

Combined-Events Olympic Games Proposal

14 April 2020

Dear World Athletics Commission,

The proposal below is a representation from the combined event community in response to the postponement of Tokyo 2020 to 2021, as well as the qualification system for the 2021 Olympic Games.

In these difficult times, it was inevitable that sports would be affected. With daily life being drastically altered, it is difficult for any of us to not only train, but also plan for the 2020/2021 seasons.

With the recent notification that WA will be reviewing the qualification system, and the suspension of the qualification period until 1 December 2020, we would like to respectfully request an additional modification for the Combined Events.

The combined eventers who have signed this letter strongly agree that the current criteria are not fair to many decathletes/heptathletes, therefore we have developed alternative suggestions for consideration in regards to the Tokyo 2021 qualification criteria:

- 1. Reduce the required number of competitions to qualify from 2 down to 1;**
- 2. Increase the number of competitors from 24 back to 32;**

Allowing combined-event athletes who don't achieve the automatic qualification standard during 2019 and 2021 to take their **one best decathlon [for men] and heptathlon [for women] score** forward to qualification will offer a fairer qualification model globally compared to the current set of criteria. We suggest that the remaining athletes are selected based on the descending order of the best scores in the ranking list.

The current qualification system for combined eventers requires two high-ranked competitions. If the competition calendar next year remains similar to the one in 2019 and 2020, the highest bonus point competitions before the Olympics qualification deadline will be in Lana (Italy); Gotzis (Austria); Arona (Spain) and Ratingen (Germany). The limited number of high-ranked competitions could result in the qualification system negatively impacting many athletes who will not be accepted into these meetings. The combined-event meeting organizers largely decide who can and who cannot compete at these competitions.

If the qualification requirement of two “placing scores” remains the same, many of the athletes, including those who do get accepted into the above mentioned meetings, in order to fight for their chances to qualify for the Olympics, will have to provide two high-scoring results between the end of April and the end of June 2021. It is especially true for those athletes without highly ranked scores in 2019. This is unrealistic, given the limited high placing score competitions available, as well as injury and recovery rate in our event. Additionally, we do not yet know how the coronavirus pandemic around the world will affect competition travel in 2021.

By increasing the number of athletes from 24 back to 32, it will provide a safety net to those athletes who may have been impacted more significantly by geographical restrictions during this time. This will also align the combined events more closely with other events. Currently all eight field events allow for 32 athletes to compete at major competitions, and all other events have 40+ competitors, excluding the 10,000m (27), and the relays (16).

We believe that historically there is a close enough performance gap between the 24th and 32nd ranked athlete to merit the increase in field size. For example, over the past 5 years, the average 24th and 32nd ranked scores in the decathlon are 8089 and 7987 points respectively⁽¹⁾. We believe this 102-point spread is close enough to ensure that a field of 32 would still produce a world-class event.

While we understand that preparing and altering a schedule for the Olympic Games is an incredibly complex process, we would ask you to consider this proposal to help ensure fair and equal opportunities for all decathletes and heptathletes during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Decathletes and Heptathletes

⁽¹⁾ *Average from 2015-2019 top lists, 3 per country.*

Decathletes

Nr.	NAME	COUNTRY	PERSONAL BEST
1	Ashton Eaton	USA	9045
2	Eelco Sintricolaas	Netherlands	8539
3	Adam Sebastian Helcelet	Czech Republic	8335
4	Mihail Dudaš	Serbia	8275
5	Cedric Dubler	Australia	8229
6	Tim Nowak	Germany	8229
7	Paweł Wiesiołek	Poland	8204
8	Gaël Querin	France	8194
9	Bastien Auzeil	France	8191
10	Harrison Williams	USA	8188
11	Dominik Distelberger	Austria	8178
12	Fredrik Samuelsson	Sweden	8172
13	Romain Martin	France	8138
14	Jorge Ureña	Spain	8125
15	Brent Newdick	New Zealand	8114
16	Curtis Beach	USA	8084
17	Fredriech Pretorius	South Africa	8002
18	Marek Lukas	Czech Republic	7997
19	Jeremy Lelievre	France	7911
20	Wolf Mahler	USA	7897
21	Darko Pešić	Montenegro	7846
22	Aaron Booth	New Zealand	7827
23	Andri Oberholzer	Switzerland	7827

24	Axel Hubert	France	7810
25	Kyle Cranston	Australia	7786
26	Simon Ehammer	Switzerland	7735
27	Juuso Hassi	Finland	7734
28	David Brock	Australia	7733
29	Markus Ballengee	USA	7722
30	Nick Guerrant	USA	7717
31	Reinis Krēgers	Latvia	7618

Heptathletes

Nr.	NAME	COUNTRY	PERSONAL BEST
1	Kateřina Cachov	Czech Republic	6400
2	Alina Shukh	Ukraine	6381
3	Maria Huntington	Finland	6339
4	Caroline Agnou	Switzerland	6330
5	Grit Šadeiko	Estonia	6280
6	Turpin Esther	France	6230
7	Chari Hawkins	USA	6230
8	Sarah Lagger	Austria	6225
9	Ashtin Mahler	USA	6222
10	Miia Sillman	Finland	6209
11	Georgia Ellenwood	Canada	6173
12	Adrianna Sulek	Poland	6171
13	Annik Klin	Switzerland	6132

14	Maria Vicente	Spain	6115
15	Sofia Yfantidou	Greece	6113
16	Lucia Vadlejšch	Slovakia	6103
17	Rimma Buinenko	Ukraine	6079
18	Nicole Oudenaarden	Canada	6073
19	Laura Arteil	France	6050
20	Katie Stainton	Great Britain	6029
21	Mari Klaup-McColl	Estonia	6023
22	Bianca Salming	Sweden	5985
23	Puiu Beatrice	Romania	5890
24	Lucia Mokrášová	Slovakia	5789