



SELECTION POLICY

2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships Tallahassee, Florida, USA, 10 January 2026

GENERAL INFORMATION:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Selection Panels Terms of Reference](#).

QUALIFICATION PERIODS		
Date	Event	Note
1 October 2024 to 14 December 2025	Qualification Period	
IMPORTANT DATES		
17 November 2025	National Team Declaration Form	Online Form
15 December 2025	Final selections	Names published after selection date on AAI website

1. ENTRY CONDITIONS:

1.1 Member Federation entries must comply with World Athletics Technical Regulations and Local Organising Committee (LOC) entry requirements.

Categories and Distances

1.2 The program comprises of 5 categories held over the following approximate distances:

- a. U20 Women ~6Km
- b. U20 Men ~8Km
- c. Senior Women ~10Km
- d. Senior Men ~10Km
- e. Senior Mixed Relay 4x~2km

1.3 Each of the categories, except for Senior mixed Relay, will include an Individual Event and a Team Event held concurrently.

Teams and Reserves

1.4 Member Federations may enter a maximum of eight (8) athletes per category (except Mixed Relay).

1.5 No more than six (6) athletes will be allowed to start in each category (except Mixed Relay).

1.6 Teams Events, other than Mixed Relay, results shall be decided by the aggregate of places recorded by scoring the first four athletes of each team.

Mixed Relay

1.7 Mixed Relay is composed of 2 men and 2 Women per team running one loop of the course in any order.

Age Requirements for each Category

1.8 Any athlete aged 18 or 19 years on the 31st of December 2026 (born in 2008 or 2007) may compete in any race.

1.9 Any athlete aged 16 or 17 years on the 31st of December 2026 (born in 2010 or 2009) may compete in the U20 race only.

1.10 No athlete younger than 16 years on the 31st of December 2026 (born in 2011 or later) in the year of the competition may be entered.

2. SELECTION/NOMINATION PHILOSOPHY:

2.1 To achieve our High Performance vision of “more athletes winning on the world stage” Athletics Ireland will consider selecting individual(s) with the potential for a top 30 finish, team(s) with the potential for a top 8 finish, or mixed relay team with the potential for a top 6 finish for the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships.

3. SELECTION PROCESS:

Participation Criteria

3.1 Nothing in this Policy obliges Athletics Ireland to select a full contingent of athletes or a team(s) in any event regardless of the Entry Rules.

Eligibility

3.3 In order to be eligible for selection all athletes must:

3.3.1 Fill out a [National Team Declaration Form](#) (NTDF) on the High Performance section of AAI website before the published date.

3.3.2 Satisfy all World Athletics eligibility, nationality and championship participation rules.

3.3.3 Be a registered member of Athletics Ireland.

3.3.4 Remain in “good standing” with Athletics Ireland and at all times comply with any established code of conduct or athlete agreement and otherwise conduct themselves in a way that does not bring their sport or the National Team into disrepute.

3.3.5 Athletes wishing to compete in the female category at the 2026 World Cross Country Championships must have completed gender testing as per WA eligibility requirements.

Performance Standards

3.4 There are no published performance standards for this event.

Qualification Period

3.5 Athletics Ireland has set its own Qualification Period for this event. Selection will be based on performances during the period of 1 October 2024 to 14 December 2025.

General Selection Criteria

3.6 The Selection Panel has “sole and overriding discretion” to select individuals or teams that meet with the eligibility and entry rules of the 2026 World Cross Country Championships.

3.6.1 The Selection Panel may use their sole and overriding discretion to consider any factor or combination of factors that, in their opinion, are relevant to the selection of an athlete, including, but not necessarily limited to the following general principles:

A. Consistency and Repeatability of performances (in all or any events) during the qualification period, achieving the performance standard and showing current form and fitness

B. Statistical data (ranking/performance list, performance-time curves, course ratings, altitude/wind adjustments)

C. Championship performance history, in particular the history of the athlete’s on-demand performances at major championships

D. The competitive head to head record of each athlete

E. Injury and illness history

Individual Selection Criteria

3.7 The Selectors have the sole discretion to select any eligible athlete to the 2026 World Cross Country Championships. Without in any way limiting the discretion of the Selectors, the Selectors may consider the following for selection:

3.7.1 Any athlete that finishes in the Top 10 individual places at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships may be considered for selection provided they demonstrate a commitment to cross country preparation and competition throughout the qualification period;

3.7.2 Any athlete that demonstrates potential during the qualifying period to achieve a top 30 finish at the 2026 World Cross Country Championships;

Team Events (except Mixed Relay) Selection Criteria

3.8 Selectors will consider supporting a team(s) for the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships in any category where Ireland has achieved a top 3 team finish in the same category (U20/Senior) at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships provided that;

3.8.1 Potential team members demonstrate a commitment to cross country preparation and competition throughout the qualification period;

3.8.2 Key members of that team are still eligible for that category in 2026;

3.8.3 That team has the potential to achieve a top 8 team finish.

3.9 If a team is selected to the 2026 World Cross Country Championships on the basis of a top 3 team finish at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships please note that:

3.9.1 Individual athletes may be selected to that team regardless of their participation at 2025 European Cross Country Championships

3.9.2 An individual's membership of that team at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships does not guarantee that individuals' selection to the team at 2026 World Cross Country Championships.

3.10 Regardless of team performances at the 2025 European Cross Country Championships, Selectors may consider any team for selection to the 2026 World Cross Country Championships if they believe that team has the capacity to achieve a Top 8 Team finish at the 2026 World Cross Country Championships;

Mixed Relay Selection Criteria

3.11 Selectors will consider selecting a team in the Mixed Relay (2 Men + 2 Women) of 4 x 1 lap (approximately 2 km per lap) provided Selectors believe that team available has potential to achieve a top 6 team finish;

3.11.1 When considering a Senior Mixed Relay Team, selectors will use discretion (as outlined in section 3.6) to select two (2) men and two (2) women, from our pool of leading middle-distance athletes, who have proved current form and fitness during the performance period.

3.11.2 An aggregate 2025 1500m Season's Best of the best available 2 males and 2 females of 15:24.00 or faster will be referenced by Selectors as a guideline standard.

After Selection

3.12 An athlete who enters the Athletics Ireland Team Camp and/or the 2026 World Cross Country Championships village will be subject to an injury evaluation/assessment by the championship Team Management staff. The injury evaluation/assessment will be carried out by Athletics Ireland's Physio (or appointed Team Physio).

3.13 If as a result of such injury evaluation/assessment the Team Physio, Team Management staff, and Team Leader/Manager considers an athlete does not have the standard of fitness or is otherwise not in condition to compete due to injury at a level appropriate to the event(s) for which they have been selected, the Team Leader/Manager will have the sole discretion to withdraw the athlete from the competition.

3.14 An athlete who is found to have breached any Athletics Ireland, World Athletics, EAA, LOC or other relevant code of conduct may be withdrawn from the competition at the sole discretion of the Team Leader/Manager.

Selectors Meetings

3.15 The Selection Panel members and the [Selectors Terms of Reference can be found here](#).

3.15.1 Final selections all events will be on **15 December 2025**.

Selection Queries

3.16 Athletes can seek clarification on any aspect of this policy with the Athletics Ireland [National Endurance Coordinator](#).

Non-Selection Appeals Process

3.17 The publishing of selected athletes (Selection Announcement) on Athletics Ireland website after a selection meeting will be **deemed the commencement of the 24-hour period to lodge non-Selection Appeals** in accord with this Selection Policy.

3.18 Any athlete who is not selected in accordance with this Selection Policy may appeal their non-selection to Athletics Ireland providing they:

3.18.1 Have submitted an NTDF in accordance with timelines contained in this Selection Policy and;

3.18.2 Submit their non-selection appeal via online [Notice of Appeals Form](#) within 24 hours of the selection decision published on the Athletics Ireland website (i.e. the Selection Announcement). The Notice of Appeal Form is submitted to the Chair of the Appeals Panel and the CEO of Athletics Ireland.

3.19 The [Selection Appeals Procedure](#) can be found on the HP section of Athletics Ireland website.

3.20 The Grounds upon which a Selection decision may be appealed are limited to the following:

3.20.1 There has been an alleged failure by Selection Panel to follow or apply the relevant Selection Procedure and/or criteria set out in the Selection Policy, and/or

3.20.2 The decision for selection for the championship has been reached based on an error of fact.

4. GENERAL INFORMATION:

4.1 The criteria may be amended at any time by the Directors of Athletics Ireland, if Athletics Ireland is of the opinion that such amendment is necessary in the best interests of Athletics Ireland or as a result of any change in participation rules and/or guidelines. Any amendment to the criteria will be published on the Athletics Ireland website.

Meet Information

4.2 The number of accreditations authorised per team is limited overall to the number of participating athletes. Team Support Staff will be accredited on this basis and informed after the team selections.

4.3 Selected athletes' personal coaches/family outside of the selected "Official Irish Team" will be responsible for their own travel, accommodations, tickets, and accreditations for the 2026 World Cross Country Championship.