



World Athletics Ultimate Championship Budapest 2026

updated: 22 April 2026

Qualification System: Conditions and Criteria

Introduction

The World Athletics Ultimate Championship ('Ultimate Championship') is **not** a World Athletics Series Event. These conditions and criteria have been developed to identify the best individual athletes who are eligible to receive a World Athletics invitation to participate in a limited number of events at the Ultimate Championship. The target number of total participating athletes and the events are stated in the table below. Provided the participation conditions are met, the invitation criteria to participate include being a champion at the Olympic Games 2024, World Athletics Championships 2025, a winner of the Diamond League Final 2026 and World Ranking position in an event that features in the Ultimate Championship. Accordingly, there are no entry/qualification standards and, except for the host Member Federation or an exceptional invite from World Athletics, no unqualified places are available for any other athletes to receive an invitation to participate. Athletes who accept an invitation participate in an individual capacity except when part of a relay team. When participating the athletes' Member Federation will be acknowledged and recognised. Finally, these are the only conditions and criteria for an individual athlete to be eligible to receive an invitation, therefore Member Federation nomination and selection requirements do not apply to the Ultimate Championship.

Events and Target Numbers

The number of athletes and relay teams for each event are:

Events	Target Number
100m	16
200m	16
400m	16
800m	16
1500m	12
5000m	12
100mH, 110mH, 400mH	16
HJ, PV, LJ, TJ (W only) JT, HT (M only)	8
4x100m and 4x400m Mixed Relays	8 Teams

The Host Member Federation may enter an additional athlete in some of the events listed above. See the section Host Member Federation below.



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Participation Conditions

- **Individual Events**
 - There is no limit on the number of athletes per Member Federation permitted to compete in each event.
- **Relay Events**
 - Only one qualified relay team per Member Federation is permitted to compete in each relay event.
 - A total of six athletes from any one Member Federation may be entered in each relay. These must include the individual athletes (up to four) entered in the respective individual event (100m and 400m)
- **Age categories**
 - Under 18 and Under 20 Athletes: athletes aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 years on 31 December 2026, (i.e., born in 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010), may compete in any event.
 - Under 16 Athletes: no athlete younger than 16 years of age on 31 December 2026 (born in 2011 or later) may be entered.

Invitation Criteria

- **Invitations for respective Individual Events featured in the Ultimate Championship:**
 - Automatic invitations for:
 - Olympic Champion from Paris 2024
 - World Champion from Tokyo 2025
 - Winner of the 2026 Diamond League Final (see below)
 - Invitations based on World Ranking position determined during the ranking period 2 September 2025 – 1 September 2026
 - World Athletics will keep an updated list of eligible athletes for each event in the lead up to the World Athletics Ultimate Championship. This **Road to the Ultimate** is published on the Stats Zone section of the World Athletics Website. (www.worldathletics.org/stats-zone) and, as customary, includes:
 - the automatic invitations (except the 2026 Diamond League Final Winners – see below)
 - the athletes in the World Ranking positions to be eligible to receive an invite
 - the athletes in the next best World Ranking positions
 - Following the end of the ranking period, based on the entry numbers for each event and considering **ONLY** the pre-entered athletes, World Athletics will determine:
 - the confirmed automatic invitations from:
 - Paris 2024 Olympic Games
 - World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025
 - the athletes subsequently invited based on their World Rankings to complete the entry numbers
 - The list will be published on 3 September 2026



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- **2026 Diamond League Final:** Winners of the 2026 Diamond League Final will automatically receive an invitation to the Ultimate Championship. If these winners have previously automatically received an invitation through other means (i.e., 2024 Olympic Champion, 2025 World Champion, World Ranking as of 01 September 2026), the invitation will go to the next highest-placed finisher who has not already automatically received an invitation to participate. Athletes entered into the Diamond League Final via a national Wild Card are not eligible for these invitations. Final Entry Places will be confirmed on 06 September 2026, and the eligible athletes will be notified directly.
- **Invitations for Relay Events:**
 - Automatic invitations for the first six placed relay teams at the World Athletics Relays Gaborone 26, and for the best two ranked teams at the end of the qualification period to fill the two remaining places. The qualification period for the relay teams starts on 22 August 2025. Should any of these eight teams decide not to participate in Budapest, their spot will be taken by the next best ranked teams at the end of the qualification period. For the purpose of being ranked, the results of relay races will be valid only on the condition that they are part of a competition staged in compliance with World Athletics Rules and that at least two different international teams, representing at least two countries, complete the event. In case of a tie the results will be separated by the thousands. If the tie remains, the best performance achieved in the World Relays will be take precedence.
- **Host Member Federation:**
 - World Athletics may invite a number of individual athletes or relay team in selected events. These will not impact the above defined Target Numbers as athletes will be added to the respective fields.
- **Exceptional Invitation:**
 - World Athletics has the right to provide an entry to an athlete who for whatever reason has not qualified for the Championship. This athlete would be within the above defined Target Numbers. Such exceptional invitation is limited to one per event and, unless notified otherwise, the deadline to allocate them is Monday 17 August.

Timeline

- 1-10 August 2024 – Olympic champion automatic qualifiers confirmed
- 22 August 2025 – World Ranking Qualification Period opens for relays
- 2 September 2025 – World Ranking Qualification Period opens for individual athletes
- 13-21 September 2025 – World champion automatic qualifiers confirmed
- 2-3 May 2026 – World Athletics Relays automatic qualifiers confirmed
- 1 September 2026 – World Ranking Qualification Period closes for all events
- 3 September 2026 – Provisional Entries published
- 5-6 September 2026 – Diamond League winners confirmed
- 7 September 2026 – Final Entries published
- 11-13 September 2026 – World Athletics Ultimate Championship



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Legal Notice

All invitations to participate are issued at the sole discretion of World Athletics in accordance with the above conditions and criteria. All invitations are subject to the individual athlete being eligible to participate in accordance with World Athletics' Rules and Regulations. Athletes must not be subject to any disciplinary decision whether issued by Athletics Integrity Unit, World Athletics, the Disciplinary and Appeals Tribunal, the Safeguarding Case Management Group, Court of Arbitration of Sport or their Member Federation which suspends, prohibits or otherwise prevents their participation in athletics and therefore the Ultimate Championship.

Any decision to issue an invitation to participate is final and there is no right of appeal. As stated above, these are the only conditions and criteria for an individual athlete to be eligible to receive an invitation, therefore Member Federation nomination and selection requirements do not apply to the WAUC. Member Federations must not, under any circumstances, place on athletes additional conditions, requirements to or otherwise circumvent the conditions and criteria set out in this document or place further obligations or demands on an athletes' participation generally.