

Proposal of Regulation Changes for Athlete Representation at the NZ Track & Field Championships

Keegan McCauley, Athletics NZ's Head of Track and Field Events proposes that Athletics NZ amends the Competition Regulations pertaining to athlete representation and uniform requirements at the NZ Track & Field Championships.

Introduction and Background

Currently athletes at the NZ Track and Field Championships can compete under the name of their centre and in their centre uniform or if they aren't selected for a centre team or don't want to compete for the centre can compete under the name of their club and in their club uniform. While this structure supports grassroots development, it has created fragmentation in branding and athlete identity during the NZ Track & Field Championships.

The 2025 Championships highlighted this issue, with feedback from centres indicating a strong preference for simplifying athlete representation to centre-only. This shift is seen as a way to strengthen team cohesion, reinforce regional pride, and present a more unified and recognisable structure for audiences engaging with the event.

A key motivation behind this proposal is the desire to create a competition format that allows spectators and supporters to more easily identify who athletes are representing, fostering inter-regional rivalries, and enhancing the overall narrative of the Championships. This approach mirrors the structure of many other representative sports across the country, where regional identity plays a central role in building public connection and engagement.

Proposed Regulation and Changes to Existing Regulations

A small working group of two centre representatives and the Athletics NZ Head of Track and Field Championships have worked on the below proposed changes to the current regulations understanding the need for some flexibility in the centre representation while also understanding the impacts on logistics for centres to implement this in 2026.

Current Regulation:

C4.2.2 – A competitor shall be a member of a duly selected Centre Team, but if not selected for the Centre and has achieved the required standard may compete as an individual.

C4.2.3 – Competitors shall compete in their Centre uniform, unless competing as an individual when they shall compete in their club uniform

Proposed Changes to the Regulations:

C4.2.2 – All athletes who have met the required standard may compete and shall do so under the representation of the Centre in which the club they are currently registered for resides. Athletes may not compete as individuals under club affiliation.

Note: Only Centres may enter relay teams. No club entries will be accepted.

C4.2.3 – All competitors shall wear the official uniform of the Centre they are representing. Club uniforms are not permitted to be worn at the NZ Track and Field Championships. Athletes approved to represent their Centre or Centre of Origin under clause C4.2.4 must wear the uniform of the Centre.

C4.2.4 – Athletes may apply for special exemption to compete for their Centre of Origin, defined as the Centre where they were first registered with Athletics NZ. This exemption is strictly limited to representation of the athlete's Centre of Origin and does not permit representation of any other Centre.

- a) Requests must be submitted in writing to the Athletics NZ Dispensation Committee no later than the entry deadline date prior to the Championships.
- b) Approval is at the sole discretion of the Athletics NZ Dispensation Committee and will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.
- c) If approved, the athlete must compete under the name of their Centre of Origin and wear the official uniform of that Centre.
- d) Athletes may only represent one Centre at any one NZ Track and Field Championships. Dual representation is not permitted under any circumstances.

No athlete may compete for a Centre other than their current registered Centre or their Centre of Origin.

Comment:

The Rules Committee have considered this proposal and have the following feedback to offer.

The Rules Committee supports this proposal.

This proposal will now be posted for the required 50-day consultation period before any recommendations for adoption go to the Board.

Andrew Orme (Convenor), John Gamblin, Paul Craddock & Karen Gillum-Green
Rules Committee
October 2025