel (SP) will, after reviewing the results of the selection process, ensure that all proposed athletes meet the eligibility criteria prior to official selection confirmation. The SP can only consider an athlete who meets and maintains the athlete eligibility criteria set out in section 2, and therefore shall have the final determination, acting reasonably, as to whether an athlete meets the eligibility criteria

Construct of Selection Panel

The Selection panel will be convened and chaired by a Board appointed member with relevant experience. The selection panel will be ratified by the Canoeing Ireland CEO. The selection panel will consist of the following 3 members:

1. Performance & Pathway Rep. (CI Board member)
2. The Performance Director

3. One member of the CI High performance Unit (HPU)

Conflicts of Interest

Any member of the SP shall declare any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest and shall refrain from participation in the discussion of and any vote in respect of any selection matter in which they have a material conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest might occur when, for example:

- A Selection Panel member is a club coach to a particular athlete vying for selection.
 - A Selection Panel member is closely aligned to or is a member of a club for which an athlete vying for selection is also a member of.
 - A Selection Panel member is a family member or close friend of an athlete vying for selection.

Or any circumstance where a Selection Panel member has a personal relationship with an athlete or athletes vying for selection which could influence his or her decision or stands to gain in any way from the outcome of a selection decision.

12. Selection Appeal Procedures

The Canoeing Ireland Athlete Appeals Process can be found on the Canoeing Ireland website link: <https://www.canoe.ie/governance-documents/>

Appeals will be reviewed by an independent panel separate from selectors to ensure fairness.

13. Appendices

Table 1: CSL percentage performance criteria 2026.

To be used at selection 2026, K1W / C1W as a percentage of the fastest female run of the day, and K1M / C1M as a percentage of the fastest male run of the day (IRL). These performance percentages are based on the top 30 placings at World championships, weighted to the leading IRL paddlers. Under 23 and under 18 age group are based on the top 30 standard at the World championships in 2025. Percentages will only be used if the baseline is set by a recognised senior International standard CSL paddler. In the absence of this baseline, the HP panel will utilise discretion.

Class	Senior %	U23 %	U20 %	U18 %
K1M	104%	107%	112%	116%
K1W	109%	114%	119%	123%
C1M	110%	113%	116%	120%
C1W	117%	124%	127%	134%

Table 2: CSLX percentage performance criteria 2026.

To be used at selection 2026, K1W as a percentage of the fastest female run of the day, and K1M as a percentage of the fastest male run of the day (IRL). Percentages will only be used if the baseline is set by a recognized senior International standard CSLX/CSL paddler. In the absence of this baseline, the HP panel will utilise discretion.

Class	Senior %	U23 %	U20 %	U18 %
K1M	103%	106%	111%	115%
K1W	106%	109%	115%	119%

Table 3: Minimum standards based on ICF ranking release (CSL 2025.5 and CSLX 2025.5 X)

To be selected for unfilled places after the selection series. A paddler must have achieved the below ranking on the 2025.5 release.

Class	K1M	K1W	C1M	C1W	K1MCSLX -X	K1WCSLX- X
ICF points	Below 40.0	Below 40.0	Below 40.0	Below 40.0	Above 100.0	Above 100.0

Table 3 - Key competition dates

Date	Event	Location
18-19.4.26	Selection	Lucan or Clonmel, IRL
29-31.5.26	World cup 1	Tacen SLO
5-7.6.26	World cup 2	Prague CZE
12-14.6.26	World cup 3	Augsburg GER
20 – 25.7.26	World championships	Oklahoma USA
4 – 6.9.26	World cup 4	Vaires sur Maine FRA
11 – 13.9.26	World cup 5	La Seu d’Urgell ESP
16 - 29.9.26	European championships,	Ivrea ITA

Please note, these dates may be subject to change on the ICF calendar

Table 4 – Key competition dates for U18/U23

Date	Event	Location
18-19.4.26	Selection Race	Lucan / Clonmel, IRL
30.6.26 -5.7.26	Junior and Under 23 European Championships	Krakow
6.8.26 – 9.8.26	Junior and Under 23 European Championships	Epinal

Please note, these dates may be subject to change on the ICF calendar

Revision history:

Version	Amended by	Reason	Date of revision
V1 draft created 14.10.25			
V 1.1 draft	Richard Lee.	Initial discussions, review	29.10.25
V 1.2 draft	Michael Black / Richard Lee	Initial consultation feedback	7.12.25

End of Document