

USA TAEKWONDO

KYORUGI Athlete Selection Procedures

2026 U21 National Team

- Publication Date: 11/5/25; Revised 4/22/26

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

These procedures outline the pathway for selection to the 2026 U21 National Team in KYORUGI.

The maximum team size can be 16 ATHLETES (8 MALE/8 FEMALE).

SECTION 2: ATHLETE REQUIREMENTS

1. Nationality/Passports Requirements:

- Have a valid United States passport at the time of July 3rd, 2026 that does not expire for six months after the conclusion of the 2026 U.S. National Championships (July 4th to 8th, 2026).

2. WORLD TAEKWONDO (WT) Requirements:

- Must be a citizen of the United States of America.
- Holder of Taekwondo Dan certificate issued by the Kukkiwon
- Must hold a valid 2026 WT Global Athlete License
- Must be born between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2009.

Please note: this age range is based on the information established by WT for the 2025 U21 World Championships.

3. National Governing Body (NGB) Requirements:

- Comply with the USATKD Athlete Agreement.
- Comply with the [USATKD Code of Ethics](#).
- Comply with the [USATKD SafeSport Policy](#).
- Athlete must be a USATKD member in good standing.
- Athlete does not have an active suspension from the U.S. Center for SafeSport that would make the Athlete ineligible to participate as a member of the 2026 U21 National Team.
- Athlete does not have an active sanction for an anti-doping rule/policy violation that would make the Athlete ineligible to participate as a member of the 2026 U21 National Team.
- Athlete must compete in the World Class Black Belt division and hold a taekwondo Dan certificate issued by Kukkiwon or World Taekwondo (Article 4.1.3).

SECTION 3: OTHER MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE TEAM

- Meet the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training requirements in accordance with the [USOPC Athlete Safety Policy](#) if you will be 18 or older on the day after the Closing Ceremony.
 - Agree to be bound by and adhere to all WT, USATKD, WADA, USADA and USOPC anti-doping protocols, policies and procedures, as applicable. This includes participation in Out-of-Competition Testing and an agreement to be bound to the results management authority of WT, USAT, WADA, USADA, or other Anti-Doping Organization as applicable.

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- Meet all health and safety protocols, to include vaccine requirements and/or testing requirements set forth by the government, local laws, USOPC, WT, USATKD and/or the Local Organizing Committee.

SECTION 4: EVALUATIVE EVENTS

Event names, dates and locations of all trials, competitions, and camps to be used as part of the selection process:

DATE(S)	DESCRIPTION/EVENT NAME
May 29 th to 31 st , 2026	2026 U.S. Taekwondo American Open – East
June 12 th to 14 th , 2026	2026 U.S. Taekwondo American Open – West <i>*Athletes only need to compete at one of the above</i>
July 4 th to 8 th , 2026	2026 U.S. National Championships – U21 World Class Black Belt Divisions

SECTION 5: SELECTION PROCESS

Provide a step-by-step description of the selection process including an overview of the Qualification System.

The 2026 U21 National Team will be determined by the winners of the U21 World Class black belt divisions at the 2026 U.S. National Championships (July 4th to 8th, 2026, Charlotte, NC). This team will represent USATKD at a TBD event in 2026.

5.1 TOTAL QUOTA PLACES:

The U21 National team size is 16 ATHLETES (8 MALE/8 FEMALE).

CLASS	MALE	FEMALE
FIN	54KG	46KG
FLY	58KG	49KG
BANTAM	63KG	53KG
FEATHER	68KG	57KG
LIGHT	74KG	62KG
WELTER	80KG	67KG
MIDDLE	87KG	73KG
HEAVY	>87KG	>73KG

5.2 EVALUATION EVENT QUALIFICATION PATHWAY:

Athletes can qualify for U21 divisions contested at the 2026 U.S. National Championships (July 4th to 8th, 2026, Charlotte, NC) via these pathways:

1. 2025 U.S. National Team members that competed at the 2025 World Taekwondo Championships (Oct. 24th-30th, 2025; Wuxi, China) **or be the current 2026 U.S. National Team member** that meet the age requirements found in Section 2 of this document.
 - A 2025 **or 2026 U.S.** National Team member is eligible to automatically qualify for the U21 World Class Black Belt Division at the 2026 U.S. National Championships in the same weight category as their **2025** National Team Weight Division. If an athlete wants to contest a different weight category,

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they must qualify via route 3 listed below.

The 2025 World Championships Selection Procedures can be found [here](#).

The 2026 Pan Am Championships Selection Procedures can be found [here](#).

2. 2025 U21 U.S. National Team members that competed at the 2025 U21 World Taekwondo Championships (Dec. 3rd-6th, 2025; Nairobi, Kenya) that meet the age requirements found in Section 2 of this document.

- A 2025 U21 National Team member is eligible to automatically qualify for the same U21 World Class Black Belt Division at the 2026 U.S. National Championships. If an athlete wants to contest a different weight category, they must requalify via route 3 listed below.

The 2025 U21 World Championships Selection Procedures can be found [here](#).

3. Compete in the U21 division at one, or both, of the following open entry events:
 - a. 2026 U.S. Taekwondo American Open – East (May 29th to 31st, 2026; Oaks, PA)
 - b. 2026 U.S. Taekwondo American Open – West (June 12th to 14th, 2026; Tucson, AZ)

**Both American Opens have no qualification requirements and are open entry.*

5.3 NOMINATION TO THE TEAM:

1. The winners of each respective U21 World Class Black Belt weight division held at the 2026 U.S. National Championships will be nominated to the 2026 U21 National Team.

Please note: Competing in a U21 division at Nationals will meet the 2027 U.S. National Team Trials requirement for competing at 2026 U.S. Nationals. However, as this is a Team Trials, this division will not receive USAT Ranking points for the U21 divisions.

2026 U21 National Team Trials Format

1. The U21 World Class Black Belt categories will take place at the 2026 U.S. National Championships on.

If there are only 2 athletes in a division, then the division will follow a “Best of 3” competition system.

If there are 3, or 4 athletes, then the division will follow a “Round Robin” competition system.

If there are 5, or more, athletes in a division then the division follow a “Single Elimination Bracket” competition system.

Team Trials Seeding

Senior World Class Black Belt Divisions will be seeded via the following:

1. 2026 U.S. National Team Member
2. 2025 U.S. National Team Member
3. 2025 U21 U.S. National Team Member

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- All other seeds beyond this list will be completed with USATKD Rankings.
- If there is no athlete qualified to fill a seed, the lower seeds will move up to the next highest seed.

SECTION 6: DISCRETIONARY CRITERIA TO NOMINATE ATHLETES

6.1 RATIONALE FOR UTILIZING DISCRETIONARY SELECTION:

N/A

6.2 DEFINE THE DISCRETIONARY CRITERIA TO BE USED:

N/A

6.3 SELECTION COMMITTEE

N/A

SECTION 7: MANDATORY TRAINING AND/OR COMPETITION

Specify the location, schedule, and duration of all mandatory training and/or competition that will be considered in Team selection.

There will be no mandatory training camps for the 2026 U21 National Team.

SECTION 8: DATE OF TEAM NOMINATION

NGB will nominate the Team following the conclusion of the 2026 U.S. National Championships (July 4th to 8th, 2026, Charlotte, NC)

SECTION 9: REMOVAL OF ATHLETES FROM THE TEAM

9.1 NGB JURISDICTION

- a. NGB has jurisdiction over the 2026 U21 National Team. An athlete who is nominated to the Team may be removed for any of the following reasons, as determined by NGB:
 - i. Voluntary withdrawal. Athlete submits a written letter to Eric Winger, the USATKD Associate Director of National Teams requesting to voluntarily withdraw from the Team. Submissions must be sent to ewininger@usatk.org.
 - ii. Injury or illness. A physician (or medical staff) approved by NGB provides certification that the Athlete has a debilitating condition. If Athlete refuses to provide verification of their illness or injury by a physician (or medical staff), their injury will be assumed to be debilitating, and they may be removed from the Team.
 - iii. Failure to participate. Athlete does not participate in all Mandatory Training and/or Competition as defined in these procedures.
 - iv. Code of Conduct Violation. Athlete violates the NGB Code of Conduct: <https://www.usatk.org/v2-resources/code-of-ethics>
 - v. Athlete Agreement. Athlete violates a term in their signed NGB Athlete Agreement.

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- vi. Non-compliance. Athlete does not meet the athlete eligibility requirements listed in Section 2 and Section 3 of these selection procedures.
- b. An Athlete may be removed as a nominee to the Team or from the Team if found to have violated WADA, WT, USADA and/or USOPC anti-doping protocol, policies and procedures, the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code, the USOPC Athlete Safety Policy and the NGB SafeSport Policy, as applicable.
- c. Non-compliance with the eligibility requirements listed in Section 2.4.

SECTION 10: SELECTION PROCESS IF ATHLETE VACANCY OCCURS PRIOR TO SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES BY NAME TO THE LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

10.1 Process TBD until the event that the 2026 U21 National Team will attend is determined.

SECTION 11: RIGHT TO A HEARING

An athlete who is removed from the Team has the right to a hearing per the NGB's complaint procedures ([found here](#)) and the USOPC Bylaws (applies only for a Protected Competition), Section 9 (<https://www.usopc.org/governance/dispute-resolution>).

SECTION 12: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The following documents are required to be signed by an athlete as a condition of nomination to the 2026 U21 National Team:

- [USATKD Code of Ethics](#)
- USATKD Athlete Agreement

SECTION 13: DISCLAIMERS

These procedures are based on WT rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the selection procedures caused by a change in WT rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected athletes immediately. The selection criteria are based on the latest information available to NGB.

However, the selection criteria are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency. If any force of nature, pandemic, or force majeure, should cause the alteration or cancellation of any of the selection events listed in this document, these selection procedures may require revisions.

SECTION 14: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All members of the Selection Committee (Section 6.3) and all individuals who developed these selection procedures (Section 21) must comply with the USATKD Conflict of Interest Policy, to include completing and submitting a disclosure form consistent with the USATKD Conflict of Interest Policy before convening the committee.

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[USATKD Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

A conflict of interest exists when a personal, family, financial, professional, club, team or business relationship or interferes with, or maybe perceived to interfere with a committee member's ability to be impartial and participate in the selection process in a fair and impartial manner. Any member of the Selection Committee who has an actual, possible, or perceived conflict of interest must disclose it to the NGB's Ethics Committee prior to the start of the selection process and may be required to recuse themselves from the Selection Committee discussions and/or voting.

If a conflict exists, the NGB's Ethics Committee shall review the conflict and determine the committee member's level of involvement (e.g., whether that committee member must recuse themselves from participating in discussions and/or voting).

During its review, the NGB Ethics Committee may ask a Selection Committee member or an affected person for more information at its discretion. For example, if a Selection Committee member is required to recuse themselves from voting, the NGB Ethics Committee may still determine that a Selection Committee member who has relevant and necessary information related to athlete performance, such as a national team coach or high performance director, may, if requested by the Selection Committee, provide that information to the Selection Committee if the information is provided in a fair and unbiased manner and if the Selection Committee member with the conflict of interest does not vote toward the final decision.

Additionally, any person with a good faith belief that a committee member has a conflict of interest may report the alleged conflict of interest to the NGB Ethics Committee, smcnally@usatkd.org. Reports may also be made anonymously through the [USOPC's Integrity Portal](#). No committee member shall retaliate in any way against a person who, in good faith, reports an alleged conflict of interest. In addition, the USOPC maintains a strict no retaliation policy that prohibits any employee, contractor, agent, volunteer, or member of the USOPC to take or threaten to take any action against an athlete for reporting information to or seeking assistance from the Office of the Athlete Ombuds.

Any recused individual shall be replaced in accordance with the NGB Selection Committee appointment process.

SECTION 15: QUESTIONS REGARDING ATHLETE SELECTION PROCEDURES

Athletes may contact the individuals listed below for information about these selection procedures.

Name: Stephen Lambdin

Position: CPO

Email: slambdin@usatkd.org

Phone: (817)-797-3541

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Name: Alex Lee

Position: Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative

Email: alexlee.usa@gmail.com

ATHLETE OMBUDS

The Team USA Athlete Ombuds serves as a safe, independent, confidential place for Team USA Athletes to seek advice about any sport-related rule, policy, or process; how to navigate raising or responding to concerns; or access legal and mental health resources.

Team USA Athletes may contact the Athlete Ombuds:

PHONE: (719) 866-5000

EMAIL: ombudsman@usathlete.org

WEBSITE: usathlete.org

SECTION 16: GRIEVANCES

The NGB Grievance Procedures can be found here: <https://www.usatkd.org/v2-resources/bylaws>. (Section 15.1)

Section 9 of the USOPC Bylaws provides a process for an athlete to file a complaint with the USOPC against an NGB alleging that they have been denied, or threatened to be denied, with the opportunity to participate in a Protected Competition, as defined in the USOPC bylaws. Additional information on how to file a complaint can be found here: <https://www.usopc.org/governance/dispute-resolution>

SECTION 17: NON-RETALIATION

USATKD has a zero tolerance for retaliation against people who make good faith reports of potential ethical, policy, or legal violations, or who cooperate with investigations of those reports. That means no USOPC or NGB staff, Board or Committee member, or volunteer may threaten, harass, discriminate against, or take any negative employment or related action (e.g., discharge, demotion, suspension, negative review) on that basis.

- Individuals may report concerns to the NGB by following the NGB's Whistleblower Policy located here: <https://www.usatkd.org/v2-resources/code-of-ethics>
- Individuals may report concerns to the USOPC confidentially, or anonymously, online using the [USOPC Integrity Portal](#) or individuals may call the USOPC Integrity Hotline at 1-877-404-9935.
- Additional information can be found in the USOPC's [Speak Up Policy](#).

SECTION 18: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

NGB will retain the approved Selection Procedures and all supporting documents, including scouting or evaluation forms, etc., and data from the selection process as required by the NGB's Records Retention Policy

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or for six months past the date of the 2026 U.S. National Championships, whichever is longer.

SECTION 19: DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL & CERTIFICATION OF SELECTION PROCEDURES

The following committee of individuals developed these selection procedures.

NAME	ROLE
Stephen Lambdin	CPO
Eric Wininger	Director of National Teams
Alex Lee	AAC Representative

The following individual approved these selection procedures and through their signature, certifies that the procedures comply with the standards and criteria set by the WT. The following individual further certifies that the information provided herein regarding Athlete Selection Procedures represents the method approved by the NGB and that these selection procedures will be posted on the NGB's website.

POSITION	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Chief Executive Officer	Steve McNally		

The following individual affirms that they read and understand the selection procedures.

POSITION	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Team USA Athletes Commission Representative*	Alex Lee		

* If the Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative has delegated authority to the Alternate Representative to sign the Selection Procedures, attach a letter from the Team USA AC Representative indicating the reason they have delegated authority.

* Signature by the Athlete Representative constitutes that they have read and understand the Selection Procedures. If the Athlete Representative reads and does not agree with the Athlete Selection Procedures being submitted by the NGB, they may submit those reasons in writing to their USOPC Sport Performance Team.

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* If, for some reason, a sport does not have an elected Team USA AC Representative, the NGB must designate an athlete from that sport to review and sign the Selection Procedures.

APPENDIX A – COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

AAC – Athletes' Advisory Council

AC – Athletes' Commission

Act or TSOASA – Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act

APC – Americas Paralympic Committee

CAS – Court of Arbitration for Sport

Center or CSS – U.S. Center for SafeSport

CF – Continental Federation

IMS – Internally Managed Sport (sport managed by the USOPC)

IOC – International Olympic Committee

IPC – International Paralympic Committee

IF – International Federation

LOC – Local Organizing Committee

NGB – National Governing Body

NOC – National Olympic Committee

NPC – National Paralympic Committee

OCOG – Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games. The OCOG refers to the Organizing Committee of the Paralympic Games as well.

PAG – Pan American Games

Panam Sports or PASO – Pan American Sports Organization

PPAG – Parapan American Games

PSO – Paralympic Sport Organization

TEAM USA AC – Team USA Athletes' Commission (formerly USOPC AAC)

USADA – United States Anti-Doping Agency

USATKD – USA Taekwondo

WADA – World Anti-Doping Agency

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WT – World Taekwondo

APPENDIX B – GLOSSARY

Contingency means a future event or circumstance which is possible but cannot be predicted with certainty.

Force Majeure means an event or effect that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled (e.g., hurricane, tornado, etc.).

Grievance Procedures means the process that enables an athlete to file a complaint with the NGB or USOPC.

Jurisdiction means the power or authority to make decisions and judgments.

Nominated means an athlete, coach or staff member whose name has been submitted to the USOPC by an NGB for participation on the 2026 U21 National Team.

Protected Competition means a Delegation Event or a Qualifying Competition.

Qualifying Competition means either of the following:

- i. **NGB Qualifying Competition:** Any competition or activity organized or approved by the NGB where the athlete's performance or results are considered in the published selection criteria to represent the United States in a Delegation Event.
- ii. **International Qualifying Competition:** Any international sport competition where (i) athletes represent the United States against athletes representing other nations, (ii) the NGB officially designates entrants, as required by the competition organizers, and (iii) athlete results or performance are included in the published criteria to qualify, or be selected, to represent the United States in a Delegation Event.

Selected means an athlete, coach or staff member whose name has been submitted by the USOPC to the LOC at the final submission date, as determined by the LOC.

APPENDIX C – ATHLETE RESOURCES

ATHLETE OMBUDS

The Team USA Athlete Ombuds serves as a safe, independent, confidential place for Team USA Athletes to seek advice about any sport-related rule, policy, or process; how to navigate raising or responding to concerns; or access legal and mental health resources.

Team USA Athletes may contact the Athlete Ombuds:

PHONE: (719) 866-5000

EMAIL: ombudsman@usathlete.org

WEBSITE: usathlete.org

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SAFESPORT HELPLINE

The SafeSport Helpline provides crisis intervention, referrals, and emotional support specifically designed for athletes, staff, and other SafeSport participants affected by sexual violence. Through this service, support specialists provide live, confidential, one-on-one support that is available 24/7. Individuals can call the Helpline at 866-200-0796 or visit www.safesporthehelpline.org.

TEAM USA ATHLETES' COMMISSION (Team USA AC) *(Formerly Athletes' Advisory Council)*

The Team USA AC is responsible for broadening communication between the USOPC and active athletes and serves as a source of input and advice to the USOPC Board of Directors.

WEBSITE: www.usopc.org/teamusa-athletes-commission

TEAM USA MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

For those in need of mental health support, USOPC Psychological Services is available at psychservices@usopc.org, or you can connect with a licensed mental health provider 24/7 through the USOPC Psychological Services Support Line at 719-866-2255. You can also visit <https://www.usopc.org/mental-health> for information about all available resources or complete our referral link at go.teamusa.org/referrals to get connected.

USOPC DISPUTE RESOLUTION UNIT (DRU)

For Protected Competitions, USOPC's DRU oversees the administration of dispute resolution services to athletes and other members of NGBs for grievances under the USOPC's jurisdiction to ensure the complaints are heard in a timely and fair manner. For more information about this process, please visit the [dispute resolution website](#).

USOPC ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

USOPC's Ethics and Compliance team is responsible for ensuring the USOPC and NGBs comply with the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, their own bylaws and policies, and any other applicable laws or regulations. Any individual may report concerns confidentially, or anonymously, online using the [USOPC Integrity Portal](#) or individuals may call the USOPC Integrity Hotline at 1-877-404-9935 to report their concern over the phone.

USOPC SECURITY AND ATHLETE SAFETY REPORTING PORTAL

Athletes can report an incident of emotional, physical, or sexual misconduct, a violation of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) or a general security incident or concern through the [Safety Reporting Portal](#). Athletes may also report to the USOPC over the phone at 719-866-3869.