

TRI **THLON** **CANADA**

Survey Summary Report

FEEDBACK

2017 ITU – WTS Grand Final and World Championships Rotterdam

Summary

2017 ITU – WTS GRAND FINAL AND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ROTTERDAM

Age Group Athlete - Survey Results

Introduction

September 14th – 17th 2017 less than 4 weeks after the 2017 Multisport World Championships in Penticton, 300 Age Group Team Canada Athletes competed in Rotterdam at the 2017 ITU WTS Grand Final and World Championships. This was a strong turnout for an international World Championship event for Team Canada particularly with the Multisport World Championships taking place in Canada just a short time before.

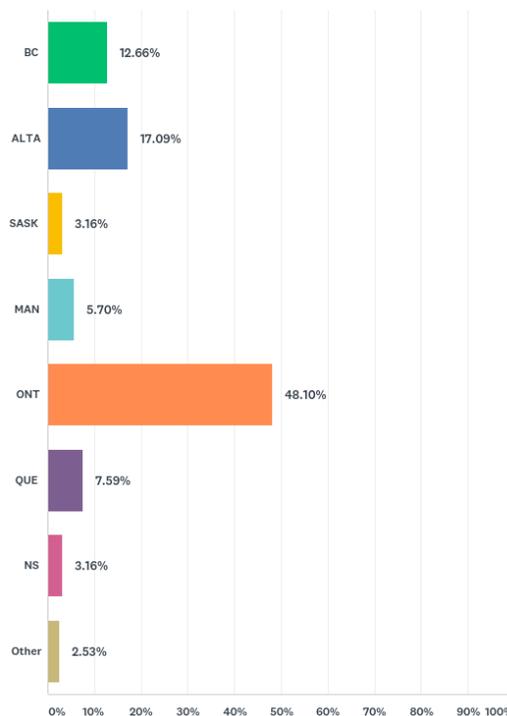
This was no question; a challenging year for Triathlon Canada with the hosting of three international ITU events and fielding large Age Group Teams at two World Championship events. It was important to Triathlon Canada to solicit feedback from the athletes not only about the Penticton and Rotterdam Team Canada events but, about the Age Group program in general. Like Penticton, a survey was sent to all Team Canada Age Group athletes post Rotterdam and with 158 survey respondents, a response rate of just over 50% was achieved.

The following provides a summary of the survey responses (French and English survey results combined) provided by athletes who participated in the ITU-WTS Grand Final and World Championships in Rotterdam. There is considerable information within these survey results which, when combined with the information from the Age Group survey post Penticton, will help to inform program changes moving forward.

The Survey Respondents

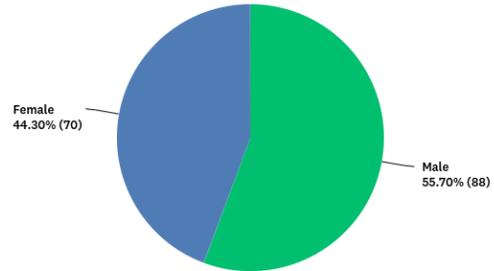
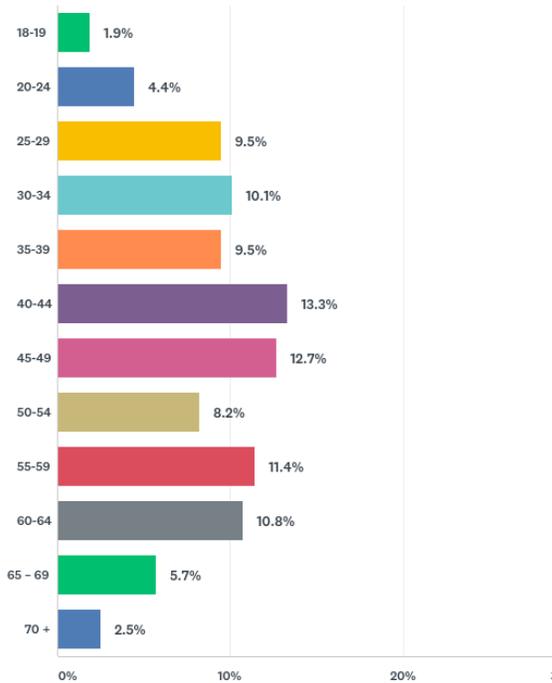
By far, the majority of Age Group participants in Rotterdam came from Ontario (48%) but competitors from across the country were represented amongst the team members. The number of BC participants was much lower than would be expected for a World Championship event but, with the Penticton event so close to home this year it is probably safe to assume that many BC athletes chose to compete there instead of travelling overseas.

Q1 Where do you live (select province or, other)?



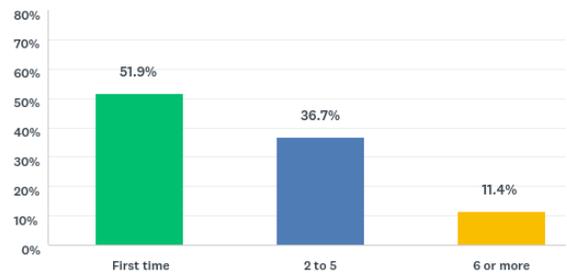
56% of the respondents were male and 44% female and ranged in age from 18 years to 70 years plus.

Q3 In which Age Category did you compete?



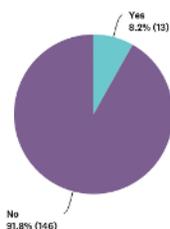
While 52% of respondents were competing as members of a Team Canada Age Group World Championships Team for the first time, 48% of the Rotterdam Team had competed 2 or more times in a World Championship event. This is 48 percent of respondents who could contribute to the survey as more seasoned Team Canada athletes with prior experiences to draw from/compare to.

Q4 How many times have you competed as a member of a Team Canada Age Group World Championships Team?



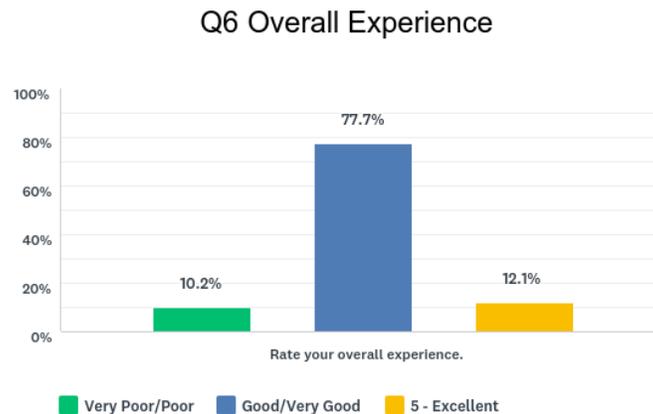
8.2% (N = 13) of respondents participated in both the 2017 ITU Penticton World Multisport event and the 2017 ITU World Championships in Rotterdam.

Q5 Were you part of the Age Group Team at the ITU World Multisport Championships recently held in Penticton?



The Athlete Experience

When asked to rate their overall experience at the 2017 ITU World Triathlon Grand Final in Rotterdam. 157 athletes responded to this and 90.3% rated their experience as “good”, “very good” or “excellent”. 9.7% rated their overall experience as “very poor” or, “poor”.



Athletes were then asked to evaluate their 2017 ITU World Triathlon Grand Final (Rotterdam) experience based on some key elements particularly in the lead up to their event participation. These elements included: the qualification process; the registration process and; travel and accommodation.

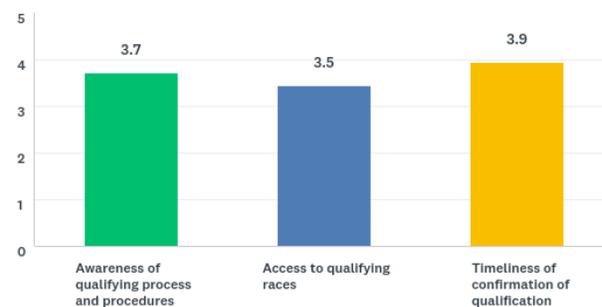
The responses are presented as weighted averages falling between 1 (very poor), 2 (poor), 3 (good), 4 (very good) and, 5 (excellent).

Awareness of Qualifying Process

In terms of the Qualifying process, survey respondents (N=157) rated: a) their awareness of the process; b) their ability to access qualifying races, and; c) the timeliness of their receipt of confirmation of their having qualified.

On each factor, using a weighted average, athlete responses fell between “good” and “very good” overall. However, 17.2% rated their access to qualifying races as “very poor” or “poor” suggesting that this is an area for specific improvement.

Q7 Qualifying Process



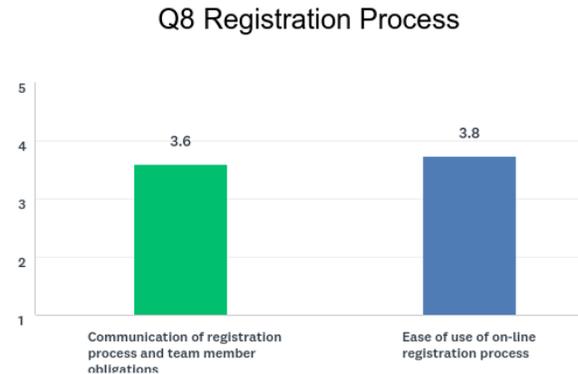
18 respondents provided specific comment. In particular, comments noted the lack of qualifying races in BC specifically and, Western Canada more broadly. In Ontario and Alberta it was noted that the main qualification opportunity (s) conflicted with another major event being held in the province. Some commented on the difficulty of finding current information on the qualification process, and the available races/qualification spots available which may be related to the old website which has since been overhauled.

With respect to qualification, suggestions provided covered a broad spectrum. Some would prefer increasing the number of provincial/regional qualifiers to reduce the need to travel to nationals, while

others prefer that the national championships be the focus for qualification (along with eliminating automatic qualification).

The Registration Process

Respondents were asked for feedback on the Athlete Registration Process in terms of “communication of the process and Team Canada participant obligations” and, the “ease of use of the on-line registration process”. Again, ratings overall were between “good” of the 157 respondents to these questions, 12 provided specific comment.



While most found the registration process fairly easy

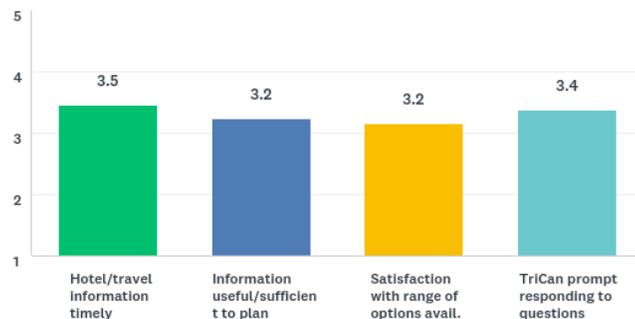
to use, two suggestions for Triathlon Canada stem from the comments provided:

- a) Prior to inviting athletes to commit to the Age Group Team Canada program, Triathlon Canada should provide a communication that outlines not only the qualification process but, all the associated costs and expectations that participants can anticipate so they are able to make an informed decision regarding their participation.
- b) As much as possible, Triathlon Canada should use one consistent email for all Age Group Team Canada communications in order to avoid important communications ending up in athletes’ junk mail or spam folders. With changeover in personnel in 2017, this became a problem for some people.

Travel and Accommodation

Respondents (N=154) were generally satisfied with the information received from Triathlon Canada on travel and accommodation options although ratings on these factors were slightly lower than ratings received on the same factors for the Penticton Multisport World Championships. Approximately 20% of respondents provided very poor/poor ratings on the information received, the range of options provided and on the promptness of Triathlon Canada’s response to questions indicating these as areas for improvement for future events.

Q9 Travel and Accommodation (Weighted Average)

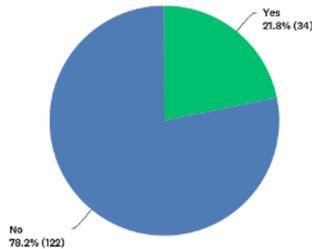


38 respondents provided specific comment. In particular;

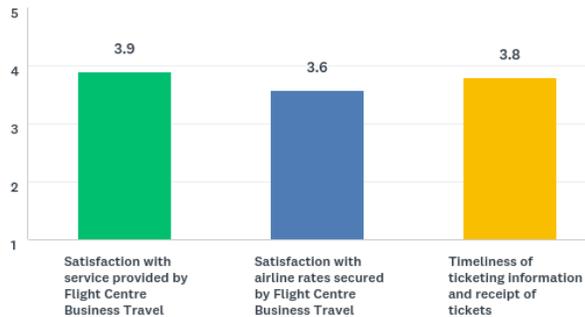
- Many noted that the Team Canada hotel was outside their budget/too expensive so they pursued other options
- Some noted that they booked the team hotel online closer to the event date, at a cheaper rate than the group rate that was secured by Triathlon Canada
- A number were frustrated that schedules (events and activities) came too late and with flights already booked, they had to miss some of the pre-race activities

Only 34 of 156 respondents (22%) indicated that they booked their travel through Triathlon Canada’s travel partner – Flight Centre however, of those who did use this service, the satisfaction ratings on service provided; airline rates secured and timeliness of receiving tickets was quite high (Very Good).

Did you book with "Flight Centre", TriCan's travel partner?



Q11 If yes, please rate the following:

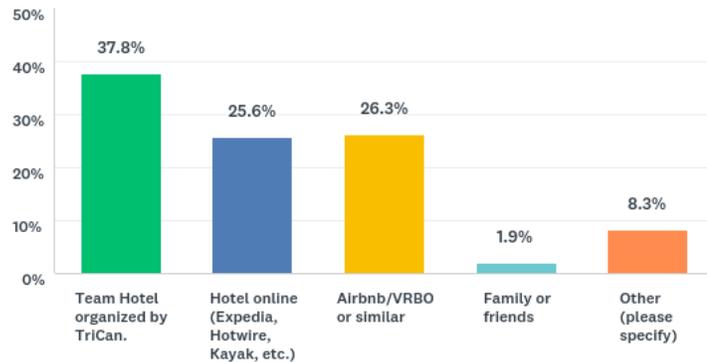


Two people commented that Flight Centre could have done a better job providing information on how the cost of transporting bikes would affect flight prices.

37.8 percent (n = 59) of 156 respondents indicated that they stayed at the Team Hotel (S.S. Rotterdam), with a number commenting that they booked the Team Hotel on their own/online, at a lower rate than the group rate secured by Triathlon Canada. 26.3% booked accommodation through AirBnB/VRBO or similar service.

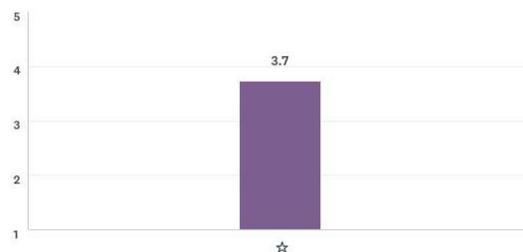
Q12 Where did you stay in Rotterdam?

Anecdotally, those booking this type of accommodation typically had family members with them and these options are more affordable for groups than hotel rooms. The remainder booked alternative accommodation online or stayed with family/friends.



Of those who did stay at the Team Canada hotel satisfaction ratings were quite high. The greatest advantage reported by those who stayed there was the proximity to the race venue and the access to information and seeing/meeting other athletes. Some expressed concern about noise, room size and lack of proximity to eating establishments. Amenities to be considered for future events and Team Canada hotels would be: access to gym facilities and a team room and the inclusion of breakfast.

Q13 Satisfaction with Team Hotel (Weighted Average)

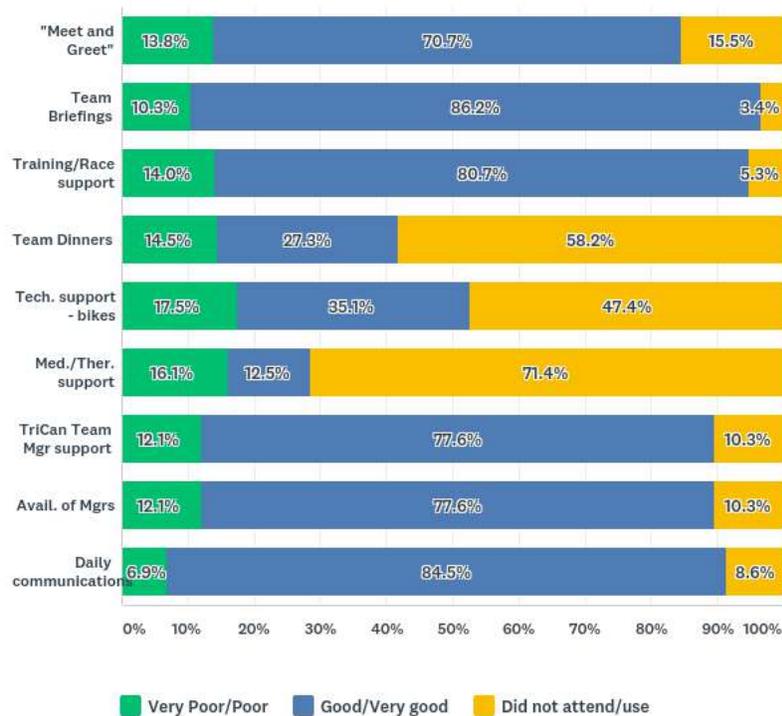


Team Canada Events and Event Support

Only 58 survey respondents took the time to complete this question but, from those who did, the overall ratings in each of the key areas identified (where people availed themselves of the opportunities), was for the most part rated “good” to “very good”. Daily communications and team briefings received the highest ratings. Areas for improvement are noted in: Bike (technical) and medical/therapy support.

58.2% of respondents did not attend the Team dinner and of those who did, the overall rating was mixed.

Q14 Satisfaction with Team Canada Events and Support.



With respect to these ratings, the comments provided greater clarity.

- Unanticipated by Triathlon Canada was the challenge presented by having “two transitions with a lot of water in the way” and transport being unavailable early in the morning on race day.
- It was noted that the Meet and Greet event and the Team Dinner were difficult to find/get to. This would have been easier if these were held at the Team Canada hotel however, there was recognition that this year the team hotel did not have a large enough room to accommodate this at the hotel.

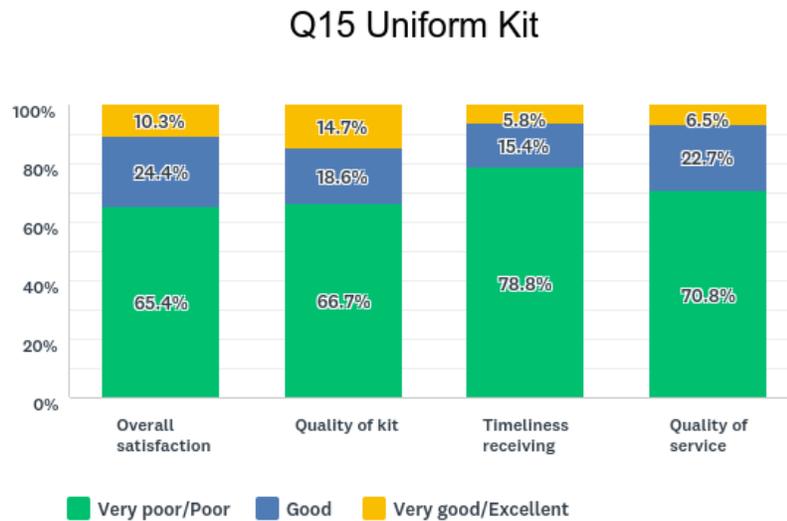
Based on feedback provided, Team Canada hotel selection should preferably have the capacity to host the Team Canada events as well as provide a team space/location where team managers can be accessed for questions.

Uniform Kit

The greatest amount of feedback received from survey respondents was related to the Team Canada uniform kit for the Age Group athletes in 2017. This holds true for athletes who raced in Penticton and/or Rotterdam and took the time to respond to this survey.

More than 65% of survey respondents rated their satisfaction with the kit; the quality of the kit; the timeliness of receiving the kit and the quality of service from the supplier as “Very Poor” or “Poor”.

The factor receiving the poorest rating was the “Timeliness of receiving the kit” and a very close second was the “Quality of Service from the supplier”.



90 of the 158 respondents provided specific feedback in the comments section.

While cost was a factor for some, unlike the responses from the Penticton survey the comments received were less about cost and more related to the quality of the items received, the timeliness of receiving the items and the service/responsiveness from the supplier and Triathlon Canada. More so than in the Penticton survey results, significant concerns were raised about the uniform colours.

“the design itself was extremely poor – embarrassingly basic – lack of Canadian identity, and more orange than the Netherlands uniforms”

Jackets received the most negative comment but concerns were raised about the quality of the materials (fading colours and fraying seams) on many of the items. The survey was sent prior to the supplier advising Team members that they are replacing the jackets for all athletes; a move that has been very positively received.

The racing suits had mixed reviews from one end of the spectrum to the other. Some thought the racing suits were great, others expressed concerns about colours fading, durability and seam construction.

Many commented on a lack of service or responsiveness from the supplier and many expressed their disappointment around the use of a non-Canadian supplier. Some respondents noted that they were still missing items and many expressed concerns about Triathlon Canada continuing to use the current supplier in the future.

The number and cost of kit items; the mandatory nature of these items, and until now; the inability to use these items for future Team Canada events was, like the Penticton results; raised as a significant concern by many. Many felt that some of the items were unnecessary and, were never worn as part of their Team Canada activities.

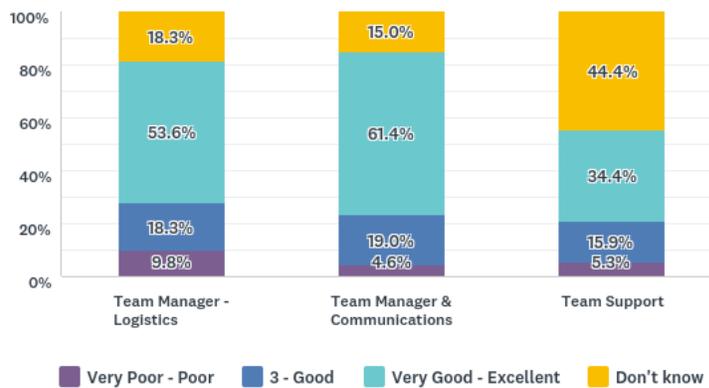
It is clear from the feedback that the overall experience for the Age Group athletes this year was marred by the experience they had with the uniform kits.

Management Team Support

There were two primary support team members and as an observation/training opportunity, a third member was added to the team in the final weeks of the program. Athletes were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the support provided by the Triathlon Canada Management Team members and overall, the ratings provided were quite positive.

“The team managers had a lot of balls in the air, the LOC was changing things mid-week and the bike course had some serious flaws. The team managers kept us sane, which I bet was not an easy task.”

Q16 Satisfaction with Support from Triathlon Canada Mgt. Team



Areas highlighted for improvement are:

- Better communication in the lead up to the event
- Greater anticipation of “on the ground” logistics issues (ie. Two transition zones) and, advanced planning
- Improved communication system throughout the event – the LOC was continually changing things due to weather challenges and it was difficult to keep communication flowing

“Their support, positive attitudes during difficult situations and enthusiasm made all the difference for athletes this year :)”

Q17 Name three things that could be improved upon for future Age Group Team events.

Suggestions provided numbered 357. The top 5 referenced improvements were:

1. Changing the uniform supplier with many specifically stating a preference for a Canadian supplier
2. Allowing team kit items to be used over several years and reducing the number of mandatory or, “non-essential” items - to save cost for athletes
3. Improving communication in lead up to and during the event, specifically referenced was the late communication of race information/athlete package prior to the event and an over-reliance on Facebook which some do not use

4. The creation of a stronger “team” environment through better communication and location of Meet and Greet event – greater opportunity for athletes to mingle, and the inclusion of spouse/family in these events
5. Improved support for logistics such as accommodation options, bike transportation, airport transfers, bike mechanics, bike “pump” for team use, etc.

Moving Forward

The following summarizes feedback from a section of questions put to the Age Group Team Canada athletes with respect to the program moving forward. There was significant commentary of which a brief summary is provided below. The purpose of this section was two-fold – to educate and to seek input on program changes that might be required moving forward.

The first question provided an opportunity to explain why the Age Group program is largely “self funded” and the support that is currently provided by Triathlon Canada.

Q18 Sport Canada is TriCan's major funder and primarily restricts its support to programs on the Olympic/Paralympic Pathway and youth participation. For this reason the Age Group Program is largely self-funded. Triathlon Canada is responsible for: Setting qualifying standards, managing selection, managing entries/payments/changes, making arrangements for team uniforms/design, and handling event media/promotions. If you had to prioritize the type of support that you receive from TriCan, how would you rank the following in order of priority from 1 (highest priority) to 6 (lowest priority).



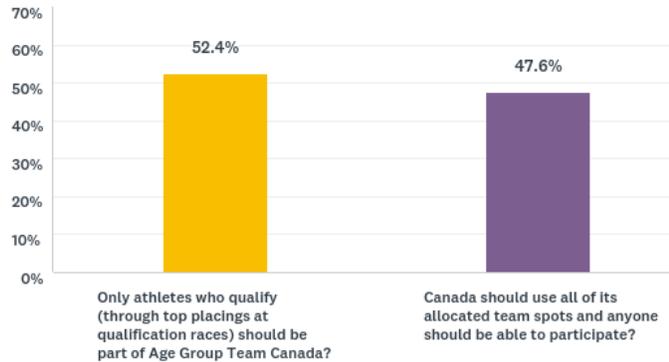
The highest weighted average represents an indication of the “highest priority” and the lowest weighted average represents what respondents viewed as the “lowest priority”. Having Team Managers at the event was clearly rated as the top priority, organizing team travel was rated as the lowest priority. The other factors are less easily discernible however, in addition to the functions listed in the question, the ranking indicates the priorities in the following order:

1. Team managers at the event
2. Organizing team accommodation
3. Organizing team social events
4. Organizing local transportation,
5. Arranging access to medical and therapy support, and
6. Organizing team travel

Age Group Team Canada - Selection

The next question (Q 19) queried survey respondents on how Team Canada athletes should be selected. Respondents were reminded that Canada is entitled to 20 team spots (by gender/age category) as per ITU rules and currently team spots are allocated first to those who automatically qualify through top placings at qualification races. Remaining spots are allocated on a first come, first serve basis to other age group athletes who meet certain criteria. Respondents were asked whether they thought:

- a) Only athletes who qualify (through top placings at qualification races) should be part of Age Group Team Canada, or
- b) Canada should use all of its allocated team spots and anyone should be able to participate.

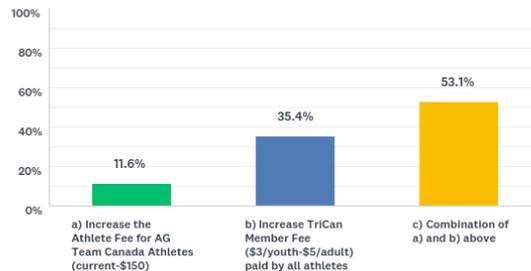


Of the 147 respondents to this question, 52.4% of respondents felt that only those athletes who qualified should be part of the Age Group Team while 47.6 % thought Canada should allow all the allocated team spots to be used by opening participation to others once the qualification spots were spoken for.

There is a great sense of pride among Age Group athletes that is linked to having “qualified” and a sense that this is diminished when the door is then open for anyone to compete. In comments provided, the recognition of this is balanced by suggestions on how the ability to be “qualified” could be expanded. In other words, there appears to be support for the concept of qualifying versus “anyone being able to participate” and, the idea of a minimum standard and importance of fielding a team of athletes who are competitive at a World Championship level event.

Funding for the Age Group Team Canada Program

Q20 Currently Age Group Program costs exceed program revenue and unfortunately the program is not sustainable at current levels of team support. Some of the options being considered by Triathlon Canada are listed below. Please identify the option that you would most support.



This was a “closed” question that required respondents to select one of the three options. 147 responded and 53.1% of those supported option c) Increasing both the Triathlon Canada Membership fee and, the Age Group Athlete fee however, many provided further comment to clarify their views. Comments range from one end of the spectrum to the other.

Comments related to Team Canada Fees and Funding:

While most respondents felt that participation in a World Championships was expensive, many who responded felt that moderate increases (option a, b or, c) would be reasonable,

"I think the whole World Championship thing is costly and prohibitive for a lot of people. That being said, the Athlete fee isn't all that high considering what we get – I see it as good value for money. You could probably up it by \$25 with moderate complaints. The TC membership fee is peanuts and could definitely be increased."

"If you want to play you should have to pay ... however for those that can't afford to pay but deserve to play well, maybe b) should be the option. Good luck with this one!"

"It's an amazing event and \$150 is very inexpensive to take part in the Worlds. Equivalent to the price of a round of golf."

... particularly if the cost of uniforms was reduced:

"If athletes are not paying \$450 on uniforms each year, they will be happy to pay a higher team fee. \$150 is very modest for all the support, team events etc. that we get."

Some felt that the burden of cost for Age Group participation should remain with the Age Group athlete and that the broader membership should not have to pay to support Age Group athlete participation at Worlds:

"To me b) is not an option as others should not pay for age groupers to attend the worlds (by definition (c) is then not an option either)."

And, one or two went so far as to state that, in addition to Age Group athletes covering 100% of the costs of their program participation, they should be contributing to Triathlon Canada's development programs as well:

"I think AG team costs should be fully covered by the athletes plus some additional amount should be levied to go to development programs. \$5 per athlete should be doubled. Also encourage charitable donations to TC and provincial bodies."

Some did not feel there was enough information or financial transparency to provide an opinion on fee increases and preferred to look first at reducing expenses or exploring other revenue producing options before considering increases to athlete or membership fees:

"It is a bit hard to say increase the fees when I don't know how things are being spent. For example, could some things be cut out? But it wouldn't be a big deal paying a bit more, especially if you kept the race suit design the same, and got rid of the "mandatory clothing"."

"Another option is to reduce the money you spend on it. I do not know how all the costs break out."

"All I see here are revenue generating options ... where is the expense rationalization? I have no idea what your costs consist of and the value added by these expenses."

"What about looking for sponsorship?"

Final Comments

The final question of the survey was open ended allowing participants to share any final thoughts or comments. 66 provided comments in addition to those offered throughout the survey. Many of the comments were centered around the issue of uniforms and improvements needed in this area and many used this section to take the time to reinforce the importance of the Age Group Team Canada program and to thank Triathlon Canada and staff for their commitment to the Age Group program and this year's events. Some suggested that Triathlon Canada look to models in other countries as they undertook a program review and some comments made were specific to Rotterdam, the ITU and some of the challenges that were faced this year with respect to the venue.

"This was my first experience at the ITU World Championships. The event and the Team surpassed my expectations. I feel very lucky to participate in such a quality event with such great Managers and Team. The level of support and comradery was amazing and something I will always remember. I look forward to Australia next year and improving my level of fitness in the coming months. Thank you for providing this excellent program and opportunity."

"Thanks! As an Age grouper you are allowing me to have experiences I never thought possible."
