

## **Playing Format for the 2020 Olympic Games Trial and National Ranking Tournament (August 28, 2019)**

**This format applies both to the men's and women's trial. The winners of each trial will be named to the 2020 U.S. Olympic Team.**

### **Summary:**

1. The competition has two round-robin stages. If more than sixteen (16) men or women enter, then a qualifying competition will be held as described below.
2. Assuming that qualifying is required, the top eight (8) seeded players will be joined by eight (8) more qualifiers and be placed into two Stage 1 round robin groups of eight (8) players each.
3. The top four (4) players from each Stage 1 group will be combined into a Stage 2 Championship round robin group, and the winner will win the Trial. The second four (4) players will also play a Stage 2 round robin for places 9-16.
4. Matches played will carry over from Stage 1 to Stage 2. Two players will not play each other twice.
5. The top sixteen (16) seeds in the qualifying competition will be placed into eight (8) final qualifying groups of three (3) players each, to be joined by eight (8) more players who win single elimination preliminary draws. The winners of the final qualifying groups will advance to the Stage 1 round robin groups.
6. The format will also be adjusted in ways described below, if required by the number of entries.
7. USATT approved tie-breaking procedures will be used.

**Seeding:** Up to the first eight (8) players of each gender will be seeded based on the February 2020 ITTF World Men's or Women's Ranking for any player in the top 250 (including ties). All remaining seeds will be determined based on USATT rating as of February 15, 2020. In case of a tie in world ranking or USATT ratings, the world ranking or USATT ratings one month earlier will be used, and if there is a tie still, it will be the world ranking or USATT rating from one month earlier and so on until the tie is broken. The snake system will be used for placing players into all round robin groups and other draws based on their seeding.

**Playing format:** Sixteen (16) players of each gender will play in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 round robin groups, as described further below.

The top eight (8) seeded players of each gender will automatically advance to the Stage 1 groups, and additional players may also advance directly to the Stage 1 groups depending on the number of total entries as described below.

Players seeded ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) and below may be required to play in the qualifying competition. It will have up to eight (8) final qualifying groups of players, and the group winners (only) will advance to the Stage 1 groups.

The lower-seeded players in the qualifying competition may also have to compete in single elimination preliminary draws to reach the final qualifying groups.

All matches are best of seven (7) games.

**Qualifying competition:** Players seeded ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) and lower are required to play in the qualifying competition unless exempted due to the number of entries (see below). Up to eight (8) final qualifying round robin groups will be created and each will contain three (3) or four (4) players. The winners, only, of the final qualifying groups will advance to the Stage 1 groups.

If more than twenty-four (24) players are required to play in the qualifying competition, then the top sixteen (16) seeds among them will be placed directly into the final qualifying groups. Lower-seeded players may then be required to compete in single-elimination preliminary draws to advance to the remaining available place(s) in final qualifying groups that will each contain three (3) players only.

Players required to compete in single elimination preliminary draws will be chosen in backwards order of seeding, i.e. starting with the last seed in the event, following by the next-to-last seed and so on until enough players have been placed in the single elimination preliminary draws to assure that the result will be eight (8) final qualifying groups of three (3) players each.

For example: If sixty (60) players are entered into the Trial, then the top eight (8) seeds will be exempt from qualifying; the next sixteen (16) seeds will be placed directly into the final qualifying groups; and the remaining thirty-six (36) lowest seeds will be placed into eight (8) single-elimination preliminary draws, with the winner of each draw placed into a final qualifying group. Another example: If thirty-five (35) players are entered in the Trial, then the highest seeded eight (8) players will be exempt from qualifying, the next twenty-one (21) players will be placed into final qualifying groups, and the bottom six (6) seeds will each participate in a single elimination match to determine the three (3) winning players who will take the remaining places in the final qualifying groups.

If the number of players in the qualifying competition is not sufficient to create eight (8) final qualifying groups of three (3) players in each group, the draw will be adjusted as follows. The 9<sup>th</sup> seed will be made exempt from qualifying and placed into Stage 1, and the remaining players will be placed into seven (7) final qualifying groups. If that is not sufficient to cause each group to have at least three (3) players, then the 10<sup>th</sup> seed will be made exempt from qualifying and the remaining players will be placed into six (6) final qualifying groups. As required, this process will continue (exempting more seeded players) until all final qualifying groups have at least three (3) players; in this process, it will also be possible for a group to have four (4) players. If there are seventeen (17) total entries, the sole final qualifying group will contain the bottom three (3) seeds and the top two finishers will qualify for Stage 1. If there are sixteen (16) or fewer total entries, then all players will be placed in Stage 1 without any need to qualify.

Finally, the qualifying competition groups and preliminary draws will be made in advance based on the number of entries, and will not be adjusted further on the day of competition based on no-shows, illness or injuries. If one or more of the top eight (8) seeds withdraws from the event after the draw is made but prior to the start of Stage 1 play, then a "lucky

loser” will be selected at random from among the second-place finishers in the final qualifying groups to replace each such withdrawn top 8 seed in the Stage 1 groups.

**Stage 1 and Stage 2:** The sixteen (16) players of each gender qualified for Stage 1 will be divided into two (2) round robin groups of eight (8), using their seedings for the event. For Stage 2, the top four (4) players of each stage 1 round robin group will be combined into a Championship round robin group of eight (8); and the bottom four (4) players from each group will be combined into a second round robin group of eight (8). The results of matches previously played against the same opponents will be carried over (e.g. from Stage 1 to Stage 2), and those matches will not be played a second time.

The top eight (8) finishers, in order, from the Championship round robin group will finish in places 1 through 8 in the trial, while players in the second round robin group of eight (8) will finish in positions 9 through 16 in the trial based on their Stage 2 final placements.