

USA Triathlon (USAT) High Performance (HP) Department is responsible for supporting athletes who have the vision, goals and capability of winning Olympic & Paralympic Games medals, while identifying, supporting and developing future Games medalists.

Each year the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) invests significant financial resources into the USAT HP Department strategies and directly into its athletes. USOPC does so with the belief that USAT and its athletes are on track to continue winning medals in the Olympic & Paralympic Games. If USAT athletes are not on-track to achieve podium performances in the Games, we can expect a significant reduction in USOPC investment. In addition, USOPC only recognizes Tier 1 & 2 of our National Team Programs (both Olympic & Paralympic) for direct athlete support (DAS) and elite athlete health insurance (EAHI) reflecting their interest in investing in Games ready athletes rather than developing athletes or those further away from achieving medals performances.

USAT has made a commitment to running and investing in a HP department that can achieve its mission of identifying, developing, and supporting athletes to achieve their goals of winning Olympic & Paralympic medals. At the same time, USAT is being forced to make hard choices to remain fiscally responsible and protect the overall organization during a difficult time. This provides extra incentive to be certain that we are investing in HP in the most careful and thoughtful ways, in alignment with our strategic initiatives, capturing the important aspects of our development philosophy and high performance investment strategies.

The following are areas deemed mission critical to the USAT High Performance as we complete our preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and begin the Paris 2024 quad:

- **National Team Program** – Our National Team Program design should recognize and reward performances and progress towards our mission critical goal of seeing USAT elite athletes on Olympic podiums. The National Team Program is not intended to reward the best elite triathletes in the USA with support and services; it is intended and must be designed to support our strategic mission related to Games medals success and so we may sustain our USOPC support which funds a large percentage of our high performance expenses.
- **Collegiate Recruitment Program (CRP)** – we believe it is mission critical to advance and continue to invest in this highly successful talent transfer program, which has been the pathway for many National Team Program athletes and an Olympic gold medal in 2016.
- **Project Podium** – elite daily training environment squad based out of Tempe, AZ focused on providing a select number of emerging men the opportunity to pursue collegiate study while training for Triathlon without the need or pressure to accept a single sport NCAA scholarship.
- **Junior development pathway** – via Youth & Junior Elite Series races, High Performance Teams, and international race experiences (JR Pan American Championships, JR Pan American Cups, Junior Pan Am Games, & JR Worlds).
- **Project X** – A HP support strategy intended to ensure USAT HP is making strategic investments in the most qualified athletes with the greatest potential of winning future Olympic Games medals. The USAT HP staff that make up the Project X panel will regularly review the USAT Elite athletes with a special focus on those who have not earned National Team Program support. Support will be 100% discretionary, customized to each identified athlete, and is aimed as stimulus support (monetary and non-monetary).

#### **National Team Program – design & structure**

The USAT Olympic National Team Program, and the financial support associated, is designed specifically to assist athletes in achieving podium performances at the Olympic Games. The three-tiered program provides performance-based support to athletes in the form of administrative assistance, travel, training and race support, performance advisement and allocation of equipment and financial resources. The Program is comprised of athletes with proven

performance capability and is designed with three ascending tiers to support athletes as they advance towards their goal of achieving podium performances at the Olympic Games. Athletes are expected to advance up the levels during their time in the Program with improving international performances reflective of their ability to execute Olympic podium performances.

- **Tier 1 (Gold) level** – earned by athletes who can achieve a World Triathlon Championship Series (formerly WTS) level podium on any particular day.\*
- **Tier 2 (Silver) level** – earned by athletes who can achieve a top 8 of a World Triathlon Championship Series (formerly WTS) level event on any particular day.\*
- **Tier 3 (Bronze) level** – earned by athletes who can achieve a top 15 in World Triathlon Championship Series (formerly WTS) level event and/or hit podiums in World Triathlon Cup (formerly ITU World Cup) events. Other criteria may include U23 World Championship podium performances, Super Sprint performances, and Mixed Relay podium performances. These developing athletes should be showing they may be capable of achieving future Olympic Games medals.\*

*\*Language in each level is representative in nature and is not meant to serve as official criteria language.*

### **Performance Progress – guiding principle**

Athletes who qualify for Tier 1 (Gold), or Tier 2 (Silver) will be supported at those levels indefinitely through the term of the Program regardless of Program history and term. Athletes who have been part of the National Team Program for 2 years or more (consecutively or not) and who only qualify for Tier 3 (Bronze) will not be automatically eligible for the Program. Requests for special consideration will be subject to discretionary review (as described below) which will review performance results, data analytics, and age performance analytics with an objective of demonstrating continued progress towards Olympic medal capacity before being eligible for the Program.

Tier 3 (Bronze) serves as the entry level of the National Team Program and is designed to capture developing athletes on their way to attain higher levels of National Team status en route to achieving their Olympic Games medal objectives. Therefore, returning National Team Program athletes are not expected to remain on Tier 3 for more than 2 years and athletes who have been on Tier 1 & 2 will not be permitted to drop to Tier 3 without special consideration. Athletes who are not confirmed for repeat National Team Program support, may be eligible for other High Performance support resources at the discretion of USAT.

### **Discretionary Evaluation**

USA Triathlon may use discretion to select athletes who have not met the objective criteria for the Program for several reasons. These include, but are not limited to, injury or illness (via the “Injury or Illness Provision” of the National Team Program Agreement), the occurrence of exceptional circumstances (e.g. earthquakes, cancellation of other World Triathlon events, epidemics, riots), and other unanticipated failure of objective criteria to select an athlete likely to achieve competition results consistent with the program Tiers.

Discretionary nominations, if any, may be based on a variety of factors, including consideration of competition results outside of the selection period and data analytics, to ensure that USA Triathlon is investing in the most qualified athletes with the greatest potential of winning Olympic Games medals. Discretionary nominations for the Program, along with Tier level and term length, will be determined by a panel of three USA Triathlon High Performance Staff (who do not serve in the capacity as a personal coach to program athletes) and one USAT elite athlete representative.

### National Team Program Guiding Principles chief contacts:

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