



## **Australian Canoeing Sprint Development Pathway - Future Direction Focus group U16, U18 and U21 athletes**

One of the aims of AC's Canoe Sprint Development Pathway is to ensure our athletes, who have completed their final National or International event as under 18 athletes, are well prepared and ready to make a successful transition into our High-Performance Pathway.

A key component of this strategy will be the introduction of a new International competition, labelled as the **Asia / Pacific Regatta** which will be introduced in 2018. The first event of its kind is scheduled 12-13 May, 2018 in Adelaide, Australia.

This event will take place annually, sometime during the first two weeks in May. In 2019 the event will be held in New Zealand and 2020 Japan and back to Australia in 2021 on a rotating, ongoing basis.

Although the Asia Pacific event will be open to any country, it is likely in the first few years that the largest national teams will be from Australia, New Zealand and Japan, who have all made a commitment to the event, acknowledging the importance of an event like this and the timing of this event for our developing athletes. It is anticipated that in the future this event will grow to become a higher quality International Regatta recognised by the International Canoe Federation.

National Teams (U16, U18 and U21) will be selected by each country and races will be held in each age category over Olympic race distances. A maximum of two entries per country per event will be allowed (a similar format to international World Cup regattas)

Australia will be selecting teams in each age group category – refer to Asia / Pacific – Olympic Hopes selection criteria.

Some of the benefits of a regatta such as the Asia / Pacific Regatta are as follows:

- The timing of the event (May) is closely aligned to our Australian domestic season, meaning our athletes will be better prepared and race conditioned.
- It will provide a World Cup type experience for our Junior World Championship Team athletes and some under 21 athletes who may also be members of the Under 23 National Team in the lead up to Junior and U23 World Championships (July)

- The event will provide an important focal point and ongoing development opportunity for athletes transitioning from Juniors (U18) into the under 23 space.
- Australia's Under 16 athletes will have the opportunity to race against athletes with a similar training age and will hopefully be extremely competitive.
- Asia / Pacific regatta will provide a quality international racing experience at an affordable cost to the athletes / parents.
- Under 15, 16 and 17 athletes will be provided with an opportunity to secure Olympic Hopes Team selection at this event.
- Following the Asia / Pacific Regatta, any Under 16 athletes who are not selected as members the Olympic Hopes Team, will have the opportunity to do a longer "off season" preparation focusing on strength development and endurance. If approached correctly this will provide a better foundation for future success, enhancing longer term athlete development.

In the development pathway, the priority event for under 18 athletes is clearly the Junior World Championships.

As a preferred competition pathway, under 16 athletes who are mostly still in the early developmental stages, should be focused on success at the Asia / Pacific Regatta in May. It is for this reason AC has developed a selection criteria aimed at providing appropriate development opportunities and relevant international racing opportunities for this group of athletes.

AC acknowledges the importance of racing the best in the world and believes the Olympic Hopes Regatta will play a critical role in the athlete development pathway. However, it is critical that any athlete selected for this event must display an extremely high level of development, suitable of being highly competitive against the best in the world in their specific age group. Athletes who meet this standard are clearly at a suitable developmental level and have obviously developed appropriately in all the key areas and are truly on track as they move towards the HP pathway. It is for this reason AC will provide a significant level of support for athletes of this standard to attend future Olympic Hopes Regattas.

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