PADDLE EUROPE ANNUAL AWARDS

Regulations and Award Criteria

November 2026

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ARTICLE 1 — PREAMBLE

Canoeing promotes healthy lifestyles and personal development, while fostering perseverance, integrity, respect and commitment. Sports organisations have a responsibility to uphold these values and recognise individuals and teams whose achievements inspire the wider community.

Paddle Europe recognises the outstanding contributions of athletes, teams, officials, volunteers, administrators and other members of the European canoeing community. The Paddle Europe Annual Awards celebrate sporting excellence, exemplary conduct and sustained service to the development of canoeing in Europe.

These regulations establish a transparent and consistent framework for determining eligibility, submitting nominations, evaluating candidates and selecting award recipients.

ARTICLE 2 — MAIN GOALS

The main goals of the Paddle Europe Annual Awards are to:

- recognise outstanding sporting performances, exemplary ethical behaviour and long-standing contributions to European canoeing;
- encourage dedication, excellence, integrity and positive role models across all recognised canoeing disciplines;
- bring the European canoeing community together through an annual awards ceremony;
- increase the visibility of European canoeing, its athletes, events and contributors;
- ensure a fair, transparent and inclusive recognition process, supported by clearly defined eligibility criteria and good governance principles;
- strengthen engagement with National Federations, athletes and supporters through official communication and digital platforms.

ARTICLE 3 — PERIODICITY AND REFERENCE PERIOD

The Paddle Europe Annual Awards shall be presented annually, normally between February and April, at an official Paddle Europe gathering. In odd-numbered years, the ceremony should normally take place during the closing dinner of the Paddle Europe Congress; in even-numbered years, at an official Paddle Europe Board gathering. The Board may approve an alternative venue or occasion.

Sport Awards recognise performances achieved during the preceding calendar year (1 January to 31 December). Recognition Awards may take into account contributions over a longer period, in accordance with their category criteria. The Board shall confirm the schedule and ceremony arrangements each year.

ARTICLE 4 — AWARD CATEGORIES AND ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Sport Awards

Sport Awards are open to eligible athletes and teams representing National Federations affiliated with Paddle Europe, or clubs affiliated with those federations, across recognised canoeing disciplines. Achievements in competitions at European and world level during the reference year may be considered. Candidates must meet the requirements of their respective categories.

Best Male Athlete

Recognises an individual male athlete whose achievements during the reference year demonstrate outstanding performance, consistency and excellence at European and/or world level, whether representing a National Federation or an affiliated club.

Best Female Athlete

Recognises an individual female athlete under the same principles and standards applied to the Best Male Athlete category.

Best Team

Recognises outstanding collective sporting achievements by a defined team of two or more athletes. Eligible teams include crew boats, relay teams, Canoe Polo teams and national teams competing as a collective unit in any recognised canoeing discipline. A National Federation may be nominated as a national team where the nomination is supported by a clearly identifiable collective competitive achievement; an overall federation medal tally shall not, on its own, constitute a team performance.

For all Sport Awards, eligibility and evaluation shall be based on the achievements of the nominated athlete or clearly identified collective unit during the reference year.

4.2 Recognition Awards

Achievement Award

Recognises individuals who, over at least ten years, have made a significant and sustained contribution to the development, organisation or promotion of canoeing, with a demonstrable impact at European level. Eligible nominees may include international technical officials, volunteers, coaches, event organisers, technical committee members, sports administrators and other contributors. Consideration shall be given to long-standing voluntary service and lasting positive impact.

Fair Play Award

Recognises an athlete, coach, team, official, referee, volunteer or other individual involved in European canoeing who has demonstrated exemplary fair play, integrity, respect, solidarity or sportsmanship. The recognised act may occur during or outside competition, if it has a clear connection to canoeing and can be substantiated.

Honorary Recognition

This is the highest institutional distinction granted by Paddle Europe and continues the tradition of institutional recognition established by the European Canoe Association. It may be awarded to current or former members of the Paddle Europe Board of Directors whose exceptional leadership, dedicated service and lasting contributions have significantly influenced the organisation, its governance and the development of European canoeing.

Additional categories may be introduced in future editions following an evaluation of the programme and approval by the Paddle Europe Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 5 — CRITERIA AND EVALUATION

Each nomination shall be assessed against the category-specific criteria set out below. For Sport Awards, performances during the reference year shall be evaluated in context, taking into account the level of competition and the characteristics of each discipline.

5.1 Best Male Athlete and Best Female Athlete

- Sporting results and achievements in competitions at European and world level during the reference year.
- Performance at major championships, considering the level and significance of the competition.
- Consistency and quality of results over the season.
- Exceptional sporting achievements or notable progress, including records where relevant.
- Commitment to sporting values and conduct consistent with the reputation of Paddle Europe.

5.2 Best Team

- Results and collective performances in major competitions at European and world level during the reference year.
- Strength and significance of the team achievement relative to the type of team, event and discipline.
- Consistency, teamwork and collective contribution to success.
- Notable achievements, including titles, records or other exceptional results where relevant.
- Fair play, cohesion and sporting conduct.
- Crew boats, relay teams, Canoe Polo teams and national teams shall be assessed in the context of their respective competitions; they shall not be compared solely on the number of medals won.

5.3 Achievement Award

- At least ten years of active involvement in canoeing.
- Significance and sustained impact of the nominee's contribution to the development, organisation or promotion of canoeing at European level.
- Evidence of dedication, leadership and service, with recognition of voluntary contributions.
- Commitment to integrity, ethical conduct and the values of European canoeing.
- A lasting positive influence on athletes, officials, events, organisations or future generations.
- Length of service alone shall not determine the award; the overall quality and impact of the contribution shall be decisive.

5.4 Fair Play Award

- A specific, identifiable act or pattern of conduct demonstrating exceptional sportsmanship, integrity, respect, inclusion or assistance to others.
- Positive impact on participants, officials, spectators or the wider canoeing community.
- Evidence or credible testimony substantiating the nomination.
- Conduct that goes beyond normal expectations and serves as an example to others.

5.5 Honorary Recognition

- Current or former membership of the Paddle Europe Board of Directors.
- Exceptional commitment and service to Paddle Europe.
- Significant contributions to institutional development, governance or international standing.
- Leadership, integrity and commitment to European canoeing values.
- An enduring positive legacy for the organisation and its member federations.
- Honorary Recognition is exceptional in nature and need not be presented every year.

ARTICLE 6 — NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Phase 1 — Nominations

Nominations may be submitted by the Paddle Europe Board of Directors, Technical Committees, Athletes Committee, affiliated National Federations and other recognised Paddle Europe governance bodies. Each nomination shall include the nominee's name, the award category, a justification and supporting information relevant to the applicable criteria.

Phase 2 — Eligibility Review

An Awards Committee appointed by the Paddle Europe Board of Directors shall review each nomination's eligibility and supporting information and may request clarification or additional evidence before shortlisting.

The Board shall determine the Committee's composition and mandate. Committee members with a direct conflict of interest concerning a nomination shall not participate in its assessment or recommendation.

Phase 3 — Shortlisting

For each Sport Award, the Awards Committee shall propose a shortlist of up to five eligible nominees for approval by the Board of Directors. The Board shall approve the final shortlist before public voting begins.

Recognition Award nominations (achievement award) shall be submitted to the Board with the Awards Committee's eligibility assessment. The Board may request further information and is not required to establish a public shortlist for these categories.

An award need not be presented in every category each year. Where no eligible nominations are received, or where the Board determines that no nomination sufficiently meets the applicable criteria, the Board may decide not to confer the relevant award. For Sport Awards, any such decision shall be taken before public voting opens and communicated accordingly.

ARTICLE 7 — VOTING AND FINAL DECISIONS

7.1 Sport Awards — Public and Board Voting

The winners of the Best Male Athlete, Best Female Athlete and Best Team categories shall be determined through two equally weighted voting components: Public Voting (50%) and Paddle Europe Board Voting (50%). In each component, nominees shall be ranked according to the number of valid votes received and awarded points based on that ranking.

Each eligible Board member shall have one vote per Sport Award category. Each member of the public may cast only one vote per category through a single official Paddle Europe voting system, promoted across official digital channel. Appropriate verification and anti-duplication measures shall be applied to prevent duplicate or fraudulent votes, while respecting applicable data protection requirements.

In each voting component, the nominee receiving the highest number of valid votes shall receive 5 points, the second-ranked nominee 4 points, the third-ranked nominee 3 points, the fourth-ranked nominee 2 points and the fifth-ranked nominee 1 point. Where fewer than five nominees are shortlisted, points shall be awarded from 5 downwards according to their ranking. Abstentions and invalid votes shall not be included in the ranking.

Points allocation and final calculation

Final Score = Public Voting Points + Board Voting Points (maximum: 10 points)

Illustrative example

Nominee	Public Voting Points	Board Voting Points	Final Score
Athlete A	5	3	8
Athlete B	4	5	9
Athlete C	3	4	7

In this example, Athlete B wins with 9 points: 4 points from the public ranking and 5 points from the Board ranking.

The nominee with the highest combined score shall be declared the winner. If nominees receive the same number of votes within either voting component, they shall share the same ranking and points; the next ranking position(s) shall be skipped accordingly (for example, two nominees ranked first shall both receive 5 points, and the next nominee shall receive 3 points). In the event of a tie in the combined score, the nominee with the higher Board Voting Points shall win. If the tie persists, the Board shall determine the winner through an additional vote.

The published results shall show the ranking and points awarded in the public and Board voting components, together with the combined final score for each nominee.

Voting records, provisional rankings and the identities of winners shall remain confidential until the official announcement. Awards Committee and Board members shall not disclose non-public nomination information or provisional results. Following the ceremony or official announcement, Paddle Europe shall publish the validated Sport Awards results without disclosing the personal data of individual voters.

7.2 Recognition Awards — Board Decision Only

The Achievement Award, Fair Play Award and Honorary Recognition shall be decided exclusively by the Paddle Europe Board of Directors, through formal deliberation and approval. No public voting shall apply to these categories.

The Board shall consider the relevant eligibility requirements, evidence and evaluation criteria. Recipients shall be approved by a simple majority of valid votes cast by eligible Board members, subject to Paddle Europe's applicable quorum and voting rules. Abstentions shall not count as valid votes. A Board member with a direct conflict of interest concerning a nomination shall not participate in the related deliberation or vote.

7.3 Annual Timetable

The indicative annual timetable shall be as follows:

Period	Stage	Main action
December	Nominations	Submission of nominations for the preceding or ending sporting year
January	Review and voting	Eligibility review, shortlisting and Sport Awards voting; Board deliberation on Recognition Awards
February to April	Presentation	Official presentation of awards at the annual Paddle Europe ceremony

The Board shall approve and communicate the exact opening and closing dates each year, considering the date of the awards ceremony. Sport Awards shall recognise the calendar year ending in December immediately before the ceremony.

ARTICLE 8 — AWARDS CEREMONY AND BUDGET

Paddle Europe shall cover the production costs of the awards and the hospitality provided to award recipients during the official ceremony. Recipients' travel expenses shall normally be borne by the recipients themselves or their National Federations.

Hospitality funded by Paddle Europe shall be limited to one representative per award, unless the Board approves an exception. The Board may establish an annual budget and make additional arrangements for the ceremony.

ARTICLE 9 — ADMINISTRATION AND FINAL PROVISIONS

The Paddle Europe Board of Directors shall oversee the implementation of these regulations and may issue operational instructions consistent with their principles. Any amendments to the award categories, eligibility requirements, voting rules or evaluation procedures shall require Board approval and should be communicated before the annual nomination process opens.

The Board is responsible for appointing the Awards Committee, validating final shortlists and results, and ensuring that nomination and voting procedures are administered fairly and consistently. Any suspected voting irregularities shall be reviewed before results are confirmed.

These regulations shall enter into force upon approval by the Paddle Europe Board of Directors.