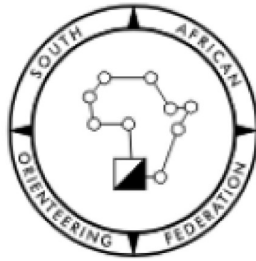


SOUTH AFRICAN ORIENTEERING FEDERATION

SEASONAL POLICY 2026



DEVELOPMENT - GROWTH - EXCELLENCE

1 OVERVIEW

The policy aims to support the international development of:

- i) Athletes who show the most likelihood of meeting SAOF's performance targets in the current season, and
- ii) Athletes who show strong indications of potential to do so in future seasons.

The Seasonal Policy document is administered by the High-Performance Manager in consultation with the Selection Committee. This responsibility automatically devolves to the Vice President Technical when no High-Performance manager is currently appointed.

This policy will be updated on an annual basis to reflect competitions, tours and training camps in the forthcoming season.

2 PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy is intended to

- Provide squad members with a clear understanding of the process, details of and requirements for selection to teams, tours or training camps for the forthcoming season.
- Provide the selectors with a clear understanding of the teams, tours and training camps for which selection must be made for the forthcoming season.

3 GENERAL

All teams will be selected and entered by the South African Orienteering Federation.

Athlete funding for competitions and camps is subject to availability of funds. Funds may be distributed through various incentive policies in accordance with the SAOF's High-Performance Strategic Plan (HPSP) targets.

Some selections may be made on a self-funding basis.

In all cases the criteria for selection will follow the general Selection Policy document (*i.e. the primary areas for consideration will be international performance record, demonstrated potential for high performance, and current form*).

The SAOF's High-Performance Strategic Plan (HPSP) will act as a guide for selection strategy, with the objective of achieving the targets laid out in the plan.

For the various competitions, tours or training camp, the main races to be used as an indicator of current form are listed below.

In addition, where any other criteria are being treated as particularly important for a particular competition or camp, this information is given below.

4 ATHLETE AVAILABILITY

All Junior and Senior National Squad members will be required to indicate availability for a list of competitions, tours and training camps for the upcoming season during the Squad application process (see Appendix 2).

Any changes to availability must be indicated in writing as soon as possible to the chairperson of the SAOF Selection Committee and the High-Performance Manager.

5 COMPETITIONS AND TRAINING CAMPS

Further competitions and training camp selections may be added at shorter notice.

5.1 World Cup Races (various in 2026)

National Squad members will only be considered for selection upon application for specific World Cup races by the athlete. Selection is subject to the athlete attaining qualification criteria for the selected World Cup races as determined by the IOF.

Athletes should expect to be self-funded unless otherwise notified at a later date.

Confirmation of selection will be on a case-by-case basis prior to each World Cup race.

For further details: <https://orienteering.sport/world-cup/>

5.2 World Championships, Italy (6-11 July 2026)

The World Championships event program changed from 2019 onwards. Odd years are organized with forest-based competitions and even years are organized as urban-based competitions. 2026 is an Urban Sprint WOC

South Africa can only field at maximum the following number of athletes:

Forest Based Events	Male Competitors	Female Competitors
Middle Qualification	3	3
Middle Final	Per qualification	Per qualification
Long Distance	1	1
Team Relay	1 team of 3 runners	1 team of 3 runners

Urban Based Events	Male Competitors	Female Competitors
Sprint	3	3
Knock-out Sprint Qual.	3	3
Knock-out Final	Per qualification	Per qualification
Sprint Relay	1 mixed team - 2 men	1 mixed team - 2 women

The Selection Committee will thus select athletes for specific events. This may include designated reserves for specific events, whilst non-travelling reserves may also be selected at the Selection Committee's discretion. The WOC Team Coach in consultation with the Team Manager will be responsible for confirming the final Relay teams shortly before the events based on the available team athletes at the Championships and their current form at the time.

Some athletes and slots for various events at WOC may be pre-selected earlier in the season than the final team announcement date. If so, such pre-selection may be subject to demonstrating continued fitness levels through the remainder of the season.

Form during the selection period may be used to select any athlete for any discipline. The main indicators of current form will be results from the first quarter of 2026.

Other results between September 2025 and the final selection date will be considered. The selectors may request a selection race(s) (either an existing designated event or a new specifically run competition) to help them in the selection process. If this is to occur, relevant participants from the squad will be notified no less than 30 days beforehand. Such a selection race will have a notable bearing on selection.

Athletes may be required to perform 3000m tests on a track on multiple occasions during the season, on dates to be determined by the National Coach in conjunction with the High-Performance Manager. These tests will be used for fitness monitoring, will be a *strong indicator for selection decisions for the Sprint Distance* event and athletes will also be expected to achieve certain benchmarks to be selected for WOC.

Some athletes may be pre-selected. If so, such pre-selection may be subject to demonstrating continued fitness levels until the event.

Athletes should expect to be self-funded unless otherwise notified at a later date.

Final confirmation of all selections will take place on or before **12 April 2026**.

For further details: <http://www.woc2026.it>

5.3 Junior World Championships, Sweden (28 June–4 July 2026)

A total of up to 6 men and 6 women may be selected. Non-travelling reserves may be selected at the Selection Committee's discretion.

The main indicators of current form will be results from the first quarter of 2026. Other results between September 2025 and the final selection date will be considered. The selectors may request a selection race(s) (either an existing designated event or a new specifically run competition) to help them in the selection

process. If this is to occur, relevant participants from the squad will be notified no less than 30 days beforehand. Such a selection race will have a notable bearing on selection.

Form during the selection period may be used to select any athlete for any discipline.

Athletes may be required to perform 3000m tests on a track on multiple occasions during the season, on dates to be determined by the National Coach in conjunction with the High-Performance Manager. These tests will be used for fitness monitoring and may be used as additional evidence for selection or de-selection. Athletes will be expected to achieve certain benchmarks in order to be selected for JWOC.

Some athletes may be pre-selected. If so, such pre-selection may be subject to demonstrating continued fitness levels until the event.

Athletes should expect to be self-funded unless otherwise notified at a later date.

Final confirmation of all selections will take place on or before **12 April 2026**.

For further details: <http://www.jwoc2026.se>

5.4 National Training Camp (20-22 March, Venue TBC)

The total number of athletes selected for a National Training Camp may be subject to various logistical and financial constraints. The High-Performance Manager will advise on the final number of slots available at a later date. Non-travelling reserves may be selected at the Selection Committee's discretion.

If selection is necessary, this will be done so as to best fit the development of short, middle and long-term strategic goals as encapsulated in the SAOF's HPSP. Selection will be made based on judgments of which athletes would benefit most from training and which athletes would be able to best use this experience to achieve HPSP goals.

Selected athletes will be required to advise the High-Performance Manager of any medical issues prior to the camp. Issues that would prevent the athlete from training effectively on the camp will require the athlete to stand down from the camp in favour of a reserve.

Some athletes may be pre-selected.

Athletes should expect to be self-funded unless otherwise notified at a later date.

Final confirmation of invitation and if necessary, selection, will take place by a date to be confirmed. Importantly, this camp is subject to the finalization of various logistical matters, and regrettably there is no guarantee that the camp will proceed.

5.5 Other training camps and tours

Proposals will be considered if motivated.

5.6 Other International MTB-O, Ski-O and Trail-O Competitions

Given that the major focus of Orienteering in South Africa is for Foot-O, there is little administrative infrastructure for other disciplines of orienteering such as MTB-O, Ski-O and Trail-O. International competitions in such disciplines do take place however, and there is development potential for South African athletes to represent the country in such fields.

Any South African athlete who is a member of a SAOF club may apply to the Selection Committee to participate in any competitions in these disciplines where they will be representing the SAOF. The Selection Committee will consider such requests on a case by case basis, determining if selection is in the best interest of the SAOF and the competitor.

Selection is subject to the athlete attaining qualification criteria for the designated races as determined by the IOF.

Athletes should expect to be self-funded unless otherwise notified.

At the date of this document, selection to represent South Africa and participate in a World Championship in any of these disciplines is not yet possible.

6 BENCHMARKS

The SAOF Selection Policy document indicates that selections (to both squads and teams) will be made based on relative performance to certain benchmarks. The assessment against a benchmark may be made both relative to other athletes, as well as to that specific athletes' prior performance.

The purpose of the benchmarks is to allow assessment of both technical performance and physical fitness levels.

6.1 Technical performance benchmarks

Ranking systems allow for comparison of performance both relative to other athletes and over time. Possible ranking systems that can be considered include:

- World ranking points (gained through participation in World Ranking Events);
- Rankings in terms of Attackpoint (gained through registration on www.attackpoint.org);
- Performance log (for example in Gauteng points are awarded in both a short course and colour-coded log system); or

- For championships, the athletes' performance is based on time relative to others on the same course (i.e. percentage of winner's time across all classes on the course)

Each of these options have pros and cons, often caused by the relatively small number of athletes and events in South Africa, which can result in skewed outcomes. Benchmarking against certain athletes assists with some of these problems. Benchmark athletes include those that compete regularly and have been consistent in their performance on an annual basis over the years. The benchmark athletes are likely to be top performing athletes within their age class (a general benchmark) in addition to top performing athletes within the M/W21 age group (the top South African athletes). Athletes who do not compete regularly against these athletes will be assessed relative to their peers (who would have been racing against the benchmark athletes).

6.2 Physical fitness performance benchmarks

The running of 3000m time trials has been in existence for the national squads since 2011. As such, it forms the most useful benchmark to assess physical fitness for both squad and team purposes. A 3000m time trial, run within 3 months before a specific competition or 1 month before the selection date whichever is the longer period, will be used as a determination for inclusion in a team (referred to as the qualification TT).

6.3 Benchmarks for Seniors

Athletes in the senior squad are likely to be able to gain ratings across all the benchmarks set out in 6.1 above. Inclusion into the senior squad can occur if the athlete shows:

- a good performance relative to the top South African athletes; and
- as it relates to a developing athlete, improvement in performance over the past year/compared to previous years measured against general benchmark athletes; or
- as it relates to a developed athlete, maintaining their performance compared to previous years.

Selection for a senior team can only occur if the athletes' performance is within a narrow margin of the top South African athletes.

Senior athletes are expected to already be able to run a fast 3000 m time trial. In order to be selected for a senior team their qualification TT must either

- be within 10 seconds of their personal best (PB), or
- for men be at or under 10 minutes (at altitude) or 9 min 45 sec (at sea level); or
- for ladies be at or under 12 min (at altitude) or 11 min 42 sec (at sea level).

6.4 Benchmarks for Juniors

Inclusion into the junior squad can occur if the athlete shows acceptable performance relative to general benchmark athletes. In order to make these relative comparisons, in addition to competing in their age groups at championship events, junior squad members should, as a minimum, be competing at the following levels in colour coded events: Men-Blue, Ladies-Green. Furthermore, athletes who wish to be selected for JWOC team should be running as follows: Men-Brown events, Ladies -Blue events for long events and Brown for middle distance events.

First time JWOC

To be selected for the JWOC team for the first time, an athlete must deliver an acceptable performance relative to benchmark athletes. The benchmark athletes are likely to not fall within the M21 category.

Squad members should also be showing a trend of improving their own time trials (subject to reasonable explanations for deviations).

Second time JWOC

To be selected for the JWOC team for a subsequent occasion, the athlete must show improvement in both technical and physical form. That means they must show relative improvement compared to the general benchmark athletes, and they should be showing improvement relative to M/W21 athletes. As it relates to their qualification TT, it should either

- be within 10 seconds of their personal best (PB), or
- for men be at or under 10 min 30 sec (at altitude) or 10 min 14 sec (at sea level); or
- for ladies be at or under 12 min 30 sec (at altitude) or 12 min 11 sec at sea level.

6.5 Benchmarks for Youth

Youth squad members should, as a minimum, have delivered good relative performances:

- in U16 (or above) age group championship events,
- green, blue or brown colour coded event/s, and
- men's or ladies short course events (i.e. not the novice courses)

APPENDIX 1: CONTACT INFORMATION

Vice President Technical

Paul Wimberley

Tel: 082 550 7793

Email: technical@orienteering.co.za

High-Performance Manager

Garry Morrison

Tel: 082 330 2496

Email: high_performance@orienteering.co.za

SAOF Selection Committee 2025/2026

Margaret Archibald

Jacori Uys

Carl Holmes

Nicholas Mulder - Chairperson

Richard Venter

Email (Chairperson): selection_committee@orienteering.co.za

APPENDIX 2: SQUAD MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Please complete to the best of your abilities and mark 'unknown' or 'not applicable' where necessary. This form is for applications for Senior and Junior squad membership. Potential Youth squad members do not need to complete a form. Closing date for applications is 14 December 2025.

I hereby apply for membership of the following squad(s):

☐ Senior

☐ Junior

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name : _____

Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

Date of Birth : YYYY – MM – DD

Current Hometown : _____

Cell No : _____

Email Address : _____

Occupation : _____

ORIENTEERING INFORMATION

South African Club : _____

Other Clubs : _____

Years of Orienteering : _____

Orienteering Coach : _____

Athletics Coach : _____

RECENT PERFORMANCES

Please list your 3 best performances in the last 12 months, rate them out of 10 and explain why.

1. Race: _____ Rating: _____

Detail: _____

_____ Placing: _____

2. Race: _____ Rating: _____

Detail: _____

_____ Placing: _____

3. Race: _____ Rating: _____

Detail: _____

_____ Placing: _____

ORIENTEERING GOALS

Please describe your orienteering goals for 2026

Please describe your longer-term orienteering goals (2027 and beyond)

CONSIDERATION FOR SELECTION

Please indicate which of the following events and camps you would like to be considered for selection in, or would like to attend in 2026.

- ☐ WOC Italy
- ☐ World Cup events Which Rounds?: _____
- ☐ JWOC Sweden
- ☐ National Training Camp

Any specific comments as to your availability/non-availability?: _____

COMPETITION PLAN 2026

In addition to the selection events above, please state which international, national, provincial and other major events you plan on competing in.

TIME TRIALS

Please include details of your 3000m TT records:

Lifetime PB: _____ (achieved in which year) _____ (sea/altitude?) _____

Fastest time in last 12 months: _____ (sea/altitude?) _____

What is your target time for 2026 (by end April) for the TT's : _____

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Please indicate any areas where you believe your current training or competition plan is deficient and indicate what assistance you require. This is for the benefit of the HP Manager in improving the HP structure and support facilities and is not considered in the selection process.

AGREEMENT

I certify that all information given in this application is complete and true. I will notify the South African Orienteering Federation (SAOF) Selection Committee of any changes to this information as contained herein. I acknowledge that the Selection Committee requires the foregoing personal information as part of the selection process for the national squad and team. The SAOF is committed to keeping my personal information confidential and, except as provided herein, it will not be sold, rented, traded, or disclosed to anyone else.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to abide by the SAOF Code of Conduct for Athletes, including anti-doping rules as laid out by the IOF and IOC. I also agree to abide by the SAOF Selection Policy, including any appeals on the process or decisions.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of parent or guardian if applicant is under the age of 18 years:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

All applications for national squad membership must be received by the Chairperson of the SAOF Selection Committee by 31 December 2025. The application must be emailed to the address below. Squad selections will be announced by 18 January 2026.

By email to: Nicholas Mulder
The Chairperson of the SAOF Selection Committee
selection_committee@orienteering.co.za