

2014

The USA Triathlon Junior Elite Series is the premiere national-level racing circuit for junior triathletes in the United States. The series attracts some 400 of America's top young triathletes, as they vie for individual and team National Championships and Series titles, selection to World Championship teams, and, most importantly, have the opportunity to experience the dynamic format of Olympic-style, draft-legal triathlon.

2014 Junior Elite Series Events

USAT Richmond Youth Elite & Junior Elite Cup Innsbrook, Richmond, Virginia *20 National Championship Qualification Spots	http://www.endorphinfitnes s.com/races-events/	May 4, 2014
USAT Monroe Youth Elite & Junior Elite Cup Lake Tye Park, Monroe, Washington *20 National Championship Qualification Spots	www.trimonroe.com	June 21, 2014
USAT Flatland Youth Elite & Junior Elite Cup Raccoon River Park, West Des Moines, Iowa *20 National Championship Qualification Spots	www.flatlandkidstrifest.com	July 13, 2014
USAT Youth Elite & Junior Elite National Championships & Mixed Team Relay Voice of America Park, West Chester, Ohio *75 Starting Spots Per Gender; 50 4-Person Relay Teams	www.usatriathlon.org	August 1-3, 2014

Divisions and Distances

The USAT Junior Elite Series consists of two competition divisions: Youth Elite and Junior Elite.

<u>Youth Elite</u>: This division is open to athletes between the ages of 13 and 15 as of December 31, 2014. Athletes complete a super-sprint triathlon consisting of a 375m swim, 10k bike, and 2.5k run.

<u>Junior Elite</u>: This division is open to athletes between the ages of 16 and 19 as of December 31, 2014. Athletes complete a sprint triathlon consisting of a 750m swim, 20k bike, and 5k run.

Division	Birth Years	Distances	Format
Youth Elite	1999, 2000, 2001	375m/10k/2.5k	Multi-lap; Draft-Legal
Junior Elite	1995, 1996, 1997, 1998	750m/20k/5k	Multi-lap; Draft-Legal

Junior Elite Series Championship

USAT Junior Elite Series Champions are determined from the results of the four (4) series events, in both the Youth Elite and Junior Elite divisions, based on the points table shown here.

Finish Place	Points								
1	1000	6	677	11	459	16	311	21	210
2	925	7	626	12	424	17	287	22	195
3	856	8	579	13	392	18	266	23	180
4	792	9	536	14	363	19	246	24	166
5	732	10	496	15	336	20	227	25	154

Points earned at the National Championships will be increased by 15%.

Any ties for the top three positions in the Series overall will be broken by comparison of head-to-head finishes in series events. If there are no head-to-head finishes to compare, the athlete who raced the final event – the national championship – wins. If neither athlete raced nationals, the athlete with the fastest cumulative time wins. Ties at Series events will be broken by the times provided by the timer in the official results or by photographic evidence, if available. Only athletes representing the United States are eligible to score points and be ranked in the series.

Junior Elite Cup Awards

The top three male and female finishers at each Youth Elite / Junior Elite Cup will receive podium medals provided by USA Triathlon. Event organizers may provide supplemental race awards at their discretion. In addition, the top three male and female Junior Elite Series Champions will receive special recognition and awards provided by USA Triathlon. Athletes must finish the event in order to claim any primes or scholarship-type awards. Non-US athletes may be awarded podium medals if the event is designated as a PATCO Junior Continental Cup.

USAT Youth Elite / Junior Elite National Championship Qualification

The USAT Junior Elite Series serves as the pathway to gain the necessary skills and competence for draft-legal racing, and to qualify to compete at the National Championships. There are only 75 spots per gender in the respective divisions (Youth Elite/Junior Elite – male/female) at Nationals, so competition for these spots is steep.

Athletes earn **Direct Qualification** to compete at the National Championship by meeting one (1) of the following criteria:

- a) The first 10 finishers at the 2013 Junior Elite National Championships who will be between the ages of 17 and 19 as of December 31, 2014 (i.e. Top 10 16-18 year olds) and the first 5 finishers at the 2013 Youth Elite National Championships who will be age 16 as of December 31, 2014 (i.e. Top 5 15 year olds) will earn direct qualification to the 2014 Junior Elite National Championships;*
- b) The first 15 finishers at the <u>2013 Youth Elite National Championships</u> who will be between the ages of 14 and 15 as of December 31, 2014 (i.e. Top 15 13-14 year olds) will earn direct qualification to the <u>2014 Youth Elite National Championships</u>;*
- c) Finish in the Top 20* at 2014 Richmond Youth Elite or Junior Elite Cup (1st Qualifier)**;
- d) Finish in the Top 20* at 2014 Monroe Youth Elite or Junior Elite Cup (2nd Qualifier)**; or,
- e) Finish in the Top 20* at 2014 Flatland Youth Elite or Junior Elite Cup (3rd Qualifier)**.

Spots earned are not held indefinitely. Athletes meeting Direct Qualification Criteria (a) and (b) will have until March 15th to claim their spots by completing the online registration. Athletes meeting Direct Qualification Criteria (c) - (e) will have until 11:59 p.m. (Mountain Time) on the fifth (5th) day following the Qualifier at which they earned their spots to complete online registration. Unclaimed spots will be rolled down to 25th finisher (excluding athletes already qualified and/or athletes representing other National Federations) at each Qualifier. An athlete receiving a Roll Down will be provided a registration deadline with his/her notice.

Any spots not claimed per these criteria will be reserved as Wild Card spots. To receive a Wild Card invitation, the athlete must receive a written nomination from a USAT Certified Youth/Junior Coach, High Performance Team Director, Regional Athlete Development Coordinator, or member of USAT's High Performance staff. Wild Card spots will be reviewed on a rolling basis with invitations made accordingly. An athlete receiving a Wild Card invitation will be provided a registration deadline with the invitation.

Athletes earning Direct Qualification via (a) and (b) must validate their spots by starting at a 2014 USAT Junior Elite Series race or by representing the U.S. at an international junior draft-legal race. Failure to validate may result in forfeiture of one's starting position at the National Championships.

^{*}Excluding athletes representing other National Federations (this includes Dual Citizens representing other NFs).

^{**}Excluding athletes already qualified and/or athletes representing other National Federations.

Refunds will be handled in accordance with USAT National Events policy. Athletes who qualify and later decide not to race are expected to notify USAT immediately.

The results of a Qualifier will count even if the swim is cancelled. Should a Qualifier be cancelled and is not rescheduled to take place at least 30 days (or four weekends) prior to Nationals, then the spots may be redistributed to the other Qualifiers or open for general registration at the discretion of USAT.

Mixed Team Relay Registration

There are 50 "team spots" available for the Mixed Team Relay at Youth Elite / Junior Elite Nationals; accommodating participation by 200 athletes. **Each team must be comprised of two (2) females and two (2) males.** Athletes must be between the age of 13 and 19 as of December 31st of the competition year.

In order to afford as many USAT High Performance Teams and Registered Clubs as possible with the opportunity to participate in the Mixed Team Relay there will be two (2) registration periods.

<u>First Registration Period</u>: In the First Registration Period, which takes place beginning April 1st and ending May 15th, USAT will allocate team spots as follows:

- Priority #1: The Top 3 teams from the prior year's Mixed Team Relay will be awarded one (1) team spot each;
- Priority #2: The Top 10 teams from the prior year's Development Team National Championship will be awarded one (1) team spot each;
- Priority #3: USAT High Performance Teams in good standing will be awarded one (1) team spot each; and,
- Priority #4: USAT Registered Clubs in good standing that make a formal request for a team spot by March 15th may be awarded one (1) team spot each on a first-come, first-served basis until all spots are allocated or the First Registration Period ends, whichever comes first.

All allocations are cumulative, meaning, in the First Registration Period, a team/club that earned a Top 3 finish in the Mixed Team Relay in 2013, a Top 10 finish in the Development Team Championship in 2013, and is a High Performance Team in good standing in 2014 will be awarded three (3) team spots, accommodating participation by 12 athletes (6 females/6 males).

Between April 1st and May 15th, High Performance Teams and Registered Clubs must claim their allocated spots by completing the online registration process. Spots not claimed by May 15th will revert to the pool of team spots available in the Second Registration Period.

Second Registration Period: The Second Registration Period will begin June 15th and remain open until 14 days prior to the individual championships or until all 50 team spots are filled, whichever comes first. Available team spots may be claimed by registering online on a first-come, first-served basis. There will be no wait list. There are no refunds if withdrawing a team.

<u>Deadline for Setting Team Composition</u>: Coaches must enter the names of the relay team athletes in the online registration system – in the exact order of the relay – no later than ten (10) days prior to the event weekend or risk forfeiting the team spot.

<u>Performance/Injury Substitutions</u>: Coaches are allowed no more than three (3) injury substitutions following the conclusion of the individual championships held the day prior to the Mixed Team Relay. Substitutions must be delivered to the Event Organizer or his/her designee within two (2) hours of the finish of final Youth Elite or Junior Elite competition of the day. Substitutes must have competed in the individual championship or be registered for the Mixed Team Relay already (i.e. the athlete must be in the timer's database already).

Numbering: Each HPT or Club will be assigned a random number for the purpose of calling up the first athlete to the start line and rack assignments in transition. HPTs or Clubs may assign an internal ranking designator to each of its teams at the time of registration, such as Team 1, Team 2, and so on. This must be readily apparent in the registration database or USAT will assign a ranking of its choosing. The Event Organizer will assign the first team from each HPT or Club a starting position according to the random order assigned all HPTs and Clubs before repeating the process until all relay teams are given a call-up position.

The order by which each athlete completes the relay will be requested at the time of registration and may be altered only during the substitution window or when replacing an injured or ill athlete.

The Event Organizer will assign individual race numbers as follows (for example):

Team 1

- 11 First Athlete (Female)
- 12 Second Athlete (Male)
- 13 Third Athlete (Female)
- 14 Fourth Athlete (Male)

Team 20

- 201 First Athlete (Female)
- 202 Second Athlete (Male)
- 203 Third Athlete (Female)
- 204 Fourth Athlete (Male)

<u>Composite/Foreign Teams</u>: The organization of composite teams is allowed, provided they are associated with an HPT or Registered Club or organized by the USAT High Performance Department. The names of combined HPTs or clubs must be identifiable in the team name, such as "HPT-Club Composite 1". Composite teams will not factor in subsequent year allocations of team spots. Teams comprised of athletes representing other countries may enter the Mixed Team Relay either during the Second Registration Period or earlier at the discretion of the USAT High Performance Department to

further USAT's solidarity initiatives or enhance the quality of field, however, these results will not factor in subsequent year allocations of team spots.

<u>Maximum Number of Teams</u>: Any single HPT or Registered Club may enter a maximum of five (5) team relay squads, unless the event is undersubscribed at the end of the Second Registration Period, in which case there will be no limit and spots can be claimed first-come, first-served. Composite teams will not count toward the maximum. In the event that all 50 team spots have not been filled following the close of the Second Registration Period, USAT may waive the gender composition requirement to allow for the most number of athletes to participate in the event.

Race Number Assignment and Starting Positions

All race numbers will be assigned randomly by the Race Director or Lead Official. Athletes will be called to the start line by order of assigned race number and then immediately select their starting positions. Once the athlete has chosen his or her starting position, he or she may not move from it. Athletes must move forward from the start line after hearing the starter's signal.

USAT Youth Elite & Junior Elite National Rankings

An athlete's ranking is determined by the sum of up to his/her **four (4) best points scores** based on the Points Table on the next page at USAT-designated Ranked Events in a calendar year. For 2014, Ranked Events include: ITU Junior World Championship (Edmonton), ITU/PATCO Junior Triathlon Championship (Dallas), ITU-designated Junior Continental Cups (worldwide), ITU/PATCO North American Junior Championship (Sarasota), Youth Olympic Games Continental Qualifier (Monterrey), Youth Olympic Games (Nanjing), USAT Youth Elite/Junior Elite National Championships (West Chester), USAT Youth Elite/Junior Elite Cups (Richmond, Monroe, Flatland), and USAT U25 Elite Development Races that meet the ranking criteria defined below.

For U25 EDRs and International Events, points are awarded based on actual finish place irrespective of other U.S. athletes outside of the 16-19 division or international athletes. For example, if the first U.S. athlete finishes third at the ITU Junior World Championships, she would earn 856 points toward her ranking, not 1000 points. For Junior Elite Cups and Nationals, points are awarded based on finish position against U.S. athletes in the field only. For example, if the first U.S. athlete finished 2nd to a Canadian athletes at the Richmond Junior Elite Cup, he would be awarded 1000 series points and 400 ranking points.

Only athletes representing the United States will be ranked. Dual-citizens competing in the Ranked Events must declare which country they are representing with an understanding that ITU rules govern changes in national representation in the future.

A U25 Elite Development Race must have a minimum of twenty-five (25) total starters per gender to be included in these national rankings. For instance, an Elite Development Race at which thirty (30) females and twenty-two (22) males started would award national ranking points to the females only.

No points are awarded at Youth F1 Triathlons.

Youth Elite/Junior Elite National Rankings Points Table

Finish Place	ITU World Championship/ YOG	PATCO Junior Championship/ YOG Qualifier	USAT National Championship	Junior Elite Cup / ITU JCC / PATCO Sub- Regional Championship	USAT U25 Elite Development Race
1	1000	750	500	400	200
2	925	694	463	370	185
3	856	642	428	342	171
4	791	594	396	317	158
5	732	549	366	293	146
6	677	508	339	271	135
7	626	470	313	251	125
8	579	435	290	232	116
9	536	402	268	214	107
10	496	372	248	198	99
11	459	344	229	183	92
12	424	318	212	170	85
13	392	294	196	157	78
14	363	272	181	145	73
15	336	252	168	134	67
16	311	233	155	124	62
17	287	215	144	115	58
18	266	199	133	106	53
19	246	184	123	98	49
20	227	171	114	91	46
21	210	158	105	84	43
22	195	146	97	78	39
23	180	135	90	72	36
24	166	125	83	68	34
25	154	116	77	62	31
26	142	107	71	57	29
27	132	99	66	53	27
28	122	92	61	49	25
29	113	85	56	45	23
30	105	79	52	42	21
31	97	73			
32	89	68			
33	83	63			
34	77	58			
35	71	54			

All-American / Honorable Mention / Athlete of the Year

All-American honors are bestowed upon the Top 5% of ranked athletes, the U.S. National Champion, and athletes earning a first place finish at the ITU Pan American Junior Championships, a first place finish at the ITU PATCO North American Junior Championships, a Top 3 finish at Youth Olympic Games, and a Top 8 finish at the ITU Junior Elite World Championships.

Honorable Mention recognition is awarded to the Top 6-10% of ranked athletes, the 2nd and 3rd place finishers at Youth Elite / Junior Elite National Championships, the 2nd and 3rd place finishers at the ITU Pan American Junior Championships, the 2nd place finisher at the ITU PATCO North American Junior Championships, the 4th through 6th place finishers at Youth Olympic Games, and for a Top 9th through 12th place finish at the ITU Junior Elite World Championships.

USAT High Performance staff will nominate athletes for **Junior [Elite] Athlete of the Year** honors based on the collective achievements of the athlete throughout the course of the year.

USAT Development Team National Championship

USAT recognizes as "**Development Team National Champions**" the top performing USAT-registered team/club from the combined results of the four (4) Junior Elite Series events (collectively referred to as the "Scored Events"). For 2014, the Scored Events are the USAT **Richmond** Youth Elite & Junior Elite Cup, the USAT **Monroe** Youth Elite Cup & Junior Elite Cup, the USAT **Flatland** Youth Elite Cup & Junior Elite Cup, and the USAT Youth Elite & Junior Elite **National Championships**.

Athletes finishing **Top 25 Overall** (counting U.S. athletes only) in their respective divisions (Youth Elite or Junior Elite) at each Scored Event earn points for their respective teams based on the table below. Teams earn the sum total of points from each racing division awarded to its athletes. The team scoring the most points from both divisions combined wins. Points earned at the National Championships will be increased by 15%.

Non-U.S. athletes/teams/clubs are not scored or eligible for prizes in this competition category.

Points are not awarded retroactively to an athlete who joins a team, or a team that registers, after a Scored Event has taken place.

Finish	Points								
Place									
1	1000	6	677	11	459	16	311	21	210
2	925	7	626	12	424	17	287	22	195
3	856	8	579	13	392	18	266	23	180
4	792	9	536	14	363	19	246	24	166
5	732	10	496	15	336	20	227	25	154

Series Participation by Foreign Nationals

USAT welcomes participation in USAT Youth Elite and Junior Elite Cups by representatives of other National Federations provided space is available. Foreign nationals may earn podium medals and prizes based on their finish position, but are not scored in the Series Championship or National Rankings.

USAT may, at its discretion, offer solidarity invitations to non-U.S. athletes to participate in the Youth Elite and Junior Elite National Championship. Foreign athletes will not be recognized with national champion podium awards, but may receive general recognition for outstanding performances by the race announcer.

Qualifying for International Championships

U.S. junior athletes, ages 16 to 19, have the opportunity to earn starts at a number of international championships each year. These include the ITU Junior World Championship, the PATCO Pan American Junior Championship, the PATCO North American Junior Championship, and, every four years, the Youth Olympic Games. USA Triathlon is responsible for selecting the athletes and naming them to the teams that represent the United States at these events. The official criteria to qualify for these events are posted on the "Junior Elite" page of the USAT website. The following is a summary of the criteria.

Event	No. of Spots	Selection Event(s)	Other Selection Criteria
ITU Junior World Championships	Up to 3 per gender	2013 ITU Junior World Championship; PATCO Pan American Championship; USAT Junior Elite Selection Event (TBD)	Discretionary
PATCO Pan American Junior Championships	Up to 10 per gender	2013 Junior Elite National Rankings; PATCO North American Junior Championships (Sarasota)	Discretionary
PATCO North American Junior Championship	Up to 35 per gender	2013 Junior Elite National Rankings	Discretionary
Youth Olympic Games Continental Qualifier	Up to 8 per gender (age 16-17 only)	2013 Youth Elite/Junior Elite National Rankings; North American Junior Championships	Discretionary
Youth Olympic Games	1 per gender (age 16-17 only)	Youth Olympic Games Qualifier 2014	N/A

Competition Rules

The USAT Junior Elite Series is officiated by USAT Junior Series Officials. Officials apply international rules for draft-legal racing. The most current version of the Competition Rules is available for download at http://www.triathlon.org/about/downloads/. USAT Junior Series Officials post race briefings and special announcements prior to each race at http://draftlegalrules.com/. Questions about rules enforcement should be directed to USAT National Events, **not ITU**.

Athletes and Coaches must make special note of Section 5.2 of the Competition Rules (Cycling Equipment). Bikes will be checked as they are brought into transition on race day. Non-compliant equipment, include wheels and helmets, are not allowed. To avoid race day stress over equipment, come prepared and, if in doubt, bring your equipment to the race briefing for a pre-inspection.

The Competition Rules refer to the UCI approved wheels list. This list (Non-standard wheels in conformity with article 1.3.018) is updated routinely by the UCI and is posted on this page: http://www.uci.ch/templates/UCI/UCI2/layout.asp?MenuId=MTkzNg&LangId=1. USAT will enforce Section 5.2(c) in accordance with any and all guidance provided by ITU (which is subject to change). The best approach for athletes and teams is to come to events with wheels that are on the current UCI list.

Uniform Rules

To remove a potential financial barrier to participants new to developmental draft-legal racing, the USAT Junior Elite Series does not require full compliance with the ITU Junior Uniform Rule. The following elements of the Competition and Uniform Rules do apply:

- At all USAT Junior Elite Series races, the athlete's <u>torso must be covered</u> from the start of the swim until the finish of the run.
- Torso covering means no midriff showing and the front zipper of the suit closed at all times.
- At Youth Elite/Junior Elite Cups, athletes are <u>not</u> required to have their last name and country code on their suit.
- At the Youth Elite/Junior Elite National Championships, athletes <u>are</u> required to have their **last** name and **country code** on their suit. Athletes should follow the layout and dimensions
 specified in the Junior Uniforms Rules posted at
 http://www.triathlon.org/about/downloads/category/uniform-rules/.
- Rear zippered tri suits are highly recommended for male competitors. Female competitors may wear a one piece swim suit or a tri suit (with or without rear zipper).
- While logo dimensions and locations are not enforced in the USAT Junior Elite Series as a way to reduce costs incurred when starting the sport, USAT highly recommends that athletes and teams use the Junior Uniform Rules template when designing their suits. This may allow athletes to use the same suit at international events officiated by ITU Technical Officials. Not following these templates will require the purchase of a separate uniform.

Regional Athlete Development Coordinators

USAT High Performance is represented in each region by a Regional Athlete Development Coordinator, or RADC. Certified in coaching youth and junior athletes, and knowledgeable about the draft-legal development pathway, RADCs are your best local resource for junior triathlon information.



USAT designates events in each region of the U.S. that serve as Junior Talent ID Races. The common characteristics of a JTID Race are non-drafting, sprint distance, junior-friendly, and scheduled during the summer months to avoid school conflicts. JTID Races serve as an entry point for many young athletes into USAT's talent identification pipeline. They are a great place to get noticed by your RADC, to meet other teens who share an interest in triathlon, and to earn an Age Group National Ranking when not competing in the Junior Elite Series.

USAT Region	JTIDS Website	RADC Contact
Southeast Region	http://sejrtriathlon.vpweb.com/	Kathleen Johnston ks_johnston@hotmail.com
Mid-Atlantic Region	http://usatmajuniors.wordpress.com/	Christy Lausch Christy@minicowtriclub.com
Northeast Region	http://nejuniortriathlon.com/	Matt Valyo matt@tri-and-fit.com
Rocky Mountain Region	http://www.usatriathlon.org/regions/rocky- mountain/contents.aspx	Ken Axford ken@peakmultisport.com
Florida Region	http://usatfloridaathletedevelopment.blogspot. com/	Jennifer Hutchison ESportsRD@aol.com
Midwest Region	http://www.usatriathlon.org/regions/midwest/ contents.aspx	Jenny Weber jenny@z3triathlon.org
South Midwest Region	http://smwtriathlon.org/athletes/youth/junior race_series/index.htm	Shelly O'Brien shelly@icon1multisport.com
Pacific Northwest Region	http://www.usatriathlon.org/regions/pacific- northwest/contents.aspx	John Tacke john@rocksteadytri.com
Southwest Region	http://www.usatriathlon.org/regions/southwes t/contents.aspx	Sharon Osgood shozgood@gmail.com
Mideast Region	http://www.usatriathlon.org/regions/mideast/c ontents.aspx	Rick Slawinski rick@summitmultisport.com

Mandatory Race Meeting and Competition Jury

The Lead Official will provide a briefing on the rules and enforcement at the mandatory Athlete Meeting held one day prior to each event. It is important that you plan your travel to the race so that you can attend this required meeting. The Lead Official will provide the names of the Competition Jury and procedures for filing protests at the meeting. All race-specific officiating concerns must be brought to the attention of the Lead Official at the race venue. General questions or concerns about the officiating of the series must be directed to USA Triathlon National Events promptly following the event, however, all protests must be filed onsite with the Lead Official.

Draft-Legal Competencies

Athletes seeking to compete in the series should possess the following minimum knowledge and skills.

Knowledge Competencies: An athlete must be able to identify or describe –

- the multi-lap, draft-legal format, and race distances;
- the type of swim start and the start commands;
- the flow-through style transition and proper set-up of transition space;
- the rules applicable to draft-legal racing, including uniform and bicycle set-up;
- mount/dismount line rules in draft-legal racing;
- the requirement to attend the pre-race briefing and morning-of check-in;
- proper application of race number decals;
- age and skill-appropriate racing distances for juniors;
- location of athlete development information on USAT website;
- USAT athlete development pathway from Youth Elite to Elite;
- how to access the USAT Talent ID website; and,
- where to find anti-doping information.

Skill Competencies: An athlete must be able to -

- take his/her starting position on a ITU-style start line without hesitation;
- perform a dive start from a pontoon (pool's edge) on starter's command;
- perform running beach entry/exit;
- set up his/her transition area and demonstrate correct use of rack and basket;
- use elastic bands to secure cycling shoes;
- locate the mount/dismount lines/zones;
- handle bike while running at speed;
- perform flying mount and dismount (i.e. without stopping);
- ride in single-file paceline and two and three-abreast;
- rotate positions within a paceline;
- use hand/signals to communicate within a paceline;
- use proper hand positions on the handlebars;
- apply proper cornering techniques;
- apply seated and standing climbing techniques;
- remove, drink, and replace water bottle while riding in a paceline;
- place bike on transition rack during T2;
- monitor the penalty board and serve penalties in the penalty box or transition; and,
- demonstrate competency in draft-legal rules while performing these skills.



Stay Connected

Stay informed about USA Triathlon's junior development programs by following us on Facebook ("USAT Juniors") and Twitter ("@USATJuniors").

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Youth Elite / Junior Elite Cup? Youth Elite / Junior Elite Cups are USAT-designated, draft-legal triathlons organized exclusively for athletes between 13 and 19 years of age. Each year, USAT designates a small number of these events to serve as national-level racing opportunities. The purpose of these events is to prepare athletes for international competition and to prepare athletes to enter the elite ranks.

I can't find a Junior Elite Cup nearby. Are there other opportunities to participate in a draft-legal triathlon? Two other options for athletes between the ages of 13 and 19 are USAT-designated "Youth F1 Triathlons" and "USAT U25 Elite Development Races".

Youth F1 racing is designed to introduce entry-level youth athletes to the draft-legal format, while still providing age-appropriate racing distances. The purpose of these events is to enable more young athletes to develop competency in the draft-legal race format before they commit to national-caliber Youth Elite or Junior Elite Cup triathlons. Athletes between the ages of 13 and 16 are encourage to tryout a Youth F1 race. Events are comprised of a 200-400 meter swim, a 7-10 kilometer bike, and a 2-2.5 kilometer run.

The U25 Elite Development Race format is intended to prepare emerging elite athletes for the ITU Continental Cup circuit. U25 Elite Development Races provide a competition platform that engages athletes across a broad age range, from Junior Elite to post-collegiate, with the goal of retaining more athletes in the talent identification pipeline over a longer time period. The draft-legal sprint distance format also facilitates a shorter triathlon race preparation phase necessitated by these athletes' ongoing participation in high school and collegiate sports. Athletes between the ages of 16 and 25 are automatically eligible to compete, while older athletes may petition USA Triathlon for invitation based on exceptional talent in swimming and/or running.

What does "draft-legal" mean? The term "draft-legal" refers to the competition rules that are followed in the ITU/Olympic short-course triathlon format. During a draft-legal triathlon, athletes may ride directly behind other athletes to save energy or join in team tactics. This is often referred to as riding in a "pack" or "peloton." Under USAT Age Group Competition Rules, drafting behind another athlete would result in a penalty. Under international draft-legal competition rules, there is no penalty for drafting...in fact, it is encouraged. Drafting in this format of triathlon adds another dimension to race tactics and skill.

Where do I learn about international competition rules? The ITU Competition Rules are at http://www.triathlon.org/about/documents. Because these rules are written more specifically for major international events, there are some rules or interpretations that may not be applicable or enforceable in developmental junior races. If you have a question about the rules, be sure to raise it with the Lead Official prior to your event.

What is the purpose of these types of events? Because the Junior, Collegiate (FISU), Under-23, and armed forces world championships all are draft-legal triathlons, Youth Elite / Junior Elite Cups provide

America's young athletes an opportunity to develop the skills and experience necessary for international-caliber racing as they progress through the development pipeline. They also serve as a stepping stone toward becoming an elite/professional triathlete competing in the ITU World Triathlon Series or even the Olympic Games.

What are the race distances and format? A Youth Elite Cup is comprised of a 375 meter swim, a 10 kilometer bike, and a 2.5 kilometer run. Youth F1 events may be slightly shorter. Junior Elite Cups and U25 Elite Development Races are comprised of a 750m swim, 20k bike, and a 5k run. The swim starts from either a platform (dive from a floating pontoon, pier, or riverwalk) or a beach start. An in-water start may be used where no other suitable option is available. The bike course is typically multi-lap (e.g. 4 x 5k). The run is also multi-lap (e.g. 2 x 2.5k). As with any triathlon, distances may vary slightly from venue to venue.

Why are these races so short? I though triathlon was an endurance event? The distances for Junior Elite Cups mirror that of the ITU Junior World Championship. Since Junior Elite Cups combine the usual elements of a sprint triathlon with the dynamics and required skill level of draft-legal racing, reasonably short distances are most advisable. At age 13 or 14, an athlete is transitioning from the very short Youth distance races to the dynamics of draft-legal racing. Physiologically, these athletes are in a very dynamic stage of development where coordination, balance and an athlete's center of gravity are changing rapidly. The Youth Elite events provide a safe, age-appropriate distance upon which to build a foundation for success in the junior ranks.

How old must I be to compete? For Youth Elites, eligible racing ages are 13, 14, or 15 years old as of December 31st of the competition year. For Junior Elites, eligible racing ages are 16, 17, 18, or 19 years old as of December 31st of the competition year. U25 Elite Development Races allow athletes 16 to 25; those over 25 by special invitation. The age range of a Youth F1 will be determined through coordination between the event director and USAT Athlete Development prior to receiving the designation.

May I "race up" a division? No. Athletes must compete according to their age as of December 31st of the competition year. For example, a 12 year old who does not turn 13 by December 31st may not compete in a Youth Elite Cup. Likewise, a 15 year old who does not turn 16 by December 31st may not compete in a Junior Elite Cup. In the same spirit, an older athlete may not "race down" a division.

What is a High Performance Team? USAT has recognized a number of developmentally-focused teams around the country as USAT High Performance Teams. These teams are led by experienced junior development coaches and share a common mission with USAT's High Performance Department: identify, recruit, develop and support rising talent in the practice of elite-level triathlon. HPTs focus their seasons around the USAT Junior Elite Series and qualifying athletes for international competition. If you are interested in learning more about USAT High Performance Teams, visit the Junior Elite page of the USAT website.

Do I need to be on a High Performance Team to compete? <u>No.</u> While there are many development teams that focus on preparing Youth Elite / Junior Elite athletes, being a member of such a team is not expected or required in order to compete at a Youth Elite / Junior Elite Cup.

How do I register for these events? Registration is handled separately by each race director. Because many Youth Elite / Junior Elite Cups are held in conjunction with age group races, be certain you are registering for the Youth Elite Cup (13-15) or Junior Elite Cup (16-19) event. Contact the event organizer if you have a registration question.

Do I need to be a USAT member to compete? Yes. Because the Junior Elite Series is a pathway to selection for international championship teams, USAT's High Performance Department expects all participants in the series to be annual members. Junior athletes may hold a USAT Elite License and still compete in the Series.

What type of bike do I need in order to participate? For Youth Elite / Junior Elite Cups, you must ride a "traditional road bike," as opposed to a "tri bike," "time trial bike," or "mountain bike." For exact specifications, please consult sections 5.2 of the ITU Competition Rules (referenced above). Any exceptions to these rules will be briefed by the Lead Official prior to each race.

Does that mean I need to own two bikes? Certainly not. A few minor modifications to your "traditional road bike" will make it race-ready for any non-drafting triathlon. A road bike will provide the versatility to do both styles of triathlon at the lowest cost.

Can I use aerobars on my bike? You may use aerobars, however, they may not extend beyond the brake hoods or shifter levers. A simple way to check this is to take a piece of cardboard and hold it against both brake hoods/levers. If your aerobars are touching the cardboard or prevent it from touching both hood/levers, your bars are extended too far. Because of the short distance of the race and the slower speeds, USAT recommends that Youth Elite athletes not use aerobars because they offer minimal performance value and slow down bike check-in on race morning.

What is the "no bare torso" rule? An athlete must have his/her torso (upper body) covered for the full duration of the race...from swim start to run finish. Many male athletes choose to compete in a form-fitting tri-suit that does not inhibit their swim stroke and is hydrodynamic. This rule is strictly enforced.

Should I put my name on my race suit? The Junior Elite Series is a talent identification program for USAT. The best way for our talent scouts to learn who you are while you are racing is to put your name on the front and back of your suit. Please review the competition rules section for specific guidance on race uniforms.

Why is there a mandatory pre-race meeting? The mandatory pre-race meeting is necessary to inform athletes of the competition rules and course specifics. Given the developmental nature of these events, these meetings serve as a critical part of the educational process. They also may be used as an opportunity to pre-inspect equipment (however, final inspection occurs as athletes enter the transition

area). Whenever possible, these meetings will take place on the evening prior to race day. Please be aware that meeting space is often limited and access may be restricted to athletes only.

How long are these mandatory meetings? Approximately 45 minutes.

Are wetsuits allowed? Yes, provided the water temperature is 20C (approximately 68F) or below.

Are three-person relay teams allowed to compete? <u>No</u>. All participants must do the swim, bike and run.

Why are race numbers assigned randomly and not according to national ranking? The purpose of the Junior Elite Series is to provide developing athletes with as much relevant race experience as possible. This will better prepare them for the realities of international competition – both as juniors and as elites. At international championships, U.S. athletes most likely will be assigned race numbers randomly. Sometimes an athlete will be called to the line early, sometimes last. As junior athletes transition into elite racing, they most likely will be the lowest ranked and will be called to the start line last. U.S. athletes need to be mentally and skillfully prepared for any circumstance and be confident and capable of making tactical adjustments in the moment.

May parents assist their children in the transition area? No. Parents and coaches are never allowed inside the transition area before, during, or after the event.

Where can I watch video of this style of racing? The ITU offers a collection of recent event videos on its Multimedia page at www.triathlon.org.

Where can I get coaching for this type of racing? One of the best places to learn the art of draft-legal triathlon is at USAT Junior Skills or Select Camp. Camp dates and locations are posted on the Junior Elite page of the USAT website. Another option is to join a USAT High Performance Team.

Will competing as an "elite" affect my NCAA eligibility? No. While USAT uses the designations "Youth Elite" and "Junior Elite" to signify that the event is draft-legal, participants are not required to get an elite license, nor are they competing for prize money. These races should not impact your NCAA eligibility. That said, USAT always cautions athletes to consult their school's compliance officer or the NCAA By-Laws with specific questions. This advice applies to state high school athletic associations as well, which sometimes have rules about participating in multiple sports in the same season.

Is there financial assistance available from USA Triathlon? USAT supports juniors who are competitive at the international level through the Junior Performance Plan. Support comes in the form of reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses associated with travel to events. Information about this program is available on the "Junior Elite" page of the USAT website. Your USAT Regional Council may also offer travel grants to support your participation in the Series.

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