



2026 WORLD CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS: 10 JANUARY 2026 TALLAHASSEE, USA

SELECTION POLICY – published July 2025

Updated October 2025 – Date amendment (UK Athletics Cross Challenge, Liverpool)

This Selection Policy ("the Policy") set outs the selection process for the Novuna Great Britain & Northern Ireland team at the 2026 World Cross-Country Championships in Tallahassee, USA (the "Championships").

Athletes should note that they must comply with all General Eligibility requirements to compete for Great Britain & Northern Ireland at these Championships. Please refer to Appendix 1.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Medal success at the 2026 World Cross Country Championships
- Supporting senior athlete preparation for future global track success
- Opportunities for developing junior athletes with the potential for future success at World Cross Country Championships

KEY COMPETITIONS

1. There will be no official trial event for athletes wishing to be considered for selection. However, priority for selection (excluding the Senior Mixed Relay) will be given to performances at key competitions listed below. Athletes should refer to Section Two of this Selection Policy to familiarise themselves with the process.
 - a. **2025 European Cross Country Championships in Lagoa, Portugal on 14 December 2025.**
Athletes should refer to the Selection Policy for these Championships if they are targeting selection.
 - b. **UK Athletics Cross Challenge in Liverpool on 22 November 2025.**

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

2. Athletes must return the Expression of Interest form by **15 December 2025** to be considered for selection. The Expression of Interest form can be found [here](#).

SELECTION MEETING

3. The Selection Meeting will take place on **16 December 2025**.
4. Selections will be based on the performance objectives for the Championships and subject to the maximum number of entries per event as follows:
 - a. **Senior Men and Women**
A maximum of four (4) athletes will be selected in each of the individual events.
 - b. **U20 Men and Women**
A maximum of four (4) athletes will be selected in each of the individual events.



c. **Senior Mixed Relay**

Four (4) athletes can be selected for the Mixed Relay event; two (2) male and two (2) female.

5. **'Doubling Up'**

An athlete may only be selected for one event at the World Cross Country Championships and therefore athletes will not be able to compete in both an individual and the Mixed Relay event.

SECTION ONE: ELIGIBILITY FOR SELECTION

6. To be eligible for consideration for selection, athletes must comply with the relevant Performance Requirement below AND satisfy the General Eligibility Criteria set out in Appendix 1. For the avoidance of doubt, eligibility does not mean an athlete will be automatically selected.
7. Athletes who meet the relevant Performance Requirement and satisfy the General Eligibility Criteria are 'Eligible Athletes'.
8. To be considered for selection in each of the individual events, athletes must be born in the years referenced in Appendix 1.

Note for the U20 individual event: the eligibility is different from European Cross Country and therefore athletes wishing to be considered for selection should pay particular attention.

- a. For Junior (U20) athletes, be aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 years on 31 December 2026 (born in 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010)

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENT – SENIOR INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

9. Athletes who compete in the following competitions will be considered for selection in the senior individual events:
 - a. 2025 European Cross Country Championships in Lagoa, Portugal on 14 December 2025.
 - b. UK Athletics Cross Challenge Senior/U23 event) in Liverpool on 22 November 2025.
10. If an athlete has not competed at any of the competitions outlined in paragraph 9 above, then they must achieve one of the following performance standards between **1 May 2025 and 14 December 2025** to be considered for selection.

Men	Event	Women
13:25	5km	15:25
27:50	10km	31:50
62:00	Half Marathon	69:00

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENT – JUNIOR INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

11. Athletes who compete in the following competitions will be considered for selection in the junior individual events:
 - a. 2025 European Cross Country Championships in Lagoa, Portugal on 14 December 2025.
 - b. UK Athletics Cross Challenge U20 Race in Liverpool on 22 November 2025.

SENIOR MIXED RELAY PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENT

12. To be considered for selection for the Senior Mixed Relay, athletes should have achieved one of the following performance standards between **1 May 2025 and 14 December 2025**.



Men	Event	Women
3:38.00	1500m	4:10.00
7:55.00	3000m	8:55.00

SECTION TWO: SELECTION PROCESS

The Selection Panel (the “Panel”) will only select from Eligible Athletes.

Selection will be made in three (3) rounds for the individual teams and one (1) round for the Senior Mixed Relay. The stages and process are outlined below.

SENIOR INDIVIDUAL SELECTION

Round 1

13. The first two (2) eligible male senior and first two (2) eligible female senior athletes who finish in the Top 12 at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships will be automatically selected for the individual senior race. For the avoidance of doubt, if any athletes who finished in the Top 12 at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships decline their selection (through injury or any other reason), the place **WILL NOT** be offered to any other athletes who competed at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships.

Round 2

14. The number of places available in this round will only be known after the conclusion of Round 1.
 - a. Where two (2) athletes are selected in Round 1, there will be no places available in Round 2.
 - b. Where one (1) athlete is selected in Round 1, there will be one place available in Round 2 and they will be selected based on the provisions in paragraph 15.
 - c. Where no athletes are selected in Round 1, there will be two places available in Round 2 and they will be selected based on the provisions in paragraph 16.
15. Where paragraph 14b applies, the first placed finisher in the combined Senior/U23 race at the UK Athletics Cross Challenge in Liverpool will be selected for the individual Senior race, provided they are an Eligible Athlete. If the first placed athlete has already been selected in Round 1, then the second placed finisher will be selected, provided they are an Eligible Athlete. Should either of these finishers not be eligible for selection (or decline their selection), their placed will not be offered by default to the next best Eligible Athlete.
16. Where paragraph 14c apply, the first two (2) placed finishers in the combined Senior/U23 race at the UK Athletics Cross Challenge in Liverpool will be selected for the individual Senior event, provided they are an Eligible Athlete. Should either of these finishers not be eligible for selection (or decline their selection), their placed will not be offered by default to the next best Eligible Athlete.

Round 3

17. The Panel may then consider other Eligible Athletes. When making their assessment, the Panel will consider the criteria listed below. At all times the Panel’s consideration for selection will be based on meeting the Performance Objectives of the Championships, not on filling event places. The Panel is not obliged to fill places.



- Athletes' current form and fitness from 1 September 2025 to 14 December 2025
- Athletes' previous recent cross-country competition history
- Performances at the 2025 UK Athletics Cross Challenge (Liverpool & Cardiff) and 2025 European Cross Country Championships
- Head-to-Heads during the autumn 2025 cross-country season
- Current injury and illness status
- Any other factors the Panel considers relevant

18. In the expert view of the Panel, they may consider some or all of the key criteria outlined in paragraph 17 above, and the criteria may be weighted as necessary to best meet the Performance Objectives. The criteria are not listed in order of priority.

JUNIOR INDIVIDUAL SELECTION

Round 1

19. The first two (2) eligible male junior and first two (2) eligible female junior athletes who finish in the Top 6 at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships will be automatically selected for the individual junior race. For the avoidance of doubt, if any athletes who finished in the Top 6 at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships decline their selection (through injury or any other reason), the place **WILL NOT** be offered to any other junior athletes who competed at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships.

Note: U20 eligible ages for World Cross Country are different to the 2025 European Cross Country Championships. Please refer to the 'General Eligibility Criteria' in Appendix 1 for full details.

Round 2

20. The number of places available in this round will only be known after the conclusion of Round 1.
- Where two (2) athletes are selected in Round 1, there will be no places available in Round 2.
 - Where one (1) athlete is selected in Round 1, there will be one place available in Round 2 and it will be selected based on the provisions in paragraph 21.
 - Where no athletes are selected in Round 1, there will be two places available in Round 2 and they will be selected based on the provisions in paragraph 22.
21. Where paragraph 20b applies, the highest placed junior Eligible Athlete, who must finish within the Top 10 in the Junior race at the UK Athletics Cross Challenge in Liverpool, will be selected for the individual Junior race. If the highest placed athlete has already been selected in Round 1, then the second highest finisher will be selected, provided they are an Eligible Athlete and finish within the Top 10. Should either of these finishers decline their selection, their place will not be offered by default to the next best Eligible Athlete.
22. Where paragraph 20c applies, the first two (2) highest placed junior Eligible Athletes, who must finish within the Top 10 in the Junior race at the UK Athletics Cross Challenge in Liverpool, will be selected for the individual Junior race. Should either of these finishers decline their selection, their place will not be offered by default to the next best Eligible Athlete.

Round 3

23. The Panel may then consider Eligible Athletes for selection. When making their assessment, the Panel will consider the criteria listed below. At all times the Panel's consideration for selection will be based on meeting the Performance Objectives of the Championships, not on filling event places.



- Athletes' current form and fitness from 1 September 2025 – 14 December 2025
- Athletes' previous cross-country competition history
- Performances at UK Athletics Cross Challenge (Liverpool & Cardiff) and 2025 European Cross Country Championships
- Head-to-Heads during the autumn 2025 cross-country season
- Current injury and illness status
- Any other factors the Panel considers relevant

24. In the expert view of the Panel, they may consider some or all of the criteria outlined in paragraph 23 above, and the criteria may be weighted as necessary to best meet the Performance Objectives. The criteria are not listed in order of priority.

SENIOR MIXED RELAY SELECTION

25. If the Panel considers that a relay team has genuine medal potential, then up to four (4) Eligible Athletes may be selected for the Senior Mixed Relay. the relay team will comprise two (2) male and two (2) female athletes.

26. The Panel will select Eligible Athletes based on their assessment of the following criteria:

- Athletes' current form and fitness from 1 September 2025 to 14 December 2025
- Athletes' previous recent cross-country competition history
- Performances at UK Athletics Cross Challenge Liverpool and 2025 European Cross Country Championships if applicable
- Head-to-Heads during the autumn 2025 cross-country season
- Current injury and illness status
- Any other factors the Panel considers relevant

27. In the expert view of the Panel, they may consider some or all of the criteria outlined in paragraph 26 above, and the criteria may be weighted as necessary to best meet the Performance Objectives. The criteria are not listed in order of priority.

RESERVES

28. The Panel may nominate two additional reserves for each team including the Senior Mixed Relay. Such reserves will be selected based on the criteria outlined in paragraphs 17, 23 and 26 above.

29. Reserves shall be non-travelling, and it is in the Panel's discretion to determine whether a reserve will be called upon to compete.

SECTION THREE: SELECTION PANEL

30. The Panel shall comprise the following Voting and Non-Voting Members stated below. All voting members shall vote on all selections. A substitute may be nominated at any time by the UKA Endurance Strategy Manager if a member (including the UKA Endurance Strategy Manager) is unavailable:

a. Voting Members:

- i. UKA Endurance Strategy Manager
- ii. World Cross Country Team Coaches (4)
- iii. A member of the UKA Endurance Advisory Group, as nominated by the UKA Endurance Manager

b. Non-Voting Members:



- i. Chairperson;
 - ii. Independent Observer (if available);
 - iii. UK Athletics Medical Representative (as required);
 - iv. Media Representative (if available);
 - v. Note-taker(s);
 - vi. Any other person invited by the Chairperson
31. If a member of the panel is unavailable, the UKA Endurance Strategy Manager may appoint a replacement. If the Endurance Strategy Manager is unavailable, the Chairperson may appoint a replacement.
32. In the event of an actual, potential, or possible conflict relating to any voting member of the Panel, it should be reported to the Chairperson who shall determine whether the voting member in question should be permitted to take part in relation to any selection decision(s). The Chairperson may appoint an alternative voting member if necessary.
33. Voting of the Panel shall be by simple majority. All voting members shall vote in all events/rounds. The UKA Endurance Strategy Manager shall have casting vote, if required. If the UKA Endurance Strategy Manager is unable to vote due to conflict or is unavailable, the Chairperson will decide who shall have casting vote.
34. The Panel may make any selection subject to the athlete completing a performance requirement or test set by the Panel.

SECTION FOUR: DE-SELECTION

35. Following selection, an athlete may be de-selected by the Panel or UK Athletics in the event of:
- a. the athlete ceasing to comply with the eligibility criteria set out in this Selection Policy, or other document communicated by UK Athletics;
 - b. the athlete's failure to sign the World Class Programme Athlete Agreement or Team Member Agreement;
 - c. the application of the Medical De-Selection Protocol set out in the World Class Programme Athlete Agreement or Team Member Agreement;
 - d. any anti-doping rule violation or provisional suspension;
 - e. any serious misconduct or suspension due to misconduct;
 - f. a breach of any UK Athletics policy
 - g. UK Athletics reasonably considering that the athlete will be unable to perform at the level required or expected due to any reason including loss of form, failure to recover fully or as expected from injury or illness;
 - h. the athlete's failure to opt-in to team training or events.

SECTION FIVE: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Appeals

36. There shall be no right of appeal to the selection of the GB&NI Team made by the Selection Panel. The provisions of the "UK Athletics Selection Fast Appeals Procedures" do not apply to the GB&NI team selections for the 2026 World Cross-Country Championships



Amendment

37. UK Athletics reserves the right to amend this Selection Policy at any time at its discretion and will make any amended version publicly available (including the date on which any amendment was made) at www.britishathletics.org.uk

Governing Law

38. This Selection Policy shall be governed by and constructed in accordance with the law of England and Wales.

Jurisdiction

39. Any dispute or claim (other than appeals) arising out of or in connection with this Selection Policy shall be submitted for determination exclusively to arbitration under the auspices of Sports Resolutions (UK) Limited and subject to the procedural control of the English Courts.

Team Logistics

40. Athletes must agree to the travel provisions made for the team. For the avoidance of doubt, UK Athletics will cover the costs of international travel to the competition from the United Kingdom and athletes shall be responsible for domestic assembly costs.

Contacts

Contact details are as follows:

- UKA Endurance Strategy Manager – Chris Jones (cjones@uka.org.uk)
- Policy related queries – Tina Ryan (tryan@uka.org.uk)
- Championships logistics – Paula Gowing (pgowing@uka.org.uk)



APPENDIX 1 – GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Be eligible to compete for GB&NI and be the holder of a full and current British passport;
2. For U20 athletes, be born in 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
3. For Senior athletes, be born in 2006 or earlier.
4. For the Senior Mixed Relay Event, athletes must be born in 2006 or earlier (i.e. they must be a Senior or U23 athlete).
5. Is not serving a period of ineligibility from the sport (as determined by UK Athletics or a Home Country Athletics Federation) or from any other sport. For example, due to misconduct and/or disciplinary reasons.
6. Not under investigation or been charged by UK Athletics, a Home Country Athletics Federation, or any other relevant organisation (including the police and CPS) with misconduct or any disciplinary, safeguarding or criminal offence.
7. Not committed a criminal, disciplinary or safeguarding offence that in the reasonable opinion of the Board of UK Athletics renders the athlete unsuitable for selection.
8. Has not, whether by an act or omission, brought UK Athletics into disrepute.
9. Meet the standards and behaviour expected by UK Athletics, as published from time to time, including in the International Athletes Code of Conduct;
10. Be registered as a member with the relevant Home Country Athletics Federation (HCAF), directly or through a club;
11. Sign the UK Athletics Team Members' Agreement ("TMA") and abide by its terms and conditions. Any athlete failing to do so prior to the first date of competition will result in their selection being withdrawn. The current version of the TMA can be found online at <https://www.uka.org.uk/performance/british-athletics-teams-information/>