

TO ITU YTH, JNR, U23 and Professional Development U23 Athletes (Pathway Athletes)
FROM Triathlon Australia Pathways Team
DATE Thursday, 22 June 2017
SUBJECT Changes to National Performance Standards (NPS)

Overview

TA in conjunction with STTAs and the AIS are reviewing the NAPF (National Athlete Pathway Framework) and as the framework and associated policies are confirmed athletes, parents and coaches will be updated. This is the first of many updates as we enter a period of change and relates to the removal of NPS activities and introduction of athlete profiling as detailed below.

Although this forms **only a minor part** of the National Athlete Pathway Framework review, it is important to release this information now so that stakeholders can plan for the 2017/18 season.

- 1. Removal of NPS (page 1)**
- 2. Introduction of Athlete Profiling (page 2)**

1. Removal of NPS

Effective immediately the NPS and Prognostic Performance Standards Table (adopted in 2010 which allows all athletes in any age category to view where they are positioned against world's best practice) will cease to exist. This means there will no longer be any requirement around submitting NPS times for the following;

- Junior and U23 Selection Policies for World Championship Teams
- Entry Requirement for competing in the Australian Youth/Junior/U23 Triathlon Series
- National Development Camp Selection
- NTA Selection

By removing the requirements around submitting NPS for the above, we will see a reduced load on athletes and subsequent reduction in the number of times we are asking an athlete to be peaking through the season. TA believes this will see athletes and coaches being able to focus on what we view as the most important factors to an athlete's progression through the pathway, developing skill competencies through training and racing.

The following will be used where the NPS used to be the main measure used for selection;

- National Junior Selection Policies will now reflect a focus on race results and performance at key/identified races (this will be released in due course)
- A rolldown procedure for events in the AYJU23TS is currently being worked on that will be used for events that have limited numbers/sold out in the past (this will be released once complete)
- Race Performance will be used as the criteria for selection to the National Development Camp (the call for nominations will be released in due course)
- Athletes captured under the NTA will now fall under the TA categorisation Policy

TA still believes there is a need to “*Internally*” track athletes through their progression from Youth to the U23/Open ranks. However, as identified earlier, we need to be very cautious on how this is carried out so that we don’t go down the same track as the NPS where time trialling became a coaching focus. After collaborating with the coaching leadership group, AIS staff and experts in each of the individual disciplines Athlete Profiling has been identified as the tracking system to use for pathway athletes.

2. Introduction of Athlete Profiling

Athlete Profiling is **NOT** intended to be a replacement for NPS and Time Trialling however the following will be used to measure an athlete’s development across key skill components of the three disciplines of our sport. This will entail the tracking of athletes across the following measures (for the duration of their journey through the pathway);

Discipline	Distance	Measurement
Swim	50m	Max Speed (Anaerobic) – First 50m of the 400m (as part of the overall 400m swim below) to be used to replicate demands of competition
Swim	400m	vVO ² max (velocity at VO ² max) – Anaerobic threshold – Maximum Aerobic Speed
Bike	Course Test	Multiple Bike Handling Skill Competencies
Bike	Roller Test	Bike Handling Skills complementing the course test
Run	200m	Max Speed (Anaerobic) – first 200m of a 1500m (as part of overall 1500m run below) to be used to replicate demands of competition
Run	1500m	vVO ² max (velocity at VO ² max) – Anaerobic threshold – Maximum Aerobic Speed

The objective was to develop a two-stage critical velocity test for both running and swimming to capture both anaerobic speed and maximum aerobic speed. Alternatively, the bike skills tests will have a sole focus on skills (reduction in time of test will have a direct correlation with increased bike handling skills).

Given the identified demands of ITU racing and the speed range required to be competitive, the 2-point model (swim and run) combined with the bike skills tests will help profile the athlete and start the conversation around coaching interventions to improve the athletes speed profile.

These measurement tests are intended to be conducted through swimming or running meets (valid competition environments) or State Programs through camps and clinics and provided to state youth and junior coaches who wish to utilise in their home environments as a measure. We will continue to collate these results on a national basis however there is no intention at this point in time to publicly advertise any times in relation to these measures.

To reiterate, the main aim of collecting this information is to make informed decisions nationally and to assist in the creation of resources for coaches and athletes to assist in improving development and performance (the process in which this is collated is still being fine-tuned).

This move acknowledges that the progress of an adolescent athlete is not linear, and that an athletes' ability to perform in a time trial environment as a junior does not necessarily translate directly to skill levels and race performance at a senior level. It will also remove the pressure from external sources for an athlete to always be in the top x number in any age group.

Protocols around how these profiling tests will be measured for quality assurance etc. will be released through STTA programs in due course.