

Team USA Athletes' Commission
Delegation Event Flag Bearer Election Policy
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I. Section 1 Purpose.

Carrying our nation's flag into the Opening or Closing Ceremony of an international multi-sport event is an honor bestowed upon only a few athletes. Team USA is unique as a delegation in that our athletes drive the election process and elect the athletes they believe best represent Team USA. This policy outlines the roles, responsibilities and requirements of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), Internally Managed Sports (IMSs), National Governing Bodies (NGBs), athletes and Team USA Athletes' Commission (Team USA AC) in selecting the Team USA Flag Bearer for all delegation events.

The below policy is intended to facilitate a fair, athlete-driven process and should be adhered to in spirit although it may be modified by Team USA AC for any unanticipated circumstances, deadlines, etc. Team USA AC will communicate specific timelines and necessary information for each Games through the team leaders.

II. Section 2. Athlete Eligibility.

A. Flag Bearer Nominee. For an athlete to be eligible to be flag bearer they must:

1. Be willing to accept the nomination;
2. Plan to participate in the ceremony;
3. Be an accredited athlete (no alternates allowed);
4. Be in country, per the Organizing Committee (OCOG) period of stay guidelines, during the time of the respective ceremony they are running to be a flag bearer.

B. Voting Representative. For an athlete to be eligible to be the voting representative for Opening Ceremony they must:

1. Be an athlete other than the nominee and
2. Be willing to participate fully in each round of voting.

Even if an IMS/NGB chooses not to participate in the Opening Ceremony or is out of the country, those athletes should still select a voting representative to participate in the voting process.

Section 3. IMS/ NGB Nominee and Voting Representative Section.

Each eligible IMS/NGB should coordinate across disciplines to nominate two athletes of different gender identities and one voting representative from the sports organization. Once an IMS/NGB names the athletes selected for a delegation event, it is their duty to inform the athletes that they should nominate from amongst themselves athletes to serve as flag bearer(s) and the voting representative. Sport organizations may only abstain from nominating someone if the athletes elect to do so. Such a determination is not up to IMS/NGB staff.

A. Nominee Selection Process. The nominee selection process should be coordinated by NGB/IMS staff and will be conducted as follows:

1. Athletes should be given the opportunity to indicate if they would like to be considered for nomination as the flag bearer(s) nominee. Athletes should also have the opportunity to nominate each other. However, any nominated individual must be willing to accept the nomination.
2. The named team for the Delegation Event will then vote for two flag bearer nominees. The two people of different gender identities with the highest number of votes will be the IMS/NGB flag bearer nominees.
3. This process should be conducted twice for each Games. Once for Opening Ceremony and once for Closing Ceremony.
4. The team leader or other identified IMS/NGB staff member should submit the name, email address and phone number of the flagbearer nominees to Team USA AC staff.
5. The team leader or other identified IMS/NGB staff member should provide their flagbearer nominees with specific instructions to upload a 2-minute personal video or statement describing why they would be the best ambassador of Team USA to carry the flag. The video or statement can be done by the nominee or by another athlete on behalf of the nominee. **(Appendix 2)**

[Exact timelines and deadlines for the nominee submission will be communicated by Team USA Staff.]

B. Voting Representative Selection Process. *(Opening Ceremony Only)* The Voting Representative process should be coordinated by NGB/IMS staff and will be conducted as follows:

1. Athletes should be given the opportunity to indicate if they would like to be considered the voting representative for Opening Ceremony. Athletes should also have the opportunity to nominate each other. However, any nominated individual must be willing to accept the nomination.
2. The named team for the Delegation Event will then vote and the person with the highest number of votes will be the IMS/NGB voting representative.

3. The team leader or other identified IMS/NGB staff member should submit the name, email and phone number of the Voting Representative to Team USA AC staff.
4. The team leaders or other identified IMS/NGB staff member should provide the voting representatives with the specific instructions about the voting window and process. (**Appendix 1**)

[Exact timelines and deadlines for the nominee submission will be communicated by Team USA Staff.]

- C. **Exceptions.** An IMS/NGBs must follow the above processes unless an alternate process is presented to and approved by Team USA AC Leadership. Such an alternate process should be asked for approval prior before each Delegation Event.

Section 4. Election Process.

- A. **Opening Ceremony.** The voting process for the Opening Ceremony will be coordinated by the Team USA AC and will be conducted as follows:
1. All voting will take place in the USOPC Delegation App.
 2. Voting representatives may not vote for their own nominees in the first round.
 3. Voting representatives must vote for two people from different gender identities in each round.
 4. After each round, the field will be cut in half based on the number of votes received. If there is a tie on the cusp of the top ½, the tied candidates will be retained through the next round. If any candidate achieves 51% or more of the votes in a round, that candidate, will be selected as a flag bearer and removed from subsequent rounds of voting.
 5. Team USA AC Chair or their disinterested designee may be included in the vote to avoid a tie.
 6. The two top vote-getters of different gender identities that receive 51% or more of the votes will be the flag bearers.¹
 7. Once the election concludes, Team USA AC staff will work with the team leaders and USOPC Communications to coordinate the public announcement of the election results. Unselected nominees will not be told the election results prior to the public announcement.

¹ If the OCOG decides to have one flag bearer for Opening Ceremony the process used is as follows: The top two vote-getters, regardless of gender identity, from the first round will move to the second round.

B. Closing Ceremony. The voting process for the Closing Ceremony will be coordinated by the Team USA AC and will be conducted as follows:

1. All voting will take place in the USOPC Delegation App.
2. There will be NO voting representative as all credentialed athletes will be offered a chance to vote.
3. There will be two rounds of voting unless a winner receives 51% or more the votes in the first round.
4. The number of flag bearers is determined by the OCOG. The below process will be used based on that determination and information will be communicated by the Team USA AC.

i. If one flag bearer:

- a. Each credentialed athlete can vote for two athletes in the first round.
- b. The top two vote-getters, regardless of gender identity, from the first round will move to the second round.

ii. If two flag bearers:

- a. Each credentialed athlete can vote for two people from different gender identities in each round.
- b. The top two vote-getters of different gender identities (four total) will move to second round.
- c. The top two vote-getters of different gender identities that receive 51% or more of the votes will be the flag bearers.

5. Team USA AC Chair or their disinterested designee may be included in the vote to avoid a tie.
6. Once the election concludes, Team USA AC staff will work with the Team Leaders and USOPC Communications to coordinate the public announcement of the election results. Unselected nominees will not be told the election results prior to the public announcement).

Section 5. Disputes. Any disputes regarding flag bearer elections will be resolved by Team USA AC Leadership.

Appendix 1. Opening Ceremony Voting Representative Instructions

***All NGBs/IMS please provide your nominees with these instructions*

Dear Voting Representative,

Carrying our nation's flag into the Opening or Closing Ceremony of an international multi-sport event is an honor bestowed upon only a few athletes. We are unique as a delegation in that our athletes drive the election process and elect athletes they believe best represent Team USA. These procedures have been developed by Team USA Athletes' Commission and should be used in selecting the Team USA Flag Bearer.

Each nominee or their designee has the option to submit a 2-minute personal video or one-page written statement describing why they would be the best ambassador of Team USA to carry the flag. This statement or video will only be available to voting reps to help them make their voting decisions. The statements and videos can be found on the USOPC Delegation App in the resources section.

All voting will be taking place online via the form section of the Delegation App. All voting reps will be added to a whatsapp text group that will be comprised of just voting reps, and Team USA AC staff. This group is intended to be used for voting reps to discuss the candidates.

We ask that you please participate in every round of voting. Below is a summary of the voting process that will be used for opening ceremony:

1. All voting will take place in the USOPC Delegation App.
2. Voting representatives may not vote for their own nominees in the first round.
3. Voting representatives must vote for two people from different gender identities in each round.
4. After each round, the field will be cut in half based on the number of votes received. If there is a tie on the cusp of the top ½, the tied candidates will be retained through the next round. If any candidate achieves 51% or more of the votes in a round, that candidate, will be selected as a flag bearer and removed from subsequent rounds of voting.
5. Team USA AC Chair or their disinterested designee may be included in the vote to avoid a tie.
6. The two top vote-getters of different gender identities that receive 51% or more of the votes will be the flag bearers.²
7. Once the election concludes, Team USA AC staff will work with the team leaders and USOPC Communications to coordinate the public announcement of the election results. Unselected nominees will not be told the election results prior to the public announcement.

Sincerely,
Team USA AC Leadership

² If the OCOG decides to have one flag bearer for Opening Ceremony the process used is as follows: The top two vote-getters, regardless of gender identity, from the first round will move to the second round.

Appendix 2. Flag Bearer Nominee Instructions

***All NGBs/IMS please provide your nominees with these instructions*

Dear Nominee,

Carrying our nation's flag into the Opening or Closing Ceremony of an international multi-sport event is an honor bestowed upon only a few athletes. We are unique as a delegation in that our athletes drive the election process and elect athletes they believe best represent Team USA.

For the Opening Ceremony, voting representatives from each NGB voted to nominate two athletes of different gender identities. As a nominee, you have the option to submit a 2-minute personal video or one-page written statement describing why you would be the best ambassador of Team USA to carry the flag. You or your designee may submit a statement or video stating why you should be one of the flag bearers.

This statement or video will only be available to the voting reps to help them make their voting decisions. Please submit your statement or video before the first round of voting for Opening Ceremony by emailing teamusa.ac@teamusa-ac.org.

Sincerely,
Team USA AC Leadership