

# United States *Luge* Association

## SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM / SENIOR NATIONAL "A" TEAM AND SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM SELECT / SENIOR NATIONAL "B" TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

*(Both name options are permissible for each team listed above and have equal meaning within the context of this policy. The use of either name option is at the discretion of the user)*

The procedure and policy for selection to the Senior National Team Select is as follows:

### Objectives

- A) To maintain the Senior National Team Select as an extension of the Senior National Team.
- B) To have it be comprised of athletes on the basis of their performance, dedication, and potential to graduate to the Senior National Team level.

### Purposes

To enable top contenders for the Senior National Team to train as a team and fine-tune their skills on varied tracks. As a result, the Senior National Team Select will maintain its position as a strong secondary team made up of well trained, disciplined, and committed athletes. This depth will create a highly competitive situation between the teams, resulting in a stronger American luge program. NOTE: It is the intention of the USLA to supplement its Senior National Team with members from this team when logistics and budgetary limitations allow. The Team Selection Committee is empowered, at their discretion, to select any number of Senior National Team Select athletes to travel, train, and/or race with the Senior National Team at any time during the season and for any duration.

### Selection Process

#### **A) HOW and WHEN -**

Two series of Seeding Races will take place, one during the late winter and one during the fall. If necessary, the coaching staff may decide to hold more Seeding Races throughout the season.

#### Late Winter Senior National Seeding Races:

Provided that there is a minimum of ten (10) men's singles competitors, and in the case of women, a minimum of ten (10) women's singles competitors, and in the case of doubles teams, a minimum of five (5) doubles teams racing in each and every race in each respective discipline, then the two best ranked men, two best ranked women, and the best ranked doubles team from the results of the late winter U.S. Senior National Seeding Race series will automatically qualify to race in the following season's fall U.S. Senior National Seeding Race series and Senior National Championships. These athletes qualify for at least the Senior National "C" Team (see separate USLA policy document).

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Should there be less than these numbers racing in each respective discipline in at least one race, only the best ranked men's singles competitor and in the case of women, the best ranked women's singles competitor, will automatically qualify to race in the fall U.S. Senior National Seeding Race series and U.S. Senior National Championships. These athletes qualify for at least the Senior National "C" Team. For a race to be eligible as part of (to count towards) the seeding process, a minimum of five (5) athletes or teams, in the respective discipline, must start in that race.

#### Fall Senior National Seeding Races:

The two best ranked men, two best ranked women, and the best ranked doubles team from the results of the fall U.S. National Senior Seeding Race series will automatically qualify for at least the Senior National "B" Team, provided that there is a minimum of ten (10) men's singles competitors, and in the case of women, a minimum of ten (10) women's singles competitors, and in the case of doubles teams, a minimum of five (5) doubles teams racing in each and every race in each respective discipline.

Should there be less than these numbers racing in each respective discipline in at least one race, only the best ranked men's singles competitor and in the case of women, the best ranked women's singles competitor, will automatically qualify for the Senior National "B" Team. For a race to be eligible as part of (to count towards) the seeding process, a minimum of five (5) athletes or teams, in the respective discipline, must start in that race.

#### Discretion:

The selections of the remaining Senior National "B" Team members are made on a discretionary basis by the Team Selection Committee, provided that the athlete/team competed in all the Senior National Seeding Races and/or Senior National Championships. The only exceptions to this mandatory participation will be for a) injuries verified by a USLA approved medical doctor or athletic trainer to be of a nature that prevents competition participation, b) an FIL race deemed by the Sports Program Director to be of a nature that is more beneficial to the athlete's athletic development or c) as excused by the USLA Executive Director and relevant Head Coach.

The criterion used by the Team Selection Committee is based on the following basic premise: Who has the most potential to do the best in the next or future Olympic Games. To help determine who has the most potential for the next or future Olympic Games, the committee will review, but is not limited to, the following (not in priority order):

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- International Sochi Races and Training
- World Cup Races and World Championships
- Junior World Championships and other Elite Junior Races
- All Lake Placid and Salt Lake National Races and Training
- National Championships and Seeding Races
- Views of Coaches and Trainers
- Physical Training - in and out of season

It is also understood that the athletic team staff will always attempt to fill out any World Cup or World Championship race roster and its accompanying training session with other than Senior National Team athletes, when additional positions are available for qualified athletes, in accordance with USLA policies and within budgetary limitations. Additional positions will be filled on a discretionary basis by the highest-ranking athletic team staff present and are valid for that event only. Once a training entry roster is completed for a race, the athletic team staff may choose the final entries from any eligible athletes without regard to their status on a particular team.

The Team Selection Committee will meet three times a year (it can meet more often if need be). The regular meeting times of I, II, and III are described below.

I. The first time will be at the end of the competitive season. Some duties of the team selection committee at this time are:

1. Verify the commitment of those athletes that qualify to race in the next season's fall Senior National Seeding Races through:
  - a. Having finished in the top 11 for men, top 9 for women, and top 9 for doubles in the just completed season's Overall World Cup standings or World Championships. (These athletes, including those athletes qualifying for the Senior National "A" Team, are not required to race in the current season's late winter Senior Seeding Races.)
  - b. Having raced and qualified through the current season's winter Senior National Seeding Races.
2. Through discretion select athletes as either Senior "B" Team members or Senior "C" Team members, and then issue invitations to these and any additional athletes to compete in the fall Senior National Seeding Races. Such invitations must be granted no later than October 1 of each year.

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II. The second time that the Team Selection Committee will meet is prior to the Senior Fall Trip, once the Fall Seeding Races have concluded. At this time, one of its duties will be to select any additional athletes to the Senior National “B” Team and/or Senior National “C” Team beyond those that already qualified under this policy, if so desired. The same team size restrictions and selection criteria will apply. The following point must be considered.

The athletes on the Senior National Team have automatically earned the right to race and train on the Senior Fall Trip. These athletes are required to race in the Fall Senior Seeding Race series and the Senior National Championships, but their team status on the Senior Fall Trip will not be affected by their results in these races (however, other requirements, such as passing the physical test, still apply).

III. The third time the Team Selection Committee will meet is after the Senior Fall Trip. The main goal of the Team Selection Committee at this time will be to select additional athletes to travel on the Senior Winter Trip, beyond those that already qualified for the World Championship under the USLA’s policy, if so desired. One of its duties will be to pick a new Senior National Team and Senior National Team Select, and if desired, select Senior National Team Select athletes to travel with the Senior National Team if so budgeted. These selections will also be based on the same discretionary criteria mentioned previously. The athletes picked at this time are not obligated to compete in the seeding races in Lake Placid if the schedules conflict; however, they must understand that by not competing in the seeding races, their selection in the spring would be based solely on the subjective guidelines previously outlined. The following points must be considered, in priority order.

1. If World Cup competition slots are available, those athletes that are qualified for the Senior National “A” Team will automatically travel on the Senior Winter Trip.
2. If World Cup competition slots remain available, consider inviting athletes from the Senior National “B” Team to travel on the Senior Winter Trip during the balance of the World Championships qualification period.
3. If World Cup competition slots remain available, consider inviting athletes from the Senior National “C” Team to travel on the Senior Winter Trip during the balance of the World Championship qualification period.

The Team Selection Committee may meet at any time it deems necessary if they feel they wish to fill a vacancy on the team.

Once the Senior National Team Select athlete(s) have been chosen as outlined above, then only the following members of that elite group will have their status elevated and be referred to as a Senior National Team athlete (the word ‘Select’ will be removed from their title):

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Senior National Team Select athletes who have also won a minimum of one Senior World Cup / Senior World Championship (not to include the Team Competition) or Olympic Medal (with 'Medal' hereinafter defined as finishing in the International Luge Federation recognized positions of first, second or third place) over the last two seasons. Such a change in status would occur immediately at the time a Medal in any of the aforementioned events is won for any athlete that is already a Senior National Team Select athlete.

Such a Senior National Team athlete will rank higher than any Senior National Team Select athlete whenever such a ranking is necessary for the distribution of items/resources/benefits that are limited in number; however, any distribution of such items/resources/benefits that occurred prior to an athlete's elevation in status will not be reassessed until the next regularly scheduled point in time when that item/resource/benefit, if any, again becomes available.

It must be noted that the National Team Committee, the Racing Committee, and appropriate staff must work together to schedule the seeding races in a timely fashion so that the National Team Committee can design selection criteria for major international events (i.e., World Championships, Lake Placid World Cup, etc.) around or incorporating the seeding races. The scheduling of seeding races can, and is, encouraged to be used for selecting additional athletes, other than the Senior National Team members, to compete in these other major international events.

### **B) WHO WILL SELECT -**

A Team Selection Committee consisting of members of the Athletic Department staff approved twenty-four hours in advance of the actual team selection meeting by the Executive Director and the National Team Committee Chairman will fill the team spots. Discretionary picks may be left unfilled at this committee's choice when forming the team but justification to remove someone once the team is selected must be documented.

The combined total number of athletes for the Senior National Team and Senior National Team Select will be eighteen (18), comprised of a maximum of fourteen (14) athletes of any age, and four (4) additional athletes of an age that represent their first three-years of ineligibility as a Junior ("graduating junior"), due to their reaching too old an age to any longer be considered a Junior.

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**Length and Expense of Trip**

The length, and schedule, of any Senior National Team Select trip shall be decided upon by the National Team Head Coach as track availability and Senior National Team and Junior National Team schedules allow. Senior National Team “B” / Select and Senior National “C” Team athletes will be required to pay all expenses associated with the trip (travel, track use, coaching, room and board, transportation, etc.) when funds are not available.

**Conduct**

The objective of the Senior National Team Select is to produce trained, competitive athletes capable of making the Senior National Team. All Senior National Team Select members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with USLA policies. They are also required to participate, to the best of their ability, in all activities including a physical evaluation test. During all trips, the Senior National Team Select manager and coach will remain in contact with the USLA and will have full authority over the Senior National Team Select members.

**Vacancies**

- A) If an athlete cannot attend a trip due to financial reasons (when the athlete must pay for the trip out of their own pocket) they will still retain their Senior National Team Select status for the remainder of that selection period. This vacancy may be filled at the Team Selection Committee's choice as previously outlined.
- B) In the event an athlete qualifies in more than one discipline, i.e., singles and doubles, the vacancy created can be filled by the Team Selection Committee as previously outlined.