

# RACING EXPLAINED

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## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Athletes at Youth and Junior stages of the Performance Pathway are very much still developing and learning should be the absolute priority at these ages in all races. Racing covers 2 pillars of the [Athlete Development Framework](#) - [Intelligent Racing](#) and [One Day One Race](#). Athletes should be supported to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in both.

**One Day One Race** at this age and stage is about learning to deliver a performance on a given day. In doing this athletes need to understand that performance and outcome are different and that best performance may not correlate with best outcome and vice versa. Whatever the outcome, it is the process that supports performance that should be the priority for developing athletes.

**Intelligent Racing** is about exploring decision making in races. To support Intelligent Racing we would encourage all athletes to race with a plan. Athlete learning will come in reviewing their race and plan. Draft-legal Triathlon is very fluid and dynamic and during a race a lot of decisions are made; this means a lot can go right and equally a lot can go wrong too. Making a wrong decision should not be viewed as a failure, they will naturally happen as athletes explore different racing scenarios/strategies. Critically the best intelligent racers in our sport are very adaptable and can flex their plans if required. Fearlessness to commit to decisions and racing positively (i.e. racing with purpose and intent) should be very much encouraged over being a 'passenger', and praised no matter the outcome. A passenger is defined as an athlete who is passive in a race and just follows others with no real purpose or intent. It is far better to make decisions that may not have the desired outcome than to follow others blindly and passively.

## OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of international and domestic opportunities for British Youth and Junior athletes. These are listed below and selection policies can be found [here](#)

### INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

**World Juniors** - Held annually are attached to the World Triathlon Series (WTS) Grand Final. As would be expected competition is intense and of a very high level over sprint distance. This event also hosts the U23 Worlds so gives Juniors a great chance to see both U23 racing first hand along with the senior events too. There is also the chance to race in a mixed U23/Junior relay.

**Euro Juniors** - Are also annual and over sprint distance, usually in June/July (May in Olympic year), and normally attached to the European Senior Champs. Given Europe's relative strength in triathlon the standard is just a little lower than the Worlds. Athletes benefit from a Junior only mixed relay which is always a highlight of the trip.

**Euro Youths** - Held annually offering multiple racing opportunities the heats and final format is spread over 3 to 4 days. Athletes race over just longer than super sprint distances along with the chance to compete in a mixed relay too. Youth A and Youth B athletes are eligible for this event.

**Youth Olympics** - Held every four years with the next event being 2022 in Africa. Athletes aged 16 and 17 in the calendar year are eligible. The race is over sprint distance and there is a mixed relay. Selection is very challenging with athletes needing to first compete in a European qualifier where 12 places are available for European athletes with only one male and one female qualifying per nation.

### OTHER RACES WITH SELECTION POLICIES

**ETU Junior Cups** - Are a series of races held across Europe for athletes aged 16-19. They vary in quality and British Triathlon will normally choose to support some of the key events due to the learning and development opportunities these will provide - this might be because of the race location, date, course specifics and/or perceived quality of field. To be eligible for starts athletes will need to satisfy the ETU Junior Cup selection policy to demonstrate they are developmentally ready for the experience. This season's supported events will be:

**Quarteira** - An established early season event that often attracts a strong field. With a normally choppy sea swim (a first experience for most GB athletes) and relatively technical bike it provides some good learning opportunities.

**Holten** - a long running key European event that normally attracts a relatively strong field and is close to home. It serves as a great mid season opportunity and has a split transition which is a new experience for most GB athletes.

**Riga** - Is an ideal opportunity for developing athletes to cut their teeth at - a short distance from the airport with the race hotel at the finish this event provides a really good introduction to racing at this level.

Selection policies for ETU Junior Cups can be found [here](#) - please scroll down to and click on Junior selection policies

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## OTHER RACES WITH SELECTION POLICIES

**UK School Games** - Our first Games in 2018 was a huge success giving us the chance to join the most well established national sporting festival for young athletes of school age. A multi-sport event held every 2 years over 4 days the Games involves athletes from a number of leading sports. Sport England and the Youth Sport Trust put considerable funding into this event to give it a big 'Games' feel. Athletes live and race on site and with opening ceremony, accreditation's, team kit, etc.; the experience is deliberately designed to be very much like a Commonwealth or Olympic Games. Teams will consist of 2 girls and 2 boys representing the 10 English Regions along with Wales, Scotland and Ireland. To combat Relative Age Effect this event has been designed for athletes in school years 10 and 11 in England and Wales or for Scottish athletes competitors will need to be 15 or 16 on the 31st August in the year of competition. This gives quarter 4 born athletes, normally the youngest in their competition year an opportunity to compete as the oldest athletes in the field. Venue restrictions and a desire to give athletes multiple racing opportunities to support 'Intelligent Racing' mean athletes will race in less traditional formats over three days. This includes an Aquathlon (heats/finals) on day 1, a bike race and bike skills test on day 2 and a mixed relay on day 3.

In the 'off' years British Triathlon is committed to supporting it's own School Games. For 2019 this will take place at Bryn Bach Parc on August 3rd. The exact format is TBC, however, the event will run under similar principles and philosophies and for athletes of the same ages. Once formats and selection policies have been confirmed more details will be found [here](#) on our Competition Page.

**Super League** - Is a relatively new concept designed to promote racing over shorter non traditional formats on technical circuits and over multiple races for leading senior athletes. After a tremendously successful 1st season in Jersey Super League is expanding Youth and Junior racing to Malta and Jersey for 2019. Invites to race will determined from Super Series rankings. This event will support 'Intelligent Racing' and provide 12 British athletes per age/gender (6 in Jersey & 6 in Malta) the chance to race against other nations on very technical courses in a Super League format along with having the opportunity to watch the World's leading senior athletes prepare and race over multiple events across 2 days on the same course. All athletes will receive free race suits and entry.

## DOMESTIC RACING

Revolves around the [Super Series](#) for Performance Pathway Youth and Juniors. The Super Series has some key aims: primary is that it provides the best platform for our leading athletes to learn and develop their **Intelligent Racing** and performance delivery (**One Day One Race**) skills. This is achieved by the following:

**Field strength and depth** - Regional Academies focus race programmes on the Super Series ensuring strong fields at all events. This creates close competition, reduces time for decision making, supports **Intelligent Racing** and helps drive standards upward.

**Varied racing opportunities** - The Super Series looks where possible to provide a set of varied events and experiences to promote athlete learning - this includes:

**Swim** - beach/pontoon/deep water starts along with 1 and 2 lap swims - the latter including a WTS style Australian style exit/entrance (running onto and off beach) between laps.

**Bike** - flat and rolling courses with differing degrees of technical difficulty - some extremely technical, some not.

**Run** - flat and hilly courses, some long and straight and others more technical

**Transition** - some short and compact and others large, some with short runs between disciplines and others much longer

**Different formats** - we have a strong belief that we should vary racing opportunities. This includes the traditional triathlon event plus events with heats and finals and/or less traditional race formats along with the addition of mixed relays. Each event will provide the athlete with a different set of learning experiences and so build their bank of **Intelligent Racing** knowledge

**Geographical Spread** - where possible events are spread around the country in an effort to decrease travel load. While every effort is made here it is important to understand that we do not have the financial capacity to operate our own Series and drafting format Youth and Junior events are more expensive to promote then non-drafting age group events, so this does reduce our options.

## MIXED RELAY

Mixed Team Relays offer fast, intense racing experiences in a very engaging team format. With it's inclusion into the Olympic Games British Triathlon is keen to expose our young athletes to relays domestically. Through it's Olympic qualification structure the ITU is placing a heavy emphasis on the relay. We are keen to mirror this domestically and in so doing look to gain competitive advantage. For Youths and Juniors there will be 2 main opportunities at Hetton and at the British Triathlon Big Weekend (formally Under 20's).

1. Hetton fits at the end of a busy day of racing and is designed very much as an engaging and learning experience. To support this Academies enter balanced teams to create closer racing. Additional teams are made up so all athletes are able to race
2. The British Triathlon Big Weekend will provide a more focused delivery opportunity. On the second day of the festival athletes will race to represent their Region/Academy

Some of the leading Juniors may be invited to take part in the British Elite Mixed Relay Cup. This is a senior age event and will attract many of the best athletes in Great Britain.