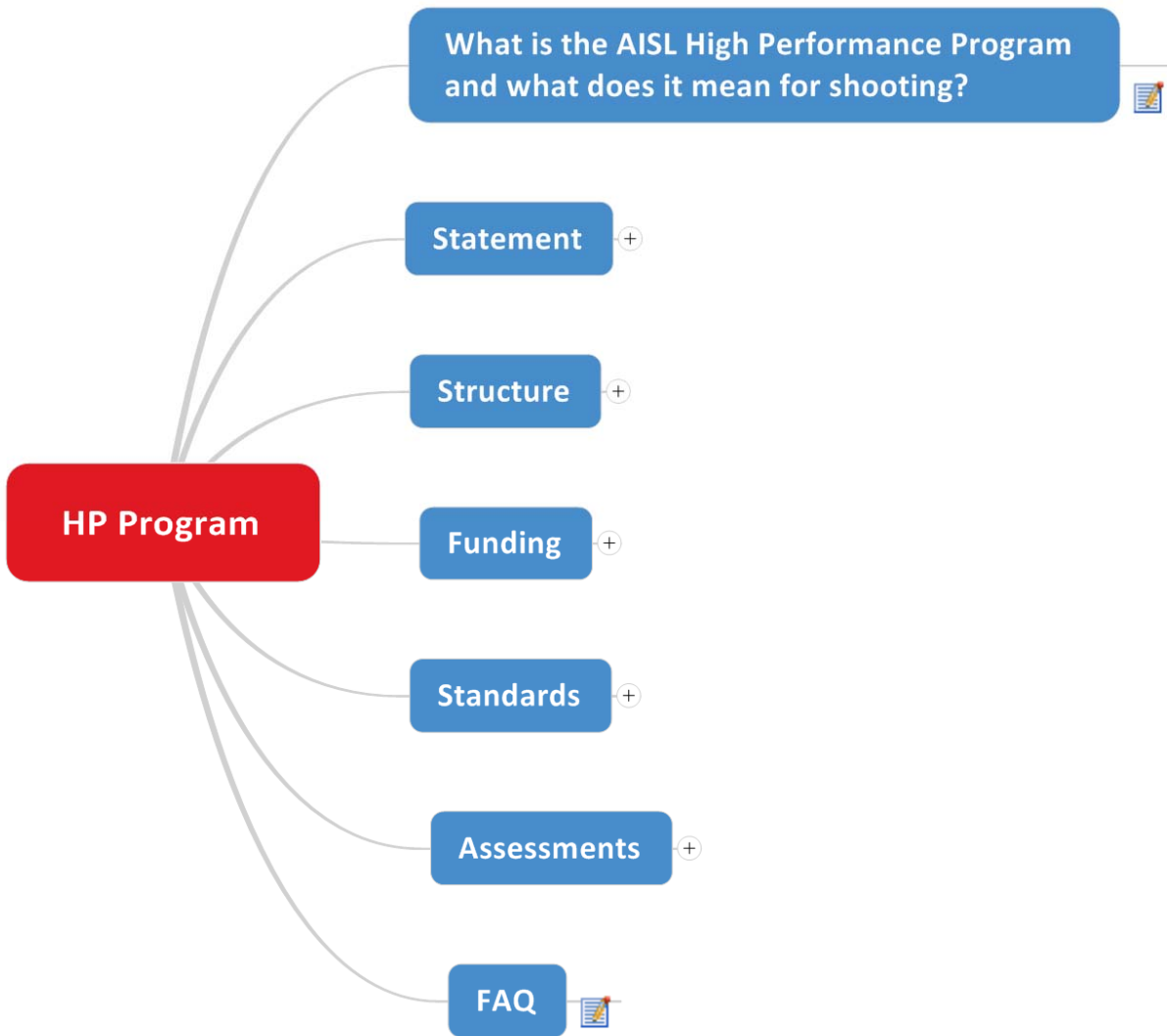




HP Program Plan



What is the AISL High Performance Program and what does it mean for shooting?

Much has been said about the High Performance Program and indeed the question is oft asked, "how does it benefit the sport overall?" In the first instance it is necessary to understand that the Program is geared toward the top level of the sport, which is those few athletes, across the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines that are capable of winning medals at those events. As a sport we all benefit from the results achieved internationally and, in particular, from those of our Olympian, Paralympian and Commonwealth Games medal winning athletes.

It is NOT just about sending teams away which is the general perception and expectation in the past. The idea of sending teams away with the thought or hope that with international experience the medals will come is false; the travel is only a very small part of what is required. The international scores and medals will come, but only to those who are capable of shooting those scores daily, in practice and at local competitions first.

Importantly the PQS is only a minimum requirement; across all sports at the high performance end there is a need to demonstrate and achieve repeatability of the world benchmark. The following may assist in understanding what is required.

In discussing the importance of repeatability and peak performance there is a view in shooting circles that the achievement of a PQS by an athlete justifies national selection, funding etc. The argument runs that, for example, 120 in men's trap or 580 in women's sport pistol would have won a medal at one of the World Cups last year so therefore it should be the PQS.

If I am (theoretical scenario here) an athlete who has shot that score once in ideal conditions, and maybe 118 on one other occasion. My average best in domestic competition is in the 117 region. Clearly I deserve national selection and HP support! It is after all well known that at benchmark events the poorest qualifying performance for finals is often below the "PQS" standard, and medals are often won with pretty modest performances, compared with world records. So my 118 will get me into the finals, and might even get me a medal!

What this view ignores is that usually every athlete that gets to finals has shot the "PQS" qualifier numerous times under varied conditions, and has peaked at well above that standard on a number of occasions. Then, under the pressure of benchmark event (BME) conditions, possibly exacerbated by unfavourable conditions, they can "fall back" on a "PQS" qualifier or better to achieve medal winning performances. The "one off" athlete, on the other hand, usually cracks under the pressure of BME, or finds the conditions don't suit, or gets the immediate pre-BME preparation wrong, or maybe even does his best, which under those conditions, isn't good enough.

The moral to all this is that not only should the achievement of a PQS not be seen as a right of entry for selection or support, it should be seen as a **minimum** prerequisite, should have been demonstrated on numerous occasions, and under varied conditions of climate and competition pressure. Only this repeatability demonstrates worthiness for selection and support, not the one-off performance, this all relates to performance based selection at the highest level - obviously different criteria need to be considered for development athletes.

The accepted view is that a minimum of five, preferably ten repeats, represent the cut off point to demonstrate "proven" performance.

The above scenario is a comment from another sport in which I have adapted by substituting our sports terminology.

Australian International Shooting Limited (AISL) is the body charged with the task of winning medals and is funded by the Australian Sports Commission. The High Performance Program (HPP) is managed by the High Performance Program Management Committee (HPPMC) which is made up of representatives from the member bodies, the national coaches, the high performance manager and a representative from the Sports Commission.

The current focus is on achieving medals in New Delhi in 2010 and London 2012; to this end those few top athletes will be supported via a new program as described within this presentation.

The program is, unashamedly, not about promoting the top scoring Australians but rather those Australians who are able to achieve medal results internationally. Until now, qualifying scores have been set at an achievable standard that required a stretch to reach, in order to attract more shooters to the squad level; however the funds available cannot hope to provide adequate support for the numbers able to achieve these scores and so those who are truly seeking "medal winner status" will need to be capable of much more than just scores.

The program is also about nurturing that next generation of athletes, who will someday represent Australia at the highest level. To this end the Focus 2016 squad has been introduced.

The HPP is about winning medals.

The program employs three full time coaches to drive the implementation of programs designed to win medals at the highest international level, and to assist the athletes and their coaches in achieving set goals. On the sports science front we will work with the individual athletes and coaches to ensure appropriate access to agreed services that will improve their preparation for successful competition, including sports psychologists, sports nutrition, masseur and physiotherapists and pertinent medical support. The program assists with travel, training, daily allowances whilst overseas, ammunition and target costs.

The flow down effect from these program areas is that the knowledge gained can be disseminated to coaches by invitations to selected coaches to attend coaching workshops and national camps conducted by the National High Performance Coaches (NHPC). This information can then be feed through the club, state and national federations programs reducing the need to fund research on such items enabling them to use these savings to spend on their coaching and athlete development programs.

The funding also provides the opportunity for AISL to develop programs such as:

- the generic portion in both coaching and officiating courses,
- operational policies which have been drawn up by legal resources and approved by the board may be used by the member bodies and,
- also conduct major competitions which are an integral part of the program.

This reduces the need for member bodies and clubs to spend money and time in such areas, allowing them to allocate their funds and resources to development of the next generation of shooters.

HP Squad athletes will receive support funds to assist in their travel and training costs. ***This money is not unencumbered though; recipients will need to agree to a plan for their own development in the run up to London, the demands of which will be rigorous.*** A medal at the Olympic/Paralympic Games means our sport will be in the public eye and the more successful we are, the more likely the sport is to grow.

Athletes will be monitored using various 'tools' including the AISL Ranking List, a decaying points system and history graphs which all show form achieved both here and overseas dating back to the nineties.

These tools are invaluable in determining whether a competitor who may consistently shoot the qualifying score in Australia but is unable to achieve under pressure at the major events should be sent, bearing in mind our stated goal is to medal. Conversely, the same tools serve to highlight problems such as just described and may enable us to assist an athlete in overcoming those areas of concern.

It is important to understand that the role of the National High Performance Coach is not restricted to that of an individual coach, rather someone who develops and coordinates a national program designed to win Olympic medals. Each competitor should be working on a program agreed by the NHPC with a coach either at the club, state or national level to 'hone' their skills. Here again clubs and states should be spending monies to support a coach; this need not be large sums but at least cover the incidentals such as petrol, phone etc.

Those coaches should then work in with the National HP Coach to ensure the success of their athletes, whether that be at national or international level. This is not to say that the National HP Coach does not or will not provide individual attention, but it is impossible to be everywhere; many sports operate on a centralised training centre and athletes need to weigh up the pros and cons of moving to that centre.

Details of the new plan will be made available on the web site www.ausshooting.org

Statement

- The HP Program & Squads are separate to Team Selection Policy.
- HP Squad membership does not mean you will go to all Events, rather you will work out a schedule in conjunction with the NHC
- making a team does not mean you are a squad member
- **The PQS is NOT a travelling score**

Structure

The HP Squad will comprise of 4 levels, known as; The HP Squad, the B Squad, the Focus 2016 Squad and the EAD (Elite Athletes with a Disability) Squad.

Qualifications for Consideration to the HP Squad: The athlete must be committed to the 2010-2016 program, have a training & competition plan, developed in conjunction with their personal coach and the AISL HP Coach; must have signed an athletes agreement

The HP Squad is split across 3 Levels and the following details the entry level; (must also have a current PQS)

GOLD

Medal at Olympic/Paralympic Games or Medal at Benchmark Event or Medal at The World Cup Final

SILVER

Finalist at Olympic/Paralympic Games or ISSF top 8 ranking or Qualify & compete at The World Cup Final

BRONZE

a minimum of 2 finals at World Cups or five PQS

The B Squad

Entry to this squad is that the athlete must be considered a genuine Commonwealth Games Medal Chance or by appointment by the HPPMC following the HP Coaches recommendation with supporting reasons.

Focus 2016 Squad

This squad will cater for up to four from each of the three shooting sports at the Olympics and is designed to fast track those members into the 2016 Olympics with entry based on recommendation and supporting reasons by the HP Coach. Athletes must within 12 months demonstrate they will be capable of achieving PQS in the near future

EAD

review still in progress

Caveat to the above: Athletes who meet specific criteria will be eligible for selection into the AISL HP, B or FOCUS 2016 SQUADS. Athletes with potential may also be selected to join the Squad (regardless of PQS status) at the National Head Coach recommendation. If due to health reasons or extenuating circumstance a person who has not completed the specific selection criteria, but is deemed to have potential to reach Olympic/Paralympic Games may be invited into the Squad in certain circumstances by an AISL Selection Panel decision. Athletes who competed in the 2008 Olympic Games and who have a program agreed by the NHPC, may be excused from maintaining an appropriate training regime and will carry forward their eligibility to be considered for events in 2010 onwards, provided they actually gain and accept national selection.

Funding

Funding shown in the accompanying chart is indicative as at the time of publishing and is subject to funding levels. The funding is the amount allocated to a squad member to enable an agreed plan for the twelve month period and is not transferable to cash.

Standards

- Agree to program with personal coach and AISL National Coach
- Training Camps; agree to minimum upfront with NHC; non attendance to agreed, will be penalised
- Competitions; agree to program balanced with training against funds
- Reports from athletes and coaches; Monthly
- Match Fitness; agree up front on program which should include physical & mental conditioning
- Squad membership agreement; Read & Sign, Code of ethics

Assessments

Squad membership will be assessed

6 monthly on;

- demonstrated commitment to the plan in the areas of training
 - both physical and mental and
 - achievement of at least one PQS Squad Training Camps may, where there is full attendance and a control competition is run, qualify as PQS
 - a review of competition results vs training and overseas vs Australian results
- an athlete who has met all their agreed targets would stay in HP Program
- if targets are not met, then a review of their status will be undertaken by the HPPMC, which may result in removal from HPP
- a review of the personal coach, athletes and HP Coach relationship will also be taken into consideration

12 monthly;

- as above with a review of reasons to continue and with the same conditions on overall performance
- including a review of the next 12 months plan

Tie Breaking

For AISL Ranking: As shoot offs are not possible then the last match final score will be used to break the tie

For Entry to Squads: As shoot offs are not possible then the finals score of International Competition (not Oceania) will be used in the following manner

- Last event Highest score including finals e.g. 12x+2x=14x
- If still equal, then the average of the three highest

For Team Selection:

If equal then the position will be determined by a shoot off following the finals; or where discretion is to be used then the matter will be decided in favour of the athlete with the best current international performances. The selection criteria will nominate which process will be used, bearing in mind our stated goal is to medal.

FAQs

- Question:** I have shot the PQS so am I in the team to?
- Answer:** Not necessarily, positions will be filled first from the various HP Squads depending on those athletes programs. A PQS is the minimum prerequisite. If space is available and you meet all the requirements you may be offered a self funding position.
- Question:** How do I get international experience if AISL will not send me to a world cup or world championship?
- Answer:** The best option for those seeking entry/selection is to go to the various Grand Prix, National Championships or other sponsored shoots and build their ranking.
- Question:** Clearly, last year there was discontent over the scores the High Performance Committee set for international travel, have you lowered them?
- Answer:** You are right, there certainly was and probably is still some discontentment, however the board supported the High Performance Committee and clearly the results from the World Cups show they (the scores) are on the mark. In fact the scores in the rifle program have risen significantly.
I must also point out that the score is only a pre-requisite and shooting that does not necessarily guarantee a place on an Australian Team.
- Question:** Is there is any requirement for shooters to attend the international circuit such as in other sports prior to being selected for World Cups and Championships?
- Answer:** We strongly recommend that those aspiring to reach the top should attend the shooting grand prix circuit which has many world class competitions open to all. An athlete should be doing their "apprenticeship" if you like on the grand prix circuit, however this is always a case of trying to balance the costs against performances and it is here that state and national federation support is required to assist those aspiring to become Olympians.
- Question:** We keep referring to shooters as athletes, but surely this is a contradiction, most of the time they are standing still, there does not appear to be much physical effort required, like other sports.
- Answer:** There has been a tendency for people and shooters not to understand the relevance of being fit, obviously they do not need to be built like swimmers or runners, but a degree of both physical and strong aerobic fitness will directly enhance the quality of preparation for successful medal performance. Evidence clearly points to a fit person being able to cope with the stress of competition far better than an unfit person. We have introduced more sports science and medicine into the program in recognition of the need to improve performance and change attitudes within the sport, developing a stronger work ethic.