

2026.09 Team Selection Discretion Execution

Taede Mai – WCL Series Santiago Speed Start

PROPOSAL / REQUEST

- High Performance Staff submitted a proposal to grant Taede Mai a discretionary start at the WCL Series Santiago Speed event.
- The proposal would allocate the start to Taede Mai instead of Ben Jennings.
- The proposal was based on the Team Selection Discretion priority of maximizing the number of U.S. athletes finishing the season in the CUWR Top 40.

DECISION

- The Team Selection Committee (TSC) voted to apply Team Selection Discretion.
- Taede Mai will receive the WCL Series Santiago Speed start in place of Ben Jennings.
- Decision by the TSC in September 2026.

BACKGROUND

- See request submitted by High Performance Staff below.
- The request was evaluated against the priorities previously established by the TSC for evaluating Team Selection Discretion, including maximizing U.S. CUWR Top-40 season finishes.
- The request was evaluated against the standard National Team Ranking allocation for Santiago.
- The current CUWR positions and 2026 WCL Series performance and results of Taede Mai and Ben Jennings were reviewed.
- Input from High Performance Staff was considered together with the objective competition and ranking information.

DISCUSSION

- The TSC reviewed the previously established priorities for TSD consideration, including maximizing U.S. CUWR Top-40 season finishes.
- The current CUWR position and 2026 results of Taede Mai and Ben Jennings were reviewed.
- Taede is currently ranked 51st in the CUWR with 331 points, including 240 points earned at his only 2026 WCL Series event. Ben is currently ranked 71st with 129 points.

- The TSC considered that Taede is materially closer to a CUWR Top-40 position and that his 2026 WCL Series result demonstrates the potential to earn points at a level that could move him into the Top 40.
- The TSC also considered Ben's larger number of 2026 WCL Series starts. While these results provide a more established performance trend, they have not demonstrated a result at the level presently necessary to close his larger gap to the Top 40.
- The TSC recognized that Taede's limited WCL Series participation provides evidence of **potential**, while Ben's larger number of starts provides evidence of a **performance trend**. These are not equivalent measures or predictions of future performance, but both were considered relevant on a limited basis.
- Input from High Performance Staff was considered together with the objective competition and ranking information.
- The TSC recognized that Ben had priority for the Santiago start under the standard National Team Ranking and that applying discretion required sufficient justification to depart from that selection order.
- The TSC determined that the meaningful difference in the athletes' current positions and demonstrated 2026 WCL Series results, as applied specifically to the established priority of maximizing U.S. CUWR Top-40 season finishes, provided sufficient basis to apply Team Selection Discretion.
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SUBMISSION

The following request was submitted by High Performance Staff:

Hi again TSC,

We would like to submit a proposal to grant Taede Mai a discretionary start at the Speed World Series in Santiago. Granting this start would support our priority of maximizing the team's Top 40 finishes for the season by providing Taede with a final opportunity to earn the ranking points needed to move into that range.

Taede currently has 331 CUWR points. While 91 of those points came from the Pan American Cup last November and will drop off by the end of the year, he has demonstrated strong performance this season with 240 points earned from the one World Series event he has attended in 2026. In his limited WS experience this season, Taede has demonstrated his ability to achieve finals-worthy times under pressure. His performance in Madrid this year is supported by his other three most recent international results — at Youth Worlds in Arco (2026) and Helsinki (2025) and the 2025 Pan American Championship. On the other hand, while we value the consistency and dedication shown by Ben Jennings in his 7 starts this season, he has yet to demonstrate the ability to achieve the results necessary to qualify for finals. For these reasons, we believe that Ben is unlikely to improve his performance enough to break into the Top-40.

Based on the current ranking, we anticipate that approximately 500–550 CUWR points may be needed to secure a Top 40 position. Taede is within a realistic margin of making a significant move towards that range. While reaching the Top 40 range would require a strong result in Santiago, Taede is currently the athlete best positioned to close that gap based on his competition history and demonstrated ability to place well against the current field of speed athletes.

Given the 240 points he has already earned from a single World Series event, and his demonstrated ability to achieve strong competition results, we believe Taede is the strongest candidate for a discretionary start with the potential to maximize the team's opportunity for an additional Top-40 finish.

Thank you for your consideration!

HP Staff