

US Biathlon

PRELIMINARY NOTICE TO THE ATHLETE SELECTION PROCEDURES

2026 Olympic Winter Games

Dec. 2, 2024

USOPC & USBA ICC and USBA Board approved

TO: Members of US Biathlon

FROM: US Biathlon

RE: Preliminary Notice to the Athlete Selection Procedures for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games

To provide as much information in a timely manner, US Biathlon is releasing this Preliminary Notice to the Athlete Selection Procedures for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games. This document is being written as a complement, and not a substitute to the 2026 Olympic Winter Games Athlete Selection Procedures. Additional communication will be released by US Biathlon once the Athlete Selection Procedures have been approved by the USOPC.

The complete qualification pathway for the 2026 Winter Olympic Games (Games) is anticipated to be released by June 2025. However, the opportunity exists for up to 50% of the start quota per gender to be pre-qualified for the Games through Phase 1 Early qualification (rounding down for all fractions).

I. Phase 1 Early Qualification for 2026 Olympic Winter Games from the 2024/25 Season:

- 1) Eligible athletes who place in the top six (6) in any Sprint, Individual, Pursuit, or Mass Start race at the 2025 World Championship (February 2025) will pre-qualify for the Games.
 - If the maximum allowable percentage of pre-qualified start spots is exceeded via top six (6) performances, the following tie-breaking mechanisms will be employed in the order below:
 - Single best World Championships non-team result.
 - If two or more athletes have the same single best result, each athlete's second-best result will be used as the tiebreaker. This tie-break process will continue until the tie is broken (e.g., third-best, fourth-best, etc.).
- 2) If the maximum allowable percentage of pre-qualified start spots have not been filled via step 1, additional athletes may pre-qualify for the Games by meeting the standards outlined below.
 - A. Top-25 in the overall World Cup Final Ranking for the 2024/25 season; or
 - B. Two Top Ten (10) finishes in World Cup (WC) and/or World Championships (WCH) non-team competitions in the 2024/25 season.

If the maximum allowable percentage of pre-qualified start spots is exceeded, the following tie-breaking mechanisms will be employed in the order below, until the maximum allowable percentage of pre-qualified start spots is reached:

- Single best non-team result during the 2024/25 WC (including WCHs 2025) season
- If two or more athletes have the same single best result, each athlete's second-best result will be used as the tiebreaker. This tie-break process will continue until the tie is broken (e.g., third-best, fourth-best, etc.)

II. Performance Requirements for Early Qualification:

The USBA coaching staff, in consultation with each Pre-Qualified Athlete, will develop a Training Agreement which will outline the continued training and competition requirements for each Pre-Qualified Athlete in the 2025/26 season. Each Training Agreement will be individualized and specific to each Pre-Qualified Athlete and is intended to enable the Pre-Qualified Athlete to best prepare for their training and participation in the Olympic Games, with the focus of the program on peak performance.

The Training Agreement must be signed by the USBA and Pre-Qualified Athlete within one month (or another period mutually agreed upon) after the athlete's Pre-Qualification for the Olympic Team. By signing, both parties agree to fulfill the terms and conditions in the Training Agreement. The signed Training Agreement must be submitted and approved by the International Competition Committee (ICC) prior to execution.

Failure to fulfill the terms and conditions in the Training Agreement may result in the ICC removing the Pre-Qualified Athlete from early qualification status at which time the Pre-Qualified Athlete would need to follow the remaining selection procedures to qualify for the Olympic Team.

III. Phase 2 Qualification/2025 Olympic Team Selection Pathway:

It is intended that athletes who do not pre-qualify for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games via Phase 1 Early Qualification will be evaluated on their performance at any of the below listed events. More information including eligibility and registration information for the events below will be provided in the full athlete selection procedures.

EVENT NAME	DATE/LOCATION
Roller Ski Trials	Fall 2025, (exact dates, to be determined) <i>*This competition will be open to all eligible USBA members.</i>
Pre-Season On-Snow Selection Races	Fall 2025 (exact dates, to be determined)
World Cups	2025/26 Season
IBU Cup Tour	2025/26 Season
2025 US Biathlon On-Snow IBUC/WC Trials	December 2025 (exact dates, to be determined) <i>*This competition will be open to all eligible USBA members.</i>

Pre-Qualified Athletes may be evaluated by some of the 2025-26 events listed above but will not be subject to the same evaluation standards set forth in the full athlete selection procedures. Any standards of evaluation for Pre-Qualified Athletes will be outlined in their Training Agreement.

IV. Disclaimer:

This preliminary notice is based on the International Biathlon Union (IBU) rules and regulations as presently known and understood for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games. The information in this notice is provided to assist athletes with their training and competition planning and is subject to change upon approval of the US Biathlon Athlete Selection Procedures for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games. Once complete, the approved Athlete Selection Procedures will be posted on the [US Biathlon selection procedures website](#). Additionally, the IBU Qualification System and athlete eligibility information for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games can be found [here](#).

For questions about the Games selection process, please contact Lowell Bailey, Director of High Performance, lbailey@usbiathlon.org.