



## **2025 National Team Selection Criteria**

### **Program Overview:**

The United States Biathlon Association (USBA) is entrusted with building programs that seek to grow the sport in the United States and to consistently elevate American biathletes towards success on the IBU International World Cup circuit with the ultimate goal of winning Olympic medals. USBA programs and initiatives are structured to reach athletes at all stages of the development pipeline, creating a pathway of support for an athlete, and fostering consistent performance improvement over time. As the main benefactor to USBA, the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) invests significant resources in USBA with the express expectation that those resources are being used to help US biathletes reach the Olympic podium.

The USBA National Team Program is responsible for supporting those athletes with the vision, talent, and capability to win Olympic and World Championship medals. All National Team programming and selection criteria must support this organizational mission of Olympic medals.

### **Team Structure:**

The National Team team consists of two main categories - A and B, with A consisting of three tiers - A1, A2, and A3; and B consisting of a single tier. As tiers ascend towards A1, performance-based standards become more stringent and services and benefits increase. The National Team Program is designed to support athletes in their consistent ascension of National Team tiers until they reach A1.

### **Tier Definitions:**

The National A Team is divided into three separate tiers - A1, A2, and A3. A1 athletes should demonstrate the ability to achieve a World Cup, World Championship, or Olympic podium on any given day. Generally speaking, A2 athletes are 1-2 years away from achieving that level. A3 athletes should demonstrate the capability of placing in the top half of the World Cup field consistently.

The National B Team serves as the “bridge” to the A Team for two groups of athletes:

- Recent or current junior biathletes with a recent history of top-level international junior results.
- Top-level cross-country skiers with high ski speed but relatively minimal shooting experience.

B team athletes should demonstrate high potential for rapid performance progress. An athlete should not spend more than three years at the B team level unless events beyond their control prevent them from

ascending to the A team.

### Performance Progression Standards:

**B to A Team Movement:** In principle, B team athletes should ascend from B to A team, achieving A team standards after three years or less. An athlete that has previously qualified for B team status within the past three years, and meets B team objective standards for a fourth year, without moving up to A team, will not automatically qualify for the B team unless through a discretionary decision, considered and approved by the ICC, based on the assessment that events beyond their control prevented them from ascending to A team status.\*

**A to B Team Movement:** Once having achieved A team status, an athlete will have a maximum of one additional year of eligibility for objective qualification to B team. After this point, the athlete can only qualify for the B team through a discretionary decision, considered and approved by the ICC, based on the assessment that events beyond their control prevented them from otherwise maintaining A team status.\*

*\*Junior athletes qualifying for a Senior National Team are exempt from the timeline established above. For example, if a junior athlete qualifies for the B team, they would still have an additional period of three years, once becoming a senior, to qualify for the B team through objective standards.*

The following chart shows examples of an athlete's eligibility for qualification through objective standards over time, depending on their previous team qualifications. Cells containing the term, “none” connote years where the athlete did not qualify for any team. Cells with ~~strike~~ connote years that an athlete will no longer be eligible to qualify through objective standards. For example, in the first scenario, an athlete qualifies for the B team in Year 1, then does not qualify in Years 2 and 3. This athlete would then be ineligible to qualify *through objective standards* for B team in Year 4. Discretionary selection always remains a possibility.

Year Number	Eligibility for Objective Qualification (examples)							
1	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A
2	none	none	B	A	none	B	A	none
3	none	B	B	B	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>	A
4	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>	<del>B</del>

**HOW TO READ THE TABLE:** Each column represents an example of a hypothetical athlete’s qualification status from year to year to show where they would reach the limit of B team *objective* qualification. For example, in the first column, the athlete qualifies for the B team in Year 1, misses all qualification for any NT in years’ 2 and 3, and therefore is ineligible to qualify for B team through objective qualification in Year 4.

## **Qualification Standards:**

**Note:** Unless otherwise stated, all results benchmarks refer to non-team race formats.

**Note:** Qualification for 2025/26 Direct Athlete Support (DAS) stipend tiers will be directly correlative to National Team tier qualification. For example, A1 status qualifies for Level 1 DAS support, A2 status qualifies for Level 2 DAS support, A3 status qualifies for Level 3 DAS support, and B team status qualifies for Emerging Athlete One-Time Grant support.

### **National A Team**

*Invited to all scheduled National Team camps.*

#### **A1 Team:**

1. Top-10 result at World Championships (WCH), or
2. Two top-15 performances at World Cup (WC)/WCH, or
3. Top-30 overall WC Final Ranking, or
4. Recommendation of coaching staff with ICC consideration and approval based upon significant national and/or international results applying the USBA Principles of Discretion (see Appendix A below).

#### **A2 Team:**

1. Two Top-25 performances at WC/WCH, or
2. Top-60 overall WC Final Ranking, or
3. Recommendation of coaching staff with ICC consideration and approval based upon significant national and/or international results applying the USBA Principles of Discretion (see Appendix A below).

#### **A3 Team:**

1. Two Top-40 performances at WC/WCH, or
2. Top-6 result at IBUC/OECH, or
3. Member of Top-5 Relay, Mixed Relay Team, or Single-Mixed Relay at WC's or WCH's, or
4. Top-3 result at Junior World Championships (only in junior class), or
5. Recommendation of coaching staff with ICC consideration and approval based upon significant national and/or international results applying the USBA Principles of Discretion (see Appendix A below).

### **National B Team**

*Invited to training camps on a case-by-case basis.*

1. Two Top-60 Sprint performances at WC/WCH's, or
2. Two Top-15 results at IBU Cup and/or OECHs, or
3. Top-10 result at Junior World Championships (only in junior class), or
4. Recommendation of coaching staff with ICC consideration and approval based upon significant national and/or international results applying the USBA Principles of Discretion (see Appendix A below).

**Note:** If an athlete reaches 50% of one benchmark in one tier, and 50% of another benchmark in another tier, the athlete shall qualify for the lower tier of the two. For example, if an athlete had one Top-40 result on the World Cup (50% of A3 qualification) and one Top-15 on the IBU Cup (50% of B team qualification), they would automatically qualify for B team but could also be considered for discretionary selection to a higher tier.

**Note:** Nominees must accept or decline their nomination in writing within three weeks following nomination unless a later deadline is specified by USBA. Acceptance is contingent upon the athlete signing a written agreement regarding training camp attendance and a commitment to the National Team training plan. All nominees who accept their nomination will be required to sign the Team Member Agreement.

## **Appendix A:**

### **USBA Principles of Discretionary Selection**

The purpose of a discretionary choice is to ensure selection of the most competitive team. Creating watertight, finite criteria for discretionary choices is impossible, since by their very nature they are meant to account for the unanticipated circumstances, which inevitably elude the principles of objective criteria. Based on the context of the situation, the ICC will select the athlete(s) that has the best chance of producing the best result based on the following factors. Note: This list is not in any order of priority:

1. History of performance in a specific competition type (e.g., Relay or Individual) over the current and previous two competitive seasons.
2. Recent improvements in results or performance parameters such as ski speed and shooting performance (both in training and competition), prioritizing ski speed over shooting performance.
3. Recent positive trend of competition results or performance parameters, such as ski speed and shooting, prioritizing ski speed over shooting performance, indicating a potential for Olympic success. This includes indication of medal potential in future Olympic or World Championship competition that would be materially enhanced by selection to the Team.
4. Performance/participation in the qualification process affected by illness or injury as confirmed by USBA.
5. Ability to effectively contribute to a relay.

If an athlete declines or is unable to attend the competition(s) for which (s)he has qualified, the ICC will rely upon the above Principles of Discretionary Selection to fill the spot. The ICC also reserves the right to not fill the vacated spot.