



CHAPTER 11 • CLUBS & REPRESENTATION

11.1 – INTRODUCTION

Clubs are organizations of athletes and others who participate in USATF programs as teams or individuals representing clubs. There shall be various types of USATF clubs, based on the types of programs and purposes they serve. Clubs may have more than one purpose. All clubs are considered Association (local) clubs and shall become members by joining the Association in which they are located – all clubs are basically limited to their local geographic area in recruiting members who can compete in championships representing them.

Clubs are classified as follows:

- **Competitive:** Clubs that primarily prepare athletes for competitive opportunities shall be referred to as competitive clubs.
- **Affiliated:** Clubs that primarily stage events or provide competitive opportunities to the public shall be referred to as affiliated clubs.
- **Training:** Clubs that exist to provide non-collegiate athletes insurance coverage when training at an educational institution's facilities shall be referred to as training clubs.
- **Elite development clubs:** USATF may designate member clubs as Elite Development Clubs. These clubs may provide coaching, training groups, facilities, travel to events, financial assistance, stipends, or other forms of assistance. Elite development clubs shall receive additional benefits and information from USATF to assist them with elite development and may be charged additional dues and fees for the additional benefits.

Apart from these classifications, some clubs identify exclusively with a single aspect or division of the sport. Among the primary reasons a club will be formed are to allow kids to compete in Junior Olympics track & field or cross country programs, to allow open competitors to receive support for training, to form long distance or cross country teams, to compete exclusively in Masters competitors, or to form a specific event area training group. There are a select number of clubs which do not compete at all – they were formed to support, promote, and/or own an event. Disputes over club names shall be resolved through USATF's grievance process. USATF or involved parties may institute these proceedings when two clubs choose the same or confusingly similar names (except if both clubs concur), when a club uses a name that could reasonably be interpreted to refer to a national team, when a club uses a name that causes public confusion with USATF-related sponsorship or advertising, or a club uses a trademark or service mark of USATF or the USOC.

11.2 – RULES ON REPRESENTATION

An athlete may compete as a representative of a local club, educational institution, or other organization, and additionally may be listed as competing for the club and/or a sponsor, subject to USOC regulations. The club and athlete must be USATF members in good standing. Only an athlete, or his/her legal guardian, may give notice of a change of representation. An athlete member who wishes to change representation shall notify the Association, in writing or online, prior to the effective date of the change. A fee for change may apply.

Due to differing levels of support local clubs are able to offer, open and Masters athletes are more or less free to transfer their USATF membership to the Association of another club and be a member of that club. However, there are limitations on the types of competitions the athlete can participate in and score for the club if he or she chooses to do that. Among these are the National Club Championships, which has severe limitations on residency and citizenship exceptions. Such limitations are part of the USATF Rules.

Transfers

In order to transfer membership from a club in one Association to another club in a different Association, an adult athlete age 19 years and older first completes a request at <https://usatf.org/Mgmt/Assoc/Forms/Essentials-for-Officers/Association-Transfer-Request.aspx>. USATF then notifies the affected Associations and the athlete. Then the athlete must contact his or her new membership chair and show that he or she has not competed for the old club for the previous three months, unless the athlete claims and is granted a waiver due to events beyond the athlete's control.

There are exceptions to the above process:

- An athlete who is a member of a club who wishes to compete as an undergraduate student for a college or university (two- or four-year institution) is automatically released without notice by the club when the college season begins, to compete for that college or university in open competition. The athlete shall similarly be automatically released without notice to the school immediately after the academic eligibility period ends, to represent the club of the athlete's choice.
- An athlete member on active duty in the United States Armed Forces may, upon receiving permission from the local membership committee, represent in open competition the military organization or the Athletics club to which the athlete belongs, or both. Any points scored by that athlete shall count for the Athletics club, except where a point trophy is advertised to be contested by a military organization.
- An athlete may compete as a member of a club in race walking and for another club in another Athletics discipline, provided the two clubs or organizations involved do not both participate in race walking. For example, an athlete may race walk for one club which may or may not have a running program, and run for another club that has no race walking program. The athlete shall have responsibility for giving proper notice of a change of representation. In the event of a dispute among clubs, educational institutions, organizations, and an athlete regarding a transfer of representation, the athlete's written designation of representation shall be determinative.

11.3 – YOUTH CLUB PARAMETERS

A Youth athlete must compete in the Association in which they permanently reside. 'Permanent Residency' is defined as the residence of the youth athlete's parent/legal guardian. Proof of residency can be provided by the parent's or guardian's tax statements or utility bills at the place of residency.

An exception is provided for minor children whose parents or guardians share custody at residences in different Associations. Youth athletes can compete in their Association of permanent residence as a member of a club and represent the club by wearing a team uniform and participating on a relay. Participation of relay teams shall be limited to those clubs that hold a valid membership in USATF, and where the athlete appears in the on-line database as a member of the club. Uniform and relay rules also apply. During a track & field meet, team scoring can be tallied. Any member of a club in the USATF database may score for that club, provided the club has followed the proper entry procedures. If a particular relay is the athlete's only event in the meet, they must still be entered in the meet as a "roster" athlete and pay any required entry fee. In cross country running, all members of a club listed on the team declaration roster at the Association finals are eligible to compete on the club's team (minimum of 5, maximum of 8) in the next round of qualifications up to and including the

National Championships, so long as the team qualifies. In order to declare a team, a club must enter a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 8 athletes by the entry deadline. The composition of the team at each round can change if you submit a change form at packet pickup at least two hours prior to the race, and any athlete changed must be listed on the declaration roster.

11.4 – OPEN AND MASTERS CLUB PARAMETERS

Open competition is open to anyone ages 14-and-over for girls and women and 16-and-over for boys and men. If the competition is open, all of the parameters for an event must be the same for all of the entrants. This means that only one short hurdle race per gender and one longer hurdle race per gender is contested, one steeplechase distance and barrier height is contested per gender, and only open implements are used in weight events. There is team scoring in most Masters track & field and long distance running events at the Association, regional, and national levels. Athletes score points for their team within their division. Relays and cross country and road running teams are sometimes more complicated, as a small club attempts to fill up the required number of relay members or LDR scorers, and may have to dip into its pool of younger members. In doing so, the age on the first day of a meet of the youngest member shall determine the age division of a team in a team event or relay. That individual remains in their actual age division for individual events.

RACING TEAM

There are both club and non-club relays permitted at many Masters' meets, including championships. A club relay team is composed of eligible athletes all members of and competing for the same club. Non-club relays can be teams composed of all members of a single Association, or all members of a single region, or unrestricted. Club relay records will be maintained separately from non-club records. Club and non-club relay teams compete in separate divisions. At Association, regional, and national track & field championships, and all other meets, each relay team must meet one of the definitions above, or be a foreign national team as guest competitors in the non-club Division. A team meeting any of the above definitions may set a Masters' record. Team championships are also held in Masters race walking events held outside of the track & field championships. They are conducted in ten-year age divisions for men and women. Any number of members for each team may be entered, the number of declared members shall be up to five (5), and three (3) individuals shall score.

Team championships in Masters cross country shall be conducted in 10-year age divisions, 40+, 50+, 60+ and 70+, for men and women. Team championships in these same divisions may be conducted in other Masters long distance events. An 80+ division for men and/or women may be added at the discretion of the Games Committee. The maximum number of entries per team shall be unlimited. In Association championships, the maximum number of entries for an open or Masters team, and the number of members of each team to finish for scoring may be determined by the Games Committee.

Team scoring for Masters cross country shall be as follows: M40+ and M50+ five (5) individuals shall score with a maximum of eight (8) individuals declared per team and M60+ and above, and all women's teams three (3) individuals shall score with a maximum of five (5) individuals declared per team.

Team scoring for Masters road racing championships shall be as follows: All teams, men and women, in all 10-year age divisions, three (3) individuals shall score with a maximum of five (5) individuals declared per team. Competitors in a track & field championship must be current members of USATF. Only U.S. citizens shall be allowed to win USATF medals and other Championship awards, or to score on a team.

Teams shall represent current member clubs of USATF, verified through the National Office. USATF Association, Regional, or National “all-star” teams are not eligible to compete in Masters Long Distance Running Team competition. Team members shall be affiliated with the club they are representing on their USATF membership record prior to entering the competition. Championship patches may be awarded to the declared members of the winning team in each team division.

11.5 – TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Selected events have no team scoring.

These include:

- USA open indoor and outdoor track & field championships
- Junior Olympics track & field (scoring is part of Junior Olympics cross country)
- Olympic Trials competitions

Some sport committees have a variable policy. If team scoring is included as a part of the bid for the event, a Men’s or Women’s Long Distance Running Championship can have team scoring. Absent a bid, a championship is not obligated to provide team awards or perform team scoring.

These committees include:

- Men’s Track & Field
- Women’s Track & Field
- Men’s Long Distance Running
- Women’s Long Distance Running
- Mountain/Ultra/Trail Running

All other sport committees mandate team scoring for championships.

These include:

- Cross Country
- Masters Long Distance Running
- Masters Track & Field
- Race Walking

The two national club championships employ special team championship stipulations. The intent of the program for local (Association) clubs has always been to encourage the creation and nurturing of clubs which serve the athletes in their local area, building strong support programs and networks in a number of critical sport and life components. Those rules are detailed below.

Association membership chairs will receive the most requests for team changes just prior to major team championships. Make sure you understand the rules for each type of championship – otherwise you could be changing an athlete to a team for which he or she is ineligible to score. Don’t approve (for example) all of the open athletes in your Association to compete for clubs outside your Association if it is ever your desire to have a club for open athletes in your area. The same goes for masters. Use youth as an example – they can’t compete for teams outside their Association, so youth clubs are developed to support them.

11.6 – CLUB COUNCIL AND NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

Club Council Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the Council is to work with National staff to produce a national and regional championship series in track & field, cross country running, and road running. It is also charged with nurturing the club system by preparing a policy for elite development club criteria and benefits for Board approval.

It will also formulate a policy for ranking clubs in terms of assistance and national programs. It shall specify the criteria for clubs to attain each ranking. The Council holds a business meeting at the Annual Meeting and often holds information and club-building meetings and exercises at the national club championships.

ELITE DEVELOPMENT CLUB

Club Council Makeup

One coach or administrator and one athlete from each currently registered Elite Development Club (EDC) and Team USA Training Center (TUSA) have seats on the Council, along with the following persons or their designated representatives: USATF President, Men's Track & Field chair, Women's Track & Field chair, Race Walking chair, Development Group Coordinator, Long Distance Running Division chair, Men's Long Distance Running chair, Women's Long Distance Running chair, Cross Country Council chair, Associations Committee chair, and RRCA President. Three at-large seats can also be named by the chair.

Elite Development Clubs

The Elite Development Club (EDC) Program is intended to support the efforts of USA Track & Field and the USATF Club Council to develop and support nationally and internationally competitive athletes by increasing the number of year-round training environments available to U.S. athletes once they leave our school-based programs. By increasing the number of promising athletes who continue to compete in our sport following their high school and college careers, we enlarge the talent pool from which our future stars will emerge. The "Elite Development Club" designation identifies clubs that have demonstrated the commitment, resources, and record of developing athletes to the elite level. The "Elite Development Club" designation is also intended to enhance the ability of high-level USATF clubs to marshal community and corporate support for their mission of elite athlete development.

Additional information on the EDC program is located at <https://www.usatf.org/Mgmt/Assoc/Forms/Essentials-for-Officers/Elite-Development-Club-FAQs.aspx>.

Club Cross Country

The club cross country annual festival of races takes place on a biddable site basis (meaning the date can change depending on when the successful bidder is intent on putting it on), but is generally held the weekend after the conclusion of the USATF Annual Meeting, on the same date as the National Junior Olympics are traditionally scheduled for. It has successfully been held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, on Thanksgiving weekend, and in conjunction with the Annual Meeting.

Club Track & Field

Most successful when it is held in New York, the Club Track & Field Championships is still an important focus for many clubs across the country.