

# British Athletics

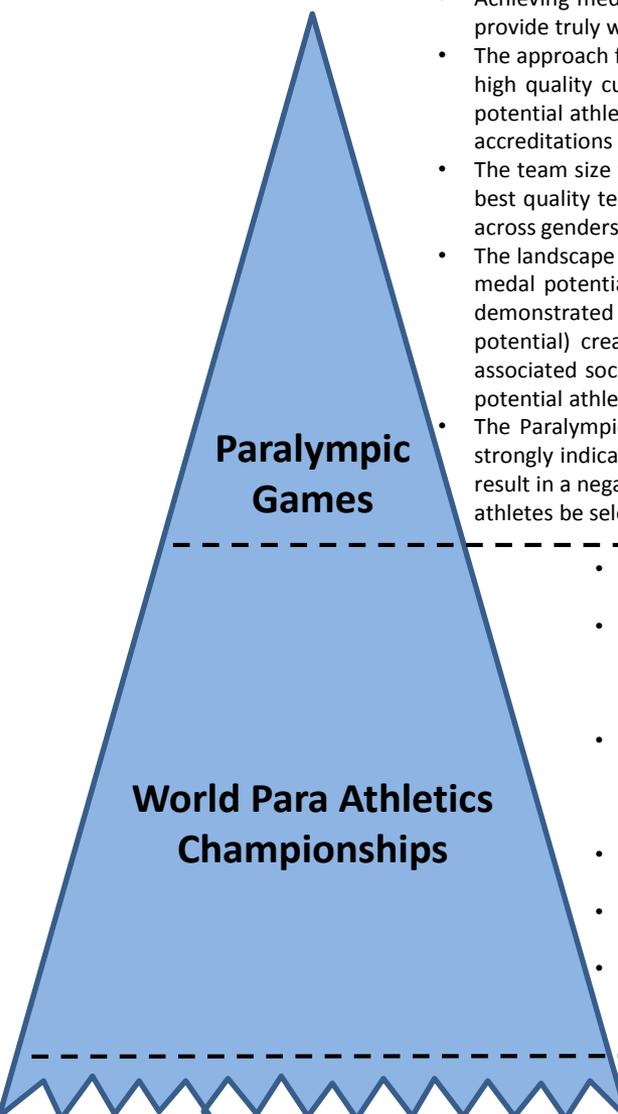
## 2017-2021 Selection Philosophy

- This document has been produced to outline the philosophy for selecting teams for Para-Athletics 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 was reviewed with two key aims (in priority order):
  - Ensuring that medal success at the Paralympic Games and World Para Athletics Championships is maximised; and
  - Ensuring that appropriate competition opportunities for potential future medal winners are provided throughout the pathway.
- An approach has been provided for each individual championships, along with a short rationale for the approach taken.
- All selection policies for the Tokyo and Paris cycles 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 Paralympic 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). Unless otherwise indicated in this document, British Athletics will NOT support World/Euro championships for International Disability Sport Organisations (i.e IBSA, CP-ISRA, INAS, IWAS etc.).
- The Paralympic landscape is also rapidly changing and as such, this document may need adjusting should new competition structures be introduced throughout the Tokyo and Paris cycles.



**BRITISH  
ATHLETICS**

# PARALYMPIC GAMES & WORLD PARA ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS



## Paralympic Games

- Achieving medal success at the Paralympic Games is the main priority for the Tokyo and Paris Paralympic cycles. This necessitates that we provide truly world leading support to genuine medal potential athletes in the Paralympic environment.
- The approach for the next 2 cycles will be to maintain the team size for the Paralympic Games of approximately 50 athletes, with a balance of high quality current athletes and stars of the future. Experience tells us that (unless there is a drastic increase in the number of medal potential athletes available at selection), this is the optimal team size – carefully balancing the number of athlete places with the number of accreditations allocated. Increasing the team size slightly, does not result in a similar increase in allocated accreditations.
- The team size will remain at approximately 50 regardless of how many quota slots are allocated to British Athletics. To ensure we select the best quality team (with the aim of winning medals at these games and beyond), it may be required to manipulate use of qualification slots across genders – in other words, handing back places from one gender to maximise those from the other.
- The landscape of Para-athletics events often changes drastically and very quickly. As such, British Athletics has to be very sure of an athlete's medal potential – limiting selection to athletes usually in the top 8 in the world is an effective mechanism for doing this. Experience has demonstrated that selecting “developing” athletes outside of that tipping point (with only limited early evidence as to future medal potential) creates significant additional management burden (due to their level of experience/exposure to such environments and the associated social-independence challenges) and severely compromises the ability to provide truly world leading support to genuine medal potential athletes.
- The Paralympic Games is an unforgiving environment for the young and inexperienced athlete, and the last two Paralympic Games have strongly indicated that selecting athletes too early for the Paralympics (i.e. with no major global championships experience) is more likely to result in a negative, rather than a positive experience. As such, only in exceptional circumstances (stand out medal priority as an example) will athletes be selected for a Paralympic Games with no previous experience of a major championships (World or European level).

## World Para Athletics Championships

- The World Championships are 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 Paralympic Games.
- Paralympic Games and WPA Championships are undoubtedly different. Due to the much “safer” environment at a WPA Championships the approach to selection is also different. Therefore, the approach for the pre-Paralympic Games World Championships (2019/2023) will aim to accelerate the development of athletes who are already demonstrating rapid progression and strong medal potential prior to the Paralympic Games.
- However, the post-Paralympic Games World Championships (2021) will be treated with the aim of aiding the transition of retiring and developing athletes between Paralympic cycles. This is the first opportunity any “new” athletes who are expected to medal in 2024 will have to compete in a Major Championships. As such, these athletes may be prioritised over those who finished in top 8 in Tokyo but were not a medallist and may not be a 2024 medal contender.
- For both editions, ALL athletes who are ranked in the top three (3) individual MQS Rankings for the respective Championship will be selected in the same event of the MQS ranking (subject to form/fitness/maximum entry restrictions).
- We will never “fill” places for the sake of it and as with the Paralympic Games, it may be necessary to manipulate quota places across genders to maximise the quality of the team selected.
- Medals at the Paralympic Games remain the priority. As such, we will only select athletes who have at least one event with a Paralympic pathway. However, these athletes will be allowed to compete in other events to maximise medals at that specific WPA Championships.

# WORLD PARA ATHLETICS EUROPEAN & JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

## WPA European Championships

- Selection for WPA European championships will be consistent with the approach taken in the Rio cycle – i.e. ensuring these Championships are genuinely used as experiential opportunities for developing future medal potential athletes. This will generally include those athletes ranked in top 3-5 in Europe.
- Paralympic Games year European Championships (2020/2024) will be treated very differently to those in a Commonwealth Games year (2018/2022).
- In a Paralympic Games years (2020/2024), key medal athletes for the following Paralympics will be prioritised and given opportunity to use it as preparation for the Games themselves. Developing athletes would be given the opportunity as well should quota spaces allow - those likely to make the team for the Paralympic Games that year will be prioritised.
- In a Commonwealth Games year (2018/2022), selection will allow for a much wider developmental remit. Our experience indicates that, with agreement from British Athletics, some of our most high achieving athletes will choose not to compete at the European Championships in Commonwealth year, allowing us to select with a much wider, developmental remit.
- Similar to the World Championships, an objective qualification criteria will be provided – all those who meet this objective criteria (usually ranking based) will be automatically selected. Invites will only ever be utilised in support of genuine future medal contenders (and only then if timing/logistics of selection allows).
- Selection of future potential global medal contenders in need of classification may also be prioritised (i.e. to support athletes going through IPC classification).
- More experienced athletes who might win a European medal (but are not seen to have global medal potential) will only be selected after all developing athletes have been selected (assuming finances/quota allows).
- Medals at the Paralympic Games remain the priority. As such, we will only select athletes who have at least one event with a Paralympic pathway. However, these athletes will be allowed to compete in other events to maximise medals at that specific WPA European Championships.

## WPA Junior Championships

- The priority for WPA Junior Championships is in the development of athletes to senior global championships.
- Specifically, these Championships are most relevant for those athletes in very deep events for whom the development pathway is closer to eight (8) years, rather than two (2) years (for example, men's T54 & T46).
- The WPA Junior Championships are also an ideal opportunity for athletes who are very early in their athletic careers and/or returning from recent injury. Dependent on an athlete's situation, these Championships can be seen as key to their progression back to full fitness/qualification for senior level competition.
- The maximum team size for all WPA Junior Championships will be 20 athletes. Dependent on the age groups, classes and events available, we will look to select mainly U18 athletes for these Championships.
- Athletes who have already competed at a major global championships will not be eligible for selection.
- Young athletes who have been in the sport a comparatively long time and are only developing slowly would not be considered.
- As with the European Championships, this competition may be used as an early opportunity to classify highly promising athletes with future global medal potential.