

## **PRINCIPLES OF ATHLETE SELECTION**

In general, any event that is accessible only to International Federation National Teams will be considered “protected,” e.g. Continental Championships, World Championships, Olympics and Pan Am Games. Events that are open to access through other means, e.g. individual or team registration (amateur or professional), will not be considered to be “protected.” Please note that open or invitational events for which USA Cycling receives an invitation for participation by the National Team are NOT considered to be protected events. In these instances, USA Cycling may elect to select and send a team or may simply make the opportunity available on its website ([www.usacycling.org](http://www.usacycling.org)) to any other domestic team on a first come, first served basis. Please also note that USA Cycling does NOT participate in the World University Games.

USA Cycling will be responsible for the nomination and selection of athletes to participate in all protected events. In fulfilling this obligation, USA Cycling will generally use the principles described in this section. At all times, within the context of the event, USA Cycling will strive to send the best and most prepared team to compete in protected events.

### **USA Cycling Selection Committee**

USA Cycling will maintain a Selection Committee for the purpose of reviewing *and approving* the final nominations of individual athletes to specific protected events, e.g. Continental Championships, World Championships, Pan Am and Olympic Games. The Selection Committee provides oversight on the nomination process of athletes to protected events and is the de facto body responsible for the final nomination of athletes to the respective teams. This obligation includes review *and approval* of the process by which athletes receive automatic nominations to teams, as well as the review and final approval of athletes nominated by USAC coaching staff according to the USA Cycling Principles of Discretion as described below.

This committee will be composed of 6 to 8 volunteers that are recommended by the Athletic Director of USA Cycling and appointed by the USAC President. Additionally, the USAC representative to the USOC Athletes Advisory Council (AAC) and one member from the USOC Sport Partnership group will fill non-voting seats on the Selection Committee. All of the appointed members shall have the following characteristics:

1. Must have participated in an Olympic Games or been employed as a professional in one of the Olympic cycling disciplines
2. Must not be currently employed as a team director
3. Must not be currently coaching U.S. Olympic eligible athletes. Note, in this case, Olympic eligible refers to athletes who are actively competing at the elite international level
4. Must agree to support the USA Cycling Principles of Athlete Selection

5. Must agree to declare any potential conflicts of interest in the selection process and recuse themselves from discussion and or voting if necessary

The Selection Committee will work within the context of the USA Cycling Selection Philosophy as described in this section, to ensure that selected athletes meet the stated objectives of these Principles as well as the event specific selection criteria.

### **Importance of Professional and International Competition**

USA Cycling has made substantial changes to its selection paradigm in the past few years. Many of these changes are in recognition of the fact that, at the elite level (age 19 and over), cycling is a professional sport in which the highest level of competition is represented by top-tier professional athletes racing on the UCI International race calendar. Obviously, some aspects of the sport have a more developed professional component than others and, in those cases where professional opportunities are limited (e.g. U23 and Track); USAC programs may play an adjunctive role to the professional teams. However, even for these groups and athletes under the age of 18, results in high-level International competition should be the benchmark for selection. Therefore, whenever possible in the nomination of any athlete to a protected event, performances in top-level, professional and/or international competition will take precedence over performances in domestic competition.

### **USA Cycling Athlete Selection Criteria**

**World Championships and Olympic Games.** USA Cycling endeavors to select to World Championships and Olympic Games only those athletes who, within the context of the event, are: 1) capable of a top-three (podium) international result; or 2) can positively impact team performance toward medal capability; or 3) considered to be “on track” to produce a medal capable result in the near future;. Toward this end, USA Cycling has established the following **prioritized** criteria as the primary determinants in the selection process of World Championship and Olympic Games. In all cases USA Cycling will endeavor to select via automatic or discretionary criteria:

1. Our **FIRST** priority for the selection of athletes to any World Championships and Olympic Games event is the selection of athletes who have demonstrated that they are medal capable in OLYMPIC style events (see section on Olympic and World Championship events for specific events);
2. Our **SECOND** priority for the selection of athletes to protected events is the selection of those athletes who have demonstrated that their presence on the team will have a positive impact on the overall team performance and create a MEDAL CAPABLE team environment in an OLYMPIC style event;
3. Our **THIRD** priority for the selection of athletes to protected events is the selection of those athletes who have demonstrated the capacity to advance to the level of medal capability in an OLYMPIC style event;
4. Athletes who can enhance the overall performance of the team in OLYMPIC style events
5. Medal capable athletes in non-Olympic style events;

6. Athletes who can assist the “team” to produce a medal winning performance in a non-Olympic style event;

**Continental Championships and Pan Am Games.** In many respects, these events are somewhat problematic: even though they have protected status, medal-winning performances in these events have little or no intrinsic value. However, in the context of the UCI international point system, they can be of tremendous importance in qualifying nation start positions for American athletes at World Championships and Olympic Games. For this reason, it is of utmost importance to send our top UCI ranked athletes, or those athletes that we expect to be our top-ranked athletes, to these events so they have the opportunity to earn additional International points that impact our UCI Nations Ranking and ultimately our qualification of start positions for World Championships and/or Olympic Games. Another important consideration is the fact that the winner of some Continental Championship events receives an automatic entry (by name) to the next World Championships; this entry is in addition to our normal quota. This aspect is very important for qualifying additional Americans to World Championship events that have typically small quotas. For these reasons, USA Cycling will endeavor to select via automatic or discretionary criteria:

1. Those athletes who are expected to be our top-ranked Americans on the individual UCI Ranking list for the event in question at the end of the year or other specific time period, such that their performance will have a positive impact on the qualification of World Championship and/or Olympic Games start positions (see section on Olympic and World Championship events for specific events);
2. Those athletes capable of a winning (first place) performance in an Olympic style event that also serves as an automatic qualifier to the upcoming World Championships;

In the context of 1 & 2) above:

3. Athletes who can assist the “team” to produce a medal winning performance in an OLYMPIC style event;
4. Athletes who demonstrate future medal capability in an OLYMPIC style event;
5. Athletes who can enhance the overall performance of the team in OLYMPIC style events
6. Medal capable athletes in non-Olympic style events;
7. Athletes who can assist the “team” to produce a medal winning performance in a non-Olympic style event;

## **Definitions and Criteria**

1. **Medal Capable.** A medal capable athlete is one who has demonstrated the ability to produce a medal winning result by:
  - medal finishes at World Championships or Olympic Games within 24 months; with demonstration of continued ability to perform at that level or higher based on performances in recent top-level international competition; and/or
  - producing medal capable times under certified conditions within the past 12 months; and/or
  - consistently beating the Worlds best in recent (past 12 months) international competition with top-quality fields; and/or
  - other recent historical performances in International competition that would indicate the athlete is capable of a medal winning performance.

In all cases, the athlete in question must demonstrate that they remain capable of a medal capable performance at the time of selection and the time of the event to which the athlete has been selected.

2. **Enhancing Team Performance.** An athlete who can enhance team performance is one who, based on their international experience and current level of international performance, is expected to contribute substantially to the overall team performance or to the performance of a medal capable team member. In the case of our selection philosophy, this is deemed to be particularly important in the special case where a medal capable individual has been selected to the team and the athlete's contribution may assist the medal capable athlete in a medal-winning performance. Obviously this effect is of *primary* importance when nominating athletes for team-based events (Men's Road Race, Women's Road Race, Team Pursuit, Team Sprint, and Madison) where the synergy of the team members and/or the ability to play a strong support role is critical to the success of the team. For example, even though the Road Race event is scored individually, athletes who "sacrifice themselves" to execute a team strategy for the designated team leaders can have a profound impact on the ability of the medal capable team leaders to achieve a medal winning performance.

3. **Future Medal Capability.** A future medal capable athlete is one who:
  - demonstrates a trend of improving performance in international competition that, when extended a reasonable distance into the future, e.g. 24 to 36 months, intersects the current international performance standard for the event under consideration (see discussion and examples below); and/or
  - despite being "new" to the sport or competing a relatively short time in the sport, is within a reasonable percentage, e.g. 3 to 5%, of the international performance standard (see discussion and example below); and or
  - despite being biologically immature, is within a reasonable percentage, e.g. 5 to 8%, of the international performance standard (see discussion and example below).

4. **UCI top-ranked athletes.** The UCI maintains an individual classification for most cycling events. An athlete is considered to be top-ranked if he or she is among the top-three or top-five (depending upon the event) Americans at the end of the calendar year or at the end of a specified time period.

### **USA Cycling Principles of Discretion**

Discretionary nominations will be used per the above priorities in the event that positions are available after the application of any automatic criteria. Discretion may also be used when nominating athletes for the team-based events (Men's Road Race, Women's Road Race, Team Pursuit, Team Sprint, and Madison) where the ability to play a strong support role is absolutely critical to the success of the team.

1. The primary purpose of discretionary athlete nomination is to ensure that:
  - a. In the cases of World Championships and Olympic Games, USA Cycling has the ability to nominate the best physically, psychologically and technically prepared athlete in order to produce medal-winning performances at a given Olympic-style event. See definition of "medal capable" above.
  - b. In those cases where the primary importance of the event is subsequent qualification of start positions for World Championships or Olympic Games through the UCI Nations Ranking system, to ensure that USA Cycling has the ability to nominate the athlete most likely to be among the UCI ranked athletes at the end of the calendar year or specified time period that will be used to determine our Nations Ranking (three to five depending upon discipline).
  - c. In those cases where the primary importance of the event is to qualify additional riders to our quota for the World Championships, to ensure that USA Cycling has the ability to nominate the physically, psychologically and technically prepared athlete in order to produce a winning performance at a given Olympic-style event
2. The secondary purpose of discretionary athlete nomination is to ensure that:
  - a. USA Cycling has the ability to nominate the best physically, psychologically and technically prepared athlete in order to assist the team to produce medal-winning performances at a given event. See definition of "enhancing team performance" above.
  - b. In those cases where the primary importance of the event is subsequent qualification of start positions for World Championships or Olympic Games through the UCI Nations Ranking system, to ensure that USA Cycling has the ability to nominate the athlete most likely to be able to assist the team or the individual athlete expected to be among the UCI ranked athletes at the end of the calendar year or specified time period that will be used to determine our Nations Ranking (three to five depending upon discipline).
  - c. In those cases where the primary importance of the event is to qualify additional riders to our quota for the World Championships, to ensure that USA Cycling has the ability to nominate the physically, psychologically and

- technically prepared athlete in order to assist the team in producing a winning performance at a given Olympic-style event
3. The tertiary purpose of discretionary athlete nomination is to allow USA Cycling the ability to nominate the best physically, psychologically and technically prepared athlete in order to produce a medal-winning performance ***in the future*** at a given event. See definition of “future medal capability” above, and also continued discussion below.

## Discussion of Future Medal Capability

In most situations, athletes who perform consistently at the medal capable level are easily identified. On the other hand, one of the greatest challenges in the talent identification and selection process is discriminating among athletes currently performing below the level of medal capability. Ideally, one would like to identify those athletes which represent an “investment” in future medal performances over those that do not. In an effort to make such discrimination possible, USA Cycling has designated “performance trends” as a key component in the talent identification and selection process. Performance trends are determined by plotting an historical record of a given athlete’s performances on a graph where the x-axis is time (weeks, months, years); and the y-axis is event specific performances (times, placings, etc). These graphs can then be used to identify trends in an athlete’s performance in order to predict future performance potential. For example, an athlete whose performance is trending up (positive slope) is suggestive of the potential for future improvements in performance. On the other hand, an athlete with a decreasing performance trend (negative slope) or stable trend (zero slope) over time indicates little or no potential for future improvements.

The following graphs illustrate the differences in the performance trends of medal capable and non medal capable athletes:

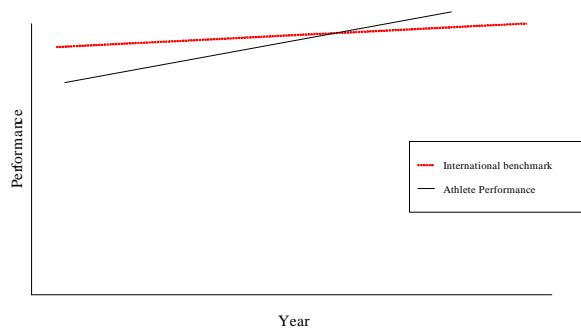


Figure 2 - Medal capable athlete

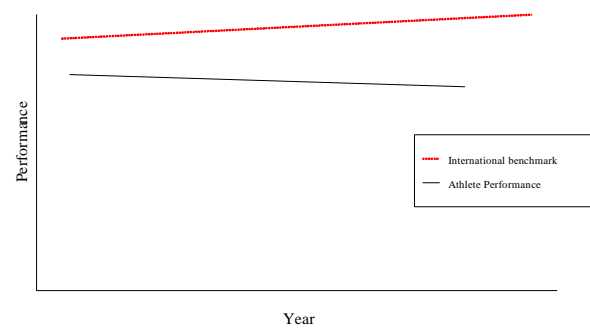


Figure 2 - Not medal capable; performance decreasing

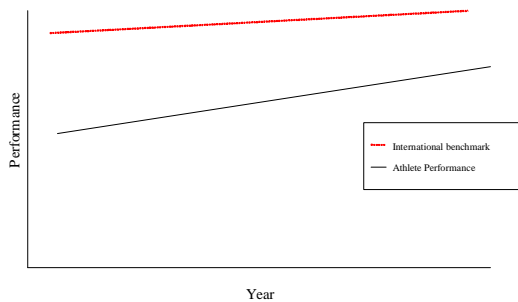


Figure 4 - Not medal capable; performance increasing

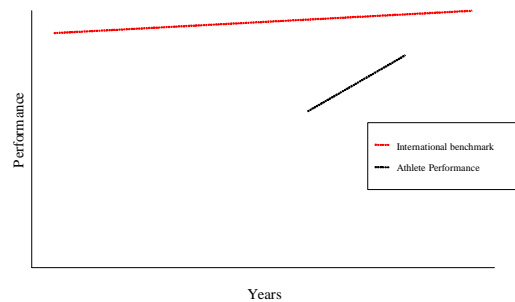
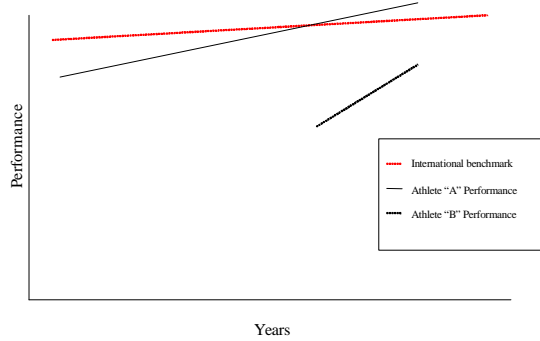


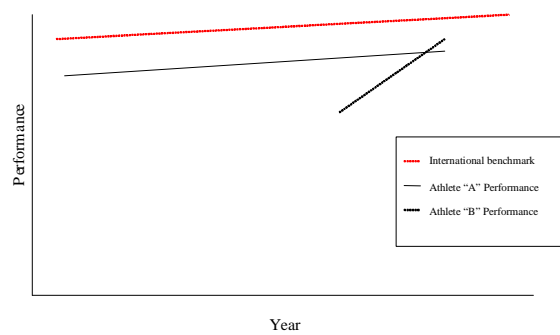
Figure 3 - Future medal capable athlete

Obviously many factors need to be considered when evaluating athletes with this technique, e.g. length of time over which the trend has been developed, number of years in the sport, slope of the trend, and so on. However, with regard to selection, as stated in the above criteria, we believe that it is desirable to preferentially select athletes who demonstrate substantial future ability (positive slope) over those athletes who demonstrate stable or decreasing potential. This is particularly true when extrapolation of the current performance trend over a reasonable period of time (2 to 4 years) indicates the potential to achieve an international medal capable standard.

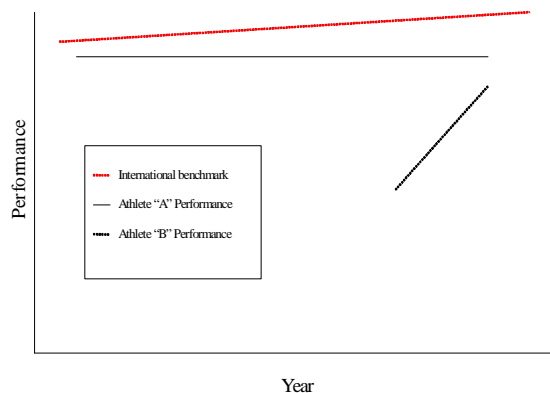
The following graphs illustrate the differences between athletes without future medal capability versus athletes that demonstrate future medal potential:



**Figure 6 - Athlete A medal capable; Athlete B future medal capable: Select Athlete A**



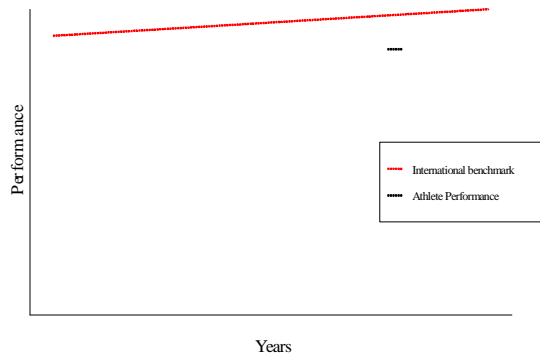
**Figure 6 - Athlete A not medal capable; Athlete B future medal capable and outperforms A: Select Athlete B**



**Figure 7 - Athlete A not medal capable; Athlete B future medal capable but does not outperform A: Select Athlete B.**

As pointed out above, another important consideration in evaluating the future performance potential of an athlete is the relationship of their “time in the sport,” i.e.,

how long have they been competing; their stage of biological development and adaptation; and their current performance level. In the case of an athlete who is new to the sport, there are not enough data points to plot an accurate performance trend. However, if such an athlete is within a reasonable distance of the international benchmark such that when their anticipated physical development and/or their general adaptation response is expected to put them at or over the international medal benchmark, then they may be considered to have future medal capability. Although the magnitude of the expected improvement in performance is dependent upon many factors, e.g., biological development, body type and etc., it is generally assumed that, without evidence to the contrary, a performance deficit of 3 to 5% may be overcome in a reasonable amount of time by an athlete that "new to the sport" or 5 to 8% for an athlete that is biologically immature.



**Figure 8 - "New" or young athlete; within 5% of international benchmark = future medal capability**