



## **US Biathlon Association**

### **ATHLETE SELECTION PROCEDURES**

2026 Youth & Junior World Championship Team

June 2025

#### **Overview**

*The following selection criteria specify how youth and junior class athletes qualify to represent the U.S. at the 2026 Youth & Junior World Championships held February 25th-March 8th in Arber, Germany.*

*Team selections are proposed by the US Biathlon High Performance Staff and approved by the International Competition Committee (ICC) through the following process (Also, see Appendix, Section 5):*

- 1. US Biathlon High Performance Staff proposes team selections and justifications for any discretionary selections*
- 2. The ICC holds a committee meeting to discuss these proposals and to make any necessary revisions per the committee's input*
- 3. At the conclusion of the committee meeting, the ICC members vote on the final proposal and team selections are deemed final only when a majority of ICC members have voted in favor.*

#### **Different methods for qualifying for this team include:**

- (1) "pre-qualifying" with excellent results in the 2024-25 season. No athletes pre-qualified in the 2024-25 season.*
- (2) competitive results at the trials races to be held Dec 28 - 31 in Lake Placid, New York.*
- (3) discretionary selection.*

***Note Regarding Pre-Qualification for 2027 Junior World Championship Team and 2027 Jr. IBU Cup:***

*Athletes who place in the top 6 at the 2026 Junior World Championships automatically pre-qualify for next season's 2027 team.*

*Additionally, junior athletes placing in the top 6 at the 2026 JWCH automatically qualify for next season's 2027 Jr. IBU Cup. Youth athletes cannot pre-qualify for these events.*

*Athletes pre-qualifying for US Biathlon Teams need to maintain their performance level as outlined in the USBA principles of pre-qualification.*

**1. Pre-Qualification for YJWCH from the 24/25 season**

Any athlete with a top 6 at last year's YJWCH is pre-qualified for the 2026 team. No athletes met this criteria.

**2. Pre-Qualification by ICC Discretion**

Up to one junior athlete may receive a discretionary selection before JWCH trials. To receive a discretionary selection before trials, athletes must demonstrate extraordinary results, such as qualifying for and showing competitive ski times in the Senior IBU Cup field.

**3. YJWCH Team Trials Qualification**

**Trials Event Information**

General: The Youth & Junior World Championships Team Trials will take place December 28-31 in Lake Placid, NY.

Standardized Waxing Procedures: All athletes in the Youth and Junior classes at the Team Trials must adhere to the US Biathlon Standardized Waxing Protocol, which is available on the US Biathlon website.

Formats: All junior and youth class competitors will race the same distances at the Team Trials:

Trials Competition Program	Sprint	Mass Start 60 Format	Sprint
	Dec 28	Dec 29	Dec 31
Junior & Youth Men	7.5 km	12 km	10 km
Junior & Youth Women	6 km	9 km	7.5 km

Point lists will be calculated from the best 2 of 3 results for each athlete using the USBA percent-back system. The point base will include only American athletes. Pre-qualified athletes will not be included in the points. Youth and junior athletes will be scored together. Two lists will be created for each gender: the Primary List will include both youth and junior athletes, while the Youth List will include only youth athletes.

### **YJWCH Selection Criteria**

#### **IBU Youth and Junior WCHs 2026 - Arber, Germany (February 25th – March 8th, 2026)**

##### **Juniors (born 2006 and 2005)**

Team size: up to 4 athletes per gender

- Any athlete who placed in the top-6 at the 2025 Youth & Junior World Championships will be pre-qualified for the 2026 event. No athletes met this criteria.
- Up to one junior athlete may receive a discretionary selection before JWCH trials. To receive a discretionary selection before trials, athletes must demonstrate extraordinary results, such as qualifying for and showing competitive ski times in the Sr. IBU Cup field.
- The top two athletes on the Primary List from the Team Trials will be selected for each gender. If the first and/or second athlete(s) on the Primary List is/are youth, they will count against the juniors, and fewer junior athletes will be selected via this bullet point. If no Junior athlete receives discretionary selection before trials, the top three athletes on the Primary List will be selected for each gender. If the first, second, or third athlete on the Primary List is/are a youth, they will count against Juniors selected via this bullet point.

- Additional junior or youth athletes may be selected up to the maximum team size by the ICC in consultation with US Biathlon staff in accordance with the USBA Principles of Discretionary Selection. When considering athletes for discretionary selection, a strong emphasis will be placed on ski speed. Athletes can demonstrate this through the races at YJWCH trials or Nordic races before trials. We highly encourage our athletes to race Nordic JNQ races.
- Youth athletes not being named to the YWCH team may be selected to the JWCH team if their performance at trials is better or similar to that of Junior athletes.
- The JWCH team will be announced within 24 hours of the last race at Trials unless the ICC needs additional time. Athletes must immediately accept or decline their team nomination.

### **Youth (born 2007 through 2010)**

Team size: up to 4 athletes per gender

- Any athlete who placed in the top-6 at the 2025 Youth & Junior World Championships will be pre-qualified for the 2026 event. No athletes met this criteria.
- The top three youth athletes on the Youth List from the Team Trials will be selected for each gender.
- Additional youth athletes may be selected up to the maximum team size by the ICC in consultation with US Biathlon staff, in accordance with the USBA Principles of Discretionary Selection, with particular attention paid to athletes demonstrating competitive ski speed. Athletes can demonstrate this through the races at trials or Nordic races before trials. We highly encourage our athletes to race Nordic JNQ races.
- The YWCH Team will be named within 24 hours of the last race at team trials unless the ICC needs additional time.

## **Appendix: Policies & Rules**

### **1. USBA Percent-Back System**

An athlete's percent-back in a race is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Athlete's Percent-Back} = 2 - ( \text{Athlete's time} / \text{Average time of the top three finishers scored} )$$

If there are only two finishers that can be scored, the average of their times shall be used as the denominator in the formula above. If only one finisher can be scored, that athlete shall receive a percent-back of 100%. In the case of pursuit races held at a trials, net times will be used to calculate percent-back scores. Net time is the finish time minus the start time.

## **2. 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)
3. Recent positive trend of competition results or performance parameters, such as ski speed and shooting, 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 effected 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.

## **3. Contingency Procedures for Trials Events**

In the event that weather conditions or other issues prevent a trials series or other races listed herein from being held at the planned time and place, the ICC reserves the right to change the

location, date, and/or format of the trials series. In the event that one or more events are canceled, cannot be held, or are in the view of the ICC, held under grossly unfair conditions and not rescheduled by the ICC, the following contingencies may be applied by the ICC:

1) If more than three races are used in the selection process, the following may be applied by the ICC:

- a) If four races are held, the best three of four will be scored
- b) If three races are held, the best two of three will be scored.

2) If only two or fewer races of a three-race series are held and at least two athletes are being selected, the following may be used:

- a) If one race of a three race series is canceled or in the view of the ICC held under grossly unfair conditions and not rescheduled, the winners of each of the races held shall be named to the team and any additional athletes may be named discretionarily by the ICC using the USBA Principles of Discretionary Selection.
- b) If one or no races are held, the ICC reserves the right to name the team by discretion and/or to create a new trials process for team selection.

3) If only one athlete is being selected from a three-race series and one or more of the races are canceled or, in the view of the ICC, held under grossly unfair conditions and not rescheduled by the ICC, the ICC may name the athlete at its discretion using the USBA Principles of Discretionary Selection.

#### **4. Funding and Self-Pay Policy**

US Biathlon will cover joint expenses of the event (coaches/staff travel, etc.) as well as select expenses of athletes who qualify for funding as follows:

##### **2026 YJWCH Arber, Germany**

US Biathlon will cover joint expenses of the event as well as the individual travel expenses of athletes as follows:

- 100% funding (no co-pay, full flight, does not cover excess baggage) for athletes who are prequalified for the event either by way of their results at the 2025 YJWCH event (a top-6) or who receive a discretionary selection prior to team trials.
- \$1,000 in flight support and **no** co-pay for the top athlete of each gender on the Primary List, regardless of whether those athletes are a youth or junior athlete.

- \$1,000 in flight support and **no** co-pay for the top two athletes of each gender on the Youth List. If the top athlete on the Primary List for a gender is a youth athlete, then that athlete will count against the financial support allocation for both classes.
- Self-pay for all other athletes.

Budget depending, USBA will again offer Need Based Support for athletes not qualifying for funding. More information on this funding will be released with team naming.

Participation grant money from the IBU will be used by US Biathlon to pay for joint expenses and organizational overhead, and not paid or shared with athletes. US Biathlon estimates that the cost-share expenses for ground transport, hotel, and other direct costs for affected athletes will total \$1,800 each. The final co-pay fee will be listed during team naming.

## **5. USBA International Competition Committee (ICC)**

### **Quoted from US Biathlon By-Laws; Sept. 2010:**

#### Section 9. International Competition Committee

a) With approval by the Board of Directors, the International Competition Committee shall consist of five (5) members, selected as follows:

- i) one (1) individual who shall be appointed from the Board of Directors and will serve as Chair;
- ii) one (1) individual who meets the definition of “athlete representative” set forth in USOC By-law Section 8.8.2 selected by the three (3) athlete representatives on the USBA Board of Directors;
- iii) three (3) individuals appointed by the Chair, one each from among the Group “B” membership category, the Group “E” membership category, and the USBA Coaching Staff.

b) The International Competition Committee shall meet as required, in person or by telephone conference for specific issues, and shall be responsible for providing recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval of:

- i) team selection criteria for domestic and international events and activities, to include all levels of international participation;
- ii) confirmation of team selection criteria outcomes;
- iii) proposals on issues of USBA National Team selections and levels of individual support as provided by USBA budgetary actions;
- iv) guidance concerning potential disciplinary actions for noncompliance

of team directives and/or violations of USBA Athlete Code of Conduct; and  
v) formulating the developmental and competitive strategies designed to meet the goals of the USBA High Performance Plan.

**ICC Members are:**

Chair: Jay T. Kearney

USOPC Athletes' Advisory Council Athlete Rep: Maddie Phaneuf

USBA Athlete Representative: Russell Currier

USBA Director of High Performance: Lowell Bailey

National Guard Biathlon Coach: Drew Gelinas

USBA Director of Athlete Development: Tim Burke