



US Biathlon Association

ATHLETE SELECTION PROCEDURES

2026 Jr. IBU Cup and Junior Open European Championships

June 2025

Overview

The following selection criteria specify how youth and junior class athletes qualify to represent the U.S. at the 2026 Jr. IBU Cup in Madona, Latvia, and Junior Open European Championships in Imatra, Finland.

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) competitive results at the trials races to be held Dec 28 - 31 in Lake Placid, New York.*
- (2) discretionary selection.*

YJWCH, Jr. IBU and JOECH Team Trials Qualification

Trials Event Information

General: The Youth & Junior World Championships Team Trials will take place December 28-31 in Lake Placid, New York. These trials will also select athletes for the Jr. IBU Cup and JOECH.

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 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 based on 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 counted in the points. Youth and junior athletes will be scored together on the Primary List, which will be used for the Jr. IBU and JOECH team selection.

Jr. IBU and JOECH Criteria

Jr. IBU Madona, Latvia and JOECH Imatra, Finland (January 12th – January 25th, 2026)

Juniors (born 2005-2006) and Youth (born 2007-2010)

Team size: Minimum 3 per gender and up to 5 athletes per gender

- Any athlete who receives pre-qualification via discretion for the JWCH Team
- The top two athletes on the Primary List from the Team Trials will be selected for each gender. If no athlete receives pre-qualification via discretion for the JWCH team, the top three athletes from the Primary List will be selected.

- Additional junior and 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 trials or Nordic races before trials. We highly encourage our athletes to race Nordic JNQ races.
- Discretionary selection will not always follow rank order from the primary list. As noted above, ski speed will be an important factor when considering discretionary selections. Other considerations will include, but are not limited to, the competitiveness of YJWCH selection. If the YJWCH team selections show tight races where athletes are narrowly missing the team, this will also be considered during discretionary selection to provide more international race opportunities to athletes with similar abilities.

Appendix: Policies & Rules

1. Funding and Self-Pay Policy for 2026 Jr. IBU Cup and JOECH

- 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 before team trials.
- If no athlete qualifies by the above bullet point, then the top two athletes on the primary list will **not** be charged a trip co-pay. If one athlete qualifies via the above bullet point, then only the top athlete from the primary list will not be charged a co-pay.
- Self-pay for all other athletes.

The expected cost of this trip will be \$1,800 per athlete, plus airfare. Need-based support may be available for this trip. Information on this program will be provided with team naming.

2. 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.

3. USBA Principles of Discretionary Selection

The purpose of a discretionary choice is to ensure the 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) with 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.

4. 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.

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
National Guard Biathlon Coach: Drew Gelinas
USBA Director of Athlete Development: Tim Burke
USBA High Performance Director: Lowell Bailey