



2025 Elite License Qualification Criteria

Effective March 13, 2025

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY:

- This criteria or any updates to the criteria are effective on the day of its official release by USAT as noted above. Before this date the previous 2024 Elite License Qualification Criteria are still valid for qualification and all valid elite license applications under the previous criteria are acceptable.
 - **EXCEPTIONS: The Texas Draft-Legal Festival NTDR on April 12, 2025 and the East Coast Triathlon Festival NTDR taking place on May 3-4, 2025 will remain valid for elite qualification under the [2024 Elite License Qualification Criteria](#). After these events, NTDRs will no longer be eligible for elite license qualification.**
- All new elite applications and eligibility extension applications must be submitted online through the [USA Triathlon membership system](#). To be considered, the application must contain links to qualifying race results, list out race scores and the races they were achieved at, or otherwise provide the required proof of qualification needed for the criteria an athlete is applying under. **USA Triathlon will not consider incomplete applications.**
- All athletes MUST present proof of elite status at all USA Triathlon (USAT) sanctioned events; therefore, athletes must carry their license to all events. If an elite athlete loses his or her elite license card, they may print a temporary card on the [USAT membership website](#).
- Athletes have one (1) year from the date of race to use the result unless the criteria state race(s) must be from the current calendar year. Results over 365 days old cannot be used for any listed criteria.
- **NON-ELITE ATHLETES:** Athletes who meet the elite qualification criteria and are granted an elite license will retain their elite eligibility for up to **two (2) calendar years**. Eligibility always expires on **December 31 of the second year**, regardless of when the license was obtained in the first year. To maintain active elite status, athletes must renew their elite license and pay the membership fee annually, even if they still have remaining eligibility time.
- **FOR CURRENT ELITE ATHLETES:** Athletes who wish to maintain their elite license must:
 1. Renew your elite license each year.
 2. Submit **one race result** within 8% of the winner's time from a qualifying event.

Qualifying events must:

- Be sanctioned by USAT, World Triathlon, IRONMAN, or Challenge Family.
- **And** offer a prize purse of \$5,000 or more.

How this extends your eligibility:

Submitting a qualifying race result extends your eligibility for two (2) **years** from December 31 of the year you submitted it.

Example:

- An athlete applies for an elite license in **March 2025** with an eligibility expiration of **December 31, 2026**.
- If the extending race result is from **2026**, elite license eligibility extends to **December 31, 2028**.
- If the extending race result is from **2027**, elite license eligibility extends to **December 31, 2029**.



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- Once an elite license expires, an athlete may return to Age Group racing, but only when the current membership license expires. Elite athletes cannot compete in Age Group categories while holding an elite license, or hold an Age Group membership while competing in elite events.
- The minimum age requirement for an elite license is 15 years old. Elite athletes between the ages of 16 and 19 may also compete in USAT Junior Development Series (“Junior Development Cup” and “Junior Draft-Legal National Championship”) events and are eligible for all awards, rankings points and prizes.
- An eligibility extension for renewals of up to **two years** may be granted to an Elite athlete who becomes pregnant or receives active-duty military orders of significant length during their current two-year eligibility period. Documentation must be submitted to USA Triathlon Membership (membership@usatriathlon.org) to be reviewed by the Elite License Panel. For details on applying for an extension please view the Special Consideration criteria below.
- If a race cancels the swim less than 24 hours before the start of the race, the event may still be used for Elite Triathlete or Draft Legal criteria requirements, to be reviewed by the Elite License Panel. Additional race results to support the application may be requested at the discretion of the Elite License Panel.
- Any criteria requiring a participant minimum will only include individual race finishers in that specific distance. No relay teams, non-finishers and those participating in another race will be included in participant numbers.
- Athletes registered as elites/pros CAN compete in events with less than \$5,000 prize purses but they are competing in events according to the Age Group rules of USAT, not pro/elite rules. They cannot accept age group awards or be included in those results; they cannot be listed in the overall finish position or receive any prizes offered for overall placing.

USAT RECOGNIZES SEVEN CLASSIFICATIONS WITHIN ITS ELITE LICENSE STRUCTURE:

1. Elite Triathlete License or Collegiate Elite (covered as an elite in all categories)
2. Draft Legal Pathway
3. Elite Duathlete License (considered as an elite in duathlon, Age Group in triathlon)
4. Elite Off Road License (considered as an elite in off road events, Age Group in road events)
5. Elite Foreign License
6. Elite Paratriathlon
7. Special Considerations

1. ELITE TRIATHLETE LICENSE: This license is for athletes wishing to race as an elite in any USAT-sanctioned event, at any distance (from sprint to ultra) in the following formats: Triathlon, Duathlon, Aquathlon, Off-Road, and Winter Triathlon. Athletes can obtain the elite triathlete license or the collegiate elite license designation (see below). Both licenses expire on December 31st of the year in which it was issued.

All elite triathlete licenses must be earned in the triathlon format.

COLLEGIATE ELITE LICENSE DESIGNATION

- The Collegiate Elite License Designation is an option of the regular elite license for current or soon-to-be NCAA athletes who do not want to jeopardize their NCAA eligibility but want to compete in elite events sanctioned by USAT to gain experience. These athletes are NOT eligible for prize money but may race



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when it is offered. Collegiate/NCAA athletes should check with the NCAA or their university's compliance personnel regarding the most current rules regarding eligibility and prize money acceptance.

Qualification criteria: Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite triathlete or an elite triathlete with a collegiate license designation must meet at least one (1) of the criteria listed below. **To qualify under any of the criteria below, an athlete may not currently hold a USAT elite license. Athletes holding an elite license must extend their eligibility as prescribed on the first page of this criteria.**

CRITERIA A: Finish within 8% of the winning elite time on the same course as the registered elites (distance and format) in **three (3)** USAT-sanctioned events that offered a prize purse of \$5,000 or greater. All three (3) results must have been earned in the last 365 days when the application is submitted.

CRITERIA B: Finish top-10 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at the World Triathlon Age Group Olympic Distance World Championships.

CRITERIA C: Finish top-10 overall in the Age Group field at Ironman 140.6 World Championships.

CRITERIA D: Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at the USAT Age Group Olympic Distance National Championships.

CRITERIA E: Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at USAT Collegiate Club National Championships - Olympic Distance.

CRITERIA F: Finish top-3 overall in the Age Group field at an Elite Qualifying Race.

2025 Elite Qualifying Races: All triathlons sanctioned by a World Triathlon recognized National Federation or World Triathlon with 200 or more participating athletes and a corresponding elite race in a similar distance with \$20,000 or more in combined elite prize money shall be Elite Qualifying Races. Please confirm prize purse amounts directly with race organizers and include proof of the prize money totals in your elite license application.

CRITERIA G: Achieve a Race Score of 110.1488 for men and 99.50236 for women or higher at two (2) events with 300 or more total (male and female) participants. **This criteria cannot be used to extend an elite license.** For additional information on USAT Rankings, including the definition of Race Score, please consult the USAT Rankings Criteria page: <https://www.usatriathlon.org/rankings>.

2. DRAFT LEGAL PATHWAY: Athletes who qualify via these criteria can choose either the standard Elite Triathlete License (described above) or the standard Elite Triathlete license with Collegiate designation. This license expires December 31st of the year in which it was issued.

Qualification criteria: Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite triathlete through Draft Legal Pathway must meet at least one of the criteria listed below:

CRITERIA A: Finish Top 10 at the World Triathlon Junior Sprint Distance Triathlon World Championships or Youth Olympic Games.

CRITERIA B: Finish Top 5 in a World Triathlon Continental Cup with at least three athletes starting who are ranked in the Top 125 of the [World Triathlon Rankings](#).

Note: Under the revised World Triathlon Rule 2.5(h), elite status is now granted only through designated events (WTCS, World Cup, T100). Continental Cup athletes will not be considered elite by World Triathlon, though these events remain elite-level competitions allowing Age Group athletes to race both AG and elite Continental



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Cup events. Considering this change, Age Group athletes in good standing with USA Triathlon will be eligible to compete in Continental Cups, subject to standard USAT and World Triathlon qualification criteria.

CRITERIA C: Finish Top 5 at Americas Triathlon (PATCO) Junior Continental Championships.

CRITERIA D: Overall Junior winner at any World Triathlon-sanctioned Junior Continental Cup or any USAT Junior Development Series race.

CRITERIA E: Finish Top 2 in Junior Nationals (draft-legal) in the 16-19 age category race.

CRITERIA F: Finish Top 5 among the non-elite (Age Group) athletes and within 5% of the first finishers time at the NCAA Women's Collegiate National Championship (D1, D2, and D3 waves), or Collegiate Club Nationals draft-legal triathlon. At a USAT-designated trials/finals race where non-elites (Age Group) are permitted to start with elites in the seeded heats athletes who advance to the A finals are eligible for an elite license.

CRITERIA G: Former World Triathlon Junior or U23 World Championship medalist may apply for an Elite License within four (4) years of earning said medal, provided the former Junior/U23 athlete is currently or has been a member of an NCAA Varsity sports program within the previous 12 months.

CRITERIA H: Athletes who have never held an elite license, and who are committed to competing safely in the draft-legal format may earn a one-time, single-calendar-year period of eligibility through either of the qualification criteria below. This eligibility is subject to approval by the Elite License Panel. During this initial period of elite eligibility an athlete will earn an extension opportunity (three years from the qualifying result) by finishing within 10% of the winning time in their elite category in at least one (1) World Triathlon Continental Cup, World Cup or World Triathlon Series event. After this period of initial eligibility and, if applicable, the extension earned within, all standard elite qualification criteria will apply.

- Finish within the top 8% of all finishers of the same gender (including elites) and within 10% of the overall winner's time at a USAT-sanctioned event offering a prize purse of \$5,000 or greater
- Achieve a Race Score of 106.7058 for men and 96.04309 for women or higher at a USAT-sanctioned event with 500 or more total (male and female) participants racing in the same distance or format. **This criterion cannot be used to extend an elite license.** For additional information on USAT Rankings, including the definition of Race Score, please consult the USAT Rankings Criteria page: <http://www.usatriathlon.org/rankings/rankings-criteria.aspx#Definitions>
- Long Distance and Ultra-Distance results are not eligible to be used for this criteria.
- Please note that IRONMAN results are not eligible to be used for this criteria.

3. ELITE DUATHLETE LICENSE: This license is for athletes wishing to race as an elite in any USAT sanctioned duathlon. Athletes approved for this license remain Age Group in triathlon events. This license expires December 31st of the year in which it was issued.

Qualification criteria: Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite Duathlete must meet the following criteria:

CRITERIA A: In the Age Group field, finish top-10 overall and within 10% of the overall winner's time, according to gender, in at least two (2) USAT sanctioned duathlons having at least 200 total participants (combined genders) that occurred within the last 365 days.

CRITERIA B: Achieve a Race Score of 109.316 for men and 94.9749 for women or higher at two events with 100 or more total (male and female) participants. **This criteria cannot be used to extend an elite**



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license. For additional information on USAT Rankings, including the definition of Race Score, please consult the USAT Rankings Criteria page: <https://www.usatriathlon.org/rankings>

4. ELITE OFF ROAD LICENSE: This license is for any athlete wishing to race as an elite in any USAT sanctioned off-road event (e.g., XTERRA). Athletes approved for this license remain Age Group in all on road events. This license expires December 31st of the year in which it was issued.

Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite off road athlete must meet one of the criteria below:

CRITERIA A: Finish within 8% of the winning elite time on the same course as the elites (distance and format) in three USAT sanctioned events that offered a prize purse of \$5,000 or greater. All three results must be from the last 365 days.

CRITERIA B: Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winning Age Group time at the Age Group World Triathlon Cross Triathlon World Championships.

CRITERIA C: Finish top-10 overall in the Age Group field at the XTERRA World Championships.

CRITERIA D: Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winning Age Group time at the XTERRA National Championships. Athletes must compete and qualify in the “full or long distance” division (1500 swim, 28k mountain bike, 10k trail run).

CRITERIA E: Finish top-3 overall in the Age Group field at an Off Road Elite Qualifying Race.

2025 Off Road Elite Qualifying Races: All triathlons on US (including territories) and Canadian soil that have a corresponding elite race in the same distance and format with \$15,000 or more in elite prize money shall be Off Road Elite Qualifying Race. Please confirm prize purse amounts directly with race organizers.

CRITERIA F: Any athlete who holds elite status in NORBA, UCI, USAC, AND/OR USATF.

CRITERIA G: Achieve a Race Score of 113.2298 for men and 96.42109 for women or higher at two events with 100 or more total (male and female) participants. **This criteria cannot be used to extend an elite license.** For additional information on USAT Rankings, including the definition of Race Score, please consult the USAT Rankings Criteria page: <https://www.usatriathlon.org/rankings>

5. ELITE FOREIGN LICENSE: This license is for foreign athletes who compete in USAT-sanctioned elite events including World Triathlon events. All foreign athletes competing in USAT sanctioned elite events are **required** to hold this license. This license expires on December 31st of the year in which it was issued.

Qualification criteria: Any athlete who chooses to compete as a foreign elite athlete must present proof of elite status from his/her National Triathlon Federation or meet one of the USAT elite license qualification criteria outlined above.

6. ELITE PARATRITHLON: Paratriathlon elite annual membership is available to qualified, highly competitive, and experienced athletes. Details related to this license are captured in the “Paratriathlon Elite Membership License Qualification Criteria” posted at <https://www.usatriathlon.org/our-community/elite-development>

7. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: Special consideration for exceptions to all elite membership criteria may be granted by the International Competition Panel made up of at least **(1)** USAT High Performance staff, and at least two **(2)** members of the Athletes Advisory Council. The Panel may utilize its discretion to grant provisional licenses, in a variety of circumstances, and in most cases will review all triathlon and single sport results and may require



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submission of video evidence of cycling skills when draft-legal results are not available. In addition, the Panel will specifically consider exceptions for athletes who meet the following criteria:

- Athletes who are not part of the Olympic Development (Draft-Legal) pipeline will generally not be considered for Special Consideration, except in cases where athlete results demonstrate comparable level of performance to world leading athletes.
- Special consideration may also be given to athletes who would like to race in the elite division at the World Triathlon Winter Championships. If you are qualified for Winter Worlds at the AG level and want to race in the elite category, please apply for special consideration.
- **Requests for Special Consideration Elite Licenses must be submitted [HERE](#).**