



2026 WORLD TRIATHLON JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM SELECTION CRITERIA

Version 10.7.2025

1. Introduction

This 2026 World Triathlon Junior Championship Team Selection Criteria (the “Criteria”) determines the athletes that will represent the United States at the 2026 World Triathlon Junior Championships (the “Team”) in **Pontevedra, Spain, September 23 – 27, 2026** (the “World Championship”). The selection criteria are designed to provide emerging athletes aged 16 to 19 (as of December 31, 2026) the opportunity to continue their athletic development at the highest levels of international triathlon competition.

Under World Triathlon Championship eligibility guidelines (see www.triathlon.org) the USA may send up to three (3) men and three (3) women to compete in the Junior division of the World Championship. However, such entries are not guaranteed. Entry spots are typically awarded to USA Triathlon (“USAT”) by World Triathlon based on 1) a quota system; and 2) USA team results at the Americas Triathlon Junior Continental Championship.

If there is a Junior/U23 Mixed Relay event in 2026, selection will be in accordance with the most current USAT Mixed Relay Event Selection Criteria.

2. Minimum eligibility requirements for an athlete to be considered for nomination to the Team:

- a. Athletes must be a citizen of the United States or be eligible to race for the United States under the applicable World Triathlon rules;
- b. Must be a USA Triathlon member in good standing;
- c. Must abide by all USAT, United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”), SafeSport, World Triathlon, US Anti-Doping Agency and World Anti-Doping Agency anti-doping policies and procedures and be in good standing with these organizations;
- d. Must comply with World Triathlon Competition Rule 2.4(c) and have physician-signed certification form (PPE) on file with USA Triathlon;
- e. Must comply with World Triathlon Anti-Doping education requirements;
- f. Current with SafeSport Training by completing the SafeSport tutorial and updating the tutorial as required by the U.S. Center for SafeSport and,
- g. Athlete must be eligible to enter and compete in the country in which the event is held. This includes, but is not limited to having an acceptable visa, passport and meeting all country health evidentiary requirements.

3. Selection Events

- a. **Selection Event #1: 2026 Americas Triathlon Junior Championship, [Date/Location TBA], 2026.**
- b. **Selection Event #2: 2026 USAT Junior Nationals, West Chester, Ohio, August 1, 2026.**

4. Selection Procedure

- a. **Team Quota:** The maximum size for the Team is three (3) athletes per gender. If World Triathlon rules allow for additional nominations, then USAT High Performance may request special invitations from World Triathlon. Additional nominations over the three-athletes-per-gender maximum will be made by discretionary selection. USAT will submit all entries to World Triathlon 35 days prior to the World Championship (“Nomination Deadline”).
- b. **Automatic Selection:** Selections will be made as follows:
 - i. At **Selection Event #1**, one (1) spot will be awarded to the highest placing USA athlete provided they finish in the top 5 overall; then, at **Selection Event #2**, up to one (1) spot, quota dependent, will be awarded to the highest placing USA athlete(s) not already selected, provided each earns a podium finish (inclusive of all athletes in the field, including non-USA athletes); then,

- ii. If no athlete earned automatic selection at Selection Event #1, then up to two (2) spots will be awarded at **Selection Event #2** to the two (2) highest placing USA athletes, provided each earns a podium finish (among all athletes in the field, including non-USA athletes).
- iii. One (1) spot will be awarded based on discretion.
- c. **Discretionary Selection:** USAT will fill all spots not earned by achieving Automatic Selection per the Discretionary Selection process described below.
- d. **Cancellation or Modification:** In the event of cancellation of any portion of the Automatic Selection events (swim, bike or run), or if the distance of any leg of the event or the entire event is shortened by 50% or more, spots will be filled according to the Discretionary Selection process. If the event is canceled entirely or postponed until after August 15, 2026, spots will be filled via the Discretionary Selection process.

5. Discretionary Selection Process

- a. Discretionary Selection: Any athlete who meets the minimum eligibility requirements in Section 2 may be considered for nomination through Discretionary Selection. The USAT International Competition Panel (“ICP”) will prioritize athletes for nomination to World Triathlon per the Discretionary Criteria outlined below.
- b. Discretionary Criteria: The following criteria shall be used for assessing athletes for Discretionary Selection. These criteria are listed in no particular order and are not inclusive of all possible factors warranting consideration:
 - i. Performance and results in 2025 & 2026 World Triathlon draft-legal events;
 - ii. Performance and results in 2025 & 2026 USAT Junior National Series and/or other USAT Sanction Events;
 - iii. Current and former USAT Junior Draft-Legal Rankings, PATCO, or World Triathlon rankings (if any); and,
 - iv. Performance measures and assessments at the ICP’s sole discretion.
- c. The ICP will be responsible for Discretionary Selection and will be comprised of one (1) member of the High Performance Staff and two (2) elite athlete representatives.

6. Removal from the Team

- a. An athlete who is or has been nominated to the Team by USAT may be removed as a nominee for any of the following reasons, as determined by USAT:
 - i. Voluntary Withdrawal: Notification must be submitted in writing to the USAT Junior & U23 Program Contractor at juniors@usatriathlon.org.
 - ii. Injury or illness as certified by an USAT-approved physician (or medical staff). If an athlete refuses verification of his/her illness or injury by an USAT-approved physician (or medical staff), his/her injury will be assumed to be disabling and he/she may be removed.
 - iii. Violation of the USA Triathlon Code of Conduct, USAT rules, Safe Sport, or team travel policies. An athlete who is removed from the Team pursuant to this provision has the right to a hearing per the USAT Bylaws Article XV or the USOPC’s Bylaws, Section 9.

7. Replacements to the Team

- a. If for any reason a position on the Team shall become vacant, such vacancy shall be filled according to the Discretionary Selection criteria, provided that the replacement athlete meets all applicable eligibility criteria, and a replacement is allowed by World Triathlon. If no athlete meets all the eligibility and Discretion Selection criteria, or World Triathlon does not allow replacement, the vacancy shall not be filled.

8. Additional Requirements for Selection

- a. All athletes selected to the Team will be required to comply with all applicable rules and requirements of World Triathlon, WADA, USADA, and USAT, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - i. Abide by the USAT’s Code of Conduct, team travel policies, any USAT or World Triathlon Wavier or Release, and conform to all USAT policies and protocol regarding Team preparation and participation.

- ii. Agree not to race any event **longer** than the Olympic triathlon distance (1.5km/40km/10km) up to six (6) weeks prior to the date of the World Championship.
- iii. Agree to stay in lodging as a team for World Championship. Accommodation arrangements will be coordinated by USAT High Performance staff.
- iv. **All athletes must comply with World Triathlon Competition Rule 2.4(c), requiring an electrocardiogram (ECG) and pre-participation evaluation (PPE) in order to participate in certain World Triathlon officiated events. Satisfaction of these requirements will be a condition of nomination to participate in this championship.**
- v. Athletes who wish to compete in Junior, U23, Elite, and Paratriathlon categories at World Triathlon events are required to complete and pass the USAT Safe Sport tutorials well as any follow up refresher courses. More information about how to access the tutorial can be found [here](#). This tutorial or refresher course needs to be completed annually. Once you have completed the tutorial, please email the completed .pdf certificate to juniors@usatriathlon.org and retain a copy for your records.
- vi. Athletes must be eligible to enter and compete in the country in which the event is held. This includes, but is not limited to having an acceptable visa, passport and meeting all country health evidentiary requirements.

9. Team Support

- a. USAT will provide staff and/or experienced contractors to serve as Team Leader(s) for this event.
- b. USAT will look for opportunities to decrease the total cost of the trip to World Championships for those attending, by subsidizing and/or reimbursing the cost of lodging, transport, and/or competition fees if possible.
- c. USAT will inform qualified athletes of their expected costs involved with this competition trip upon selection.

10. International Disclaimer

- a. These Selection Criteria are based on the latest information available to USAT, and on World Triathlon and USAT rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the selection procedures caused by a change in World Triathlon or USAT rules and regulations, or other unforeseen circumstances, will be distributed to the affected athletes promptly, and USAT reserves the right to revise these Selection criteria in such event.

11. Relay Selection

Athlete Selection Process

1. Selection: Selection of individual athletes in the individual race at the same event for Mixed Relay teams shall be determined by a panel of three USAT High Performance Staff, who do not serve as a personal coach to any of the athletes being considered. Selection of a MR Team is a highly complex process which involves analysis of objective performance measures and as such is a highly discretionary process. The panel will consider a range of factors that may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1.1. Past performances in MR events and individual events including the most recent
 - 1.2. Past performances in other World Triathlon events (especially Sprint & Super Sprints) and compared to other USA athletes;
 - 1.3. Course profile and setup (e.g. technical vs. less technical courses);
 - 1.4. Athletes with a history of successful and unsuccessful performance history on similar courses;
 - 1.5. Athletes with a history of successful and unsuccessful performance history in similar environmental conditions (i.e. temperature & humidity) to be expected at the event;
 - 1.6. Athletes who have consistently demonstrated ability to successfully manage the performance pressures associated with the highest level of triathlon competitions;
 - 1.7. Athlete health, injury, and return from injury status;
 - 1.8. Strategic considerations towards identifying talent for future MR event success;

- 1.9. Other information the panel deems relevant to an athlete's ability to contribute in delivering a podium performance at the event for which selection is being made;
- 1.10. Team strategy as it relates to creating the ideal MR Team. This may include choosing Athletes with specific characteristics/abilities that when combined could result in exceptional Team performance at the event. These abilities may be demonstrated by displaying the following in any evaluation event(s), including, but not limited to:
 - a) A record of consistent front-pack swimming results at the highest-level events (WTCS, WC, MR);
 - b) A demonstrated ability to close or establish gaps in the swim, bike, and/or run;
 - c) A record of superior cycling time-trialing ability (especially in Sprint & Super Sprints);
 - d) A demonstrated ability, (through skills, conditioning and tactics) to ride economically in lead and/or chase packs, especially on similar or relevant/comparable courses to those of the event;
 - e) A demonstrated ability to execute transitions at the highest-level speeds and effectiveness, especially in MR and Super Sprint events. This includes bike mounting ability and ability to catch or be in relevant pack out of T1;
 - f) A record of superior running performance off the bike that enhances the likelihood of podium performances, especially in the 4th leg of Mixed Relay;
 - g) A demonstrated overall consistent ability to contribute to podium performances through reliable execution in highest level Super Sprint and MR events;
 - h) Race result data (swim, bike, run, T1, T2) gathered from previous events;
2. MR Order: The panel may also determine the order in which the athletes will race at the event, provided that the panel may change the order of the athletes and composition of the team any time prior to the final roster deadline communicated by World Triathlon for the event (typically two (2) hours before the event), based on a range of factors that may include, but are not limited to:
 - 2.1. Changes in team composition for any reason;
 - 2.2. Fitness of athletes;
 - 2.3. Expected fatigue and impact of any racing in the previous 48 hours of the MR start;
 - 2.4. Recent results in events preceding the MR event;
 - 2.5. Expected weather at the event;
 - 2.6. Illness or injury of athletes;
 - 2.7. Any other consideration that the panel believes relevant to selecting the order & combination of athletes that is most likely to succeed.
3. Athlete Pool: MR event teams are made up of 2 female and 2 male athletes. USAT will initially select a minimum of three (3) athletes per gender to make up the athlete pool (those who will be considered for final team selection), which includes a minimum of one athlete per gender to serve as alternate should there be any injuries, illnesses, change of Team strategy, or other extenuating circumstances. USAT may utilize varying strategies in how it selects MR teams in advance, including; selecting specific expected starters of 2 female + 2 male athletes with 1 or more alternate per gender; or selecting an athlete pool with a minimum of 3 female + 3 male athletes from which the final starters will be selected within the final submission/change deadline (typically two (2) hours before the event).
4. Timeline of Notification: USAT will notify athletes if they are to be included in the athlete pool for a particular MR event. USAT will make every effort to communicate at least 14 days in advance, the intent to include particular athletes in the athlete pool, or in the expected starters & alternates pool, or strategy but will do so sooner when possible. Additionally, athletes will be notified when they have been officially submitted on the World Triathlon Mixed Relay Declaration Form, which is typically submitted after the MR Briefing, between 72-18 hours before the MR event.

5. **Notification of Availability & Health Status:** Those selected in the athlete pool (including alternates) must notify USAT as soon as possible if, after selection but before the event, they sustain any injury or illness that could impact their fitness or ability to perform their best at the event. Failure to promptly notify USA Triathlon of such injury or illness may result in a penalty. Upon notification of an illness or injury by an athlete, or for other extenuating circumstances, the panel may substitute a different athlete if it concludes that substitution will improve the potential success of the team.
6. **Changes:** USAT will make every effort to select the MR athlete pool or strategy fourteen (14) days in advance with good intent based on the information it has available at that time, but retains the authority to make changes (additions & subtractions) to the athlete pool for a variety of factors including, availability and health status of those initially selected, and for other reasons listed above in the Selection section 1.1-1.10, and MR Order sections 2.1-2.7 listed above. Changes to the athlete pool are permitted right up until the submission of the MR declaration form (typically 72-18 hours before the MR event).
7. **Confidentiality:** It is the expectation that all USAT athletes (selected or not) will keep the MR selection process confidential, to avoid sharing with other nations potential strategy in advance of the final submission/change deadline (2 hours before the event). Additionally, athletes are asked to avoid any social media posts related to MR composition until 2 hours prior to the event to maintain confidentiality until no changes can be made by any nation.

Concerns or questions related to discretionary decisions should be communicated to the USA Triathlon High Performance General Manager (hpgm@usatriathlon.org or 719-744-2842). 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 USA Triathlon Senior Counsel (legal@usatriathlon.org or 720-800-6622) 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