



## **SPORT CANADA ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CARDING)**

### **2026 SELECTION CRITERIA (TENNIS PARALYMPIC PROGRAM)**

#### **1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Athlete Assistance Program (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 Centres 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.

#### **2. GENERAL AAP GUIDELINES**

2.1 To qualify for the benefits of the Athlete Assistance Program (AAP), Tennis Canada's National High-Performance Program must comply with the criteria stipulated by Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program. The goal of the Athlete Assistance Program is to contribute to improved Canadian performances at major international sport events such as the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games and World Championships. To this end, the Athlete Assistance Program identifies and supports athletes already at or having the potential to be in the top 16 in the world.



2.2 A maximum of 2 Senior or the equivalent of \$52,200 will be available annually. Sport Canada is currently reviewing the card quotas for all sports. This may affect the number of cards available to the Tennis Paralympic program.

2.3 Development carded athletes will receive a stipend of \$1,305 per month, and all other Senior carded athletes will receive \$2,175 per month. In addition, tuition and deferred tuition benefits are available. For more information, please refer to the AAP website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/athlete-assistance.html>

The carding criteria will be reviewed and updated yearly to reflect any changes in the development and structure of the sport.

2.4 Eligible athletes will be nominated to the AAP based on the carding criteria published order of priority (section 5). Should there not be a sufficient number of qualified athletes, meeting the carding criteria, then the equivalent of two SR cards may not be used.

2.5 The High Performance Committee makes carding selection recommendations to Tennis Canada. Final recommendations to Sport Canada are decided by the Vice-President-High Performance at Tennis Canada. Sport Canada approves all carding decisions.

2.6 For any matters related to the Athlete Assistance Program Nomination or de-carding, all appeals must follow the Policies and Procedures of Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) Section 13.

### **3. GENERAL AAP ELIGIBILITY PRE-REQUISITES**

3.1 To be considered for carding, an athlete must:

- Be a National High Performance Program or National Development Program member who meets the carding criteria,
- Be a permanent resident
- Be a member in good standing☆ with Tennis Canada
- Compete in the 2025 National Championships unless an exemption is approved in advance and in writing by the High Performance Committee. To apply for an exemption a written request must be submitted to the Director of High Performance Programs and Administration by November 1, 2025.
- Participate fully in the National High Performance Program or National Development Program
- Be eligible to represent Canada in accordance with the ITF rules and regulations stipulated for the World Team Cup and Paralympic Games
- Have his/her annual training and competitive plan approved by the National Coach.



\*Good standing means understanding and abiding by Tennis Canada/Athlete Agreement, National Program policies, and Tennis Canada Code of Conduct.

3.2 Carding will be based on a 12-month cycle, starting January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2026.

3.3 Athletes' results will be based on the 52-week period from November 1, 2024-October 31, 2025.

3.4 Athletes who are awarded carding for a given year and who meet all criteria are not automatically guaranteed carding the following year. However, meeting all criteria will ensure athletes are considered for carding the next year.

#### **4. AAP ELIGIBILITY BASED ON CARDING CRITERIA**

In addition to meeting the general eligibility requirements, to qualify for the benefits of the Athlete Assistance Program (AAP), athletes must meet one of the 4 carding criteria laid out below:

- Senior Carding Criteria
- Development Carding Criteria
- Injury Carding Criteria
- Paralympic Upgrade Card

##### **4.1 Senior Carding Criteria**

###### **4.1.1 Senior International Paralympic Years Carding Criteria (SR1/SR2 Cards):**

In Paralympic Games years, athletes who achieve the following performance at the Paralympic Games will be eligible for nomination:

- Top 8 & Top ½ in a Paralympic event with a maximum of 3 entries per country

In Non-Paralympic years, athletes in the men's, women's and quad divisions who achieve the following performance at the ITF Year-End Singles Masters will be eligible for nomination:

- Top 8 and Top ½ in the event with a maximum of 3 entries per country

Athletes who do not meet the first year SR or D performance indicators are ineligible for carding consideration based on the ITF Year-End Singles Masters results.



Athletes who qualify for carding under the Senior International criteria are eligible for two years of AAP support, with the card for the first year referred to as a SR1 Card and the card for the second year referred to as a SR2 Card. The second year is subject to the athlete being re-nominated by Tennis Canada, a training and competitive program approved by Tennis Canada and Sport Canada, signing an Athlete/Tennis Canada agreement, and completing the AAP application form for the year in question.

#### 4.1.2 Senior National Carding Criteria (SR)

Athletes who meet the following minimum standards will be considered for nomination under the following restriction:

##### SR Level #1:

Athletes with a Top 16 (men), or Top 12 (women), or Top 8 (quad) ITF singles ranking as of October 31, 2025, or for 20 weeks throughout the period of March 1, 2025, to October 31, 2025. The weeks do not have to be consecutive.

SR Level #2: Meet the progressions outlined in the chart below:

<b><i>Senior National Minimum Standards</i></b>
Injury cards, and Paralympic upgrade from a D card or from no carding, are not included in the calculation of number of years carded.
<b><u>Men's Division</u></b> Entering 1 <sup>st</sup> year carded at Senior levels (SR1, SR2, SR): ITF Top 80 singles or better Entering 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> years: ITF Top 65 singles Entering 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 55 singles Entering 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 45 singles Entering 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 35 singles Entering 10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> year years: ITF Top 25 13 <sup>th</sup> year and more: ITF top 24 singles, plus showing progression toward meeting SR priority 1 and essential to the performance of the World Team Cup (WTC).
<b><u>Women's Division</u></b> Entering 1 <sup>st</sup> year carded at Senior levels (SR1, SR2, SR): ITF Top 40 singles or better Entering 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> years: ITF Top 35 singles Entering 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 30 singles Entering 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 25 singles Entering 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 20



Entering 10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 15 12th year and more: ITF top 14 singles, plus showing progression toward meeting SR priority 1 and essential to the performance of the WTC
<u>Quad Division</u> Entering 1 <sup>st</sup> year carded at Senior levels (SR1, SR2, SR): ITF Top 25 singles or better) Entering 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> years: ITF Top 22 Entering 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 20 Entering 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 18 Entering 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 15 Entering 10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> years: ITF Top 12 Entering 11 <sup>th</sup> year: ITF Top 12 12th year and more: ITF top 9 singles, plus showing progression toward meeting SR priority 1 and essential to the performance of the WTC

The ITF singles rankings must be achieved as of October 31, 2025, or for any 20 weeks throughout the period of March 1, 2025, to October 31, 2025. The weeks do not need to be consecutive. However, a player's October 31, 2025 singles ranking will be used for tie-break purposes when the player has met their performance indicator based on the 20 week rule outlined above.

**4.2 Development Carding Criteria (D)**

National High Performance Program athletes, who meet the following criteria, may be considered for Development (D) card status if Development (D) cards are available.

Injury cards and Paralympic upgrade cards are not included in the calculation of number of years carded at the Development levels.

<b><u>Development Card Minimum Standards</u></b>
Injury cards are not included in the calculation of number of years carded
<u>Men</u>
Entering 1 <sup>st</sup> year carded at D level: ITF Top 150 singles or better
Entering 2 <sup>nd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 125 singles
Entering 3 <sup>rd</sup> year carded ITF Top 100 singles
Entering 4 <sup>th</sup> year carded: ITF Top 80 singles
<u>Women</u>
Entering 1 <sup>st</sup> year carded: ITF Top 75 singles
Entering 2 <sup>nd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 65 singles
Entering 3 <sup>rd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 50 singles
Entering 4 <sup>th</sup> year carded ITF Top 40 singles



Quad

Entering 1<sup>st</sup> year carded: ITF Top 50 singles

Entering 2<sup>nd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 40 singles

Entering 3<sup>rd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 30 singles

Entering 4<sup>th</sup> year carded: ITF Top 25 singles

Junior Transition

For athletes transitioning from the Junior division to the Men's, Women's, or Quad divisions. A Junior Team athlete moving to Senior National Team status must meet the Junior Transition performance indicator in the transition year.

Men:

Entering 1<sup>st</sup> year carded: ITF Top 225

Women:

Entering 1<sup>st</sup> year carded: ITF Top 90

Quad:

Entering 1<sup>st</sup> year carded: ITF Top 60

Junior Boys:

Entering 1<sup>st</sup> year carded: ITF Top 25 singles (junior)

Entering 2<sup>nd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 20 singles (junior)

Entering 3<sup>rd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 15 singles (junior)

Junior Girls

Entering 1<sup>st</sup> year carded: ITF Top 15 singles (junior)

Entering 2<sup>nd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 12 singles (junior)

Entering 3<sup>rd</sup> year carded: ITF Top 10 singles (junior)

The ITF singles rankings must be achieved as of October 31, 2025, or for any 20 weeks throughout the period of March 1, 2025, to October 31, 2025. The weeks do not need to be consecutive. However, a player's October 31, 2025 singles ranking will be used for tie-break purposes when the player has met their performance indicator based on the 20 week rule outlined above.

Example: John Smith, an athlete in the Men's division, has been carded as follows: Year 1 - C1, Year 2 – SR1, Year 3 – SR2, Year 4 – SR injury, Year 5 - SR. As the SR Injury card doesn't count, John Smith is entering his 5<sup>th</sup> year of carding. To be eligible for a 5<sup>th</sup> year of carding, he must place in the top 55 or better in singles on the ITF ranking at least 20 weeks during the period of March 1, 2025, to October 31, 2025 year or on the October 31, 2025 ranking or meet the Senior international or the Senior priority 1 criteria.



### 4.3 Injury Carding Criteria

Athletes carded the previous year at the SR1/SR2, SR, or D card levels and were unable to meet the carding criteria strictly due to health-related reasons, may be considered for an Injury Card.

The requirements of Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) policy on the "Curtailed Training and Competition for Health Related Reasons" must be met for a player to be nominated for an Injury card. The policy can be found in section 9 of the AAP Policies and Procedures.

#### Steps for Injury Card Consideration

1. Athlete to apply to Director, High Performance Programs & Administration by October 1.
2. Athlete to send all supporting medical documentation, and a detailed rationale for consideration
3. HP Committee to review and make determination of eligibility

Injury cards will be prioritized based on the process outlined in Section 5. The player's October 31 ITF singles ranking from the previous year will be utilized to determine his/her rank on the priority list. Injury cards are for a one-year period with the intention that the athlete returns to full time training and competition. Athletes may be eligible for more than one injury card.

At the end of an injury card cycle, athletes must attain the performance indicator from the year prior in order to be considered for further carding. For example, if an athlete's performance indicator was Top 55 prior to the start of the injury card cycle, then the Top 55 performance indicator would need to be attained as of October 31 in the year of the injury card.

### 4.4 Paralympic Upgrade Cards Eligibility

An athlete who qualifies for the Paralympic Games and is not carded, will receive 4 months of SR funding (May - Aug). An athlete who currently has a D card will be upgraded to SR funding from May through to the end of their cycle for the number of remaining months for which they have been approved. The Paralympic card and any upgrade costs are a function of the Athlete Assistance Program discretionary funding pool. This SR Paralympic card will not count toward the number of years carded at the Senior or Development levels. The D card is included in the number of years of D carding. More information on the Paralympic Upgrade card can be found here: [Policies and Procedures – Athlete Assistance Program - Canada.ca](#)



#### 4.5 Meeting More than One Carding Level

An athlete who meets both the D and SR carding performance standards may choose to be considered for carding at the first year SR level. Should a player opt for SR carding, they will have to meet the SR carding criteria and next applicable performance standard in the following year. Athletes who fail to meet the next SR performance standard may be eligible for a D card on a one-time basis pending prioritisation laid out in section 5.1.2.

### **5. PRIORITIZATION OF ATHLETES ELIGIBLE FOR CARDING**

Should the number of athletes that qualify for AAP support either via senior, development or injury card eligibility, exceed the available cards(funding), the funding allocation will be made based on an order of priority laid out below:

#### 5.1 Prioritization of carding levels

##### 5.1.1. Senior Cards:

- a) Athletes who meet the Senior International Paralympic Years/Non-Paralympic Years (SR1/SR2) carding criteria;
- b) Athletes carded the previous year at SR1/SR2 who meet the Injury carding criteria;
- c) Athletes who meet Level #1 of the Senior National carding criteria (SR)
- d) Athletes who meet Level #2 of the Senior National carding criteria (SR)
- e) Athletes carded the previous year at SR who meet the Injury carding criteria

##### 5.1.2. Development Cards

- a) Senior Team Athletes who meet the Development carding criteria for men, women, quad divisions as per Section 5 below;
- b) Senior Team Athletes carded the previous year at Development who meet the Injury carding criteria for men, women, quad divisions;
- c) Senior Team Athletes carded previously at the C1, SR levels for 1 year or less and fail to re-qualify for Senior card status,
- d) Senior Team Athletes who meet the Junior Transition card criteria;
- e) Senior Team Athletes carded the previous year at the Junior Transition card level who meet the Injury carding criteria;
- f) Junior Team Athletes who meet the carding criteria for junior boys or girls.
- g) Junior Team Athletes carded the previous year who meet the injury carding criteria for junior boys or girls.





### 5.1.3. Senior Cards (Closest to Criteria)

Any remaining SR cards will first be guaranteed to Senior Team Athletes who came the “closest” to meeting their published AAP Performance Standard.

The carding order will be determined by the athlete with smallest % difference between the official October 31, 2025, ITF ranking and their applicable AAP Performance Standard (to within a maximum differentiation of +2.0).

For example, if 1 SR card is available for distribution. Player A achieves an October 31, 2025, ITF ranking of #36. Her required AAP Performance Standard was #35. The difference is  $36/35 = (1.02\%)$ . Player B achieves an October 31, 2025, ITF ranking of #21. Her required AAP Performance Standard was #15. The difference is  $21/15 = (1.4\%)$ . Player C achieved a year an October 31, 2025, ITF ranking of #47. His required AAP Performance Standard was #45. The difference is  $47/45 = (1.04\%)$ . Player A would be recommended for carding with the lowest % difference.

### 5.1.4 Development Cards (Closest to Criteria)

Any remaining D cards will first be guaranteed to Senior Team Athletes who came the “closest” to meeting their published AAP Performance Standard.

The carding order will be determined by the athlete with smallest % difference between the official October 31, 2025, ITF ranking and their applicable AAP Performance Standard (to within a maximum differentiation of +2.0).

For example, if 1 D card is available for distribution. Player A achieves an October 31, 2025, ITF ranking of #70. Her required AAP Performance Standard was #65. The difference is  $70/65 = (1.07\%)$ . Player B achieves an October 31, 2025, ITF ranking of #38. Her required AAP Performance Standard was #40. The difference is  $40/38 = (1.05\%)$ . Player C achieved a year an October 31, 2025, ITF ranking of #80. His required AAP Performance Standard was #125. The difference is  $125/80 = (1.56\%)$ . Player B would be recommended for carding with the lowest % difference.

### 5.2 Prioritization within each carding level (i.e., a), b), c), etc. above)

In each lettered prioritization carding level above, if there are fewer cards than athletes meeting the respective carding criteria, the following process will be used to prioritize the eligible athletes:



#### 5.2.1. Prioritization within same playing division

If all remaining athletes are within the same playing division (i.e.-men, women, quad) then priority will be given to the athletes with the highest ITF singles ranking as of October 31, 2025.

#### 5.2.2. Prioritization in different playing divisions (co-efficient tie-break calculation)

If all remaining athletes are in different playing divisions (i.e.-men, women, quad, junior) then the top ITF singles ranked athlete from each playing division will be extracted and grouped with the top ITF singles ranked athlete of the other playing division. Once grouped the following tie-break procedure will be followed:

Athlete with the lowest % difference between his/her October 31, 2025, ITF singles ranking and their applicable AAP Performance Standard. For example, player A achieves an October 31 ITF ranking of #44. Her required ranking was #50.  $44 \text{ divided by } 50 = .88$ . Player B achieves an October 31 ITF ranking of #24. His required ranking was #30.  $24 \text{ divided by } 30 = .8$ . Player B has the lowest percentage. He would be carded.

Once an athlete with the lowest coefficient as per above has been determined then all extracted athletes are returned to their respective playing division (i.e.-men, women, quad, junior).

The procedure outlined in 5.2.2 is repeated with the top ITF singles ranked player from each of the remaining playing divisions extracted and group. If after repeating the process there only remain athletes from the same playing division (i.e.-men, women, quad, junior) then the athletes will be ordered in priority based on the highest ITF singles ranking as of October 31, 2025. In the event that the procedure outlined in 5.2.2 yields more than one player with the same coefficient then the funding will be divided equally among these players.