



WPIH Women's Development Pathway
2025 Edition



About World Para Ice Hockey

- World Para Ice Hockey (WPIH) is the international governing body for Para ice hockey, operating under the **International Paralympic Committee (IPC)**. It manages the sport's governance, development, and international competitions, including the prestigious **World Championships** and **Paralympic Winter Games Para Ice Hockey tournament**.
- WPIH is dedicated to advancing inclusivity in sports by supporting athletes with physical impairments, ensuring the sport's sustainability, and building global participation. Para ice hockey is a high-paced and physical sport played on sledges, with players using specialized sticks to compete at the highest level.



Our Vision and Mission

Vision

To lead, develop, and promote the sport of Para ice hockey globally.

Mission

To empower athletes with impairments through equitable opportunities in competitive sports while fostering awareness and inclusivity on and off the ice.

Strategic Priorities

Development

- Empower grassroots programs to attract and train athletes worldwide.
- Focus on gender diversity to increase participation by women and underrepresented groups.

Competitions

- Host world-class events, including World Championships, **Women's World Championships**, and other flagship tournaments.

Operations

- Establish strategic partnerships to enhance infrastructure, deliver exceptional events, and expand the sport's reach.

Women's Development Pathway



Women's World Championships

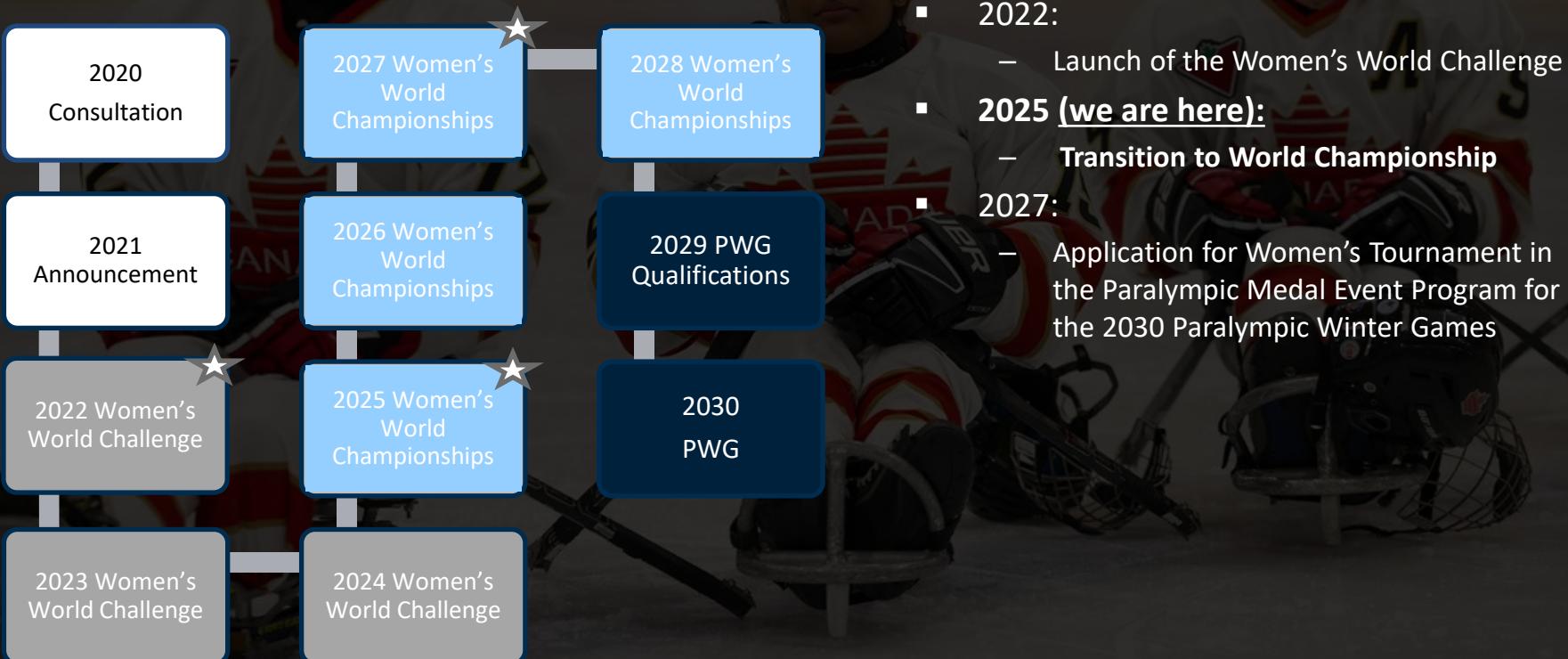
Over the past three years, through the launch of the Women's World Challenge, WPIH has increased female participation from 1% to 20%. As a result, WPIH is proud to confirm that it is moving to the next phase of the Women's Development Pathway with the **Dolny Kubin 2025 WPIH Women's World Championships** scheduled 26-31 August 2025.

Participating Teams:

1. USA
2. CAN
3. GBR
4. NOR
5. AUS
6. WRD

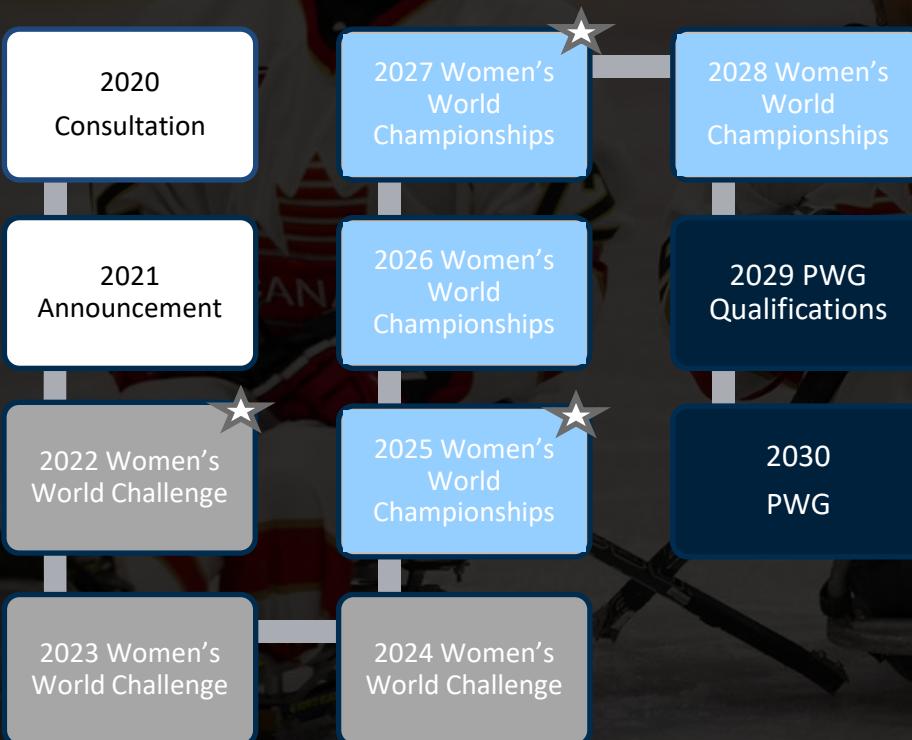
Women's Development Pathway

Key Milestones in the Development of Women's Para Ice Hockey



Women's Development Pathway

Eligibility Criteria for Inclusion in the Paralympic Medal Program

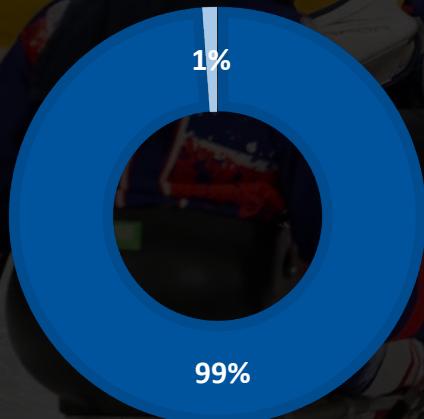


- A minimum of 8 national teams is required
- National teams must represent at least 3 regions
- 2 World Championships **must** have been played at the time of the application
- All details can be found [HERE](#)

WPIH Gender Representation

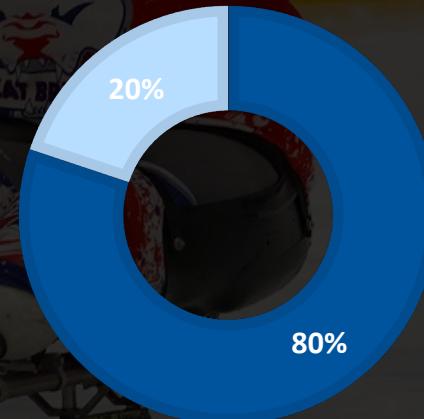
2021-2022 SEASON

■ Male ■ Female



2024-2025 SEASON

■ Male ■ Female



Where do women play Para ice hockey?

Recognized National Programs

Australia
Canada
Great Britain
Korea
Norway
USA

Developing Programs

China
Czechia
Japan
France

Developing athletes

Finland
Kazakhstan
Germany
Slovakia
Sweden
Thailand



GET INVOLVED –
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2020-2030 Women's Development Pathway

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1. Purpose

1.1 This document sets out the official Women's Development Pathway of World Para Ice Hockey (WPIH).

1.2 The purpose of the Women's Development Pathway is to establish a structured, progressive framework through which women athletes can access, develop within, and advance through Para ice hockey from entry-level participation to elite international competition.

1.3 The pathway is designed to support sustainable national programme development and to align with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) criteria for potential inclusion in the Paralympic Winter Games medal programme.

2. Scope and Application

2.1 This policy applies to:

- All WPIH-recognised national programmes
- All WPIH-sanctioned women's competitions and development initiatives
- National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) and partner organisations engaged in women's Para ice hockey

2.2 This framework provides guidance for programme planning, competition delivery, and long-term investment decisions related to women's Para ice hockey.

3. Governance Context

3.1 World Para Ice Hockey is the international governing body responsible for the global governance, development, and delivery of Para ice hockey.

3.2 WPIH operates under the authority of the International Paralympic Committee and aligns its policies with IPC strategic priorities, including gender equity, universality, and sustainable sport development.

3.3 The Women's Development Pathway is embedded within WPIH's broader sport development and governance framework.

4. Strategic Objectives

4.1 The Women's Development Pathway has the following strategic objectives:

4.1.1 To increase sustainable global participation of women athletes in Para ice hockey

4.1.2 To support the establishment and consolidation of national women's Para ice hockey programmes

4.1.3 To provide structured and progressive international competition opportunities

4.1.4 To establish a recognised elite women's Para ice hockey competition system

4.1.5 To position women's Para ice hockey for potential inclusion in the Paralympic Winter Games medal programme

5. Pathway Structure

5.1 The Women's Development Pathway is structured across four progressive levels.

5.2 Progression through the pathway is based on programme maturity, competition readiness, and compliance with WPIH regulations and standards.

5.1 Level 1 – Entry and Exposure

5.1.1 Objective To introduce women athletes to Para ice hockey and identify emerging talent.

5.1.2 Key Components

- Introductory Para ice hockey programmes and camps
- Mixed-gender participation environments
- National talent identification initiatives
- Athlete classification and eligibility pathways

5.1.3 Outcomes

- Increased access to Para ice hockey for women athletes
- Formation of national women-identified athlete pools

5.2 Level 2 – Structured Development Competition

5.2.1 Objective To provide women-specific development-focused international competition environments.

5.2.2 Key Components

- Women's World Challenge
- Invitational and regional women's tournaments
- Minimum roster, staffing, and competition standards
- Development of women-specific coaching, officiating, and technical pathways

5.2.3 Outcomes

- Regular international competition exposure
- Strengthened national programme structures
- Improved athlete retention and performance progression

5.3 Level 3 – Elite International Competition

5.3.1 Objective To establish a recognised elite women's Para ice hockey competition governed by WPIH.

5.3.2 Key Components

- Women's World Championships
- Standardised competition regulations and eligibility criteria
- Formal event delivery, officiating, and medical standards

5.3.3 Milestone The inaugural Women's World Championships will be delivered in August 2025.

5.3.4 Outcomes

- Establishment of an elite international competition benchmark
- Clear performance reference points for national programmes

5.4 Level 4 – Paralympic Integration

5.4.1 Objective To align women's Para ice hockey with IPC medal-event eligibility criteria.

5.4.2 Key Criteria

- A minimum of eight active national teams
- Representation across at least three IPC regions
- Delivery of at least two Women's World Championships
- Demonstrated organisational and financial sustainability

5.4.3 Status WPIH is actively structuring the Women's Development Pathway to meet these criteria.

6. Evidence of Progress

6.1 Since the launch of the Women's World Challenge in 2022, female participation in Para ice hockey has increased from approximately one per cent to nearly 20 per cent of the global athlete population.

6.2 Key contributing factors include:

- The introduction of women-specific international competition opportunities
- Increased visibility and legitimacy of women's Para ice hockey
- Clear strategic commitment from WPIH
- Reduced structural barriers to entry at national level

7. National Programme Landscape

7.1 Recognised National Women's Programmes

7.1.1 The following programmes currently meet WPIH recognition standards and are eligible for elite international competition:

- Australia
- Canada
- Great Britain
- Norway
- United States of America

7.2 Emerging and Developing Programmes

7.2.1 The following programmes are engaged in pathway development through camps and national-level participation:

- China
- Czechia
- Finland
- France
- Japan
- Korea
- Kazakhstan
- Slovakia
- Sweden
- Thailand

7.2.2 WPIH will continue to support emerging programmes through targeted development initiatives and structured access to competition.

8. Alignment with IPC Medal-Event Criteria

8.1 The Women’s Development Pathway has been intentionally designed to align with the eligibility criteria established by the International Paralympic Committee for inclusion in the Paralympic Winter Games medal programme.

8.2 WPIH anticipates submitting a future application for inclusion following the delivery of the required number of Women’s World Championships and the achievement of minimum team and regional representation thresholds.

9. Future Priorities (2025–2030)

9.1 Key priorities for the next phase of the Women’s Development Pathway include:

- Expansion of Women’s World Championships participation
- Formalisation of qualification and ranking principles
- Continued growth of national women’s programmes
- Integration of the women’s pathway into WPIH’s long-term governance and strategic planning

10. Review and Governance

10.1 This policy framework will be reviewed on a cyclical basis in alignment with WPIH strategic planning cycles and IPC governance requirements.

10.2 Amendments will be informed by competition outcomes, programme growth, stakeholder feedback, and evolving IPC policies.