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## **2012 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

### **ITU Junior and U23 Athletes**

Over the last seven to eight years, TA High Performance program has recommended that states adopt standard swim, bike and run time trial tests for ITU Junior and U23 athletes. NSW initiated this move in 1999/2000, using time trials as **one of** the means by which State Junior squad and NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS) squad were selected. In the last five years all states, State Institutes and the AIS have used these time trials to assess, and gain information on ITU Junior and U23 level triathletes.

The Triathlon Australia National Performance Standards (NPS) protocols are:

- **Swim 1000m:** Conducted in a 50m pool (with lane ropes). The time trial is 20 laps, timed from a feet to the wall push start, to a hand to the wall finish. No drafting off other swimmers is allowed. (Maximum 3 swimmers per lane spaced 15 seconds apart at the start).
- **Bike 20km:** It is impossible to standardise a bike time trial as there are so many course and environmental variations, however most states use the same course for all their cycling time trials. Courses cannot be point to point. They must start and finish at the same point. A multi lap criterium style course is acceptable (and indeed the most commonly used). Bike time trials must be individual – NO DRAFTING allowed.
- **Run 5000m:** Conducted on a 400m synthetic running track. Mass start “race” situation is allowed.
  - These time trials are commonly run over a two day camp with swim on the first morning, bike the first afternoon and run the following day.
  - However, it is possible to conduct the time trials over the course of one day providing the athletes are given reasonable time for recovery between each time trial or alternatively over 2-3 weeks.
  - Care should be taken to ensure athletes adequately recover between time trials especially in hot conditions where rehydration is a priority.

The purpose of the National Performance Standards (NPS) is **not** as a definitive measure of Triathlon ability. Rather, they are used as a **quantifiable measure of potential and improvement** in each of the three legs of triathlon.

## **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS - BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHY**

Triathlon, by its nature is a sport with many variables. It is almost impossible to compare times between one Triathlon course and another or even compare times on the same course on different days! Variables include, positioning of swim buoys, weather, wind, topography, accuracy of the course, size of transition and distance to run in transitioning.

It is however, desirable to encourage young triathletes to *improve* in each leg of the Triathlon and it is important for them to be able to quantify their improvement. It is also important for Triathlon Australia to be able to track the development of its athletes from a young age. It is certainly not always the best juniors who go on to be the champion seniors, nor is it necessarily the fastest in each of the three disciplines who puts them together the best in a Triathlon race.

Time trials have been successfully used within the national program as a means of benchmarking athletes in the disciplines of swimming and running for a number of years. They have also been used as a means of establishing minimal standards for eligibility for selection into U23 and ITU Junior National Teams.

There is current concern amongst the Coaching Leadership Team that these **minimum** standards are seen to be sufficient for athletes to achieve international success, rather than identify **internationally competitive performance standards**. The **Prognostic Performance Standards Table** adopted in 2010 that allows all athletes in any age category to view where they are positioned against world's best practice, has been reviewed. It is important to highlight to athletes and coaches the current standard of international ITU Juniors and under 23 athletes. For example in the past three ITU Junior World Triathlon Championships the placegetters have posted 5km track runs of 14:30 or faster.

**Minimum** benchmarks have been replaced with '**Qualifier Standards**' in each category. These times represent minimum standards for athletes to be competitive (i.e. Top 15) in World Triathlon Championship events. Athletes should still aspire to reach performance levels above these targets as well as beyond their age category and towards world's best. Athletes and coaches should also understand that as World's Best practice improves, so should our standards. Therefore, the table is dynamic and can change. At the end of each international season, the table will be modified according to the World's best. The tool is designed to give athletes and coaches a way of assessing progression in each discipline as well as providing an indication of where they need to progress to in future years.

It should be emphasised that performances in draft legal triathlon is still the key performance indicator that determines athlete's performance. ***The table should be utilized as a reference tool, but in no-way substitute's performances in specific triathlon events.***

## **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS - PROGNOSTIC SPEED TABLE EXPLANATION**

The table identifies what the Coaching Leadership Team, consider to be world's best practice for current performing international senior triathletes. It should be noted that this does not mean these times reflect world's best times for each discipline, rather times that we believe are required to be the best triathlete in the world.

To clarify, individual athletes may achieve a faster time in an individual discipline (i.e. swim or run), but due to their lack of performance in the other discipline are not considered to be 'world's best' in regards to triathlon

performance. The table then allows prognostic times to be determined based on a percentage of these world's best times. For instance a male athlete may swim 12:03 and run 15:13, their corresponding prognostic speeds will be 94% and 92%, respectively.

Qualifier standards for Senior, U23 and ITU Junior categories have been identified. These targets have been set at 94%, 92% and 90% of world's best practice. If world's best times improve, so will these qualifying times. These Qualifying standards represent times that reflect a level where by an athlete may be competitive (approx. Top 15) in an ITU World Championship Races.

**PROGNOSTIC SPEED TABLE**

	Swim - 1km		Run - 5km		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11:20</b>	<b>12:00</b>	<b>14:00</b>	<b>16:00</b>	<b>World's Best</b>
99.5%	11:23	12:03	14:04	16:04	
99.0%	11:26	12:07	14:08	16:09	
98.5%	11:30	12:10	14:12	16:14	
98.0%	11:33	12:14	14:17	16:19	
97.5%	11:37	12:18	14:21	16:24	
97.0%	11:41	12:22	14:25	16:29	
96.5%	11:44	12:26	14:30	16:34	
96.0%	11:48	12:30	14:35	16:40	
95.5%	11:52	12:33	14:39	16:45	
95.0%	11:55	12:37	14:44	16:50	
94.5%	11:59	12:41	14:48	16:55	
<b>94.0%</b>	<b>12:03</b>	<b>12:45</b>	<b>14:53</b>	<b>17:01</b>	<b>AUS Elite Team Qualifier (approx. Top 15 WCS)</b>
93.5%	12:07	12:50	14:58	17:06	
93.0%	12:11	12:54	15:03	17:12	
92.5%	12:15	12:58	15:08	17:17	
<b>92.0%</b>	<b>12:19</b>	<b>13:02</b>	<b>15:13</b>	<b>17:23</b>	<b>AUS U23 Team Qualifier (approx. Top 15 U23 TWC)</b>
91.5%	12:23	13:06	15:18	17:29	
91.0%	12:27	13:11	15:23	17:34	
90.5%	12:31	13:15	15:28	17:40	
<b>90.0%</b>	<b>12:35</b>	<b>13:20</b>	<b>15:33</b>	<b>17:46</b>	<b>AUS Junior Team Qualifier (approx. Top 15 JUNIOR TWC)</b>
89.5%	12:39	13:24	15:38	17:52	
89.0%	12:44	13:28	15:43	17:58	
88.5%	12:48	13:33	15:49	18:04	
88.0%	12:52	13:38	15:54	18:10	
87.5%	12:57	13:42	16:00	18:17	
<b>87.0%</b>	<b>13:01</b>	<b>13:47</b>	<b>16:05</b>	<b>18:23</b>	<b>National JNR Development Camp Automatic Criteria</b>
86.5%	13:06	13:52	16:11	18:29	
86.0%	13:10	13:57	16:16	18:36	
85.5%	13:15	14:02	16:22	18:42	
<b>85.0%</b>	<b>13:20</b>	<b>14:07</b>	<b>16:28</b>	<b>18:49</b>	<b>National JNR Development Camp Discretionary Criteria</b>
84.5%	13:24	14:12	16:34	18:56	
84.0%	13:29	14:17	16:40	19:02	
83.5%	13:34	14:22	16:45	19:09	
83.0%	13:39	14:27	16:52	19:16	
82.5%	13:44	14:32	16:58	19:23	
82.0%	13:49	14:38	17:04	19:30	
81.5%	13:54	14:43	17:10	19:37	
81.0%	13:59	14:48	17:17	19:45	
80.5%	14:04	14:54	17:23	19:52	
80.0%	14:10	15:00	17:30	20:00	

## **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS – JUNIOR COMPULSORY REQUIREMENTS**

While the National Performance Standards can be completed throughout the year Triathlon Australia's High Performance Program has set two windows for Junior athletes in the 2011/2012 race season.

- **Compulsory Window : 1 August 2011 – 22 January 2012**
- **Supplementary Window: 23 January 2012 – 1 April 2012**

### **Compulsory Window: 1 August 2011 – 22 January 2012**

- All Junior athletes that wish to compete in races 2 and 3 of the Australian Junior Series events **MUST** complete and submit at least one (1) x 1km swim and one (1) x 5km run time by **22 January 2012**;
  - Race 2 - Canberra Triathlon – 15 January, Canberra, ACT
  - Race 3 - OTU Oceania & Australian Junior Championships – 10 March, Devonport, TAS
- **NO TIMES = NO START at Canberra and Devonport (Junior) Races!**
- If any Junior athletes are unable to complete the Performance Standards by the due date (22 January) due to long term injury or illness may apply in writing to the National Manager – Athlete Development.
  - Application for exemption must be submitted by 20 January 2012.
  - NB – Application for exemption will need to be for cases of extenuating circumstances as the window to complete one 1km swim and one 5km run is 5 ¾ months (approx). Therefore, an excuse for injury or illness in the last 2-3 weeks of the compulsory window will not necessarily entail an automatic exemption!
  - The decision on exemptions is at the absolute discretion of the NMAD and NPD.

### **Supplementary Window: 23 January 2012 – 1 April 2012**

- All Junior athletes that wish to attempt additional Performance Standards may re-attempt/submit times within this window. Supplementary Window may be used to either;
  - Gain selection status for 2012 ITU World Triathlon Championships (Auckland)
    - Refer to TA Junior Selection Policy for more information
  - Improve standing on the National Performance Standards ranking system.

NB - All venues, dates & Performance Standards Supervisor must be approved by respective National Talent Coaches or their appointed representatives.

### **Optional NPS Requirements for Athletes aged 14-16 in 2012**

- Based on feedback from a number of state junior development coaches and with the introduction of the Australian Youth Triathlon Championships states may conduct and submit results for younger athletes who coaches feel are not yet ready for a 1km swim & 5km run.
- The younger athletes aged 14-16 in 2012 may submit times over the following distances.
  - SWIM – 400m (50m Pool)
  - RUN – 3000m (Track)
  - Age as at 31 December 2012 (ie athletes born in the years 1996, 1997 or 1998)
  - If athletes aged 16 or above wish to be considered for selection into the Australian Junior Team or possible inclusion into the National Talent Academy they must complete the 1km swim & 5km run.

### **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS – U23 COMPULSORY REQUIREMENTS**

While the National Performance Standards can be completed throughout the year Triathlon Australia's High Performance Program has set the following requirements for U23 athletes in the 2011/2012 race season.

#### **Compulsory Window: 1 August 2011 – 1 April 2012**

- All U23 athletes that wish to be considered for selection into the Australian U23 World Championships Team **MUST** complete and submit at least one x 1km swim and one x 5km run time by **1 APRIL 2011**.
  - Refer to TA U23 Selection Policy for more information
- If any U23 athletes are unable to complete the Performance Standards by the due date (3 April) due to long term injury or illness may apply in writing to the National Manager – Athlete Development.
  - Application for exemption must be submitted by 30 March 2011.
  - The decision on exemptions is at the absolute discretion of the NMAD and NPD.

NB - All venues, dates & Performance Standards Supervisor must be approved by respective National Talent Coaches or their appointed representatives.

### **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS – SUPERVISORS**

The newly appointed National Talent Coaches in conjunction with respective STTA Junior Development Coaches/Managers will supervise/oversee (and where applicable delegate supervision of) the National Performance Standards, including setting of dates and venues in consultation with their respective STTA's. The newly appointed National Talent Coaches are:

- VIC/TAS – Jan Rehula
- NSW/ACT – Keiran Barry
- QLD/NT – Craig Walton
- WA/SA – Chris Lang

### **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS – DATABASE**

TA strongly encourages all STTA Junior Development programs to complete at least 2-3 NPS per year to gauge athlete performance and fitness levels. Moreover, to help give athletes and their home coaches basic information on athlete standards around Australia. Over the past 5-6 years TA has been developing a database of results for our ITU Junior and U23 athletes. The database gives TA a unique tracking tool to observe the development and progression of our developing athletes.

The National Performance Standards have been designed for;

1. Fitness assessment and monitoring of all ITU Junior and U23 athletes.
2. Set benchmarks and to assist STTA's in selection for state development programs .
3. Determining athletes eligibility for selection into Australian National Teams, National Talent Academy and/or National Development Camps.
4. Providing TA with a national database to be able to track improvement of athletes performances from Junior through to U23.
5. STTAs to gain an opportunity to compare where their athletes standards against the other states/athletes.

Finally, it is important to note the National Performance Standards are not designed as a talent identification tool. Again, to emphasis...**The purpose of the national performance standards is not as a definitive measure of Triathlon ability. Rather, they are used as a quantifiable measure of potential and improvement in each of the three legs of triathlon.**

#### **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS – RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Outline to athletes that it is all about them doing the very best that they can do in each performance. It is not about comparing with others, because effort is the most important thing. It is not necessarily the athlete with the fastest single discipline times who becomes the best triathlete.
- Triathletes should repeat National Performance Standard tests at least once or twice per year and aim for their own personal improvement.
- If an athlete is not improving, a coach should sit down with the athlete and discuss why. It is imperative that these Performance Standards are a POSITIVE stimulus for improvement, enjoyment and self-esteem. Reasons for non-improvement could include: weather conditions, illness, growth spurt, fatigue, social stress and/or deficiencies in training and nutrition.
- Use the National Performance Standards Prognostics Speed Table as goals to aim for in the longer term.
- National Performance Standards are not there to intimidate. They are to be used as reference points to gauge performance standards against world's best. However, these standards are a good guide of what to aim for, if an athlete is serious about progressing through the elite development pathway.
- These standards are especially useful benchmarks for athletes who do not have the opportunity to train and/or race with other athletes of a National ITU Junior/U23/Elite standard, giving them a realistic comparative target.
- The standards should be used in conjunction with good coaching principles for steady progressive development of skill, speed and endurance in each discipline and Triathlon as a whole sport. Achieving standards should never be at the expense of sound basis of technique and gradual progression linked to physical, physiological and training age, specific to the needs of each individual young triathlete.
- The development of subsequent training plans following the results should be conducted by a qualified Triathlon Australia accredited coach (or equivalent in any of the three single sport disciplines).
- The bottom line is that participation in the sport of Triathlon should be about improvement and enjoyment (at any age, but particularly for young athletes). National Performance Standards should be an exciting and interesting tool by which triathletes can assess where they are at in each of the disciplines. The emphasis should be on finding ways for individual improvement first. Using them as a comparative tool should be done with great discretion and supervision, with the context of the times as a guide of the standard required IF the athlete is aiming to progress within the TA elite development pathway.

**For more NPS information for your state please contact:**

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