

## 2026 GENERAL WORLD TEAM TRIALS PROCEDURES

### I. Eligibility

1. The World Team Trials are open to all athletes eligible to represent the USA at the World Championships as governed by United World Wrestling (UWW) and USA Wrestling (USAW) rules. Athletes must be eligible to represent USA prior to the qualifying event entered.
2. Each competitor must meet style specific qualifications to take part in the World Team Trials process. Style specific requirements may be found at:
  - a. <https://www.themat.com/team-usa/team-selection-criteria>
3. For purposes of defining the classification of an “World Team Member”, this individual can be either the Final World Team Trials Champion or the World Championships Participant.
4. The competition will be contested by UWW rules except as modified by this document.
  - a. These procedures are based on UWW rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the selection procedures caused by a change in UWW rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected athletes immediately. The selection criteria are based on the latest information available to USA Wrestling. However, the selections are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically have not accounted for every possible contingency.

### II. Acceptance of Automatic Berth for 2025 Senior World Championship Medalists

1. A 2025 Senior World Championship medalist, competing in the same weight class (Men’s Freestyle, Women’s Freestyle, Greco-Roman), will be granted automatic berth according to each of the style specific procedures.
2. To receive an automatic berth in the World Team Trials, the 2025 Senior World Championship medalist must declare, in writing via email to: [cbickley@usawrestling.org](mailto:cbickley@usawrestling.org) their intent to accept the automatic berth, as well as the weight they will compete at, by: **6:00 PM (Eastern Time) on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

### III. World Team Trials Challenge Tournament

1. Seeding
  - a. Seeding will be done by the USA Wrestling National Staff
  - b. Data that will be used when determining World Team Trials Challenge Tournament seeding, in no specific order:
    - i. USA Wrestling Performance Index (PIN)
      1. <https://www.themat.com/news/2023/september/29/pin-ratings-to-separate-athletes-at-national-and-regional-events-pin-of-all-members-available-through-sortable-online-database>
    - ii. Head-to-head matches
    - iii. Common opponents
    - iv. National/International performances (i.e. tournament finishes)
2. Bracketing
  - a. Format to be line bracket double elimination to third place.

- b. Byes will be placed with seeded wrestlers first, in order of seed. If any byes are remaining, they will be placed in the brackets in accordance with the accepted system in use by USA Wrestling.
  - c. In certain situations, athletes earn an automatic berth to the Final Wrestle-Off. Each style has its own set of criteria. Please see the style specific criteria for details.
  - d. The finals will be a best-of-three format.
3. True Third
- a. In weights where the second-place finisher from the US Open or World Team Trials Challenge Tournament (the last qualifying event for that weight) has not wrestled the third-place finisher from the US Open or World Team Trials Challenge Tournament, they will wrestle one match during Final X to determine a true third place for ranking on the National Team. This is only the case in weights that have an automatic berth to the final wrestle-off.
4. National Team (paid stipend) will be in rank order #1 - #3.
5. Schedule and Weigh-Ins
- a. Weigh-ins will be held on the day of the competition and will be at scratch weight on day one and scratch weight on day two.
    - i. Any contestant who makes the finals of the World Team Trials, will be required to make weight on day #2. If either finalist does NOT make weight, the other finalist will be declared the winner and there will be no advancement in the tournament or national team ranking.
      - 1. i.e. the semi-final loser from that event will not advance to the finals.
      - 2. For purposes of determining National Team ranking, the vacated spot will not be filled.
  - b. Any of the qualifiers may elect to change weight classes to compete at another weight at the World Team Trials Challenge Tournament only. The contestant should notify USA Wrestling in advance of this intention, but a change in weight may be made at weigh-in.
  - c. A minimum of 30 minutes rest will occur between championship matches and a minimum of 20 minutes rest will elapse between consolation matches.

#### **IV. Final Wrestle-Off**

- 1. The Final Wrestle-Off of all weight classes will be contested in a best-of-three format.
  - a. In weight classes where an athlete has earned an automatic berth to the Final Wrestle-Off, the US Open Champion or World Team Trials Challenge Tournament champion will face the automatic finalist and the winner will be the World Team Member, except in the situation where an athlete earning automatic berth into the Final Wrestle-Off has been granted a delay under Article V.
  - b. If an athlete who earns an automatic berth into the Final Wrestle-Off is granted a delay in accordance with Article V or fails to make weight.
    - i. If the athlete earning the automatic berth is granted a delay in accordance with Article V, the winner of the Trials Tournament will face the athlete granted the delay at a date and in a format in accordance with Article V.
    - ii. If the athlete earning the automatic berth fails to make weight, the winner of the US Open or World Team Trials Tournament is the 2026 World Team Member.
      - 1. If the athlete earning the automatic berth fails to make weight, that athlete will be declared the #2 ranked National Team athlete at that weight.
    - iii. If either finalist, from the US Open or the World Team Trials Challenge

Tournament, fails to make weight, the opposing athlete is the 2026 World Team Member.

1. The athlete who failed to make weight will be declared the #2 ranked National Team athlete at that weight.
- c. Automatic berths to the Final Wrestle-Offs are only applicable to athletes who are a 2025 Senior World Medalist. Please consult the style specific criteria for details on automatic berth to the Final Wrestle-Off for each of the respective styles.

#### **V. Delays or Replacement Due to Injury or Illness**

1. **Only a 2025 Senior World Championship medalist (Men's Freestyle, Women's Freestyle, Greco Roman), who earned an automatic berth into the final wrestle-off, can request a delay for competing in Part Two for medical reasons at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled weigh-in time.**
  - a. The request must be submitted in writing to the respective Sport Committee Chair for review, to include a written certification of the injury or illness from a USA Wrestling approved medical doctor. USA Wrestling's approval of a medical doctor will not be unreasonably withheld.
  - b. If a certified medical doctor's note is provided within the appropriate timeframe to support a 2025 Senior World medalist request for a delay, the request for a delay in competition will be granted. If a delay is granted, the National Coach and the two athletes involved shall determine the date for conducting the Final Wrestle-Off of the 2026 World Team Trials. If an agreement cannot be reached, then the style-specific Sport Committee will determine the date and place for the Final Wrestle-Off.
2. If a 2026 World Team member at any weight is incapacitated after the World Team Trials and prior to the World Championships, the style-specific Sport Committee shall assign the position to the next-ranked alternate at the weight in question up to and including the fourth-ranked wrestler from the World Team Trials, provided the next-ranked wrestler is able to make weight and is substantially completing World Team training requirements as determined by the Sport Committee and approved by the Executive Committee of USA Wrestling.
  - a. For the purposes of this provision, the term 'incapacitated' shall mean an athlete has an injury or illness, as certified by USA Wrestling medical staff, which inhibits peak performance at the Olympic Games.

#### **VI. UWW International Transfers Rule**

1. In the case there are more than two athletes who have changed their sporting nationality, and each occupies the #1 spot; it must be determined which two athletes will be on the 2026 World Championship team. The following criteria will be used in rank order to determine the two athletes.
  - a. Senior World Championship medal within the last four years (years: 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025).
  - b. U23 World Championship medal within the last four years (years: 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025).
  - c. Senior World Military Championship medal within the last four years (years: 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025).
2. If the above scenario, noted in #1 occurs, a special wrestle off will occur between the #2 and #3 ranked athletes for purposes of World Championship participation.
  - a. If the #2 and #3 ranked athletes met at the final trials event; that match will count in their best of three series to occur later at Final X.
3. For purposes of National Team rank and payment, all athletes will retain their National Team stipend as ranked following their Trials event.

## **VII. World Team Trials Officiating, Pairing, and Protest Procedures**

1. All bouts shall be officiated as prescribed by UWW rules, by an officiating team comprised of a referee, judge, and mat chairman. Their decision on all technical aspects of the bout shall be final and shall not be subject to protest.
  - a. Mat side video will be made available. Mat side review will be done in accordance with UWW rules, utilizing all USA Wrestling Challenge Modifications as stipulated in Attachment A of these Procedures. Upon review of action, the decision of the officiating team is final.
  - b. The mat side computer and video shall be accepted as the official result of the bout, unless the officiating team determines that an error has been made.
2. Requests for information concerning the recording of results, pairing of contestants or scheduling of bouts may be directed to the chief mat official and/or chief pairing master without the filing of a written protest.
3. Protests concerning eligibility of a contestant, adherence to the terms of this document, and other matters of procedure shall be reviewed by a Protest Committee comprised of the following individuals:
  - a. President of USA Wrestling, or his designee, who shall act as chairperson.
  - b. One or more members of the USA Wrestling Board of Directors are appointed by the chairperson of the Protest Committee. Sport Committee members of the style being protested are ineligible to serve on the Protest Committee.
    - i. Any member of the Protest Committee shall disqualify him or herself from a protest hearing if they have personal ties to any contestant in the same weight.
    - ii. Any situation not specifically addressed in this document shall be resolved under standard procedures of USA Wrestling.

## **VIII. Drug Testing**

Testing for the use of drugs or other substances prohibited by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), or UWW will be conducted as part of the World Team Trials process. Full cooperation of the athlete is mandatory.

## **IX. Athlete Ombudsman**

An athlete who has questions regarding their opportunity to compete that are not answered by USA Wrestling, may contact the USOPC Athlete Ombudsman by telephone at 719-866-5000, or by e-mail at [ombudsman@usathlete.org](mailto:ombudsman@usathlete.org)

## **X. World Team Training**

1. All members of the USA Wrestling World Team will be required to follow the training schedule as established by the National Coach as referenced in the National Team Wrestler Agreement, whether or not the athlete signs the agreement. Failure to do so can result in fines and sanctions, including removal from the National Team and World Team.
2. All members of the USA Wrestling World Team will be required to maintain a proper weight management plan that is developed with the USA Wrestling National Coach and USA Wrestling

medical staff. Failure to maintain and follow the plan may result in the removal and replacement of the athlete up to the deadline of the athlete registration for the World Championships.

## **Attachment A**

### **Challenge Procedure**

#### **What it is:**

The challenge is the action through which a wrestler in a bout, or a coach, acting on behalf of the wrestler, request that the bout be stopped at an appropriate time (when the athletes reach a neutral position and no further scoring is imminent) and request the jury and mat chairman watch the video evidence in case of disagreement with a call. This process will be available at USAW events that are designated for video review.

#### **Who is on the jury?**

The jury will be comprised of 1 or 2 referees whose sole responsibility is to act as neutral referees to review challenges offered on his or her assigned mat or specific bouts at sanctioned USA Wrestling events, only utilizing video control technology established by USA Wrestling and/or local organizers.

#### **What is the process?**

1. The coach must issue a request for a challenge when they disagree with the decision of the referee team. This should be made from the coaching area on the corner of the mat. The coach is not allowed to walk into the wrestling area.
2. To request a challenge the coach must throw a colored object (challenge block) onto the mat to notify the referee team. The color of the object will correspond to the color of the athlete. The challenge block should not be thrown in an aggressive manner toward the referees or athletes. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a yellow or red card for the coach.
3. A wrestler may also indicate his or her desire to challenge a scoring action once the athletes have come to a neutral position or there is a natural stoppage in the match by gesturing or asking the referee of their desire to challenge.
4. The mat chairman will indicate to the referee to stop the match to review the challenge as soon as the situation becomes neutral or there is no imminent scoring at that moment. Requesting a challenge does not require that a bout be immediately stopped.
5. If the wrestler disagrees with their coach's challenge, he or she can reject the challenge by telling the referee or mat chairman they do not want to challenge, and the match will continue. If the coach requests a challenge after the athlete has rejected the challenge, the coach will receive a yellow card.
6. In the case of dispute between the referee team and coach or wrestler, the mat chairman is allowed to refuse the challenge only after the approval of the assigned jury member/s for that mat. If the size of an event is too large and not enough referees are available to act as jury members, the mat chairman will be allowed to deny a challenge as described below. The jury and/or mat chairman can refuse the challenge during the following situations:
  - a. Confirmed falls and/or situations where a fall was not confirmed by the referee team. Challenges can be requested for fouls that may have occurred that led to the fall, or for time that may have expired prior to confirmation of the fall by the mat chairman.

- b. Confirmed passivity by the mat chairman, as offered by the referee and/or judge.
  - c. Challenges not made in a reasonable amount of time. Coaches must issue the challenge within a reasonable amount of time from when the scoring action occurred or when the points went onto the scoreboard. Wrestling is dynamic and this will be at the discretion of the mat chairman and jury. **IF A NATURAL STOPPAGE OCCURS IN THE MATCH AND THE CHALLENGE IS NOT OFFERED PRIOR TO RE-STARTING THE MATCH, THE CHALLENGE WILL BE DENIED.**
  - d. Challenges made after the match has ended. The only exception is when points are added to the scoreboard after the time was out or when an action occurred just before the end of the bout.
7. The video will be displayed on a big screen monitor, projector, or TV if one is available for the competition. If one is not available, the jury and mat chairman can watch the video directly on the mat side computer. Only the official video from the replay system available at the event will be utilized for review; no personal video (cell phone, tablet, etc.) or alternate video angles from any streaming service not available to the jury and mat chairman will be used during the replay process and is strictly prohibited.
  8. If there is a technical problem and video is not available, the original decision will stand, and the coach will be given back the challenge block.
  9. Each wrestler will be entitled to one (1) challenge per match. If after reviewing the challenge the jury and mat chairman modifies the initial decision made by the refereeing team, the challenge can be used again during the match by the concerned athlete.
  10. If after review, the original decision made by the referee team is confirmed by the jury and mat chairman, that wrestler will lose the challenge and his or her opponent will be granted 1 point.
  11. Challenges will not be accepted by the refereeing body after the winner has been declared as indicated by the raising of the arm of the winning athlete.
  12. Certain challenge situations that will result in time being added back on the clock:
    - a. If a scoring action was determined to be risk from the attacking wrestler by the jury and mat chairman. The time will be reset to when the action of risk occurred. Any points scored after the action of risk occurred will be cancelled.
    - b. If a scoring action or confirmed fall was determined to be a direct result of an offensive foul by the jury and mat chairman, the time will be reset to when the foul occurred.
    - c. If a defensive foul occurs during any given action sequence, the refereeing team will allow the attacking wrestler to complete any offensive maneuver that he or she may be in the process of completing and match time will continue to run. However, if a defensive foul occurs and is not recognized by the refereeing team and there are no active offensive actions taking place and is then a challenge is offered by the opponent, time will be reset to the point of the defensive foul after video review.
    - d. Article 38 of the UWW International Wrestling Rules defines a “step out” as:  
*“1 point - To the wrestler whose opponent goes in the protection zone with the supporting*

*point one entire foot (in standing position) without executing a hold.*

*Clarification for stepping out in standing wrestling for both styles: - When the attacking wrestler is the first to step into the protection area in the commission of a hold, the following may occur:*

*-If the wrestler completes the hold successfully in a continuous action, he shall be awarded the requisite points--1, 2, 4 or 5 points.*

*- If the wrestler is unable to complete the hold successfully, after stopping the action the referee shall award 1 point to the opponent.*

*-If the wrestler lifts and controls the opponent but is unable to complete the hold in a continuous action, the referee shall stop the bout but not award any point.*

*NB: When a wrestler deliberately pushes the opponent into the protection area with no meaningful action, he shall no longer be awarded 1 point (only verbal warning). However, in situations where the defensive wrestler steps out of the protection area in a grounded position (on the knees), it shall be considered as stepping out and the attacking wrestler shall be awarded 1 point.”*

If a “step out” is missed during active wrestling and then successfully challenged after the fact, time will be reset to the point of the step out and all points scored after the missed step out will be cancelled.

- e. If any of the situations described in points a., b., c., or d. are determined to have occurred after a consultation by the refereeing team, the mat chairman will be allowed to ask the jury to use video review to determine the appropriate time the match should be reset to. No challenge will be required in this situation nor can the actions in question be reviewed; only time will be considered. If an athlete or coach wants the situation to be reviewed regarding the scoring of the action, a challenge must be offered.
- f. If a technical error, as defined by Article 26 (i) of the United World Wrestling Regulations, is discovered by the jury that changes the winner of the bout after time has expired, the time will be reset to the point of the last stoppage in the bout.

13. All decisions made by the jury and mat chairman will be final and will not be discussed.

Therefore, it is not possible to request a “counter challenge” once a final decision has been rendered. Any coach that tries to “counter challenge” will be given a yellow card.

As outlined in UWW Regulations Article 26i:

*“In the case of a serious technical mistake not seen by the referee team (examples: timekeeper mistakes, wrong points or caution published on the scoreboard, mistake in resuming the bout in parterre or in standing position, declaration of incorrect winner, clear fall not given, brutality, etc.), the jury member/s may interfere to correct the situation by requesting a consultation of the refereeing team or by video review.”*

In no case may the jury member/s interfere with the refereeing team regarding judgement situations such as how points were scored, passivity calls or negative wrestling calls.”

**Protest Procedure**

Protests will only be accepted in USA Wrestling regional or national events. Protests will not be accepted in any tournaments used to determine international teams for UWW events (World Teams, Pan-Am Teams, etc.)