

British Athletics

2017-2024 Selection Philosophy

- This document has been produced to outline the approach to selecting teams for Olympic programme competitions throughout the track and field pathway during the Tokyo and Paris cycles.
- The intention of the philosophy is to provide clarity and consistency in approach to the selection for all British Athletics Teams and to allow athletes and coaches to more effectively plan for their future within the sport.
- The competition pathway has been reviewed and the three key aims of the philosophy are outlined below:
 - Ensuring that medal success at the Olympic Games and IAAF World outdoor Championships is maximised;
 - Ensuring that appropriate competition opportunities for potential future medal winners are provided throughout the pathway; and
 - Ensuring that obtaining a British vest continues to be realistic aspiration for athletes throughout the pathway and that athletes are motivated to remain in the sport post age-group championships.
- To achieve the priorities above (and to sustainably finance and resource the competition pathway), a different approach has been provided for each competition, which results in varying impacts on team sizes and selection processes throughout the pathway.
- All selection policies for the remainder of the Tokyo cycle, and the following Paris cycle, will be formulated to comply with the selection philosophy outlined for each competition.
- British Athletics reserves the right to amend this document should there be significant changes to either the wider NGB strategy or the funding status of the Olympic World Class Programme (WCP). Additionally, changes to, or concerns regarding the location/date/qualification process of any specific edition of a championships may require a bespoke approach for that particular competition (this may include a decision not to attend a particular event for one or more editions).



**BRITISH
ATHLETICS**

MAJOR SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Olympic Games

- Winning medals and maximising top 8 placings at the Olympic Games is the primary aim of the World Class Programme (WCP), which funds attendance of the British team at the Olympic Games.
- However, the ability to provide truly world leading support to genuine medal potential athletes in the Olympic environment is severely compromised by taking a very large team with a very wide range of abilities/experiences/behaviours.
- We also recognise the great value and pride placed in being an “Olympian” within the wider athletic community (and the watching public).
- Consequently, the approach to selection for the next two Olympics will see an increase in the standard/rankings required for selection and a reduction in overall team size. The aim of this approach will not be to exclude either developing athletes, or those for whom making an Olympic team is the ultimate goal – but to ensure a more focused, higher quality team in order to deliver a high level of service to all selected athletes.
- Standards/ranking requirements will be increased to achieve this aim. However, to increase transparency and consistency, ALL athletes who achieve British Athletics selection standards/rankings requirements will be selected (subject to form/fitness and max. entry restrictions).
- In discretionary selections, highly promising developing athletes will usually be prioritised.
- A very limited Performance Director/Head Coach discretion will be provided for exceptional athletes who are otherwise not selected.
- Relay teams will always be selected where the relevant team achieves qualification.

World Championships (outdoor)

- The World Championships is vital in providing global competition experience to potential future medallists. It is also vital in preparing the wider team (including staff) to deliver world class performances at the Olympic Games.
- The approach and selection process for the pre-Olympic Games World Championships (2019/2023) will therefore be the same as the Olympics (i.e. more focused team size) to allow truly effective preparation of athletes and staff for the Olympic Games.
- However, the post- Olympic Games World Championships (2021) will be treated differently – a larger team will be selected with the aim of aiding the transition of retiring and developing athletes between Olympic cycles.
- Relay teams will always be selected where relay teams achieve qualification.

European Championships (outdoor & indoor) / World Indoor Championships

- Selection for each of these championships will be widened to ensure they are genuinely used as experiential opportunities for developing athletes and as realistic opportunities for established athletes to achieve a GB vest.
- Baseline IAAF standards will be used for the IAAF World Indoor Championships – though we recognise that standards for the field events at this competition are now extremely high.
- Standards for the European Championships (indoor and outdoor) will be set to ensure developing athletes are given the opportunity to gain selection – standards for the European outdoors will be adjusted depending on where they fall within the calendar in Olympic year (i.e. a post Olympics Euros will generally be easier, taking the opportunity to “blood” new athletes).
- Winning relay medals at indoor/European championships level is not a priority (though we would expect to be winning medals at European level regardless) – instead, developing relay teams with the talent, dedication and skills to operate in the global environment is key. As such, the decision of whether to select relay teams will be made on a case-by-case basis, depending on the availability of athletes and the status of the annual relay plan in place at the time.

European Team Championships

- At the time of writing (spring 2018), EA are reviewing the format of the ETC (click [here](#) for details). As such, the approach to this competition will likely shift over the coming months/years. However, in it's current format:
- Full teams will be selected (including relays) for each addition.
- The expectation for WCP athletes to attend will depend on the location/date of the competition.
- The quality of relay teams selected will depend on the timing of the ETC (in relation to other key championships that year), availability of athletes and the status of the annual relay plan in place at the time.

AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS

European U23 Championships / World University Games

- In comparison to the U20/U18 age-groups, the value of this championships as a development opportunity for future senior medal contenders is considered to be limited. The highest quality athletes have usually already progressed to senior global championships by the time they reach the U23 age-group. There will of course be exceptions to this and it is therefore vital that we continue to support this age-group.
- The U23 age-group also covers the age at which talented athletes often tend to leave the sport (including during transition through university). As such, this age-group (inc. the World University Games) has an important role to play in retaining athletes by providing aspirational opportunity to win medals and gain a British Athletics vest.
- Selection standards will continue to be based around the ability of athletes to achieve a top 5 finish at the championships. Again, ALL athletes who qualify will be selected (subject to form/fitness/max. entry restrictions).
- Team leader discretion will be provided to ensure highly promising athletes who fail to achieve qualification standards can be selected.
- Support for WUG will be on a case-by-case basis depending on location/timing within calendar (it will be unlikely to be supported if staged at the same time [or very near] the European U23's) – opportunities to support the WUG collaboratively with the Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAF's) will also be considered.

World / European U20 (Junior) Championships (inc. Mannheim / Lboro Int)

- The key purpose of the age-group championships is the development of athletes to senior global championships. Our data indicates that approximately 60% of medallists at senior major championships finished in the top 8 of World U20 Championships, and that the remaining 40% of athletes either weren't in the sport at all, were not physically ready to meet (even reduced) standards for U20 championships, or missed their respective U20 year for global competitiveness due to year in which they were born.
- As such, selection standards will continue to be based around the ability of athletes to achieve a top 8-10 finish – however, where possible, standards will be equalised across the World and European Junior years so that, standards will usually be based on European top 8 level. In some instances this may inappropriate given World standard (endurance in particular) or significant fluctuations in global levels – for such events, standards during a 2 year period will be pitched between World and European level. Again, ALL athletes who qualify will be selected (subject to form/fitness/max. entry restrictions).
- As with U23 age-group, team leader discretion will be provided.

European U18 (Youth) Championships/ Youth Olympics/ Youth Olympic Festival

- Priority for the U18 age-group will remain the European U18 Championships. The Youth Olympic Games and the European Youth Olympic Festival dilutes the quality of athlete selected and compromises the preparation for the European U18 Championships and as such will not be supported. UKA will work with the HCAF's to effectively deliver the CWYG each cycle.
- Selection standards for the European U18 Championships will continue to be based around the ability of athletes to achieve a top 8-10 finish. Again, ALL athletes who qualify will be selected (subject to form/fitness/max. entry restrictions).
- Due to the fluctuating standards in this age group, and the comparatively low level of athletes who progress to higher levels, a maximum team size will be set each year – usually between 20 and 30 athletes.
- As with the U20 and U23 age groups, team leader discretion will be provided.

EVENT SPECIFIC CHAMPIONSHIPS: ENDURANCE

- The position of the World Cross in the international calendar is making the event less relevant – for example, within 2 weeks of the bi-annual event, athletes have a choice of around 20 IAAF Gold Label road races, the Stanford 10,000m, as well as the European/World Indoor Championships. As a result, in recent years, the majority of GB's top athletes have opted not to compete in the World Cross.
- Senior athletes will be selected where they show future track/road/XC medal potential, or where a team shows current medal potential.
- The competition provides a key developmental opportunity for juniors – as such, full U20 teams will be always be selected.

- The European Cross provides vital winter preparation for Britain's best endurance runners at a relevant time of year and in favourable (i.e. European) locations.
- Individual and team medals also remain attainable (even if the very best British athletes choose not to compete) ensuring the competition continues to be realistic and relevant.
- Full U20, U23 and Senior teams will therefore continue to be selected. Relays events will be considered on an annual basis.

- The Edinburgh XC *currently* provides a key early winter marker for Britain's best endurance runners, in a venue/format that is well known and effective (this may change if the location/format shifts in future years).
- Due to the new competition year, the competition also provides an early opportunity to blood new U20 athletes as older Juniors have progressed to the U23/senior age-group following the turn of the year.
- Full U20 and Senior teams will therefore continue to be selected. Relays events will be considered on an annual basis.

- The World Half continues to be useful for two key groups: previous track/XC specialists looking to step-up to the marathon distance and high quality 10k runners looking for high quality summer preparation.
- However, positioning of the event in the calendar (proximity to spring marathons/Stanford) usually results in the best British athletes choosing not to compete.
- Individuals will be selected if they fit the profile of one of the two key groups outlined above. Teams will only be selected if there is genuine medal potential.

- The position of the European Cup 10,000m/10k is making the event decreasingly relevant to the top British athletes – it is too close to the key 10,000m races (Stanford) as well as the spring marathon /road race season.
- Consequently, this competition can now only be considered as a developmental event – British Athletics will therefore treat it as such and set standards accordingly, with the aim of selecting men's/women's teams for each edition.
- British Athletics may need to review this philosophy as the status of the 10,000m changes in future years.

- There are very few opportunities for high quality and developing race-walkers throughout the international calendar.
- The European edition of this event is of an almost comparable level to the World edition due to the strength of European race-walking.
- As in the Rio cycle, individual senior and junior athletes will be selected according to selection standards based on the development profile of future medal winning race-walkers.

**IAAF World Cross
Country
Championships**

**European Cross
Country
Championships**

**Sterling Cross
Country
Challenge**

**World Half
Marathon
Championships**

**European Cup
10,000m/10k**

**World/European
Race Walking
Cup**

EVENT SPECIFIC CHAMPIONSHIPS: RELAYS/FIELD & COMBINED EVENTS/OTHER

- The World Relays provide a vital opportunity to build relay team continuity and consistency, and to try new combinations.
- Subject to athlete availability, teams will always be selected for the 4x100m and 4x400m metre events – with qualification for the next major championships at stake, the strongest available teams will usually be selected.
- Selection of mixed relays will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on athlete availability and time-tabling.
- Unless the location/date of the championships is changed, all other relays (including 4x800m and 4x1500m) will not be supported given the conflict with early season individual competitions and altitude/warm weather training camps.

- Recognition that a different approach is needed for the development of long throws – this competition is therefore vital in providing competition opportunity against high quality European throwers for developing athletes (particularly heavy throws).
- High quality U18/U20/U23 athletes will be prioritised in selection.
- Established throwers will also be selected, provided it forms part of a sensible annual plan and they show current form.

- Virtually every combined eventer to represent GB & NI in the recent history competed at the European Cup Combined Events Team Championships as part of their development.
- There are very few annual competition opportunities for combined eventers and as such this competition fulfils a vital part of the development framework.
- It is also important to protect the British team's position in the Super League of this event.
- Full men's and women's teams will always be selected – athletes with potential for future global championships selection will usually be prioritised in selection.

- There are very few annual competition opportunities for combined eventers and even fewer during the indoor season – sending full representation to this championships therefore provides vital competition experience for both established and developing multi-eventers.
- Full men's and women's teams will always be selected – athletes with potential for future global championships selection will usually be prioritised in selection.

- The World Cup provides a valuable opportunity for high very high quality competition across a wide range of events (often not featured in Diamond League or not available to British Athletes due to global standard).
- Athletes will usually be selected for the World Cup on the basis of their finishing position at the Outdoor British Championships in the relevant event. Only where multiple athletes decline their place or in relays will this process move to a more subjectively based selection.
- The value placed on the World Cup may shift in years where the calendar is different to traditional summer seasons (such as 2019 (late Worlds) or 2020 (early Olympics)). An alternative, edition specific approach may be taken in these scenarios.

IAAF World Relay Championships

European Cup Winter Throwing Cup

European Combined Events Team Championships

European Combined Events Indoor Match

World Cup