



## **2026 USA Taekwondo National Poomsae Team Pathway**

This document details the pathway for an athlete, pair, or team to earn a spot on the 2026 USA Taekwondo National Poomsae Team for national team events for the following divisions:

### **Recognized Individual Divisions**

Female 12-14 Black Belt, Male 12-14 Black Belt  
Female 15-17 Black Belt, Male 15-17 Black Belt  
Female 18-30 Black Belt, Male 18-30 Black Belt  
Female 31-40 Black Belt, Male 31-40 Black Belt  
Female 41-50 Black Belt, Male 41-50 Black Belt  
Female 51-60 Black Belt, Male 51-60 Black Belt  
Female 61-65 Black Belt, Male 61-65 Black Belt  
Female 66+ Black Belt, Male 66+ Black Belt

### **Recognized Mixed Pair Divisions (1 female + 1 male)**

12-14 Black Belt  
15-17 Black Belt  
Under 30 Black Belt  
Under 50 Black Belt  
Under 60 Black Belt  
Over 60 Black Belt

### **Recognized Team Divisions (3 females or 3 males)**

Female Team 12-14 Black Belt, Male Team 12-14 Black Belt  
Female Team 15-17 Black Belt, Male Team 15-17 Black Belt  
Female Team Under 30 Black Belt, Male Team Under 30 Black Belt  
Female Team Under 50 Black Belt, Male Team Under 50 Black Belt  
Female Team Under 60 Black Belt, Male Team Under 60 Black Belt  
Female Team Over 60 Black Belt, Male Team Over 60 Black Belt

### **Freestyle Individual Divisions**

Female Under 17 (12-17) Black Belt, Male Under 17 (12-17) Black Belt  
Female Over 17 Black Belt, Male Over 17 Black Belt

### **Freestyle Mixed Pair Divisions (1 female + 1 male)**

Under 17 (12-17) Black Belt  
Over 17 Black Belt

### **Freestyle Mixed Team Divisions (5 athletes plus 1 alternate, at least 2 females and 2 males)**

Mixed Team Under 17 (12-17) Black Belt  
Mixed Team Over 17 Black Belt

*\*Any change in the composition of a pair or team (including freestyle team alternates) will result in that pair or team being considered a new pair or team for the purposes of replacement of athletes or pathway considerations. For example, the removal or replacement of an athlete from a pair or team for voluntary reasons, medical reasons, or aging up will result in that team being considered a new pair or team that would no longer have the rights of the previous pair or team with regard to national team status or pathway benefits.*



**The 2026 National Team Trials** will take place in two rounds: the Qualification Round and the Selection Round. The winners of the Selection Round will serve as the team members for the entire calendar year.

### **Major Events**

2025 US Open

2025 US Taekwondo National Championships

2025 US Final Championships

### **TEAM TRIAL QUALIFICATION ROUND**

The **Qualification Round** is contested first.

**Recognized Poomsae:** The format of this round is two parts:

**Part 1:** A randomly ordered draw where all contestants perform a single randomly drawn poomsae.

**Part 2:** A different randomly ordered draw where all contestants perform a different single randomly drawn poomsae. No athlete will go first in both rounds.

The winner of the Qualification round will be the competitor with the highest combined score of the two poomsae. In the case of a tie, the winner is the competitor with the highest presentation score. If the competitors are still tied, all scores received during the competition are considered (without dropping the high and low scores). If the scores are still tied, the competitors will perform a randomly selected poomsae, and the scores from that poomsae will be used to break the tie.

**Freestyle Poomsae:** Athletes will contest a single freestyle poomsae with random order. The winner of the Qualification Round advances to the Selection Round.

For Freestyle Divisions: If there are five or more entries in the Qualification Round and no athletes contest the Selection Round, the athletes shall contest the Qualification Round, and then the top four athletes shall contest the Selection Round.

If there are four or fewer entries in the Qualification Round and no athletes contest the Selection Round, then all athletes will immediately proceed to the Selection Round without contesting the Qualification Round. The winner of the Selection round is named the USATKD National Poomsae Team Member.

### **† Under 17 Individual Freestyle Eligibility**

Because the Under 17 Freestyle Division age span is 12-17 (combination of 12-14 and 15-17), and is impacted by a small developmental pipeline in the prior age (10-11) division, the following rules apply to Under 17 Freestyle Individual Divisions only at USATKD Major Events:

The top four finishers, who do not age up in 2025, will advance to the Qualification Round. This will roll down to include only the top 8 finishers in the division.



### **INDIVIDUAL DIVISIONS**

Athletes who meet one of the following criteria in 2025 in the relevant individual division compete in the Qualification Round:

- USATKD Major Event Silver and Bronze Medalists
- Highest ranked athlete in the USATKD Rankings as of December 31, 2025
- Athletes who have won two golds within the same individual division at a G1 or G2 Event (must have at least one opponent)
- Athletes who age up in 2026 and have won gold, silver or bronze medals at a USATKD Major Event in the previous age division in 2025
- Aged up 2025 USATKD National Team members in the same category
- Under 30 & Under 40, Over 17 Freestyle: Top 20 WT World Ranking as of December 31, 2025

*\*Medals in pairs or teams do not qualify athletes for individual divisions.*

### **PAIR/TEAM DIVISIONS**

The following athletes compete in the Qualification Round:

- Any age-eligible pair or team that applies by the posted deadline

### **TEAM TRIAL SELECTION ROUND**

The **Selection Round** is contested after the conclusion of the Qualification Round.

**For Freestyle Poomsae**, athletes will perform once in random order. The winner of the Selection Round is the winner of the team trial.

**INDIVIDUAL Divisions** - Athletes who accomplish one of the following criteria in 2025 in the relevant division compete in the Selection Round\*\*:

- Winner of the Qualification Round
- 2025 National Team Member\*\*\*
- USATKD Major Event Gold Medalist
- International Dominant Athlete
- Aging up International Dominant Athlete



**PAIR/TEAM Divisions** – Pairs and teams that accomplish one of the following criteria in 2025 in the relevant division compete in the Selection Round\*\*:

- Winner of the Qualification Round
- 2025 National Team Member\*\*\*
- USATKD Major Event Gold Medalist
- International Dominant Pair/Team
- Aging up International Dominant Pair/Team

\*\* If no athletes contest the Selection Round and there are five or more entries in the Qualification round, then the top four individuals, pairs or teams from the Qualification Round progress to the Selection Round.

If there are four or fewer entries in the Qualification round and no athletes contest the Selection Round, then all athletes will immediately proceed to the Selection Round without contesting the Qualification Round. The winner of the Selection round is named the 2025 USATKD National Poomsae Team Member.

\*\*\*Benefits of being selected the National Team member only apply to the winner of the team trials; any athlete who acts as an alternate in a National Team event does not receive these benefits.

#### **International Dominant Athlete**

An international dominant athlete, pair, or team is one who has proven to be dominant in international competition by accomplishing one of the following criteria in the relevant division in 2025:

- Win three golds at a G1 or G2 event (must have five or more opponents)
- Win a gold medal at a G4 or higher event (must have five or more opponents)
- **U30 & U40, O17 Freestyle Individual Only:** Achieve #1-4 WT ranking in the world on December 31, 2025
- There may be more than one International Dominant athlete.

#### **Notes on International qualification through WT G-rated Events**

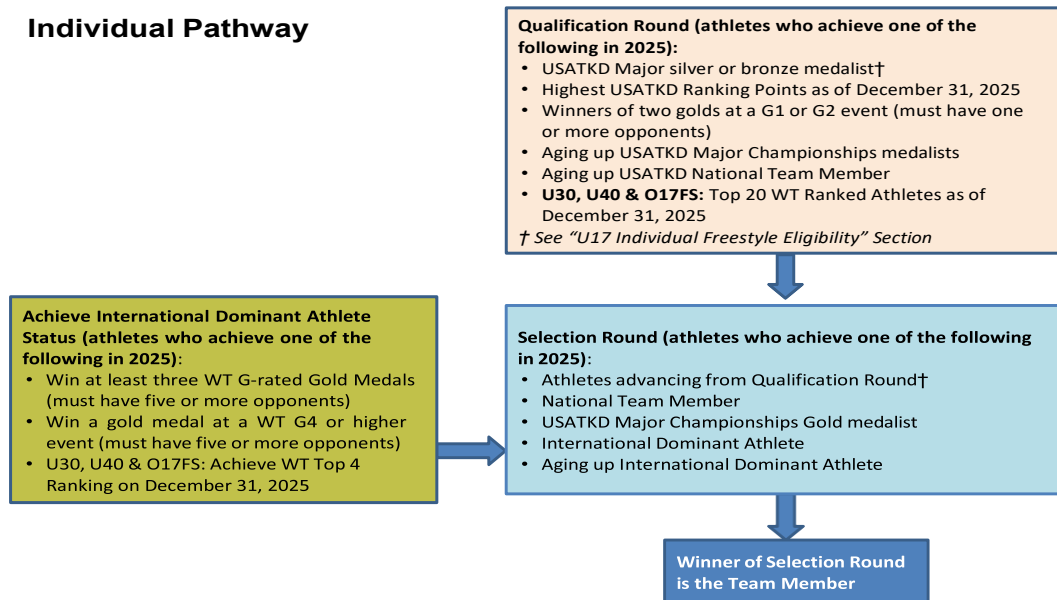
Proof of international results must be submitted by the athlete to USATKD by emailing [ewininger@usatkd.org](mailto:ewininger@usatkd.org) in the form of an official bracket or official results sheet published by the tournament organizer within 60 days of the event. Photographs of athletes on podium or ringside monitors will not be accepted.

ALL divisions with at least two contestants\* at a WT G-rated poomsae event will be considered as criteria for inclusion in the 2026 Team Trials. In other words, not only the WT-ranked poomsae divisions, but all divisions contested at that event will contribute to an athlete's eligibility.

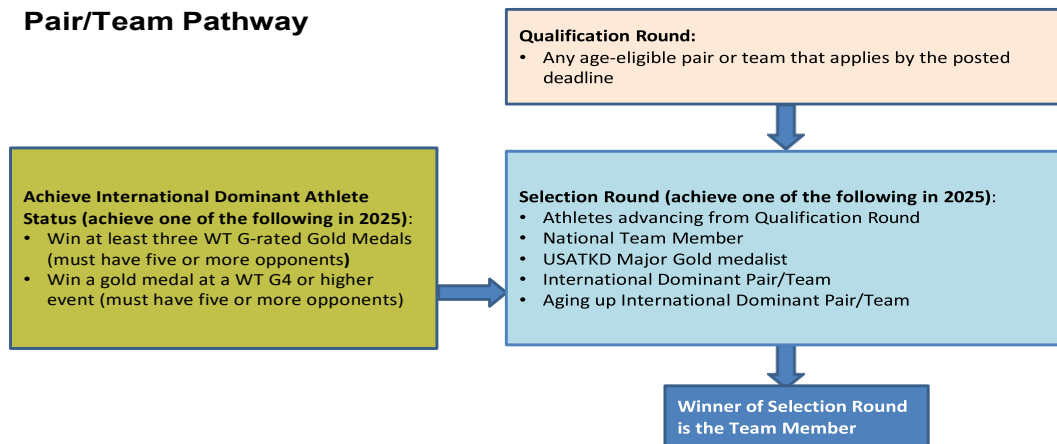
\* Athletes must compete against another athlete who is present and receives a score.



## Individual Pathway



## Pair/Team Pathway



This graphic above is for illustrative purposes only. For the complete pathways process, please refer to the text of this document.



## COMPETITION FORMAT: Selection Round

### **Recognized Poomsae Format: 5 Poomsae**

Each Recognized Poomsae Division performs five poomsae, one at a time per round. All competitors will perform the first randomly selected poomsae, followed by all competitors performing the second poomsae, and so forth.

A random competitor order will be utilized. The algorithm used to randomize the competitors will ensure that no competitor will perform first for any two consecutive poomsae.

Poomsae forms will be randomly selected and shown at the ring at the start of each round.

The selection of the winner will be based on two methods of calculating the results.

**1. Cumulative Score Method:** The first method will be by cumulative score of all rounds of competition. At the end of five rounds, the scores across the five poomsae for each athlete are totaled. The athlete who has the highest total score will be declared the winner of this method.

In the case of a tie, the winner is the competitor with the highest presentation score. If the competitors are still tied, all scores received during the competition are considered (without dropping the high and low scores). If the scores are still tied, the competitors will perform a randomly selected poomsae, and the scores from that poomsae will be used to break the tie.

**2. Rounds Won Method:** The second method will be by placement during each round of poomsae. Each round a first, second, third and fourth place will be awarded to the competitors and the number of wins will be recorded across all rounds. At the end of five rounds, the number of round wins will be listed as the highest number of 1st places, number of 2nd places, number of 3rd places and number of 4th places. The competitor with the highest number of 1st places wins.

If there is a tie, then the number of 2nd place, then number of 3rd place becomes a factor. For example, Competitor A, with 5 first place wins, beats Competitor B, with 3 first place and 5 second place wins. Or Competitor A with 4 first place, 3 second place and 1 third place beats Competitor B with 4 first place, 2 second place and 1 third place.

If the same athlete places first in both methods of calculating the winner, then that athlete is the uncontested winner. If any different athlete(s) places higher using the second method and records more round wins than the cumulative score winner, those athletes will have the right to challenge the winner to a tie breaker round.

The tie breaker between methods will use a single elimination format. The athletes qualifying will be seeded as the Cumulative Score winner seeded number 1 and the round winner seeded number 2, with subsequent round winners, if any, seeded next. Two forms will be randomly selected by the High Performance staff, and the round will be run using WT single elimination format rules. The winner will be named the Team Member.



Alternates, if needed, will be selected from the cumulative score results. The non-winning athlete who has the highest cumulative score is the first alternate. The non-winning athlete who has the second highest cumulative score is the second alternate, and the non-winning athlete with the third highest cumulative score is the third alternate. After this, the team spot will remain vacant if there were 4 or more contestants. If there were 3 or fewer contestants, alternates may be taken from the highest placement for the Qualification Round to fill 3 total alternate positions.

### **Scoring**

Referees will use blind scoring; they will not see the scores until the end of each division. Athletes and coaches will see the scores after each performance.

### **Freestyle Poomsae Format:**

Athletes will perform once in random order. The winner of the Selection Round is the winner of the team trial.

### **Minimum National Team Trials Eligibility Requirements**

#### **I. Citizenship:**

a. Athletes meet eligibility and nationality requirements as presented by USA Taekwondo in compliance with the minimum International Federation standards for participation.

b. All athletes must be U.S. Citizens to participate in the team trials.

#### **2. Minimum IF standards for participation:**

a. World Taekwondo (WT); Rules of Competition, Article 4. Contestants, Section 1  
<http://www.worldtaekwondo.org/rules-wt/rules.html>

- Holder of the nationality of the participating team.
- One recommended by the WT National Taekwondo Association.
- Holder of Taekwondo Dan certificate issued by the Kukkiwon or WT.

#### **3. Other requirements:**

a. Athlete must be a USA Taekwondo member in good standing.

#### **II. Removal of Athletes**

An athlete who is to be nominated to the Team by USA Taekwondo may be removed from the nominations for any of the following reasons, as determined by USA Taekwondo.

##### **A. Voluntary withdrawal.**

Athlete must submit a written letter to the USA Taekwondo CEO. Injury or illness as certified by USATKD physician (or medical staff). If an athlete refuses verification of their illness or injury by a USATKD physician (or medical staff), his/her injury will be assumed to be disabling and he/she may be removed.

##### **B. Violation of the NGB's Code of Conduct.**



An athlete who may be removed from the Team pursuant to this provision has the right to a hearing per the NGB's Bylaws (USATKD Bylaws, Section 15, Complaint Procedures) or USOPC Bylaws, Article 9.

C. Violation of the NGB's Athlete Agreement.

An athlete who may be removed from the Team pursuant to this provision has the right to a hearing per the NGB's Bylaws (USATKD Bylaws, Section 15, Complaint Procedures) or USOPC Bylaws, Article 9.

D. Doping violations

An athlete may be removed from Nomination or from the Team at any time for violation of IOC, WADA, WT, USADA and/or USOPC anti-doping protocol, policies and procedures. In such instances, the adjudication process will be managed through the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

III. Replacement of Athletes

Should circumstances arise in which the 1st place athlete needs to be removed for any of the reasons listed above, the athlete who places 2nd in the same division of team trial will serve as the replacement athlete. The 3rd place athlete will be the 3rd replacement athlete if needed. The 4th place athlete will be the 4th replacement athlete if needed. After this, the team spot will remain vacant.

Notes on multiple entries per national team category: If a WT or PATU-sanctioned event allows more than one entry per national team category, then alternates will be called to fill additional quotas as described in this section, up to the 4th place finisher.

IV. Required Documents

The following documents are required to be signed by an athlete as a condition of nomination to the U.S. National Team, and are included as attachments:

- Code of Conduct (Attachment A)
- Athlete Agreement (Attachment B)

V. Publicity/Distribution of Procedures

The approved Selection Procedures (complete and unaltered) will be posted/published by USA Taekwondo in the following locations:

A. NGB website: [www.usa-taekwondo.us](http://www.usa-taekwondo.us)

VI. Mandatory Training and/or Competition:

N/A





#### VII. Anti-Doping Requirements

Athletes must adhere to all IOC, WADA, WT, USADA and USOPC anti-doping protocols, policies and procedures. This includes participation in out of competition testing as required by the IOC, WADA, WT, USADA and USOPC Rules.

#### VIII. NGB Bylaws and Grievance Procedures

The USA Taekwondo Bylaws and Grievance Procedures can be found in the USA Taekwondo Bylaws.

IX. International Disclaimer These procedures are based on IOC and/or World Taekwondo (WT) and/or Pan American Taekwondo Union (PATU) rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the selection procedures caused by a change in IOC and/or WT and/or PATU rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected athletes immediately. The selection criteria are based on the latest information available to USA Taekwondo. However, the selections are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency.