Draw group system - season 2026/27

(note: no changes have been made compared to the 2025/26 version)

Principles of the draw group system

For Individual and Sprint competitions there are four draw groups.

Athletes with a current WC Total Score rank 1-15 are designated as the Red Group and athletes ranked 16-30 are designated as the Blue Group.

Athletes with high IBU Qualifying points are designated the Green Group and are assigned to draw group four. The following limits are set for the 2024-25 competition year and may be updated by the IBU EB on recommendation of the IBU TC following each season or as needed after each trimester: for men over 80 points and for women over 90 points.

Athletes who are not designated into one of the three groups mentioned above, the non-designated athletes, are to be seeded into draw groups 1-3 by their NF according to the rules below.

NFs are required to spread their non-designated athletes among the three draw groups.

Draw Group 1: Each NF is allowed to enter one non-designated athlete into group 1.

The remaining non-designated athletes are to be spread among draw groups 2 and 3 as evenly as possible.

DRAW/SEEDING procedure:

Within each draw group and each designated group, a random draw will be conducted to determine the start order.

- The draw of non-designated athletes will be done based on the entered groups and determine the order of those athletes, giving a consecutive number 1-X
- The first 15 athletes will be the numbers 1-15 of this overall order
- Bib number 16 will be the first designated athlete of the blue group, followed by the next athlete (the16th drawn) of the non-designated draw; continuing by alternation of blue group athletes and overall non-designated list
- The first designated athlete of the red group will follow 60 seconds after the last designated athlete of the blue group, followed by the next consecutive athlete of the non-designated order; continuing by alternation of red group athletes and overall non-designated list
    - **Exemplary notes:** if all designated athletes are entered, this would be bib number 46 for the first red group athlete, followed by athlete number 31 of the non-designated list; The highest possible bib number of a designated athlete of the red group will be 74 if all eligible athletes will be entered

- The green group will be seeded after the last athlete of draw group 3; continuing by alternation with red group athletes if there are less non-designated athletes in draw groups 1-3 than needed to alternate until the end of the red group

For the first WC event of the new season (WC 1), the WC total score rankings from the previous season will be taken as a reference for the athlete's allocation into the red and blue start groups. After the first WC event (from WC 2 on), the current WC total score ranking will apply.

If an athlete from the Top 30 of the previous season for whatever reason does not start at the first WC event(s), he/she will keep the status of a red- or blue-group athlete until the end of trimester 1. Afterwards, he/she will lose this status and will be seeded according to his WC total score rank. Officially retired athletes and those with a long-term medical condition that will keep them from competing in the current trimester will be removed from the red and blue groups and currently competing athletes will move up to fill any vacancies.

Entries will be done as usual, on the day before the competition.

In the event of severe course conditions and high probability of having significantly different conditions in the beginning, middle and end of the competition, a group of 3 sports officials (the Race Director WC, the IBU Referee Course and the Sport&Event Director or, if one of them is absent, the IBU TD), may decide up to 180 minutes before the start to reorder the sequence in which start numbers are assigned to the designated and draw groups as follows:

- The first drawn athlete of the red group will be seeded first (from bib number 1), followed by the first drawn athlete of the blue group (bib number 2), continuing by alternation of red and blue group athletes
- The first athlete of the non-designated group will follow 60 seconds after the last designated athlete of the blue group, followed by the next consecutive athlete of the non-designated order until the end of the order

NOTE: In case the alternative system will be used, the same entry will be used for all athletes and the same draw(s) within each group will be used for the order of athletes.

Decision Process:

NOTE: The regular system to be used will be the new system. The alternative system will only be considered in extraordinary situations.

Weather Monitoring:
Continuous monitoring of weather conditions will begin 48 hours before the race and intensify as the start time approaches.

Main Assessment/decision:
An initial assessment meeting of the competition jury will be held before the draw for the race, to review weather forecasts, temperature trends, and snow conditions. A preliminary decision on whether the alternative draw system might be required will be made.

Change of Decision:
A change of the preliminary decision can be made latest 180 minutes before the competition start, based on the most up-to-date weather information and on-the-ground assessments of snow conditions and on request of one of the competition jury members, including the RD.

Communication:
All decisions and relevant information will be communicated through official channels, such as team notifications, and public announcements.