



**2026 EUROPEAN CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS: 12 DECEMBER 2026
BELGRADE, SERBIA**

SELECTION POLICY – published May 2026

This Selection Policy (“the Policy”) set outs the selection process for the Novuna Great Britain & Northern Ireland team at the 2026 European Cross-Country Championships in Belgrade, Serbia (the “Championships”).

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

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Medal success at the 2026 European Cross Country Championships
- Opportunities for developing athletes with the potential for future medal success at senior major championships (including future World Cross-Country championships)

TRIALS

1. The Trials for athletes wishing to be considered for selection in all events will be held at the UK Athletics Cross Challenge in Liverpool on 28 November 2026 (the “Trials”).
2. It is not mandatory to compete at the Trials for athletes seeking selection for any European Cross-Country events, however priority is given to competing athletes and therefore athletes who do not compete may risk non-selection.
3. **The Junior U20 Teams:**
 - a. U18 male athletes wishing to qualify for selection for the junior team via the Trials should register to compete in the U20 race in Liverpool.
 - b. U18 female athletes already compete in the U20 race at the Trials so will automatically be considered for the U20 team.
4. **Athletes not competing at the Trials:**
 - a. Athletes seeking selection who are unable to compete at the Trials in any event should complete an Expression of Interest form before 23:59 on **27 November 2026**. The Expression of Interest form can be found [here](#).

SELECTIONS

5. The selection meeting will take place on **30 November 2026**.
6. Selections will be published by **4 December 2026**.



7. Selections will be based on the Performance Objectives for the Championships and subject to the maximum number of entries as follows:
 - a. **Senior, U23 and U20 Men and Women**
A maximum of six (6) athletes can compete in each of the individual events.
 - b. **Senior Mixed Relay**
Four (4) athletes can be selected for the Mixed Relay Event; two (2) male and two (2) female. Each athlete will each run 1 lap of the course (1 lap is approx 1500m).
8. **'Doubling Up'**
An athlete may only be selected for one event at the European Cross Country Championships and therefore athletes will not be able to double up and compete in both an individual and relay race.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SELECTION

9. In addition to meeting the General Eligibility Requirements in Appendix 1, to be eligible for selection, athletes must have competed at the Trials or completed an Expression of Interest form (paragraph 4a).
10. For each of the individual events, athletes must be born in the years referenced in Appendix 1, as follows:
 - a. For Senior Mixed Relay Athletes – be born in 2006 or earlier
 - b. For U23 Athletes – be born in 2004, 2005 or 2006
 - c. For U20 Athletes – be born in 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
11. For the avoidance of doubt, complying with the above means an athlete can be considered in the Selection Process ("Eligible Athletes"), it does not guarantee selection.

SELECTION PROCESS

12. The Selection Panel will only select from Eligible Athletes.
13. Selection will be made in four (4) rounds by event, conducted as outlined below.
 - Round 1 – Individual Senior Event
 - Round 2 – Individual U23 Event
 - Round 3 – Individual U20 Event
 - Round 4 – Senior Mixed Relay Event.
14. Eligible U20 or U23 athletes will only be considered for selection in an age-group above for the individual events at the discretion of the Selection Panel and only if, in its sole consideration, the Selection Panel deems it to be in the long-term interests of the individual athlete. Eligible Athletes will need to have demonstrated the ability to perform at Senior level.
15. **Round 1 – Athletes for the Individual Senior Events**



- a. The first four (4) placed male and first four (4) placed female **Senior** Athletes in the respective combined Senior/U23 Trial event will be selected for the individual Senior event.
- b. Should any of the top four finishers at the Trials not be eligible for selection (or decline their selection), their place will not be offered by default to the next best athlete. Any places not taken will be re-considered for selection based on the Selection Panel's comparative assessment of the criteria listed in paragraph 15c below.
- c. The Selection Panel will then select athletes to fill the remaining places based on a comparative assessment of Eligible Athletes against the criteria listed below. The Selection Panel will ultimately select Eligible Athletes with the greatest potential to fulfil the Performance Objectives of the Championships.
 - Athletes' current form and fitness from 01 September 2026 – 30 November 2026
 - Athletes' cross-country competition history in 2025 & 2026
 - Performance and position at the Trials
 - Performance in head-to-heads with other Eligible Athletes during the 2026 autumn cross-country season
 - Medical, injury and other health-related status considerations
 - Any other factors the Selection Panel considers relevant
- d. The criteria above are not listed in order of priority and may be weighted as necessary to best meet the Performance Objectives or may not be considered as the Selection Panel deems appropriate.

16. Round 2 – Athletes for the U23 Individual Events

- a. The first four (4) placed male and first four (4) placed female **U23** Athletes in the respective combined Senior/U23 Trial event will be selected for the respective individual U23 event.
- b. Should any of the top four finishers at the Trials not be eligible for selection (or decline their selection), their place will not be offered by default to the next best athlete. Any places not taken will be re-considered for selection based on the Selection Panel's comparative assessment of the criteria listed in paragraph 16c below.
- c. The Selection Panel will then select athletes to fill the remaining places based on a comparative assessment of Eligible Athletes against the criteria listed below. The Selection Panel will ultimately select Eligible Athletes with the greatest potential to fulfil the Performance Objectives of the Championships.
 - Athletes' current form and fitness from 01 September 2026 – 30 November 2026
 - Athletes' cross-country competition history in 2025 & 2026
 - Performance and position at the Trials
 - Performance in head-to-heads with other Eligible Athletes during the 2026 autumn cross-country season
 - Medical, injury and other health-related status considerations
 - Any other factors the Selection Panel considers relevant.
- d. The criteria above are not listed in order of priority and may be weighted as necessary to best meet the Performance Objectives or may not be considered as the Selection Panel deems appropriate.

17. Round 3 – Athletes for the U20 Individual Event

- a. The first five (5) placed male and first five (5) placed female U20 Athletes (including U18's) in the respective Junior Trial event will be selected for the individual respective U20 event.



- b. Should any of the top five finishers at the Trials not be eligible for selection (or decline their selection), their place will not be offered by default to the next best athlete. Any places not taken will be re-considered for selection based on the Selection Panel's comparative assessment of the criteria listed in paragraph 17c below.
- c. The Selection Panel will then select athlete(s) to fill the remaining places based on a comparative assessment of Eligible Athletes against the criteria listed below. The Selection Panel will ultimately select Eligible Athletes with the greatest potential to fulfil the Performance Objectives of the Championships.
 - Athletes' current form and fitness from 01 September 2026 – 30 November 2026
 - Athletes' cross-country competition history in 2025 & 2026
 - Performance and position at the Trials
 - Performance in head-to-heads during the autumn 2026 cross-country season
 - Medical, injury and other health-related status considerations
 - Any other factors the Selection Panel considers relevant.
- d. The criteria above are not listed in order of priority and may be weighted as necessary to best meet the Performance Objectives or may not be considered as the Selection Panel deems appropriate.

18. Round 4 – Senior Mixed Relay Event

- a. The winner of each individual short-course Trial race will be selected for the Mixed Relay Event.
- b. Should the winner of the Trial event not be eligible for selection (or decline their selection), their place will not be offered by default to the next best Eligible Athlete. Any place not taken will be re-considered for selection based on the Selection Panel's comparative assessment of the criteria listed in paragraph 18c below.
- c. The Selection Panel will then select athletes to fill the remaining places based on a comparative assessment of Eligible Athletes against the criteria listed below. The Selection Panel will ultimately select Eligible Athletes with the greatest potential to fulfil the Performance Objectives of the Championships.
 - Athletes' current form and fitness from 01 September 2026 – 30 November 2026
 - Athletes' cross-country competition history in 2025 & 2026
 - Performance and position at the Senior Mixed Relay Trial
 - Performance in head-to-heads during the autumn 2026 cross-country season
 - Medical, injury and other health-related status considerations
 - Any other factors the Selection Panel considers relevant.
- d. The criteria above are not listed in order of priority and may be weighted as necessary to best meet the Performance Objectives or may not be considered as the Selection Panel deems appropriate.

19. Reserves

- a. The Selection Panel may in its discretion nominate up to two additional reserves for each team including the Mixed Relay. Such reserves will be assessed as outlined in paragraphs 15c, 16c, 17c and 18c above. There is no obligation on the Selection Panel to nominate reserves.



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

SELECTION PANEL

- 20. The Selection Panel shall comprise the Members stated below. The Selection Panel will be chosen based on their expertise and knowledge in the field of Cross Country. 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. Team Leader
 - iii. Team Coaches, who will each vote on all athlete selections.
 - 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.
- 21. In the event of an actual, potential, or possible conflict relating to any voting member of the Selection 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). In any event including but not limited to conflict of interest or absence, the Chairperson may appoint an alternative voting member if necessary.
- 22. Voting of the Selection Panel shall be by simple majority. The UKA Endurance Strategy Manager shall have the casting vote, if required. If the UKA Endurance Strategy Manager is unable to vote due to conflict, the Chairperson shall nominate the panel member with the casting vote if required.
- 23. The Selection Panel may make any selection subject to the athlete completing a performance requirement or test set by the Selection Panel.

DE-SELECTION

- 24. Following selection, an athlete may be de-selected by the Selection Panel or UK Athletics in the event of:
 - a. The athlete ceasing to comply with the eligibility criteria set out in this Selection Policy, EA rules and regulations or UK Athletics strategy document or policy communicated by UK Athletics.
 - b. Failure to sign the World Class Programme Athlete Agreement or Team Member Agreement.
 - c. Failure or partial failure to comply with any conditions or part of conditions of selection set by the Selection Panel.
 - d. Application of the UK Athletics Team Medical Policy as set out in the World Class Programme Athlete Agreement or Team Member Agreement.
 - e. Any anti-doping rule violation or provisional suspension.



- f. Any serious misconduct or suspension due to misconduct.
- g. A breach of any UK Athletics policy.
- h. 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.
- i. Failure to opt-in to team training or other UKA led activity.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

25. Appeals

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 European Cross-Country Championships.

26. Amendment

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

27. Governing Law

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

28. Jurisdiction

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 Sport Resolutions (UK) Limited and subject to the procedural control of the English Courts.

29. Team Logistics

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.

Key Contacts

- UKA Endurance Strategy Manager: Chris Jones (cjones@uka.org.uk)
- Policy 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 U23 athletes, be born in 2004, 2005 or 2006
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. Comply with all European Athletics and competition rules including but not limited to any rules relevant to the category they wish to compete in.
6. Have completed the European Athletics 'I RUN CLEAN' anti-doping education programme via <https://www.irunclean.org/> and have a valid certificate number prior to the 2026 European Cross Country Championships selection meeting on 30 November 2026.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Completed all anti-doping requirements.
10. Not committed a criminal, disciplinary or safeguarding offence that in the reasonable opinion of UK Athletics renders the athlete unsuitable for selection.
11. Has not, whether by an act or omission, brought UK Athletics into disrepute.
12. Meet the standards and behaviour expected by UK Athletics, as published from time to time, including in the International Athletes Code of Conduct.
13. Be registered as a member with the relevant Home Country Athletics Federation (HCAF), directly or through a club. Exemption may be granted in exceptional circumstances only, where an athlete must be registered to a club in a foreign country due to local laws and regulations governing residency and training. In such cases, the athlete should seek written approval from the Performance Director in advance.
14. 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/>

Note: Athletes will be selected to compete in the age-group race for which they are eligible at the championships (i.e., U23 athletes will be selected for the U23 race, U20 athletes will be selected for the junior race). For the avoidance of doubt, should an U23 athlete finish ahead of a senior athlete in the



joint race at the Trials, the U23 athlete will be selected for the U23 race, and will NOT be considered as one of the first senior athletes past the post. Exceptions to this rule (i.e., selecting U20 athletes to compete in the U23 race, or U23's in the in the senior race) may only be made at the discretion of the Selection Panel and only if they believe that doing so would be in the best interests of the team and the best long-term interests of the individual athlete. Agreement of the individual athlete is also required.