



# 2022 Elite License Qualification Criteria

Updated June 12, 2022

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY:

- All athletes MUST present proof of elite status at all USA Triathlon (USAT) sanctioned events; therefore, athletes must carry their license to all events. If an athlete loses his or her elite license, he or she may print a temporary card at the USAT website.
- Athletes have one (1) year from the date of race to use result unless criteria states race(s) must be from current calendar year. Results more than 365 days old cannot be used for any of the listed criteria.
- Upon meeting the elite qualification criteria and applying for an elite license, an athlete will retain their eligibility for three (3) years. Regardless of remaining eligibility, athletes must renew and pay their membership fee annually to be considered an active elite athlete.
- In addition to renewing an elite license yearly, all elite athletes must extend their eligibility to compete as an elite athlete. Elite athletes must submit ONE (1) race result in which the athlete finished within 8% of the winner's time at an event sanctioned by USAT, World Triathlon, the World Triathlon Corporation (WTC) or Challenge Family that offered a prize purse of \$5,000 or greater. By submitting this result, the athlete then extends his or her eligibility expiration date for three (3) years from December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which he or she submitted the result. Example: Athlete X is approved for a first time elite license in March 2019 therefore they have an eligibility expiration date of December 31, 2022. That athlete then has all of 2020, 2021 and 2022 to submit ONE (1) race result where he/she finished within 8% of the winner's time at an event offering \$5,000 or more. If the race result is from 2020, eligibility is extended until December 31, 2023. If the race result is from 2021, eligibility is extended until December 31, 2024.
- Unlike the amateur license, an elite license is based on a calendar year. It expires on December 31<sup>st</sup> regardless of when the license is purchased. No exceptions are made.
- Once an elite license expires, an athlete may choose to go back to amateur racing, but only when the current membership license expires.
- The minimum age requirement for an elite license is 15 years old. Elite athletes between the ages of 16 and 19 may also compete in USAT Junior Development Series ("Junior Development Cup" and "Junior Draft-Legal National Championship") events and are eligible for all awards, rankings points and prizes.
- All new elite applications and eligibility extension applications must be submitted online through the [USA Triathlon membership system](#). To be considered, the application must contain links to qualifying race results, list out race scores and the races they were achieved at or otherwise provide the required proof of qualification needed for the criteria an athlete is applying under. USA Triathlon will not consider blank applications.
- An eligibility extension for renewals of up to 1.5 years may be granted to an Elite athlete who becomes pregnant during their current 3 year eligibility period. Documentation must be submitted to USA Triathlon Membership ([membership@usatriathlon.org](mailto:membership@usatriathlon.org)) to be reviewed by the Elite License Panel.
- If a race cancels the swim less than 24 hours before the start of the race, the event may still be used for Elite Triathlete or Draft Legal criteria requirements, to be review by the Elite license Panel. Additional race results to support the application may be requested at the discretion of the Elite License Panel.
- Any criteria requiring a participant minimum will only include individual race finishers in that specific distance. No relay teams, non-finishers and those participating in another race will be include in participant numbers.
- **Athletes still need to renew his/her license each calendar year.**
  - Application and race results must be received at least fourteen (14) days before the FIRST event at which the athlete wishes to compete as an elite. Once an athlete has submitted paperwork, it is the athlete's responsibility to contact USAT Membership ([membership@usatriathlon.org](mailto:membership@usatriathlon.org)) for proof of their elite status. Athletes may not show up at elite events without proof of status. USAT may, at its discretion, make an exception to this rule in the case of trials/finals formatted events



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in which the trials race has been designated to serve as an Elite Triathlon Development Race per 2.E. below and USAT has arranged in advance to process applications on site or electronically following the posting of official results.

- Athletes registered as elites/pros CAN compete in events with less than \$5,000 prize purses but they are competing in events according to the age group rules of USAT, not pro/elite rules. They cannot accept age group awards or be included in those results; they cannot be listed in the overall finish position or receive any prizes offered for overall placing.

## USAT RECOGNIZES SEVEN CLASSIFICATIONS WITHIN ITS ELITE LICENSE STRUCTURE:

1. Elite Triathlete License or Collegiate Elite (covered as an elite in all categories)
2. Draft Legal Pathway
3. Elite Duathlete License (covered as an elite in duathlon, amateur in triathlon)
4. Elite Off Road License (covered as an elite in off road events, amateur in road events)
5. Elite Foreign License
6. Elite Paratriathlon
7. Special Considerations

**1. ELITE TRIATHLETE LICENSE:** This license is for athletes wishing to race as an elite in any USAT sanctioned event, at any distance (from sprint to ultra) and format (triathlons, duathlons, Aquathlon, off road events, winter events, etc.). Athletes have the option to obtain either the elite triathlete license or the collegiate elite license designation (see below). Both licenses cost \$50 and expires December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which it was issued.

### *COLLEGIATE ELITE LICENSE DESIGNATION*

- The Collegiate Elite License Designation is an option of the regular elite license for current or soon to be NCAA athletes who do not want to jeopardize their NCAA eligibility but want to compete in elite events sanctioned by USAT to gain experience. These athletes are NOT eligible for prize money but may race when it is offered. Collegiate/NCAA athletes should check with the NCAA or their university's compliance personnel regarding the most current rules regarding eligibility and prize money acceptance.

Qualification criteria: Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite triathlete or an elite triathlete with a collegiate license designation must meet at least one (1) of the criteria listed below:

**CRITERIA A:** Finish within 8% of the winning elite time on the same course as the registered elites (distance and format) in three (3) USAT sanctioned events that offered a prize purse of \$5,000 or greater. All three (3) results must have been earned in the last 365 days.

**CRITERIA B:** Finish top-10 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at the World Triathlon Age Group Olympic Distance World Championships.

**CRITERIA C:** Finish top-10 overall in the amateur field at Ironman 140.6 World Championships.

**CRITERIA D:** Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at USAT Age Group Olympic Distance National Championships.

**CRITERIA E:** Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at USAT Collegiate Olympic Distance National Championships.

**CRITERIA F:** Finish top-3 overall in the amateur field at an Elite Qualifying Race.



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*2022 Elite Qualifying Races:* All triathlons sanctioned by a World Triathlon recognized National Federation or World Triathlon with 200 or more participating athletes and a corresponding elite race in the same distance with \$20,000 or more in elite prize money shall be Elite Qualifying Races. Please confirm prize purse amounts directly with race organizers. \*For those races in which only one (1) gender has a prize purse greater than \$20,000, an Elite License will only be granted to the gender receiving the prize money.

**CRITERIA G:** Achieve a gender-graded Race Score of **105.979** or higher at two (2) events with 300 or more total (male and female) participants. (Race Score threshold is determined annually and represents the most recent value required to be within the top .5% of all gender-graded Race Scores achieved, For additional information on USAT Rankings, including the definition of Race Score, please consult the USAT Rankings Criteria page: <http://www.usatriathlon.org/rankings/rankings-criteria.aspx#Definitions>

**2. DRAFT LEGAL PATHWAY:** Athletes who qualify via these criteria can choose either the standard Elite Triathlete License (described above) or the standard Elite Triathlete license with Collegiate designation. This license costs \$50 and expires December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which it was issued.

Qualification criteria: Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite triathlete through Draft Legal Pathway must meet at least one of the criteria listed below:

**CRITERIA A:** Finish Top 10 at World Triathlon Junior Elite Sprint Distance Triathlon World Championships or Youth Olympic Games.

**CRITERIA B:** Finish Top 5 at Americas Triathlon (PATCO) Junior Continental Championships.

**CRITERIA C:** Overall Junior winner at any World Triathlon-sanctioned Junior Continental Cup or any USAT Junior Development Series race.

**CRITERIA D:** Finish Top 2 in the Zone3 Junior Nationals (draft-legal) in the 16-17 or 18-19 age category race.

**CRITERIA E:** Finish Top 3 among the non-elite (amateur) athletes and within five percent (5%) of the first non-elite (amateur) finisher's time at a National Triathlon Development Race (NTDR), NCAA Women's Collegiate National Championship, and Club Collegiate Nationals draft-legal individual triathlon. At a USAT-designated trials/finals race wherein non-elites (amateurs) are permitted to start with elites in the seeded heats, athletes who advance to the A finals are eligible for an elite license. At the NCAA Women's Collegiate National Championship, finish times across all waves will be used to determine athletes eligible for their Elite license.

Number of Elite licenses awarded at NTDRs based on field size (genders treated separately):

- 1-10 athletes = 1 license awarded
- 11-19 athletes = 2 licenses awarded
- 20+ athletes = 3 licenses awarded

**CRITERIA F:** Former World Triathlon Junior or U23 World Championship medalist may apply for an Elite License within four (4) years of earning said medal, provided the former Junior/U23 athlete is currently or has been a member of an NCAA Varsity sports program within the previous 12 months.

**CRITERIA G:** Athletes who have never held an elite license, and who are committed to competing safely in the draft-legal format may earn a one-time, single-calendar-year period of eligibility through either of the qualification criteria below. This eligibility is subject to approval by the Elite License Panel. During this



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initial period of elite eligibility an athlete will earn an extension opportunity (three years from the qualifying result) by finishing within 10% of the winning time in their elite category in at least one (1) World Triathlon Continental Cup, World Cup or World Triathlon Series event. After this period of initial eligibility and, if applicable, the extension earned within, all standard elite qualification criterion will apply.

- Finish within the top 8% of all finishers of the same gender (including elites) and within 10% of the overall winner's time at a USAT-sanctioned event offering a prize purse of \$5,000 or greater
- Achieve a gender-graded Race Score of **102.413** or higher at a USAT-sanctioned event with 500 or more total (male and female) participants racing in the same distance or format. (Race Score threshold is determined annually and represents the most recent value required to be within the top 1% of all gender-graded Race Scores achieved. For additional information on USAT Rankings, including the definition of Race Score, please consult the USAT Rankings Criteria page: <http://www.usatriathlon.org/rankings/rankings-criteria.aspx#Definitions>
- Long distance and ultra-distance results are not eligible to be used for this criteria.
- Please note that Ironman results are not eligible to be used for this Criteria

**3. ELITE DUATHLETE LICENSE:** This license is for athletes wishing to race as an elite in any USAT sanctioned duathlon. Athletes approved for this license remain amateur in triathlon events. This license costs \$50 and expires December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which it was issued.

Qualification criteria: Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite duathlete must meet the following criteria:

**CRITERIA A:** In the amateur field, finish top-10 overall and within 10% of the overall winner's time, according to gender, in at least two (2) USAT sanctioned duathlons having at least 200 total participants (combined genders) that occurred within the last 365 days.

**CRITERIA B:** Achieve a gender-graded Race Score of **103.796** or higher at two events with 100 or more total (male and female) participants. (Race Score threshold is determined annually and represents the most recent value required to be within the top 5.0% of all gender-graded Race Scores achieved, For additional information on USAT Rankings, including the definition of Race Score, please consult the USAT Rankings Criteria page: <http://www.usatriathlon.org/rankings/rankings-criteria.aspx#Definitions>

**4. ELITE OFF ROAD LICENSE:** This license is for any athlete wishing to race as an elite in any USAT sanctioned off-road event (e.g., Xterra). Athletes approved for this license remain amateur in all on road events. This license costs \$50 and expires December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which it was issued.

Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite off road athlete must meet one of the criteria below:

**CRITERIA A:** Finish within 8% of the winning elite time on the same course as the elites (distance and format) in three USAT sanctioned events that offered a prize purse of \$5,000 or greater. All three results must be from the last 365 days.

**CRITERIA B:** Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winning amateur time at the World Triathlon Cross Triathlon World Championships.

**CRITERIA C:** Finish top-10 overall in the amateur field at the Xterra World Championships in Maui.



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**CRITERIA D:** Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winning amateur time at the Xterra National Championships. Athletes must compete and qualify in the “full or long distance” division (1500 swim, 28k mountain bike, 10k trail run).

**CRITERIA E:** Finish top-3 overall in the amateur field at an Off Road Elite Qualifying Race.

*2022 Off Road Elite Qualifying Races:* All triathlons on US (including territories) and Canadian soil that have a corresponding elite race in the same distance and format with \$15,000 or more in elite prize money shall be Off Road Elite Qualifying Race. Please confirm prize purse amounts directly with race organizers.

**CRITERIA F:** Any athlete who holds elite status in NORBA, UCI, USAC, AND/OR USAT&F.

**CRITERIA G:** Achieve a gender-graded Race Score of **108.359** or higher at two events with 100 or more total (male and female) participants. (Race Score threshold is determined annually and represents the most recent value required to be within the top 5.0% of all gender-graded Race Scores achieved. For additional information on USAT Rankings, including the definition of Race Score, please consult the USAT Rankings Criteria page: <http://www.usatriathlon.org/rankings/rankings-criteria.aspx#Definitions>

**5. ELITE FOREIGN LICENSE:** This license is for foreign athletes who compete in multiple USAT sanctioned events and want to avoid paying the \$15 one day license fee multiple times. This license costs \$50 and expires December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which it was issued.

Qualification criteria: Any athlete who chooses to compete as a foreign elite athlete must present proof of elite status from his/her National Triathlon Federation or meet the USAT elite license qualification criteria outlined above under item one (Elite Triathlete License) described above.

**6. ELITE PARATRITHLON:** Paratriathlon elite annual membership is available to qualified, highly competitive, and experienced athletes. Details related to this license are captured in the “Paratriathlon Elite Membership License Qualification Criteria” posted at <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Triathlon/USAT-for-Me/Athlete-Resources/Paratriathletes/Events/World-Triathlon-Events>

**7. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:** Special consideration for exceptions to all elite membership rules may be granted by the Elite License Panel made up of at least two (2) USAT staff, and at least one (1) member of the AAC. The Panel may utilize its discretion to grant provisional licenses, in a variety of circumstances, and in most cases will review all triathlon and single sport results, and may require submission of video evidence of cycling skills when draft-legal results are not available. In addition, the Panel will specifically consider exceptions for athletes who meet the following criteria:

- Athletes whose results and development progression suggest they could be are on-track to achieve National Team Program status within 2 seasons and whose development would be otherwise hindered by a delay in quality draft-legal race experience.