

MSB Club Guidance on Championship Relay selection



Relays are one of the few opportunities in athletics where children can work together as a team. They offer a real opportunity for fun, team bonding and camaraderie and are greatly enjoyed by all young juveniles. For that reason, we encourage all coaching groups to incorporate all aspects of relay into their games and activity plans at training days.

The club recognise that relay selections for the purpose of representing MSB at Club Championships can sometimes be a challenging and emotive process, and that there can be diverging views on how this is done. Therefore, we have created guidelines in order to ensure consistency and transparency for all involved.

Relay teams should be selected in a spirit compatible with our four core club values of:

1. **Integrity** – through a transparent, clear and fair selection process across all training groups.
2. **Respect** – through respectful communication between all those involved.
3. **Excellence** - through the selection of a performance “A” team for all age categories.
4. **Inclusion** – through selection of additional B/C/D teams to promote the development of athletic ability, to reward effort, enthusiasm and commitment to training, and to make every effort to give everyone who wants to run on a relay team the opportunity to do so.

Recommended selection process:

- It is very important that all registered athletes in MSB who are interested in participating in Championship relay competitions have the opportunity to do so where at all possible. This may require athletes to be part of a relay team from a different training group and this type of integration across training groups should be encouraged.
- Selection of an MSB ‘A’ relay team should be comprised of the fastest athletes available to compete for both the Dublin and National Championship relay competition dates. Current season times can be used to establish athlete data. In the absence of available times, trials can be run to determine fastest. Results of more than one run-off or trial can be used at the coaching team’s discretion.
- Coaches should advise athletes and parents of both regional and national competition dates prior to selection. ‘A’ Team selection should ideally comprise of athletes available for both Dublin and National competition dates.
- Subsequent Relay teams (B/C/D etc.) can be entered at the coach’s knowledge and discretion to promote inclusion, develop athletic ability and to reward effort and commitment to training.
- Relay teams at ages U14 and lower should ideally comprise athletes only from that age group unless there are insufficient athletes available. In such cases, an athlete from the next available lower age group can be run up one age group (in line with Athletics Ireland relay rules). Step-ups should ideally be avoided for younger age groups as it may mean running two relays in one day alongside individual events.
- For the older U15 and U16 age groups, the ‘A’ relay teams should be comprised of the fastest four available and eligible athletes across that age group and the next lower age group. In line with Athletics Ireland relay rules, two Athletes must be from the correct age group and up to two athletes can run up an age category. Therefore, the ‘A’ relay team should consist of the two fastest available athletes from the correct age category, and the

two fastest available athletes across both the correct age category and one age category below.

- The 'A' relay team at age U17 and upwards should be comprised of the fastest four available athletes across the correct age group and the next lower age group. This is in line with Athletics Ireland relay rules which state that up to four athletes are eligible to run up an age category for U17 and upwards.
- Subsequent relay teams (B/C/D etc) at ages U15 and upwards should be comprised of athletes only from that age group unless there are insufficient athletes available. In such cases, an athlete from the next available lower age group can be run up one age group.
- Juvenile athletes training in senior or specialist groups or any other group outside of their specific "Age / year Group" must be included and made aware of plans for relay selection. Communication with juvenile athletes training in groups outside of their "Age/Year Group" should be conveyed to the respective coaches of these juvenile athletes in the club. The respective coaches will in turn communicate with the athletes and their parents.
- Coaches should collaborate on relay selection where eligible, available and interested athletes are coached by different coaches within the same age category in MSB. A relay coordinator can be appointed to support this process if coaches feel this role is needed.
- Where trials / run-offs are being organised, the time and date should be agreed between relevant coaches and communicated to parents to ensure that interested athletes are present.
- Coaches should announce relay teams well in advance of competition dates to allow teams to get familiar with relay zones, practice smooth baton exchange and build a team rapport. Recommended lead time for relay practice is a minimum of two weeks out from the competition date but ideally longer.
- Coaches should make clear to athletes whether they are a runner or a sub.
- Selections for children's team games pairings in the U9, U10 & U11 age categories should, where possible, seek to pair children of similar abilities together.
- Attendance at training and commitment to training should also be considered when selecting teams.
- Selection should be made separately for the indoor and outdoor season.
- Athletes cannot be on two teams in one age group. I.e., cannot sub on one team and run on the other
- Changes may be made in the run up to the competition or on the day due to unforeseen circumstances like absence, injury or illness.
- To be considered for a relay team, athletes should ideally be a member of MSB and training with the club for a minimum of six weeks.