

**Wheelchair Rugby Canada  
Athlete Council  
Terms of Reference**

**Purpose/Mandate**

The Athlete Council (AC) is a WRC Board of Directors standing committee that is representative of all Wheelchair Rugby Canada's (WRC) National Team Athletes with the mandate to act as the collective voice of athletes within WRC. The AC aims to enrich the athlete experience by creating a safe space for athletes to bring their questions, comments, and concerns forward. The AC advocates on behalf of the athletes to ensure the athlete perspective is heard and actively considered in the WRC Board of Directors and WRC CEO decision making process.

**1.0 Key Duties**

- 1.1 Ensure to the greatest extent possible that WRC's policies and programs meet the needs of athletes.
- 1.2 Present athletes' views and positions to the relevant decision-making body's with regard to current or future programs, policies and procedures.
- 1.3 Provide a forum in which Athletes may share and develop information or ideas as they relate to Athletes.
- 1.4 Review issues of interest to Athletes and communicate issues and concerns brought before the committee by National Team Athletes to the relevant body within WRC.
- 1.5 Review and provide input where appropriate prior to approval into key documents and policies including but not limited to:
  - Athlete Agreements
  - AAP Nomination Criteria
  - Team Selection Criteria
  - High Performance training and competition plans
  - Coaching (Head and Assistant Coaches)
- 1.6 Has the responsibility to communicate pertinent information from WRC board and other committees to the athletes as directed.
- 1.7 Name representatives as requested by WRC and other bodies for activities where athlete representation is an integral element (eg. Annual Meeting of Members, etc.).
- 1.8 Recommend athlete representation, where appropriate to external agencies including but not limited to AthletesCAN Board of Directors, Canadian Paralympic Committee Athletes Council and World Wheelchair Rugby.
- 1.9 The Athlete Representative on the Board of Directors will act as the liaison between the AC, WRC Staff, Board of Directors and any other committees within WRC.
- 1.10 Review these terms of reference every four years and provide input to the WRC Board of Directors on desired changes.

- 1.11 All AC members must adhere to WRC's policies and procedures including but not limited to the Code of Conduct, Safe Sport training etc. As an AC member, he/she/they are an ambassador of the organization to the WRC membership and to the national and international sport community. As a role model to athletes and members, AC members must represent the organization in a professional and appropriate manner at all time with reference to language, dress and decorum.

In carrying out these duties the AC will work closely with WRC staff, and report to the WRC Board of Directors.

## **2.0 Duties of the Chair (Athlete Representative)**

- 2.1 Develop the agenda for AC meetings in consultation with AC Members.
- 2.2 Chair meetings and ensure that the AC makes recommendations within its mandate, organizational policies and plans.
- 2.3 Ensure communication of the AC's recommendations and actions to the WRC Board of Directors.
- 2.4 Ensure that the AC is represented to the WRC Board of Directors by the Athlete Representative.
- 2.5 Stay informed on relevant WRC policies.
- 2.6 Ensure the AC Members are informed of all critical matters.
- 2.7 Assist with enquiries from National Team Athletes pertaining to national team activities and WRC policies.
- 2.8 Assist in preparing written reports of recommendations, progress or any other relevant information for submission to the Board of Directors and National Team Athletes.
- 2.9 Conduct annual elections to the AC in accordance to these terms of reference.
- 2.10 Be responsible for the storing of all AC documents and resources, which include but not limited to agenda's, minutes and terms of reference.

## **3.0 Duties of the Vice Chair**

- 3.1 Attend AC meetings.
- 3.2 Serve as alternate for the Chair, should the Chair be unavailable
- 3.3 Stay informed on relevant WRC policies.
- 3.4 Aid in preparing written reports of recommendations, process or any other relevant information for submission to the WRC Board of Directors and National Team Athletes.

## **4.0 Duties of Individual AC Members**

- 4.1 Attend AC meetings
- 4.2 Be available to replace the Chair or Vice-Chair if necessary.
- 4.3 Actively engage with National Team Athletes to gather and disseminate feedback to relevant committees and the WRC Board of Directors.
- 4.4 Direct National Team Athlete concerns and views to the AC for discussion and action.
- 4.5 Willingness to serve on working groups and committees.

## **5.0 Authority**

The AC is an active advisor to WRC through an Athlete Representative on the WRC Board of Directors. It will serve as a source of athletes' opinions, providing recommendations and input to WRC staff, WRC Board of Directors, and committees on matters that affect athletes including but not limited to current or potential programs, policies, and procedures. The AC will exercise its authority in accordance with the bylaws and policies of WRC in addition to the provisions set out in this terms of reference.

The AC may:

- 5.1 Invite to its meetings individuals it deems can contribute to the work of the committee, through collaboration with the CEO, if this involved staff (eg. consultants, guest speakers);
- 5.2 Schedule meetings and other activities to facilitate decision-making;
- 5.3 Establish sub-committees as necessary to address issues in relation to the mandate of the AC.

## **6.0 Composition**

- 6.1 The AC shall be comprised of no less than four and up to seven members:
  - Chair - Athlete Rep from the Wheelchair Rugby Canada Board of Directors;
  - Council Member (one to be named Vice-Chair);
  - Council Member;
  - Council Member;
  - Council Member;
  - Council Member;
  - Council Member.
- 6.2 For the purposes of the AC "National Team Athlete" is defined as an athlete who is at least 18 years of age and is recognized as an athlete who has been a member of any of the following teams or programs within the last four years:
  - Paralympic Games;
  - Parapan Am Games;
  - World Championships;
  - World Championship Qualification Tournaments;
  - Senior AAP Athlete;
  - Development AAP Athlete;

- High Performance Training Program Athletes (National Training Centre, NextGEN);
- A retired athlete from any of the above Senior National Teams, who are not employed by WRC and/or actively coaching at the national or international level.

6.3 The Members of the AC shall include:

- A blend of genders
- A blend of active and recently-retired athletes.

## **7.0 Terms**

For the first election of the AC Members, half of the members will serve a two year term and the other half of the members will serve a one year term. Thereafter, AC Members shall be elected for two years terms.

Members may be removed from the AC if:

- they are in violation of WRC's Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy;
- A vote of non-confidence supported by at least three-quarters of AC Members;
- Resignation.

## **8.0 Nominations process for Athlete Council Chair and Council Members**

8.1 Athlete Council Chair will be nominated and elected at the first meeting of the AC

8.2 Council Members:

- An eligible National Team Athlete may nominate themselves for an AC position or by another National Team Athlete.
- Nominees will be called upon to accept or reject their nominations where necessary.
- Eligible National Team Athletes hold one vote. See next section for voting rights.
- An electronic election will be held with the names of the eligible nominees.
- Up to seven nominees who receive the most votes will be appointed to the AC.

## **9.0 Voting**

9.1 Decision-making during AC meetings is by majority vote.

9.2 Each AC Member will have one (1) vote and there are no proxy votes.

9.3 In the event of a tie, the vote of the Chair will be the tie-breaking vote.

## **10. Meetings**

A majority of AC Members, but no less than three Members, shall constitute a quorum.

The AC will meet at least two times per year in person or virtually, and may meet more frequently as required by telephone or electronically (Zoom, Microsoft Teams etc.). Meetings of the AC will be at the call of the Chair, or at the call of the Vice-Chair at the request of the Chair.

### **11. Resources**

The overall budget for the AC will be determined by the WRC CEO. The AC will have authority over expenditures within the overall approved budget. The AC may from time to time have WRC staff assigned to assist with its work.

The AC shall carry on its operations without monetary gain to its Members.

### **12. Reporting**

12.1 Meeting minutes and notes will be maintained by the AC Chair.

12.2 Minutes of meetings will record time, date, participants and any recommendations.

12.3 Updates provided for WRC Board of Directors meetings.

12.4 The AC will present the WRC Board of Directors annually with an athlete report reflecting the business and recommendations of the AC at the end of each competitive season or fiscal year.

12.5 The AC will create a written report which will be included in the annual WRC report.

### **13. Conflict of Interest**

To ensure open and transparent meetings, members will be asked to disclose any conflicts of interest at the start of each meeting. (A conflict of interest is defined as a person or organization involved in multiple interests, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest could involve working against another).

### **14. Approval and Review**

These terms of reference were approved by the WRC Board of Directors (**Insert Date**).

This document will be reviewed annually by the AC and the WRC Board of Directors.

It will be updated by the WRC Board of Directors as required.