



U23 TEAM SELECTION CRITERIA 2026

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1 – INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the process and criteria to be used by Wrestling Canada Lutte (WCL) for selecting athletes, coaches and staff to Team Canada for 2026 U23 Team events specified hereunder, as well as any other domestic or international training/competitive opportunities that will be part of the U23 Team programs.

WCL is under no obligation to send complete teams to events. Fulfillment of team spots is subject to athletes meeting the necessary qualification and eligibility criteria as outlined by WCL and other external stakeholder agencies, where applicable.

All deadlines noted herein are subject to change based on United World Wrestling (UWW) timelines.

This document will be in effect from the completion of the 2026 U23 Canadian Wrestling Championships to the start of the 2027 U23 Canadian Wrestling Championships.

For questions or clarifications on the contents of this document, please contact the High Performance Director (HPD): cwoodcroft@wrestling.ca.

2 – DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

The High Performance Director (HPD), or their designate, is responsible for the development and implementation of a selection process that is fair and equitable for all candidates.

The process outlined in this document was drafted and prepared by the HPD in consultation with the U23 Program Lead and club coaches. Oversight was provided by the Athlete Council and the High Performance Advisory Committee (HPAC – composed of coaches and athletes). Final approval of the policy was made by the WCL Board of Directors.

The High Performance Manager (HPM) will support the HPD in ensuring that the process outlined in this document is properly followed when making any selection decisions. The final decision-making authority for team selection remains with the HPD.

During the actual competition period onsite at Championships or other national team events, all final decision-making authority will reside with the Team Leader.

*NOTE: Where “HPD discretion” is specified, the following performance-based criteria for team selection includes, but is not limited to:

- Current domestic and international results, including head-to-head results;
- Yearly training plan (YTP);
- International Performance Index (IPI);
- Previous competition experience;
- Suitability of the level of competition;

- Gold medal profile (GMP);
- If no suitable participants are found, the HPD reserves the right to not select or fill a team spot.

3 – PERTINENT DOCUMENTS

The following documents are relevant and may be applicable during the selection process and / or after athletes are selected to teams. WCL documents can be found on the WCL website under Resources: <https://wrestling.ca/policy-manual/>.

- WCL Agreement;
- National Team YTP;
- WCL Coach Selection Policy;
- WCL Code of Conduct and Ethics;
- WCL Discipline and Complaints Policy;
- WCL Appeal Policy.

4 – ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

To be considered by WCL for team selection, all athletes must meet the following requirements at the time of entry to any selection or ranking event(s) and maintain these requirements throughout the 2026 - 2027 competitive season:

- Be eligible to represent Canada as governed by United World Wrestling (UWW):
 - Canadian citizen (no previous international representation with another country, i.e. not had a UWW licence with another country), OR;
 - Canadian citizen with an approved Sport Nationality Transfer from UWW, effective 2026 or earlier
- Hold a valid Canadian passport that does not expire on or before June 30, 2027;
- UWW U23 age eligibility:
 - 19-23 years of age or older (in the year of competition)
 - Athletes 18 years of age (in the year of competition) may compete, however, parental authorization and a medical certificate are required
- Be a participant in good standing and hold a valid (current) WCL licence;
 - Must not be under suspension, or any other sanction, for any doping or doping-related offence;
 - Must not be under suspension, or any other sanction for any WCL Code of Conduct or Discipline Policy offence or any other relevant WCL policy;
 - Must sign and comply with the Athlete Agreement as required by WCL;
 - Must not have any outstanding invoices with WCL;
- Be a member in good standing of their respective PTSO;
- Be in compliance with all WCL regulations and requirements;
- Be in compliance with all relevant United World Wrestling (UWW) regulations and requirements;
- Alternate athletes must also comply with all items contained in this document and must ensure that all administrative and financial obligations are fulfilled by the required timelines;
- Athletes named to compete in Championship events will be required to comply with WCL dress code regulations.

Please refer to specific event information for eligibility / entry requirements and any other conditions of eligibility.

5 – EVENT FUNDING

Event funding is determined by the WCL 2026-27 budget and will be communicated prior to each event. Athletes may be required to self-fund all or part of their participation in events and may be required to contribute to costs for referees, coaches and medical staff. Any funding that is allocated to athletes for national / international training and/or competitive opportunities will be specific to that opportunity only.

Athletes participating in non-WCL sanctioned events will be required to cover the entirety of costs of their participation as well as any costs incurred from referees, coaches, and medical staff.

All Greco-Roman events and activities are self-funded.

6 – WCL RANKING EVENTS

6.1 – 2025 U23 Canadian Championships

Final ranking will occur after true second matches are completed, unless otherwise specified in event specific WCL selection criteria.

Women’s Wrestling (WW): 50 kg, 53 kg, 55 kg, 57 kg, 59 kg, 62 kg, 65 kg, 68 kg, 72 kg, 76 kg
Men’s Freestyle (FS): 57 kg, 61 kg, 65 kg, 70 kg, 74 kg, 79 kg, 86 kg, 92 kg, 97 kg, 125 kg

6.2 – 2026 Senior Canadian Championships

Final ranking will occur after true second matches and wrestle-offs are completed, unless otherwise specified in event specific WCL selection criteria.

Women’s Wrestling (WW): 50 kg, 53 kg, 55 kg, 57 kg, 59 kg, 62 kg, 65 kg, 68 kg, 72 kg, 76 kg
Men’s Freestyle (FS): 57 kg, 61 kg, 65 kg, 70 kg, 74 kg, 79 kg, 86 kg, 92 kg, 97 kg, 125 kg

6.3 – 2026 U23 Canadian Wrestling Championships

Final ranking will occur after true second matches are completed, unless otherwise specified in event specific WCL selection criteria.

Women’s Wrestling (WW): 50 kg, 53 kg, 55 kg, 57 kg, 59 kg, 62 kg, 65 kg, 68 kg, 72 kg, 76 kg
Men’s Freestyle (FS): 57 kg, 61 kg, 65 kg, 70 kg, 74 kg, 79 kg, 86 kg, 92 kg, 97 kg, 125 kg

Please note there are no wrestle-offs for the U23 age class.

7 – GRECO-ROMAN

Athletes who wish to participate in international Greco-Roman events must submit an application to the HPD, no later than July 4, 2026. Applications must include the following:

- Training history pertinent to Greco-Roman;
- Greco-Roman competition history and results;
- 2026 Training plans and YTP pertinent to Greco-Roman submitted as part of the event application process.

Nomination to participate in an international Greco-Roman event is subject to HPD discretion and approval. Athletes intending to compete in Greco-Roman must have a suitably qualified coach with Greco-Roman experience.

Male athletes will NOT be permitted to compete in both Freestyle and Greco-Roman styles if they are selected to both teams.

8 – 2026 U23 PAN AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Women's Wrestling (WW) & Men's Freestyle (FS)

Athlete right of refusal is established in the following order of priority (weight class specific):

1. Highest ranked medallist from the 2025 U23 Canadian Championships
2. Top ranked U23 eligible athlete from the 2026 Senior Canadian Championships
3. HPD discretion

*NOTE: Athletes that want to be considered for Olympic and / or non-Olympic weight classes, must notify the HPD by June 1st, 2026, with the weight class(es) they wish to compete in.

**NOTE: All athletes participating in the 2026 FISU World University Combat Championships will NOT be permitted to participate in the 2026 U23 Pan Am Championships.

9 – 2026 U23 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Women's Wrestling (WW) & Men's Freestyle (FS)

Athlete right of refusal is established in the following order of priority (weight class specific):

1. The 2026 top ranked U23 eligible athlete (after all true-second matches are completed), who has an International Winning Consistency (IWC) of 2.0 at U23 or senior level events
2. The next highest 2026 nationally ranked U23 eligible athlete (after all true-second matches are completed), who has an IWC of 2.0 at U23 or senior level events.

3. If the top two ranked athletes decline participation, a performance-based decision will be made by the HPD.

The HPD has discretion to evaluate the international performance of any SR carded athletes who have not met the established standard, for the purpose of team selection.

*NOTE: All athletes must meet eligibility requirements and be medically approved to compete no later than September 1st, 2026, for roster finalization.

10 – 2026 U23 TEAM EVENTS

Selection for all other U23 Team events (with the exclusion of U23 Pan American Championships and U23 World Championships) will be based on the following ranking in order of priority (weight class specific):

1. 2026 U23 Canadian Wrestling Championship Gold Medallist
2. 2026 U23 Canadian Wrestling Championship True Second rank*
3. 2026 U23 Canadian Wrestling Championship True Third rank*
4. HPD discretion

*True Second and True Third rankings occur after True Second ranking matches, if applicable.

11 – PERFORMANCE READINESS & INJURY

Selected team members and alternates will be required to demonstrate a commitment to an HPD approved and mandated training and competition program, leading into and throughout the 2026-2027 competitive season. WCL identified training camps and competitions are a necessary part of an athlete's preparation program and are, therefore, mandatory.

Athletes are also expected to undergo regular monitoring against the WCL Gold Medal Profile (GMP), so programming can be adjusted to address identified gaps. The HPD will work closely with the selected athletes and their personal coaches to ensure that their program has the required elements for success.

All athletes will have their injury/health status assessed by WCL approved medical staff after selection to ensure a proper approach to their health management.

Both athletes and personal coaches must communicate with the HPD, HPM, U23 Program Lead and IST staff to collaborate on best practices and ensure optimal preparation for events.

Once selected to an event, athletes who do not remain competition ready because of lack of fitness, injury or illness may be removed from the team at any time. Athletes are required to immediately report any injury, illness, or change in training that could affect their ability to compete at their highest level. Notification must be sent to the HPD.

Where the HPD deems that an athlete is not following the WCL mandated YTP, WCL reserves the right to remove that athlete from the team for a given event.

12 – REMOVAL OF AN ATHLETE ONCE SELECTED

The HPD reserves the right to withdraw an athlete from selection:

- If the athlete has not fulfilled their responsibilities with respect to mandatory training camps, testing, and competitions;
- If the athlete has not fulfilled their responsibilities as identified in the WCL Agreement;
- If the athlete is found to be in breach of the WCL Code of Conduct by a duly appointed disciplinary panel in accordance with the WCL Discipline Policy;
- If the athlete has been found to have committed an anti-doping rule violation by an Anti-Doping Organization with jurisdiction over the athlete. For the avoidance of doubt, this could include Sport Integrity Canada, UWW, the IOC, or a National Anti-Doping Organization from the country in which the athlete is located and is subject to doping control;
- If the athlete is unable to perform due to lack of fitness, injury, illness or other medical reasons as supported by the WCL Chief Medical Officer.

If an athlete is removed, it is WCL's intention to have the alternate in the specific weight class fill the spot if they have met all athlete eligibility criteria, competitive readiness and WCL is able to meet any late replacement process/timelines. If no suitable alternates are found, the HPD reserves the right to not select or fill a team spot.

13 – CLUB ATHLETES ON WCL DESIGNATED TRIPS

Provincial / club athletes must be approved by the HPD prior to participating in WCL National Team trips. Considerations for approval include, but not limited to, having achieved a Top 3 ranking in an Olympic weight class or a Top 2 ranking in a non-Olympic weight class at the 2026 U23 Canadian Wrestling Championships or with HPD discretion. These athletes must demonstrate the ability to participate safely in the desired event and must comply with WCL and UWW regulations.

Athletes/coaches will be required to provide an athlete's recent competitive and training history, including the submission of 2026 training plans and YTP as part of the event application process. Where there is a restriction in registrants per weight class, priority will be given to athletes who are part of the WCL High Performance Program.

14 – CLUB ATHLETES PARTICIPATING IN NON WCL DESIGNATED UWW EVENTS

Any athletes intending to compete in a non-WCL designated UWW event must be sanctioned by the HPD prior to participating. Requests for consideration to the HPD must be received no later than two months prior to the event in question. These athletes must demonstrate the ability to participate safely in the desired event and must comply with WCL and UWW regulations to be considered.

15 – ADDITIONAL UWW SANCTIONED EVENTS

Where a new event not included in the present selection criteria is added to the UWW calendar and WCL considers that participation is warranted, selection criteria for the event will be clearly communicated to all eligible athletes prior to any nominating event(s) or nomination occurring.

16 – ANTI-DOPING

Athletes may be requested to submit to doping control by any Anti-Doping Organization that has testing authority over them. This includes Sport Integrity Canada, any National Anti-Doping Organization of the country in which the athlete is located, UWW, WADA and the IOC. Athlete Support Personnel, which includes, inter alia, coaches or any other person who is working with, treating or assisting an athlete, are also subject to the anti-doping rules of relevant anti-doping organizations, such as Sport Integrity Canada, UWW, WADA or the IOC.

Should an athlete, coach or other athlete support personnel commit an anti-doping rule violation, that individual, in addition to other sanctions, will be removed from the Championship Team.

Team members may be required to complete the Sport Integrity Canada e-learning course prior to competing internationally.

17 – SUPPORT STAFF SELECTION

Support staff will be selected on the principle of sending a team of specialists that are best capable of assisting and supporting the athletes in achieving podium performances at events, as well as contributing to a “winning well” team culture.

Any decisions on the distribution of accreditations falls within the authority of the HPD. The HPD may make changes to the team staff as necessary to maximize athlete opportunity for success.

Support staff selections will follow the principles of WCL’s Coaches Selection Policy (as amended from time to time) and may include, but not limited to the following:

- Team Leader
- Lead Coach
- Support Coach
- Mentee Coach
- Medical support personnel

18 – APPEALS PROCEDURE

WCL team selections may be appealed in accordance with the procedures set out in the WCL Appeal Policy (as amended from time to time).

19 – COMMUNICATION

This document will be circulated via email to all PTSOs as well as posted on the WCL website. WCL respectfully requests that the PTSOs share this document to their constituents by posting on their respective websites and email distribution. The responsibility of reading and understanding the policy lies with individual participants.

The policy will also be presented to the Athlete Council and athletes in general via a Town Hall Zoom Meeting.

Should any subsequent amendments be made to these Selection Criteria, they will be circulated via email to all PTSOs as well as posted on the WCL website.

Communication of the final team (athletes and staff) and any changes in nomination will be posted on the WCL website and circulated via email to all PTSOs.

20 – MODIFICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT/ UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

In the event that circumstances beyond the control of WCL arise, including but not limited to force majeure events, pandemics, changes made by UWW, or WCL, that prevents the fair implementation of these selection criteria, as written, the HPD reserves the right to determine an appropriate course of action, which may include the right to review and change any part of the document.

This clause shall not be used to justify changes after a competition or selection event which formed part of this document unless it is related to an unforeseen circumstance as described immediately above. This also allows for changes to this document that may become necessary due to a typographical error or a lack of clarity in a definition or wording before it has an impact on athletes.

In the event of a change to this document, WCL shall inform the membership of the changes and the reasons for those changes as soon as possible.

Further, situations may arise that do not allow these procedures to be modified or applied as written due to time constraints or other exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. In such situations, any decision, including nomination decisions, will be made by the individual(s) with decision-making authority, as stated in these procedures, in consultation with the relevant individual(s) or committee(s) (as applicable), and in accordance with the stated performance objectives and selection philosophy and approach as stated herein. Should it be necessary to make any decision in this manner, WCL will communicate with all affected individuals as soon as possible.