

# UKSG EXPLAINED

## What is the UK School Games?

The UK School Games (UKSG), established after London's winning 2012 bid and part of the Olympic legacy, is an integrated multi-sport event for the UK's leading disabled and non-disabled young athletes of school age. The Games take place from 30 August to 2 September 2018 at Loughborough University.

The event seeks to create an inspirational and motivational setting that not only provides talented young athletes with the opportunity to thrive and perform at the highest levels, but encourages more young people to take part and succeed in sport. The Youth Sport Trust develops and organises the 2017 School Games, which is supported by National Lottery funding from Sport England.

The competition re-enforces the experience of Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games complete with an Opening Ceremony and an Athletes Village. All twelve competing sports will be hosted directly at the world-class facilities of Loughborough University campus, creating a unique multi-sport atmosphere.

Competition for 2018 has been re-vamped with all previous sports being asked to re-apply and some new sports being invited to apply including Triathlon. In a very competitive process, with some of the more established sports not being extended an invitation moving forward, Triathlon was commended on its application with its focus on learning and development through multiple race opportunities, creative planning around event delivery without the opportunity to swim in open water and in looking to positively combat Relative Age Effect. Triathlon like most sports will have both an able-bodied and Para-Tri race programme.

Other sports included for 2018 are: Athletics, Canoeing and Rowing, Cricket, Cycling, Hockey, Judo, Modern Pentathlon, Netball, Wheelchair Tennis and Wheelchair Basketball.

The School Games provides wide range of opportunities and experiences for hundreds of young people, as well as the athletes. Young volunteers and young officials work to support the event, young performers appear at the opening ceremony and the young media team are on hand to capture all of the sporting excitement.

## TRIATHLON AT THE UKSG

Athletes from Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland will compete at the Games. Scotland, Wales and Ireland will compete as Home Nation Teams. English athletes will represent their Region. All teams will consist of 2 girls and 2 boys. Eligible athletes will be in Year 10 or Year 11 of the 2017/2018 school year. For athletes in Scotland, where school years are different, athletes must be 15 or 16 on 31st August 2018

In line with the development of the [Athlete Development Framework](#) pillar of [Intelligent Racing](#) athletes will have the opportunity to compete across 5 events over 3 days. Due to venue constraints and a desire to give athletes the chance to experience different triathlon related challenges to broaden their Intelligent Racing bank of knowledge events will be of a less traditional format.

### Day 1 - Swim/Run Focus (Loughborough University)

- Aquathlon (200m/2000m TBC) over a heats and final format - all athletes will race twice.

### Day 2 - Bike Focus (Prestwold Hall Motor Racing Circuit)

- Bike Skills Figure of 8 (Dustbin) Test
- Bike Circuit Race\* - this will include a pursuit start\* with athletes running into T1 as if exiting the swim, after T1 athletes will complete a bike race (approx. 30 mins) before coming into T2 and then running a short distance to the finish line.

\*start times will be ordered according to results across the Aquathlon and Bike Skills Test. The fastest athlete will go first with others following according to their start time..

### Day 3 - Mixed Team Triathlon Relay (Loughborough University)

- The 2 girls and 2 boys will combine to form a 4 person team. The Relay will be run in the normal format with athletes going girl/boy/girl/boy and each athlete completing a mini-triathlon before handing on. The swim will be pool based.

## RELATIVE AGE EFFECT

Given that this is a School event it makes sense to race in school year groups. There is also another important reason for Triathlon choosing to do this; Relative Age Effect (RAE). This applies to when an athlete's birthday falls in the competitive year. In Triathlon the competitive year is from January to December. Athletes born early in the competition year are more likely to be more physically developed and in sports like Triathlon where physical maturation plays a part consequently are at an advantage\*. Such athletes are more likely therefore to be selected to teams and be given additional opportunities e.g. higher quality competition, better coaching etc. This only serves to widen the disparity and means it is more likely to continue into adult racing. This is the case in our sport where there is significant RAE in men's racing. From our recent data collection we have found that there is a slight RAE in British Youth and Junior Triathlon in girls racing and a more profound one for boys.

In looking at RAE it is usual to group athletes in the four quarters of the year. In Triathlon quarter 1 (Q1) athletes are born in Jan/Feb/Mar and Q4 athletes are born in Oct/Nov/Dec. It is the Q4's who are most under represented at the front of races and also most under represented in senior male racing. Grouping athletes in English/Welsh School years support us in giving Q4's a much needed opportunity to be the oldest in their competitive age group.

A further effort to combat RAE is in place with Regional Academy selection. Currently Academies in England And Wales select by age on 1st September which favours Q4's and Scotland pay special attention to those athletes born in this quarter when conducting their selections.

## SELECTION POLICY

It is important to note that UKSG age groups cross over British Youth and Junior age groups. More information on the Selection Policy can be found within Junior Selection Policies [here](#).