



2026 USAT Elite Paratriathlon National Team Program

Guiding Principles, Overview, & Criteria
Selection Period January 1 – December 31, 2026

Amended: March 2026

Program Guiding Principles & Overview

USA Triathlon (USAT) High Performance (HP) Department is responsible for supporting athletes who have the vision, goals and capability of winning Olympic & Paralympic Games medals, while identifying, supporting & developing future Games medalists. To help achieve this objective USAT has developed and supports Elite Triathlon and Elite Paratriathlon National Team Programs. The Elite Paratriathlon Team Program (the “Program”) and any financial support associated is designed specifically to assist athletes in their pathway to achieving podium performances at the Paralympic Games. The ~~three~~ **four**-tiered Program provides performance-based support to athletes in the form of administrative assistance, performance advisement and allocation of equipment and financial resources. The Program is comprised of athletes with proven performance capability and is designed with ~~three~~ **four** ascending tiers to support athletes as they advance towards their goal of achieving podium performances at the Paralympic Games. Athletes are expected to advance levels during their time in the Program with improving international performances reflective of their ability to execute Paralympic podium performances.

In addition to the qualification criteria specific to each tier outlined on Page 3, athletes must meet the following minimum criteria to be eligible for the Program:

- Eligible to represent USA Triathlon in World Triathlon competition, including but not limited to:
 - National Federation (NF) affiliation
 - Current USA Triathlon elite paratriathlete license holder in good standing
 - Current with World Triathlon Pre-Participation Evaluation (PPE) requirements
- Current with Safe Sport training & Background checks
- Be internationally classified according to the World Triathlon Masterlist
- Be 2028 Paralympic Games eligible
- Commitment to the sprint distance triathlon (to be evaluated by USA Triathlon; all endurance events over 60 minutes in length must be approved in advance by the National Teams Sr. Manager, alec.hewett@usatriathlon.org)
- Creation, submission & adherence to an Annual Performance Plan
- Signed Elite Paratriathlon National Team Program Athlete Agreement for the ~~season~~ **year**.

The preferred race guide for the PTVI athletes on the National Team will receive equal benefits to the athlete they guide. This is including but not limited to Direct Athlete Support Training Stipend, Coaching Stipend, and Travel Reimbursement. Once a PTVI athlete achieves a metric in any Tier, the VI athlete will need to declare the “preferred race guide”, i.e., the race guide who will be their primary race guide at all World Triathlon events. If at any time, the VI athlete wishes to have a different preferred race guide, an email must be sent to the National Teams Sr. Manager detailing the decision. If a PTVI athlete is removed from the team, at any time, the preferred race guide will also be removed. From here forward whenever “athlete” is used below, this includes the preferred race guide.

Results achieved on or after January 1, 2026 are eligible to be used as automatic qualification criteria outlined on Page 3. It is the responsibility of each athlete to inform USAT High Performance when they have achieved a result which would earn a change in program status. Criteria objectively achieved during 2026 by Program athletes guarantees selection to that tier starting on the first of the next month for that season and the full 2027 season. Athletes not currently in the Program may be named in advance of the next year once all eligibility criteria is confirmed and processed, and will retain selection for the

2027 season as well, assuming they remain eligible, in good standing, and have a signed 2027 Elite Paratriathlon National Team Program Athlete Agreement. Existing Program athletes who have achieved objective criteria may advance to a higher Tier starting on the first of the next month.

Any financial support outlined in this document represents expected funding levels based on the ~~three~~-four tiers of the Program, though additional funding and support opportunities may become available to Program athletes and will be communicated accordingly. The descriptions below summarize the purpose of each funding mechanism available. After a review of the Annual Performance Plan (“**APP**”), a customized support plan will be developed for each athlete depending on resources available. Adjustments to the approved APP must be approved prior to incurring reimbursable expenses.

- USAT stipend: supports basic living and training expenses
- Travel reimbursement: supports travel to compete in developmentally appropriate World Triathlon events
- Coaching stipend: compensates USA Triathlon Certified Coaches working with National Team Program athletes
- USOPC benefits: Elite Athlete Health Insurance & Operation Gold funding will be distributed per the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) criteria

Discretionary Consideration

USA Triathlon may use discretion to select athletes who have not met the objective criteria for the Program for several reasons. These include, but are not limited to, injury or illness, pregnancy, the occurrence of exceptional circumstances, and other unanticipated failure of objective criteria to select an athlete likely to achieve competition results consistent with the Program Tiers.

Discretionary nominations, if any, may be based on a variety of factors, including consideration of competition results outside of the selection period and data analytics, or to ensure that USA Triathlon is investing in the most qualified athletes with the greatest potential of winning Paralympic Games medals. Discretionary nominations for the Program, along with Tier level and term length, will be determined by a panel of one USA Triathlon HP Staff (who does not serve in the capacity as a personal coach to Program athletes) and two USAT Elite 10 Year Athlete representatives.

Elite Athlete Health Insurance (EAHI)

The USOPC allocates EAHI slots to National Governing Bodies (NGBs) on a basis of objective performance. This program provides an affordable insurance option to athletes. This benefit is provided through the USOPC and is made available to USA Triathlon National Team Program athletes at the Tier 1 (A), Tier 2 (B) Tier 3 (C) and Tier 4 (D) Team levels.

Athletes must remain in good standing to receive EAHI benefits for the duration of their National Team Program term. Athletes who choose to break their agreement or no longer remain committed to the sprint distance triathlon format will be removed immediately. Athletes who are removed from the program by USAT (by choice, by actions, or contract expiration) may have the option to remain on the insurance program at their own cost for up to one year.

Athletes meeting the Team USA definition in 2027 will be eligible for EAHI. Slots will be distributed in the following priority order until the 2027 slots are fully dispersed:

- National Team selection, in order of priority: Tier A, Tier B, Tier C
- Top 5 finish at the 2026 Para World Championships and in the top 50% of the field
- Gold medal at the 2026 Para Continental Championships, provided there were four starters in the field
- Tier D

Projected 2026 Support Levels: (subject to change at the start of each selection period depending on USAT & USOPC funding capacity)

NTP Level	DAS (Direct Athlete Support) stipend	Travel Reimbursement	Coaching Stipend	USOPC Insurance
Tier 1	\$5,500/quarter	TBD based on APP	\$2,400/quarter	Eligible for EAHI
Tier 2	\$4,125/quarter	TBD based on APP	\$1,800/quarter	Eligible for EAHI
Tier 3	\$2,475/quarter	TBD based on APP	\$1,200/quarter	Eligible for EAHI
Tier 4	\$1,200/quarter	TBD based on APP	\$1,125/quarter	Eligible for EAHI
Interim NT	-	1 World Triathlon Race	-	-

USAT Elite Paratriathlon National Team Program qualification criteria: January 1 – December 31, 2026 (Selection Period).

Tier 1 (A Team)

Athletes may achieve a Tier 1 status through any **one** of the following criteria:

- Gold medal at the World Triathlon Para Championships – provided the medal event had a minimum of four starters
- In a non-Paralympic Games year, a silver medal at the World Triathlon Para Championships - provided the finish was within 1% of the winner’s result in the medal event and the top 50% of the starting field

Athletes may achieve Tier 1 status through any **two** results of the following criteria:

- Gold medal at a World Triathlon Para Series event – provided the medal event had a minimum of four starters

Tier 2 (B Team)

Athletes may achieve Tier 2 status through any **one** of the following criteria:

- Silver medal at the World Triathlon Para Championships – provided the finish was within 3% of the winner’s result in the medal event and the top 50% of the starting field

Athletes achieve Tier 2 status through any **two** of the following criteria:

- Podium finish at the World Triathlon Para Championships – provided the finish was within 5% of the winner’s result in the medal event and the top 50% of the starting field
- Podium finish at any World Triathlon Para Series event – provided the finish was within 3% of the winner’s result in the medal event and the top 50% of the starting field
- Gold medal at the Americas Triathlon Para Championships – provided the medal event had a minimum of four starters

Tier 3 (C Team)

Athletes may achieve Tier 3 status through any **one** of the following criteria:

- ~~Top 4~~ Podium finish at the World Triathlon Para Championships – provided the finish was within 5% of the winner’s result in the medal event and have a minimum of six starters

Athletes may achieve Tier 3 status through any **three** of the following criteria:

- Podium finish at any World Triathlon Para Series event – provided the finish was within 3% of the winner’s result in the medal event and the top 50% of the starting field
- 5th place finish (or better) at the World Triathlon Para Championships – provided the finish was within 5% of the winner’s result in the medal event and the top 50% of the starting field
- Podium finish at the Americas Triathlon Para Championships – provided the finish was within 2% of the winner’s result in the medal event and there was a minimum of four starters
- Gold medal at a World Triathlon Para World Cup event – provided the medal event had a minimum of four starters

Tier 4 (D Team) - athletes who have competed in more than 6 WTPS (including World Championships) events will not be eligible:

Athletes may achieve Tier 4 status through any **one** of the following criteria:

- 4th place finish (or better) at the World Triathlon Para Championships provided the finish was in the top 50% of the starting field.

Athletes may achieve Tier 4 status through any **three** of the following criteria:

- Podium finish at any World Triathlon Para Series event – provided the finish was in the top 50% of the starting field and there were 4 starters
- 5th place finish (or better) at the World Triathlon Para Championships – provided the finish was in the top 50% of the starting field
- Win at the Americas Triathlon Para Championships – provided there was a minimum of four starters
- Gold medal at a World Triathlon Para World Cup event – provided the medal event had a minimum of four starters

Interim National Team (any 2 of these will qualify you for Interim National Team which will give you funding towards 1 mutually agreed upon World Triathlon event with the High Performance Department):

- Podium finish at any World Triathlon Para Series event – provided the finish was in the top 50% of the starting field and there were 4 starters
- 5th place finish (or better) at the World Triathlon Para Championships – provided the finish was in the top 50% of the starting field
- Win at the Americas Triathlon Para Championships – provided there was a minimum of four starters
- Gold medal at a World Triathlon Para World Cup event – provided the medal event had a minimum of four starters (Only athletes who have competed in six or fewer WTPS races and have never been a member of the National Team are eligible.

*Once an athlete becomes eligible for Tier 1-3 status, if in a future year, they do not meet the eligibility requirements for at least Tier 3, they would not be eligible for any Tier of funding. An athlete may, however, move between Tiers 1, 2 and 3 from year to year.

Concerns or questions related to discretionary decisions should be communicated to the USA Triathlon High Performance General Manager (Scott Schnitzspahn, Scott.s@usatriathlon.org or 720-936-4278). In addition, athletes are encouraged to contact the Athlete Ombuds Office as a resource for confidential, independent advice and assistance with resolving disputes (contact information below). After the previous steps have occurred, athletes may contact the USA Triathlon *Legal Team* (legal@usatriathlon.org) to administer an executive review to ensure published criteria and process was followed.

Athletes have the right to file a grievance and have a hearing per the [USAT Grievance and Disciplinary Policy](#). Athletes also have the right to report any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and will not be retaliated against for raising concerns or asking questions of USA Triathlon or the Athlete Ombuds Office. For more information, please see [USA Triathlon's Whistleblower Policy](#).

Athlete Ombuds - The Office of the Athlete Ombuds offers independent, confidential advice to elite athletes regarding their rights and responsibilities in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement, and assists athletes with a broad range of questions, disputes, complaints and concerns.

Phone: 719-866-5000

Email: ombudsman@usathlete.org

Website: usathlete.org