



## USAT Elite Triathlon National Team Program Guiding Principles

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

It is important that USAT is investing in High Performance in the most careful and thoughtful ways, in alignment with its strategic initiatives, capturing the important aspects of our development philosophy and high performance investment strategies.

In addition, United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) invests significant financial resources into the USAT High Performance strategies and directly into its athletes. USOPC does so with the belief that USAT 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, USAT can expect a reduction in USOPC investment.

The following are areas deemed mission critical to USAT High Performance as we continue preparation for future Olympic & Paralympic Games:

- **Elite Triathlon National Team Program** – The Elite Triathlon 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 the strategic mission related to Games medals success.
- **Collegiate Recruitment Program (CRP)** – it is mission critical to invest in specific talent transfer athletes, strategies, and programs, which has been the pathway for many National Team Program athletes and an Olympic Gold medal in 2016, Olympic Bronze medal in 2020, as well as contributing to a Silver medal in the first ever Mixed Relay. Additional talent identification and talent transfer strategies are being developed and expected to be instituted in the coming years.
- **Project Podium** – elite daily training environment squad based out of Tempe, AZ & Park City, UT is 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. This environment has evolved to become inclusive of other USAT National Team program athletes (both Elite Triathlon and Elite Paratriathlon) needing a stable training environment.
- **Junior & U23 Development Pathway** – via Junior race series, international race experiences (Jr Continental Cups, Jr & U23 Continental Championships, Jr Pan Am Games, Jr & U23 Worlds), as well as skills camps and talent identification management strategies.
- **Project X** – A High Performance support strategy intended to identify and provide strategic investments in the most qualified athletes with the greatest potential of winning future Olympic & Paralympic Games medals who have not yet achieved National Team Program status. Support will be 100% discretionary, customized to each identified athlete and their coach, and is aimed as stimulus support (monetary and non-monetary).

### Elite Triathlon National Team Program – Design & Structure

The USAT Elite Triathlon 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, USAT partner VIK product 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 (A Team)** – earned by athletes who can achieve a World Triathlon Championship Series (WTCS) podium on any particular day.\*
- **Tier 2 (B Team)** – earned by athletes who can achieve a top 8 of a World Triathlon Championship Series event and/or win a World Triathlon Cup event on any particular day.\*
- **Tier 3 (C Team)** – earned by athletes who can achieve a top 15 in World Triathlon Championship Series level event and/or hit podiums in World Triathlon Cup events. Other criteria may include U23 World Championship podium performances, Super Sprint performances, and WTCS 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 or Tier 2 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 Elite Triathlon National Team Program for 2 years or more (consecutively or not) and who only qualify for Tier 3 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 (C Team) serves as the entry level of the Elite Triathlon 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 Elite Triathlon 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 Elite Triathlon 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 Elite Triathlon 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 three-person panel consisting of two USA Triathlon High Performance Staff and one USAT elite athlete representative.

[USAT Elite Triathlon National Team Program Guiding Principles - primary USAT contacts:](#)

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