

## Danish Athletics 2026 – 2032 Selection Overview and Philosophy

***“Our vision is to increase the number of Danish athletes competing at the highest levels in World Championships and Olympic Games with a mindset that demonstrates their determination to succeed.***

***“Our strategic intent is for athletes to advance through the competition pathway and build on experience from their debut so that they achieve semi-final and final positions at subsequent championships. We expect athletes to progress in this manner and to confirm their capability during the selection window.”***

This document has been produced to outline the approach to selecting teams for Olympic programme competitions throughout the pathway during the Los Angeles and Brisbane cycles.

The intention of the philosophy is to provide clarity and consistency in approach to the selection for all Danish Athletics Teams and to allow athletes and coaches to more effectively plan for their future within the sport.

The competition pathway has been reviewed and the three key aims of the philosophy are outlined below:

- Top 8 success and maximisation of top 24 places at the Olympic Games and World Outdoor Championships are prioritised;
- Age group championships and invitational meetings will be used as opportunities for potential future medal winners;
- Being selected for a Danish team continues to be realistic aspiration for athletes throughout the pathway and that athletes are motivated to remain in the sport post age-group championships.

Danish Athletics is supported by Team Denmark to achieve Top 8 performances at World and Olympic level therefore, our intention is to be ready, in every competition, for the upper tiers of Team Denmark (Top Elite and High Potential) athletes to achieve Top 8 positions whilst the lower tier of Team Denmark (Mesterskabsgruppe World), Performance Potential and Futures athletes will be ready to contend for semi-final positions at the competitions in their appropriate age groups. To achieve these goals, Danish Athletics will work with athletes, coaches and support staff to ensure readiness to perform in every area of performance, coaching and service provision.

To achieve the intention and priorities above (and to sustainably finance and resource the competition pathway), a different approach has been provided for each competition, which results in varying impacts on team sizes and selection processes.

All selection policies for the remainder of the Los Angeles and Brisbane cycles will be formulated to comply with the selection philosophy outlined for each competition.

Danish Athletics reserves the right to amend this document should there be significant changes to either the wider DAF strategy or the funding status of the Team Denmark Programme. Additionally, changes to, or concerns regarding the location/date/qualification process of any specific edition of a championship may require a bespoke approach for that competition (this may include a decision not to attend a particular event for one or more editions).

## SELECTION OVERVIEW – CHAMPIONSHIPS AND GAMES

	Competition	Purpose and targets (explained in detail below)	Age Class	Disciplines	Places per event
Track and Field (and road where incorporated)	Olympic Games (Every four years)	Measures the level of performance of our Team Denmark athletes and programme  Target: Achieving Top 8 placings and maximising Top 24 positions	Open	Disciplines (Male and Female) – 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m, 10,000m, 3000m Steeplechase, 20km Race Walk, Marathon, 110m/100m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 4 X 100m Relay, 4 X 400m Relay, 4 X 400m Mixed Relay, Decathlon (M).Heptathlon (F), Pole Vault, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Shot Put, Javelin Throw,.	Three (3)
	World Athletics Championships (Every two years)	Measures the level of performance of our Team Denmark athletes and programme  Target: Achieving Top 8 placings and maximising Top 24 positions	Open	Disciplines (Male and Female) – 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m, 10,000m, 3000m Steeplechase, 20km Race Walk, Marathon, 110m/100m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 4 X 100m Relay, 4 X 400m Relay, 4 X 400m Mixed Relay, Decathlon (M).Heptathlon (F), Pole Vault, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Shot Put, Javelin Throw,.	Three (3)
	World Athletics U20 Championships (Every two years)	Purpose: Competition experience, development & assessment of athletes towards senior global championships Target: Maximise top 24 places	More than 17 and less than 20 years of age on 31 December of the year of the event.	Disciplines (Male and Female) – 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m, 10,000m, 3000m Steeplechase, 5000m Race Walk, 110m/100m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 4 X 100m Relay, 4 X 400m Relay, 4 X 400m Mixed Relay, Decathlon (M).Heptathlon (F), Pole Vault, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Shot Put, Javelin Throw,.	Three (3)

European Championships (Every two years)	<p>Measures the level of performance of our Lower Team Danmark Tier and Performance Athletes segment of the programme; Competition experience, development &amp; assessment of athletes</p> <p>Target: Top 8, maximise Top 16 (Top Tier individual), maximise Top 24 (Lower Tier individual) and Top 8 (Relays) and European Cup, if we take part.</p>	Open	<p>Disciplines (Male and Female) – 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m, 10,000m, 3000m Steeplechase, 21km Race Walk, 42km Race Walk Marathon/'Haf Marathon, 110m/100m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 4 X 100m Relay, 4 X 400m Relay, 4 X 400m Mixed Relay, Decathlon (M).Heptathlon (F), Pole Vault, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Shot Put, Javelin Throw.</p>	Three (3) Team of 6 for men's and women's marathons (European Cup)
U23 European Championships (Every two years)	<p>Measures the level of performance of our athletes at the U23 segment of the programme; competition, development &amp; assessment experience</p> <p>Target: Maximise top 16 places</p>	Aged at least 20 and less than 23 years of age on 31 December of the year of the event.	<p>Disciplines (Male and Female) – 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m, 10,000m, 3000m Steeplechase, 10,000m Race Walk, 110m/100m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 4 X 100m Relay, 4 X 400m Relay, 4 X 400m Mixed Relay, Decathlon (M).Heptathlon (F), Pole Vault, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Shot Put, Javelin Throw.</p>	Three (3)
U20 European Championships	Purpose: Competition experience, development	U20	<p>Disciplines (Male and Female) – 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m, 10,000m, 3000m Steeplechase,</p>	Three (3)

	ps (Every two years)	& assessment of athletes towards senior global championships  Target: Maximise top 16 places		5000m Race Walk, 110m/100m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 4 X 100m Relay, 4 X 400m Relay, 4 X 400m Mixed Relay, Decathlon (M).Heptathlon (F), Pole Vault, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Shot Put, Javelin Throw,.	
	U18 European Championships (Every two years)	Purpose: Competition experience, development & assessment of athletes  Target: Maximise top 16 places	U18	Disciplines (Male and Female) – 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 3000m, 10,000m/5000m, 2000m Steeplechase, Race Walk, 110m Hurdles/100m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 4 X 100m Relay, 4 X 400m Relay, 4 X 400m Mixed Relay, Decathlon (M).Heptathlon (F), Pole Vault, Javelin Throw, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Shot Put.	
	World Athletics Indoor Championships (Every two years)	Measures the level of performance of our Top Tier Team Danmark athletes and programme Target: Maximise number of athletes qualified	Open	60m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 3000m, 60mH, HJ, PV, LJ, TJ, SP	Three (3)
	European Athletics Indoor Championships (Every two years)	Measures the level of performance of our Top Tier Team Danmark, and Lower Tier athletes and programme	Open	60m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 3000m, 60mH, HJ, PV, LJ, TJ, SP	Three (3)

		Target: Maximise Top 16 (Top Tier) and maximise Top 24 (Lower Tier)			
	World Athletics Relays Championships (Every two years)	Purpose: Qualification for World Championships/Olympic Games Target: Top 12	Senior	Male and Female 4 X 100m, 4 X 400m. Mixed 4 X 400m. Mixed 4 X 100m	One (1) team for each relay
	European Teams Championships (Every two years)	Purpose: Competition experience, development & assessment of athletes Target: Top 4 Division 2	Senior	Disciplines (Male and Female) – 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m, 3000m Steeplechase, 100m/110m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 4 X 100m Relay, 4 X 400m Mixed Relay, Pole Vault, Javelin Throw, High Jump, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Shot Put.	One (1) per event
Cross Country	World Athletics Cross Country Championships (Every two years)	Purpose: Competition experience, development & assessment of athletes Target: Maximise Top 16 (teams and individuals)	Senior, U23 & U20	Distance: men and women – 10km; U20 men and women–6km	Four (4)
	European Athletics Cross Country Championships	Purpose: Competition experience, development & assessment of athletes Target: 1 X Medal and	Senior, U23 & U20	Distance: Senior Men – 10km; Senior Women – 8km, U23 Men 8km, U23 Women – 6km, U20 Men – 6km, U20 Women – 4km, Mixed Relay – 4 X 1.5km	Individual race Four (4) Mixed Relay – 2 X Senior Men & 2 X

	(Every year)	maximise Top 12 (Teams) Top 16 (Top Tier individual) and maximise Top 24 (Lower Tier individual)			Senior Women
Road	World Athletics Road Running Championships (Every two years)	Purpose: Competition experience, development & assessment of athletes tracking towards Marathon (Half Marathon)  Target: Maximise Top 16 (Teams) and Top 24 (individuals)	Senior	Distances: Mile, 5km, Half Marathon	Five (5) in the half marathon, two (2) in the 5km and two (2) in the mile

#### OTHER IMPORTANT COMPETITIONS AND SELECTION RACES

Depending on the level of competition, each may serve a different purpose for performance or development. Where Danish Athletics select a team, the selection policies and criteria will reflect this.

#### Diamond League

The World Athletics Diamond League is a 13 – series competition across the world. Athletes earn points and compete for money and a place in the final at the end of the year. Entry into these competitions can be difficult and athletes normally require an agent working on their behalf.

### World Athletics Continental Tour Events

The World Athletics Continental Tour events give athletes exposure to higher level competition, prize money and ranking points depending on the grading of the event (gold, silver, bronze).

### Youth Olympics and Youth Olympic Festival – U18

Athletes are nominated by Danish Athletics and selected by DIF for the Youth Olympics (every four years) and European Youth Olympic Festival (every two years)

### Nordic Championships

Athletes qualify and are selected, by Danish Athletics, to represent Denmark at the Nordic Championship – indoor, outdoor (U20 and senior) and cross country

### European Throwing Cup

Athletes qualify and are selected, by Danish Athletics, to represent Denmark at the European Throwing Cup

### Nordic Throws Match – U20 and U23

Athletes are selected, by Danish Athletics, to represent Denmark in the match against Norway. It is held every year either in Denmark or Norway typically in the beginning of June.

### European Cup 10,000

Athletes qualify and are selected, by Danish Athletics, to represent Denmark at the European Cup for 10,000m.

### Mannheim Junior Gala

Athletes in the U20 age group qualify and are selected, by Danish Athletics, to represent Denmark at the Mannheim Junior Gala

### National Championships

National Championships take place in all disciplines at appropriate times of year.

The dates of the senior track and field competitions are scheduled in the World Athletics windows and give greater ranking points for top

positions.

National cross country and road championships are sometimes used as trial races for selection to international competitions

We are dependent on various stakeholders who host championships including commercial partners and volunteer groups including Athletics and Running Clubs.

Craft Cup – Cross Country and Road

The Craft Cup offers regular opportunities throughout the autumn and winter for athletes to gain competition experience.

Other competitions throughout Europe that Danish athletes are selected or invited to include:

IFAM Track and Field Meets

EAP Track and Field Meets

Trieste U23 10km

Armagh International Road Races

### **Selection philosophy for key competitions on the Athlete Development Pathway**

Olympic Games

- Achieving Top 8 placings and maximising semifinal positions at the Olympic Games is the primary aim of Team Denmark, a key funding partner for attendance of the Danish team at the Olympic Games.
- We recognise the great value and pride placed in being an “Olympian” within the wider athletic community (and the watching public).
- The approach to selection for the next Olympics will see ‘consideration standards’ introduced for athletes who don’t automatically qualify or secure their place via the rankings in the first window.
- ALL athletes who achieve the automatic standard or qualify through the rankings before the qualifying window closes, will be selected (subject to form/fitness and max. entry restrictions).

- Once the qualifying window closes, we will name ‘next to qualify’ athletes if they have achieved the Danish Athletics consideration standard in their event.
- The consideration standards will be appropriately set, using an evidence-based approach
- Exceptions will be made and athletes will be named on the ‘next to qualify’ list if the athlete is a ‘developing athlete’ and is 2-4 years out from average event specific peak ages or if they are making their debut.
- The aim of this approach is not to exclude either developing athletes, or those for whom making an Olympic team is the ultimate goal, therefore, any athlete making their Olympic debut or who is two - four years away from ‘peak age’ in their event group, will not need to achieve the consideration standard.
- The aim of this approach is to ensure progression is prioritised and to have a more focused, higher quality team that will deliver a high level of service to all selected athletes
- Relay teams will be selected where the relevant team achieves qualification (subject to form/fitness and maximum entry restrictions)

#### World Championships (Outdoors)

- The World Championships is vital in providing global competition experience to potential future medallists. It is also vital in preparing the wider team (including staff) to deliver world class performances at the Olympic Games.
- The approach and selection process for the World Championships (2027) will therefore be the same as the Olympics (i.e. more focused team size) to allow truly effective preparation of athletes and staff for the Olympic Games.
- Relay teams will be selected where relay teams achieve qualification (subject to form/fitness and maximum entry restrictions)

#### European Championships (Outdoors)

- The selection process for the European Championships 2026 and 2028 will be the same as for the World Championships and Olympic Games.
- Top 8 relay positions at European championships level will be a priority.

## World and European Indoor Championships

- Athletes will be selected according to the championship standards and 'Road to' or top lists – though we recognise that standards for the field events at this competition are now extremely high.
- ALL qualified athletes will be selected (subject to form/fitness and maximum entry restrictions)
- We will aim to have as many qualified athletes as possible so that these championships can genuinely be used as experiential opportunities for developing athletes, as realistic opportunities for established athletes to achieve a Danish vest and for our highest performing athletes to achieve success.
- Top 8 relay positions at indoor/European championships level will be a priority.

## European Team Championships/Nordic Championships

- Full teams will be selected (including relays) for each competition.
- The expectation for Team Denmark athletes to attend will depend on the location/date of the competition.
- The quality of relay teams selected will depend on the timing of the ETC or Nordic Champs (in relation to other key championships that year), availability of athletes and the status of the annual relay plan in place at the time.

## Age Group Championships

### European U23 Championships/World University Games

- In comparison to the U20/U18 age-groups, the value of this championship as a development opportunity for future senior medal contenders is not as great. Some athletes have already progressed to senior global championships by the time they reach the U23 age-group but there are, of course be exceptions, and we have had good recent success. It is therefore vital that we continue to support this age-group.
- The U23 age-group also covers the age at which talented athletes often tend to leave the sport (including during transition through university). As such, this age-group (inc. the World University Games) has an important role to play in retaining athletes by providing aspirational opportunity to win medals and represent Denmark.

- Danish Athletics will use the European Athletics U23 Championship standards. ALL athletes who qualify will be selected (subject to form/fitness/max. entry restrictions).
- Support for WUG will be on a case-by-case basis depending on location/timing within calendar (it will be unlikely to be supported if staged at the same time, or very near, the European U23's)

#### World/European U20 Championships/Nordic Champs/Mannhiem Junior Gala

- The key purpose of the age-group championships is the development of athletes to senior global championships. Research indicates that most senior medallists did not achieve medals in the U20 category but were at a level to participate and gain international experience in these championships.
- As such, selection standards will be as per the championship standards. Again, ALL athletes who qualify will be selected (subject to form/fitness/max. entry restrictions).

#### European U18 Championships/Youth Olympics/Youth Olympic Festival

- Priority for the U18 age-group will be the European U18 Championships.
- Selection standards for the European U18 Championships will be as per the championship standards. All athletes who qualify will be selected (subject to form/fitness/max. entry restrictions).
- Due to the fluctuating standards in this age group, and the comparatively low level of athletes who progress to higher levels, a maximum team size will be set each year – usually no more than 20.
- DAF will work with DIF to effectively deliver teams for Youth Olympics/Youth Olympic Festival

#### Event Specific Championships: Endurance

##### World Cross Country Championships

- Athletes will be selected where they show current or future track/road/XC medal potential, or where a team shows current medal potential.

- Athletes and teams will only be selected when the location and timing of the event is favourable and can be used as positive experience.

#### European Cross Country Championships

- The “Euro Cross” can provide vital winter preparation for Denmark’s best endurance runners at a relevant time of year and in favourable (i.e. European) locations.
- The standard of competition and performance has risen significantly in recent years as more nations focus on this as a key competition on the calendar.
- Denmark have achieved individual and team medals lately but we have struggled for depth and have sent athletes who have finished near to the back of the fields where the experience can be negative and de-motivating.
- Moving forward, individuals and teams (including relay) will be selected when they have demonstrated that they can be competitive at this level
- Results show that athletes in the top third of the field or top 24, which is our target, have road and track times that we can use as an objective measure in our selection criteria. Therefore, to measure potential and be sure we are sending competitive athletes, we will set relevant track and road standards in addition to results in relevant cross-country races.
- To develop potential, we will focus on bringing Denmark’s best endurance athletes together for regular training and find opportunities at high-level cross-country events such as the Belgium Cross Cups and UK Cross Challenge.

#### Nordic Cross Country Championships

- The Nordic Cross Country Championships currently provide a key early winter marker for Denmark’s best endurance runners, in a venue/format that is well known and effective
- The competition provides an early opportunity for U20s to make their international debuts
- Full U20 and Senior teams will therefore continue to be selected.
- Where appropriate, this will be used as a trial race for selection to the Euro Cross.

#### World Road Running Championships

- The World Road Running Championships are useful for two key groups: previous track/XC specialists looking to step-up to the marathon distance and competitive 5k runners looking for high quality competition and preparation.
- Danish Athletics will set our own selection standards based on the ability of athletes to achieve the targets stated in this document and in the selection policies.
- However, Denmark will host this event in 2026 giving us the opportunity to show case it and register full teams. Therefore, the selection policy will focus on sending the best Danish athletes and, for this year, standards will be used as a guide only.
- Individuals will be prioritised if they fit the profile of one of the two key groups outlined above.

#### European Cup 10,000m

- This competition will be considered as a developmental event – Danish Athletics will therefore treat it as such and set standards accordingly, with the aim of selecting men’s/women’s teams for each edition.
- Danish Athletics may need to review this philosophy as the status of the 10,000m changes in future years.

#### Event Specific Championships: Relays/Field and Combined Events/Other

##### World Relay Championships

- In 2026, Danish Athletics will focus relay preparation on the European Athletics Championships and target competitions in Europe where our teams can achieve the qualifying standards. The 2026 World Relays will be held in Botswana and the cost will be beyond our budget. Therefore, teams will only compete, this year, if clubs and athletes are able to absorb the cost. We will reassess this position each year with the intention of building relay team continuity and consistency and, where there is enough depth in the team, to try new combinations.
- Our focus will be on 4 X 100m (men’s and women’s) and 4 X 400m (men’s) according to current athlete potential.

##### European Throwing Cup

- Recognition that a different approach is needed for the development of long throws – this competition is therefore vital in providing competition opportunity against high quality European throwers for developing athletes (particularly heavy throws).
- Throwers will be selected, provided it forms part of a sensible annual plan and they show current form.