

**USAT Youth Elite / Junior Elite Nationals**  
**West Chester, Ohio**  
**2020 Revised Competition Format**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Do I need to qualify for the 2020 USAT Youth Elite / Junior Elite Nationals?** No. That requirement has been waived for 2020 due to COVID-19 and the modifications described below.

**How has the race format changed?** The new format will feature a maximum of eight (8) heats taking place on Saturday, August 1, 2020. There will be two (2) heats per race division. In other words, two (2) Youth Elite Boys, two (2) Youth Elite Girls, two (2) Junior Elite Men and two (2) Junior Elite Women.

**How many athletes will be assigned to a heat?** A maximum of 75 athletes per heat. If fewer than 150 athletes total are entered in a division, heats will be divided equally.

**Have the race distances changed?** Yes, Junior Elites (ages 16-19) will compete at the super-sprint distance (375m swim, 10k bike, and 2.5k run). Youth Elites (ages 13-15) will compete at the same distance (i.e. no change). The course layout will remain the same.

**Will heats be seeded?** This depends on the number of Junior Series events that take place prior to Nationals. If we are able to hold two or more Junior Cups prior to Nationals, we will seed the heats based on ranking points earned in an effort to balance the competition. However, if there is only one Junior Cup prior to Nationals we will assign athletes randomly. USAT High Performance will update this as we see how the season progresses.

**Why has the format changed?** Due to the cancellation of two Nationals qualifiers (Sarasota and Richmond) and the continued uncertainty caused by COVID-19, the decision was made to remove concerns about qualifying at this time so that athletes and families can plan ahead without the added stress of qualifying. We recognize that some athletes were waitlisted for later qualifiers and missed qualifying opportunities when Sarasota and Richmond were cancelled. The new format will provide an opportunity for all athletes to come together in West Chester if they choose.

**Why not run this a trials/finals format?** Youth Elite and Junior Elite Nationals is part of a larger event that includes Youth Nationals, a new non-drafting division for 13 to 18 year olds, and, of course, the popular Mixed Relay on Sunday. Given the timeline, it is not possible to host two days of Junior Elite draft-legal racing and the preference is to preserve the Mixed Relay.

**What is the new awards structure?** A podium presentation will be made for the top three (3) finishers in each heat. For each division, the athletes with the three (3) fastest times will be recognized as the overall winners (i.e. a “timed finals” similar to a swim meet). The overall fastest athlete in each division will receive the “national champion” award.

**Will I earn national ranking points?** Due to the cancellation of the early season events and the possibility that some athletes may not have an opportunity to compete at some Junior Cups this season due to COVID-19, we will not publish a Youth Elite/Junior Elite National Ranking or Junior Series standings this year. This applies to team standings as well.

**Are athletes representing other National Federations allowed to register for Nationals?**

At this time, only athletes representing USA Triathlon will be allowed to register for Youth Elite / Junior Elite Nationals. This is not a change from previous seasons. Our staff will assess the registration numbers as we get closer to the event and if there is sufficient capacity we will reach out to other Federations with invitations to enter athletes.

**Will the Mixed Relay change?** The Youth Elite/Junior Elite Mixed Relay will not change. High Performance Teams (HPTs) will be invited to enter squads as they have in the past. The total number of teams will remain at 60. HPTs may need to be more selective in naming their squads.

**Is the lap out rule still in effect?** Yes. This is necessary both the safety of all athletes and for the tight timeline that is required to host eight heats back-to-back. Athletes who are concerned about being lapped out are highly encouraged to register for the non-drafting age group division.

**Will there be a swim warm-up for each heat?** Yes.

**Do I need to have raced a Youth Elite Cup or Junior Elite Cup prior to Nationals in order to register and compete this year?** No. However, this is still a very high caliber competition and athletes should expect a very fast and capable field in each heat. Athletes who are new to draft-legal racing should strongly consider registering for the non-drafting age group divisions. A list of draft-legal competencies is available in the [Junior Program Guide](#).

**Will there be a mandatory in-person race briefing?** Any modifications to the briefing format or packet pick-up, for instance to promote social distancing, will be announced prior to the event. Athletes are encouraged to monitor the event website and read email updates leading up to race weekend.

**Will there be course previews on Friday?** Yes. However, athletes and teams should expect slightly reduced time on the course to accommodate the larger field.

**Where can I learn more and monitor updates?** <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Triathlon/Events/National-Championships/2020/2020-Youth-and-Junior-Nationals>