



Explanation of the Tiebreaking Method used for the 2026 Commonwealth Games and the 2026 Youth Olympic Games

In preparation for the 2026 Commonwealth Games and the 2026 Youth Olympic Games, it is necessary to establish a clear and objective procedure for athlete selection in the event that the number of swimmers who achieve the Qualifying Standard exceeds the quota allocated by the Jamaica Olympic Association. To date, the JOA has not confirmed the number of available slots. Therefore, criteria must be published in advance to ensure transparency and fairness in any quota restricted scenario.

To address this situation, the Swimming Technical Committee has approved the use of a percentage of standard calculation as the primary tiebreaking mechanism. This calculation is applied only if the number of qualifiers exceeds the quota provided. If the JOA allocation is sufficient to accommodate all qualifiers then all swimmers will be selected without the application of this method.

This decision reflects the Swimming Technical Committee's commitment to move away from using World Aquatics (AQUA) Points as the default primary tiebreaker unless a competition's summons explicitly requires their use such as Universality allocations for the World Championships or the Olympic Games. AQUA Points will remain the final tiebreaking method as utilized in other criteria.

The Percentage of Standard Formula: $(\text{Athlete's Time} \div \text{Qualifying Standard}) \times 100$

Lower percentage = better performance.

Understanding the Percentages

- A percentage at 100 percent reflects a swim that exactly meets the Qualifying Standard.
- A percentage below 100 percent reflects a swim that exceeds the standard.
- Athletes with the lowest percentages are ranked highest because they have surpassed the standard by the largest margin.

Examples

1. **Women's 100 Backstroke**

Qualifying Standard: 1:05.24

Athlete's Time: 1:04.25

Calculation: $(64.25 \div 65.24) \times 100 = 98.48$ percent

2. **Men's 50 Freestyle**

Qualifying Standard: 22.86

Athlete's Time: 22.50

Calculation: $(22.50 \div 22.86) \times 100 = 98.43$ percent

3. **Women's 100 Breaststroke**

Qualifying Standard: 1:12.97

Athlete's Time: 1:09.86

Calculation: $(69.86 \div 72.97) \times 100 = 95.73$ percent

4. **Men's 200 Butterfly**

Qualifying Standard: 2:06.41

Athlete's Time: 2:05.15

Calculation: $(125.15 \div 126.41) \times 100 = 99.00$ percent

Ranking of Examples (Best to Lowest Performance)

1. Women's 100 Breaststroke — 95.73 percent
2. Men's 50 Freestyle — 98.43 percent
3. Women's 100 Backstroke — 98.48 percent
4. Men's 200 Butterfly — 99.00 percent

Application Compared to Other Competitions

This approach differs from Age Group competitions such as CARIFTA and Goodwill where the focus is on versatility and broad development. In those meets the number of events in which an athlete has met the qualifying standard serves as the primary tiebreaker because this aligns with the developmental philosophy of age group swimming. Senior competitions and high level junior meets such as the Youth Olympic Games which occur only once every four years have a stronger emphasis on specialization. Thus, a performance based system is therefore more appropriate.

Alignment with International Practice

Swimming Canada which does not typically use this method for senior competitions adopted the same calculation for its 2026 Commonwealth Games selection as their athlete numbers were restricted compared to previous iterations.

USA Swimming uses percentage based calculations for their senior level tiebreaks because the number of qualifiers often exceeds available quota places.

This method is therefore not arbitrary but reflects established international approaches used in situations where qualification depth exceeds quota limits. It ensures fairness transparency competitive integrity and the selection of Jamaica's strongest performers in constrained allocation environments.