2011 USA TRIATHLON JUNIOR ELITE CUP SERIES

The USA Triathlon Junior Elite Cup Series is the premiere national-level racing circuit for junior triathletes in the United States. The Series attracts over 300 of America's top young triathletes, as they vie for individual and team national and series titles, selection to world championship teams, and, most importantly, experience the dynamic format of Olympic-style triathlon.

2011 RACE SERIES

USAT Monroe Youth Elite & Junior Elite Cup
hosted by TriMonroe – Gateway to Adventure Triathlon — Monroe, Washington — June 25, 2011

USAT Flatland Youth Elite & Junior Elite Cup
hosted by the Flatland Kids Triathlon Festival — West Des Moines, Iowa — July 16, 2011

USAT Youth Elite and Junior Elite National Championships
hosted by USA Triathlon Junior Triathlon Festival — San Diego, California — August 6-7, 2011

DIVISIONS AND DISTANCES

Youth Elite: This division is open to athletes between the ages of 13 and 15 as of December 31, 2011. Athletes compete at a super-sprint distance consisting of a 375m swim, 10k bike, and 2.5k run.

Junior Elite: This division is open to athletes between the ages of 16 and 19 as of December 31, 2011. Athletes compete at the sprint distance consisting of a 750m swim, 20k bike, and 5k run.

Division	Birth Years	Distances	Format
Youth Elite	1996, 1997, 1998	375m/10k/2.5k	Multi-lap; Draft-Legal
Junior Elite	1992, 1993, 1994, 1995	750m/20k/5k	Multi-lap; Draft-Legal

AWARDS

The top three male and female finishers at each Youth Elite and 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 Series Champions will receive special recognition and awards provided by USA Triathlon.

SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP

Series Champions are determined from the results of all three Series events, in both the Youth Elite and Junior Elite divisions, based on the points table shown here.

Finish Place	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Points	25	15	10	9	8	7	6	5	3	1

To be eligible for the overall Series title, an athlete must compete in at least two series events. If an athlete competes, but does not score points, in a Series event, that race will count toward the two race minimum requirement. If an athlete starts a Series event but does not finish (DNF), that race also will count toward the minimum events requirement. Any ties 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. Only athletes representing the United States are eligible to score points and be ranked in the Series.

SCORING

Scoring of the Series is maintained by USAT Sport Performance. Standings are posted on the "Junior" page of the USAT website.

EVENT ELIGIBILITY AND FIELD SIZE

Event Location	Eligibility		Field Size per Gender	
	Youth Elite	Junior Elite	Youth Elite	Junior Elite
Monroe	Open	Open	75	75
Flatland	Open	Open	50	50
San Diego	Open	Limited*	75	75

**See Junior Elite National Championships Eligibility summary on page 9.*

USAT MEMBERSHIP

All athletes competing in the Series must hold a current annual USAT membership. Annual membership for athletes 17 and under is $5. For athletes 18 and 19 years old, annual membership costs $39. Memberships can be purchased at www.usatriathlon.org.

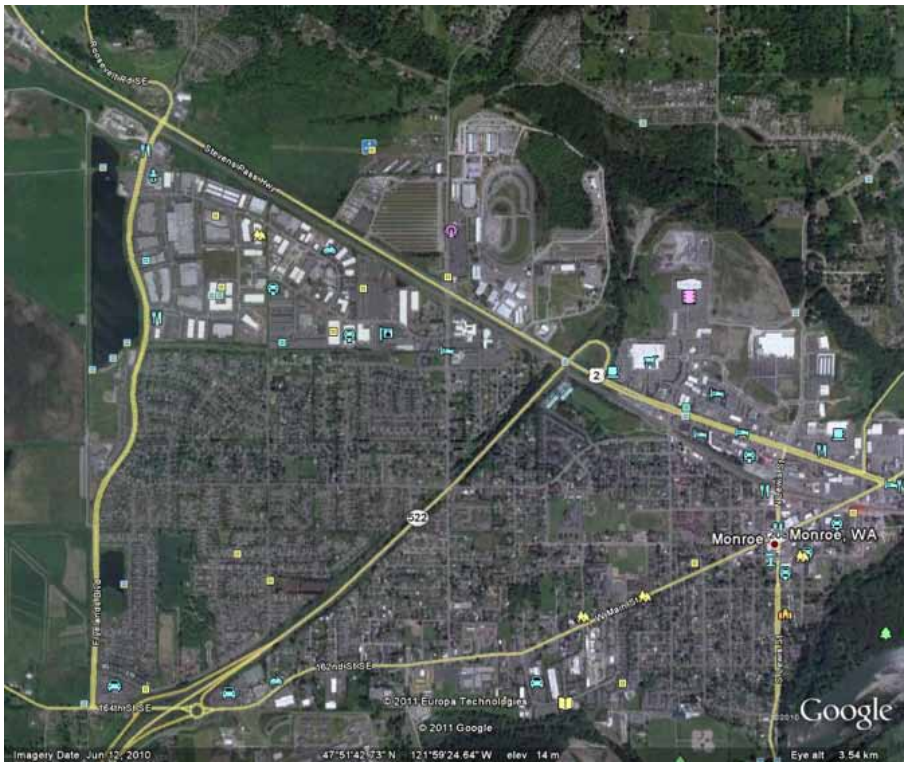
EVENT INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

USAT Monroe Youth Elite and Junior Elite Cup
ITU Junior Pan American Cup

www.trimonroe.com
Field Size: 75 per division
Registration Fee: $55
Race Briefing: 4 p.m. on June 24th at Rock Church, 146th Street SE, Monroe, WA

Swim: Lake, beach start; Youth Elites 375m; Junior Elites 750m (one lap)
Bike: 5k out and back; Youth Elites 2 laps; Junior Elites 4 laps
Run: 2.5k loop; Youth Elites 1 lap; Junior Elites 2 laps

The TriMonroe Triathlon consists of six draft-legal events on Saturday, June 25, and even more age group racing on Sunday, June 26. In addition to being the first stop on the 2011 Series, Monroe will host the first-ever ITU Junior Pan American Cup, as well as an ITU Pan American Cup and U23 Worlds Qualifier. Monroe is a small city of 16,000 residents located 40 miles northeast of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. It offers a family-friendly vacation setting filled with hiking, rafting, fishing, and camping.



USAT Flatland Youth Elite and Junior Elite Cup

www.flatlandkidstrifest.com
Field Size: 50 per division
Registration Fee: $55
Race Briefing: 4 p.m. on July 15th at Valley Church, 4343 Fuller Road, West Des Moines, IA

Swim: Pond, beach start; Youth Elite 375m (1 lap); Junior Elites 750m (2 laps)
Bike: 3.5k loop; Youth Elites 3 laps; Junior Elites 6 laps
Run: 2.5k loop; Youth Elites 1 lap; Junior Elites 2 laps

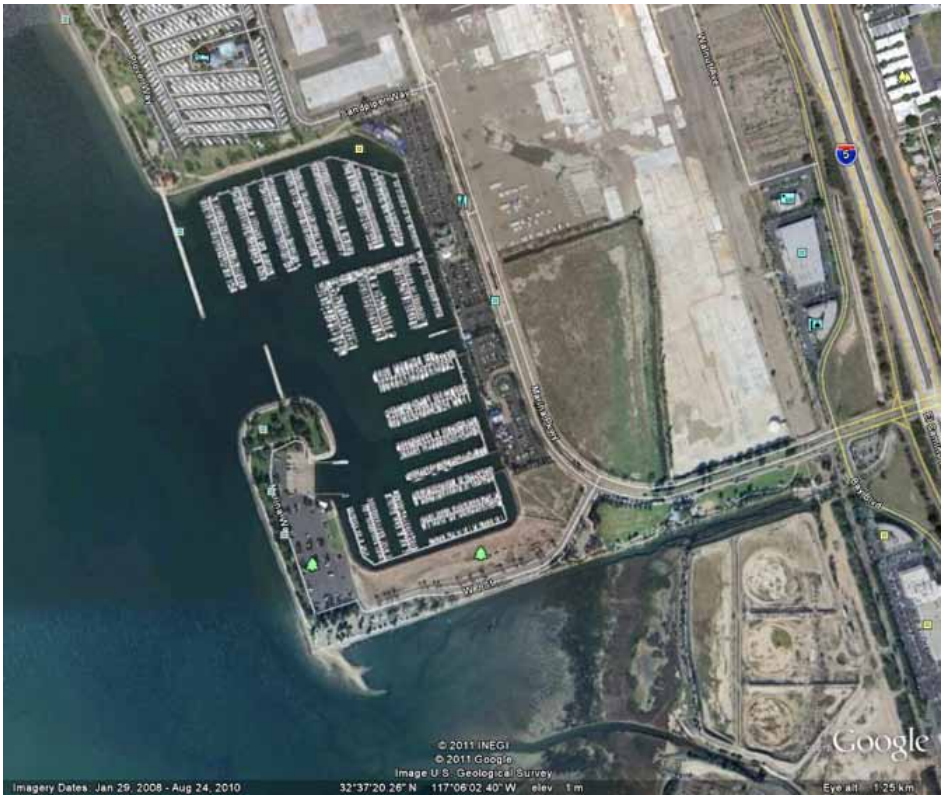
The Flatland Kids Tri Fest returns for the second year as host of a USAT Youth Elite and Junior Elite Cup. The event has found its home on the beautiful campus of West Des Moines' City Hall, which includes the public library, schools, a football stadium, and places of worship. The venue is 6 miles from Des Moines International Airport and 7 miles from downtown Des Moines.

USAT Youth Elite and Junior Elite National Championships

www.usatriathlon.org
Field Size: 75 per division
Registration Fee: $50
Race Briefing: August 5th

Swim: Sheltered ocean marina, pontoon start; Youth Elite 375m (1 lap); Junior Elites 750m (1 lap)
Bike: 5k loop; Youth Elites 2 laps; Junior Elites 4 laps
Run: 2.5k loop; Youth Elites 1 lap; Junior Elites 2 laps

The Series Finale returns to the San Diego area in 2011 and will take place at the Chula Vista Marina, about 8 miles south of downtown. The new venue stands at the gateway to San Diego's famed Coronado beaches and resorts. In addition to the Youth Elite and Junior Elite National Championships, the festival weekend includes Youth Nationals and the dynamic Triathlon Mixed Team Relay. A relatively new racing format, the International Olympic Committee is currently evaluating the Mixed Team Relay for inclusion on the Olympic Program. You can be one of the first athletes in the world to try this exciting style of racing with your teammates.



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 prestigious 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" page of the USAT website. The following is a summary of the criteria.

Event	Anticipated No. of Spots	Selection Event(s)	Other Selection Criteria
ITU Junior World Championships	3 per gender	ITU Junior Worlds (previous year); PATCO Junior Championships; USAT Junior Elite Nationals	Discretionary
PATCO Pan American Junior Championships	8 per gender	PATCO North American Junior Championships	Junior Elite National Rankings; Discretionary
PATCO North American Junior Championship	20 per gender	N/A	Junior Elite National Rankings; Discretionary
Youth Olympic Games	1 per gender	Youth Olympic Games (age 17-18 only)	N/A Qualifier
ITU Junior World Championships - Duathlon	6 per gender	N/A	Discretionary

USAT supports juniors who are competitive at the international level through its International-caliber Junior Athlete Assistance (IJAA) program and Junior Race Reimbursement Incentive Plan. Together, these programs provide financial assistance, coaching stipends, and Olympic Training Center experiences to our highest performing juniors. Information about these programs is available on the "Junior" page of the USAT website. Follow the links to "Junior Performance Plan" to learn if you qualify.

OFFICIATING

USAT Youth Elite and Junior Elite Cups are officiated by USAT Technical Officials who apply internationally-recognized draft-legal rules. The lead official, commonly known as the Technical Delegate (TD), will provide a briefing on the rules and their enforcement at the mandatory pre-race meeting held one day prior to the event. It is important that you plan your travel to the race so that you can attend the meeting. The TD 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 TD at the race venue. General questions or concerns about the officiating of the Series should be directed to USA Triathlon.

DRAFT-LEGAL RULES SUMMARY

- The pre-race briefing is mandatory.
- Time penalties assessed as “stop and go” with verbal warning (Yellow Card).
- Wetsuits are not allowed above 20°C (68°F).
- Athletes must move forward after the start signal.
- Blocking or interfering with the forward progress of another competitor is not allowed.
- Athletes lapped (overtaken) on the bike course will be withdrawn from the competition.
- Helmet chin-strap must be buckled at all times when touching the bike.
- All equipment must be placed in your individual transition bin after use.
- Torso must be covered from race start to finish.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct, including inappropriate language directed at fellow competitors, volunteers, or officials, may result in disqualification.
- Bicycle must have a traditional triangular frame; wheels must have at least 12 spokes; handlebars must be traditional drop-style with bar-ends plugged; clip-on aerobars may not extend beyond the brake levers’ foremost line and must be bridged; no bar-end gear shifters allowed; elbow pads are allowed; wheels can be replaced only at official Wheel Stops (when provided) and the athlete is responsible for replacing the wheel in the forks; there are no junior gear restrictions as in cycling.

RACE UNIFORM RULES

- Torso must be covered from race start to finish.
- Last name and country code are not required on race suit, but highly recommended.
- No limitations apply with respect to logo placements.
- Front zippers are allowed. Tri shorts/tri top combo that covers the stomach is acceptable.
- The recommended race suit for men is a one piece “tri suit” with a rear zipper. The recommended race suit for women is either a one piece swimsuit or a one piece tri suit.
- Athletes who intend to participate in international junior competitions (such as any ITU/PATCO championship or ITU World Championships) will need to comply with ITU Uniform Rules. USAT recommends that athletes set up their race suits according to these rules at the beginning of the season to avoid confusion if they are fortunate to qualify for an international racing opportunity, such as PATCO Junior Championships.
  See “Downloads” at www.triathlon.org.

CALL UPS / RACE NUMBER ASSIGNMENT

- The order by which athletes are assigned race numbers and called to take their starting positions ("call-ups") at the Youth Elite and Junior Elite National Championships is determined according to the most current Youth Elite / Junior Elite National Rankings at the time registration for the event closes or ten (10) days prior, whichever is later.
- At National Championships, the twenty-five (25) highest ranked athletes, plus the reigning ITU Junior World Champion and reigning U.S. National Champion, will be called to the start line in the order they are ranked, with the reigning World Champion and U.S. National Champion called first and second, respectively. If the reigning champions are among the twenty-five highest ranked athletes, then the call-up spots will roll down accordingly (to 26th, 27th). All remaining athletes, regardless of ranking or status, will be called to the start line by order of registration date, if available, otherwise randomly.
- Call-ups for the first Youth Elite and Junior Elite Cup of the season, excluding any international championships hosted in the United States, will be by random draw.
- Call-ups for the second and subsequent Youth Elite and Junior Elite Cup of the season, excluding National Championships, is determined according to the most current Youth Elite / Junior Elite National Rankings at the time registration for the event closes or ten (10) days prior, whichever is later. The twenty-five (25) highest ranked athletes will be called to the start line in the order they are ranked. All remaining athletes, regardless of current ranking, will be called to the start line by order of registration date, if available, otherwise randomly.
- There are no preferential call-ups at Youth F1 Triathlons or Elite Development Races. Race numbers are assigned randomly.
- Distinguished foreign athletes participating in the Series may be afforded call-ups at the sole discretion of USA Triathlon.

SERIES PARTICIPATION BY FOREIGN NATIONALS

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

USAT may permit up to five (5) international solidarity places per gender at the Youth Elite and Junior Elite National Championship, provided space is available. Interested athletes or National Federations must contact the USAT Athlete Development Coordinator prior to registering any athlete for this event. Athletes must have prior draft-legal triathlon experience and have demonstrated the ability to finish within 15% of the previous year's winner's time. Solidarity places will be made available 45 days prior to the event if the field is not already full. At the USAT National Championships, foreign nationals will not be recognized with national champion podium awards, but may receive general recognition for outstanding performances by the race announcer.

JUNIOR ELITE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS ELIGIBILITY

Due to the high demand for starting positions at the Junior Elite National Championship, athletes must establish their eligibility for the event prior to registering. The information that follows is a summary of the official criteria, which is posted on the "Junior" page of the USAT website. Athletes who do not establish their eligibility to race at Nationals are highly encouraged to participate in another Junior Elite Cup or Elite Development Race during the season.

Performance Criteria: An athlete who is between the ages of 16 and 19 as of December 31, 2011, and meets any one of the following Performance Criteria is eligible to compete in the 2011 Junior Elite National Championships:

- 2010 USAT Youth Elite and Junior Elite National Championships finisher;
- 2010 or 2011 USAT Youth Elite or Junior Elite Cup (national-level) or PATCO Pan American Junior Championship or Junior Continental Cup or other international-level draft-legal triathlon finisher; or,
- 2010 or 2011 Youth Elite or Junior Elite National Ranking ranked athlete (does not include USAT Age Group Ranking, which is based solely on non-drafting results).
  Find your ranking at http://usatriathlon.org/pages/1963

Endorsement Criteria: An athlete who is between the ages of 16 and 19 as of December 31, 2011, but has not met one of the Performance Criteria above, may achieve eligibility through endorsement as follows:

- High Performance Team: An athlete listed on the official roster of a USAT-designated High Performance Team (HPT) as of March 1st, 2011, may receive the written endorsement of his/her HPT Manager;
- Regional Athlete Development Coordinator (RADC): An athlete who completes a Junior Elite Clinic under the direction of an RADC may receive the written endorsement of a RADC. The RADC may designate a USAT-certified Youth & Junior Coach to conduct the clinic;
- USAT Skills and Select Camp Director: An athlete having participated in a 2010 or 2011 USAT-designated Skills or Select Camp may receive the written endorsement of the Camp Director; or,
- USAT Sport Performance Endorsement: An athlete lacking access to the endorsement options set forth above may, as a last resort, petition the USAT Athlete Development Coordinator for endorsement.

Endorsement Standard: In order to secure an endorsement, the athlete must demonstrate to the Endorser:

- Understanding of the race format, including the distances, laps, swim conditions, transition, and draft-legal elements;

- Knowledge of the competitive rules for draft-legal triathlon, including bike set-up, uniform requirements, and transitions;
- Competency in the skills required for safe participation in draft-legal triathlon, including swim starts, bike handling, transitions, and race nutrition; and,
- Demonstrated ability to finish within 15% of the prior year's winner's overall time (2010: Male Winner - 57:04; Female Winner - 1:03:25)

First-Come, First-Served: Achieving eligibility to compete does not guarantee entry into the championship. Due to field limits, registration is first-come, first-served.

Audit and Confirmation: Athletes are responsible for confirming their eligibility prior to registering for the event. USA Triathlon will audit all entries and remove ineligible athletes from the start list. USAT advises athletes to book refundable travel if there is any doubt as to their eligibility. USA Triathlon has a no refund policy for event registration.

USAT YOUTH ELITE & JUNIOR ELITE NATIONAL RANKINGS

- An athlete's ranking is determined by the sum of up to their four (4) best points scores based on the Points Table below at USAT-designated Ranked Events in a calendar year. For 2011, Ranked Events include: ITU Junior World Championship (Beijing), ITU/PATCO Junior Triathlon Championship (Edmonton), ITU/PATCO Sub-Regional Junior Championship (Clermont), USAT Youth Elite/Junior Elite National Championships (San Diego), USAT Youth Elite/Junior Elite Cups (Monroe, Flatland), and USAT Elite Development Races that meet the ranking criteria defined below.

- With the exception of USAT Elite Development Races, points are awarded based on actual finishing position. For example, if the first female American finisher finishes third at the ITU Junior World Championships, she would earn 856 points toward her ranking, not 1000. However, at Elite Development Races, points will be awarded according to finish position against other 16 to 19 year olds in the field, excluding older athletes.

- For all Ranked Events, only athletes representing the United States will be ranked and in the order of their finish against other US athletes. Dual-citizens competing in the Series must declare which country they are representing with an understanding that ITU rules govern changes in national representation in the future.

- An Elite Development Race must have a minimum of ten (10) total starters (including those over 19 years old) per gender to be included in these national rankings. For instance, an Elite Development Race at which eleven (11) females and five (5) males started would award national ranking points to the females only.

- No points are awarded at Youth F1 Triathlons.

NATIONAL RANKINGS POINTS TABLE

Finish Place	ITU World Championship	PATCO Junior Championship	USAT National Championship	Junior Elite Cup/ PATCO Sub-Regional Championship	USAT 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	
17	287	215	144	115	
18	266	199	133	106	
19	246	184	123	98	
20	227	171	114	91	
21	210	158	105		
22	195	146	97		
23	180	135	90		
24	166	125	83		
25	154	115	77		
26	142				
27	132				
28	122				
29	113				
30	104				

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 Sport Performance staff will nominate athletes for Junior [Elite] Athlete of the Year honors, as directed by the USAT Executive Director, 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 three Series events (collectively referred to as the "Scored Events").
- Athletes finishing Top Ten Overall (counting U.S. athletes only; no roll-down) in their respective divisions (Youth Elite, Junior Elite) at each Scored Event earn points for their respective teams. Teams earn the sum total of points from each racing division awarded to its athletes. The team scoring the most points from all age divisions combined wins.
- Foreign-national 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 Place	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Points	15	13	12	11	9	7	5	3	2	1

ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT PROFILER

USAT maintains an online database of athletes in their teens and early-20s called the Athlete Development Profiler. To access the Profiler, go to www.usatdevelopment.org and follow the instructions to create an account. Update your profile as often as you'd like with personal best times, race results, and team affiliations. USAT Sport Performance uses the Profiler from time-to-time to notify athletes of special training or racing opportunities and as part of the process for making camp invites and championship team discretionary selections.

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;
- 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 Athlete Profiler; and,
- where to find anti-doping information.

Skill Competencies: An athlete must be able to –

- take his/her starting position on a ITU-style carpet 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-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; and,
- demonstrate competency in draft-legal rules while performing these skills.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay informed about USA Triathlon's junior development programs by joining our own social network on Facebook ("USAT Juniors") and Twitter ("@USATJuniors"). News updates are posted on the Athlete Development and Junior Development blogs linked to the USAT homepage, as well.

REGIONAL ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS

USAT Athlete Development is represented in each region by a Regional Athlete Development Coordinator, or RADC. Certified in coaching youth and junior athletes, and specially trained to spot emerging talent, RADCs are your best local resource for junior triathlon information.

Southeast Region	Kathleen Johnston ks_johnston@hotmail.com	Midwest Region	Jenny Weber jenny@getzoomperformance.com
Mid-Atlantic Region	Ron Sciepko coachron@tricoachcarolina.com	South Midwest Region	Shelly O'Brien sobrien@flash.net
Northeast Region	Matt Valyo matt@tri-and-fit.com	Pacific Northwest Region	JJ Johnson goprojj@hawaii.rr.com
Rocky Mountain Region	Michelle Cox gonswimn@yahoo.com	Southwest Region	Sharon Osgood tballntricoach@aol.com
Florida Region	Jennifer Hutchison ESportsRD@aol.com	Mideast Region	Greg Mueller iammueller2@aol.com

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 three or four of these events to serve as national-level racing opportunities. In addition, these events are used as qualifiers for the ITU Junior World Championships team, to crown national champions, qualify athletes for international competitions, and sometimes even serve as international championships.

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 12 and 19 are USAT-designated "Youth F1 Triathlons" for ages 12 to 17 and "USAT Elite Development Races" for ages 16 to 23.

Youth F1 racing is designed to transition athletes from entry-level youth, or "kids", triathlons into the more challenging draft-legal format, while still providing age-appropriate racing distances. The purpose of these events is to enable more young athletes to gain competence in the draft-legal race format before they commit to national-caliber Youth Elite or Junior Elite Cup triathlons. Athletes between the ages of 12 and 16 are encourage to try-out a Youth F1 race. Events are comprised of a 250-400 meter swim, a 7-10 kilometer bike, and a 2-2.5 kilometer run.

The Elite Development Race format is intended prepare emerging elite athletes for the ITU Continental Cup circuit. 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 23 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 draft behind other athletes to save energy. This is often referred to as riding in a "pack" or "peloton." Under USAT Rules, drafting off another athlete would result in a penalty. Under international competition rules for this style of racing, 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? Go to www.triathlon.org. Locate the "Downloads" button and follow the links to the ITU Competition Rules. 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 elite races. If you have a question about the rules, be sure to raise it at the mandatory pre-event briefing.

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 developmental pipeline. They also serve as a stepping stone toward becoming an elite/professional triathlete competing in the ITU World Championship 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 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. 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 thought 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 as well. The Youth Elite distances 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. Youth F1 provides a slightly enlarged age range, from 12 to 17. For Junior Elites, eligible racing ages are 16, 17, 18, or 19 years old as of December 31st of the competition year. Elite Development Races allow athletes 16 to 23; those over 23 by special invitation.

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 or Elite Development Race. In the same spirit, an older athlete may not "race down" a division. Some exceptions to this rule may be allowed at Youth F1 races because the race distances are short and no ranking points are awarded.

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 Sport Performance: identify, recruit, develop and support rising talent in the practice of elite-level triathlon. HPTs focus their seasons around the Junior Elite Cup Series and qualifying athletes for international competition. If you are interested in learning more about USAT High Performance Teams, visit the "Junior" page of the USAT website.

Do I need to be on a High Performance Team to compete? No. 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 event organizer/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.

Does my child need a USAT membership to compete? Yes. All athletes 17 and under must hold a USAT annual membership to compete. The price of membership is only $5 for the entire year. Athletes 18 and 19 years of age must purchase an adult annual membership for $39. Purchase a membership at www.usatriathlon.org.

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 E.3 and E.4 of the ITU Competition Rules (referenced above). For safety reasons, equipment that does not comply with sections E.3 and E.4 will not be permitted on the race course at a Youth Elite or Junior Elite Cup.

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, whichever extend forward the most. 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. Also, your bars must be solidly bridged. USAT recommends purchasing a plastic bridge from the bar manufacturer.

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. Please note that this rule is strictly enforced.

Do I need to put my name on my race suit? No. Many athletes choose to add their last name to either the upper front or lower back of their race suit, or both, in the style of ITU elite athletes. Athletes are free to place logos of their choosing on their race suit. USAT encourages this as it helps our Talent ID staff get to know you. The exception to this rule is if the event is classified by ITU/PATCO as a Junior Continental Cup, in which case the ITU officials may choose to enforce the uniform rule.
If you want to set up your suit to the exact specs of an ITU athlete,
a guide is available on the ITU's "Downloads" page.

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 to 1 hour.

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

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

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.

How fast must I be to be competitive at a Junior Elite Cup? Take a look at the Junior Testing & Performance Benchmarks posted at http://triathlon.teamusa.org/content/index/1964. For the most competitive juniors, financial support may be available via the Junior Performance Plan posted on the same page.

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 at http://triathlon.teamusa.org/content/index/2205. 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 with professional athletes for prize money. These races remain amateur competitions and 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.

Still have questions? Please refer questions to Steve Kelley, USAT Athlete Development Coordinator, steve.kelley@usatriathlon.org