



Age Group Masters Competitions 2026-2027

Guide for Masters Athletes

INTRODUCTION

The England Athletics Masters programme was established to showcase England's best Masters road runners and celebrate lifelong involvement in competitive sport. Over several years the programme has evolved, offering more opportunities to qualify and represent England.

The programme offers runners aged 35+ the opportunity to qualify to represent England at trail running, 10km, half marathon, and full marathon by taking part in qualification races spread across the country.

In recent years we have also offered one off opportunities to be selected to represent England at 5km rather than via a qualification race. For these events a selection policy is published outlining a range of criteria and runners submit an expression of interest which is then discussed in a selection meeting between representatives of England Athletics.

This document outlines the process of qualification for the programme (trail, 10km, half and full marathon). To find out the latest dates and opportunities have a look at this page;

www.englandathletics.org/athletics-and-running/england-competitions/england-teams-and-selection/england-age-group-masters

Whilst we work in partnership with British Masters Athletics Federation, the England Masters Road Running Programme is separate. You can find out details on the work of the BMAF and their competition opportunities at this link - <https://bmaf.org.uk>.

ELIGIBILITY

What age do you have to be to take part in the England Age Group Masters competition?

You must be 35 years or above at the time of your qualifying race. Age groups go up in five-year bands starting with V35-39, V40-44, V45-49 and so on. There is no upper limit to getting involved and recent England teams have had octogenarians taking part.

I'll be 35 at the time of the representative match, but 34 on the day of the qualifier can I be considered for qualification?

No, you must be 35 years or above at the time of your qualifying race.

I am a member of an affiliated club, does that make me eligible?

Yes, as long as your England Athletics 'athlete registration' is up-to-date. Please note that payment of your club membership fee does not necessarily mean you are registered with England Athletics depending on your club's membership policy. Some clubs register all their members for competition and build the athlete registration fee into their annual club membership, but many clubs have 'social' membership for non-competitive club runners. It is your responsibility to check your athlete registration status.

I am a member of an unaffiliated club or Run Together group, am I eligible?

No, the masters opportunities are a unique benefit to registered athletes of affiliated clubs, who pay an annual membership to compete as registered athletes in affiliated clubs only. However, if you choose to affiliate to a club then you will become eligible.

What is 'athlete registration'?

Athlete registration means you are a member of an England Athletics affiliated club and registered for competition in accordance with the UKA rules for competition. You will be issued with a Unique Reference Number as a registered athlete and your athlete registration needs to be renewed annually. Athlete registration also enables you to access a range of membership benefits. Please go to the link below for further information;

<https://www.englandathletics.org//athletes/athlete-registration/athlete-registration>

Do I need to be a member of a specialist Masters club to compete in the England qualifying events or representative teams?

No. Unlike some other Masters competitions you are not required to affiliate to a Masters club. So long as you are a member of an England Athletics affiliated club and have a current athlete registration you are eligible to take part.

I am English, but compete first claim for a Scottish or Welsh club, am I eligible to qualify for the England Age Group Masters team?

The England Age Group Masters programme is a unique competition benefit to registered athletes in English affiliated clubs, therefore 'yes', as long as you are also registered to a second claim English club.

I am Scottish/Welsh/Irish, but I live in England and compete for an English club, am I eligible to qualify for the England team?

Yes, as long as you are registered first claim to an English club. However, please note that in doing so this will make you ineligible to compete for your nation of birth in the same year.

Please see the UK competition rules at <https://www.uka.org.uk/competitions/rules/>

REGISTRATION

How do I register my interest with England Athletics?

For the 2026-2027 season we are continuing our registration system with [Roster Athletics](#). For each qualification race you will be asked to go onto Roster (following the link on our masters pages) and register. This lets us and other runners know that you intend to qualify.

Athletes must register for each qualification race separately using Roster. Remember to also enter the race directly with the race organisers. No athlete will be eligible to qualify if they are not registered and showing on the participant list for a specific race (e.g. Manchester Marathon) the night before the race. This registration must take place before the race up to 23:59 the day before, you will not be able to register after this time and applications for late registration will not be accepted.

On the England Athletics Age Group Masters webpages you will find each qualification race listed. In order to be eligible to qualify you must:

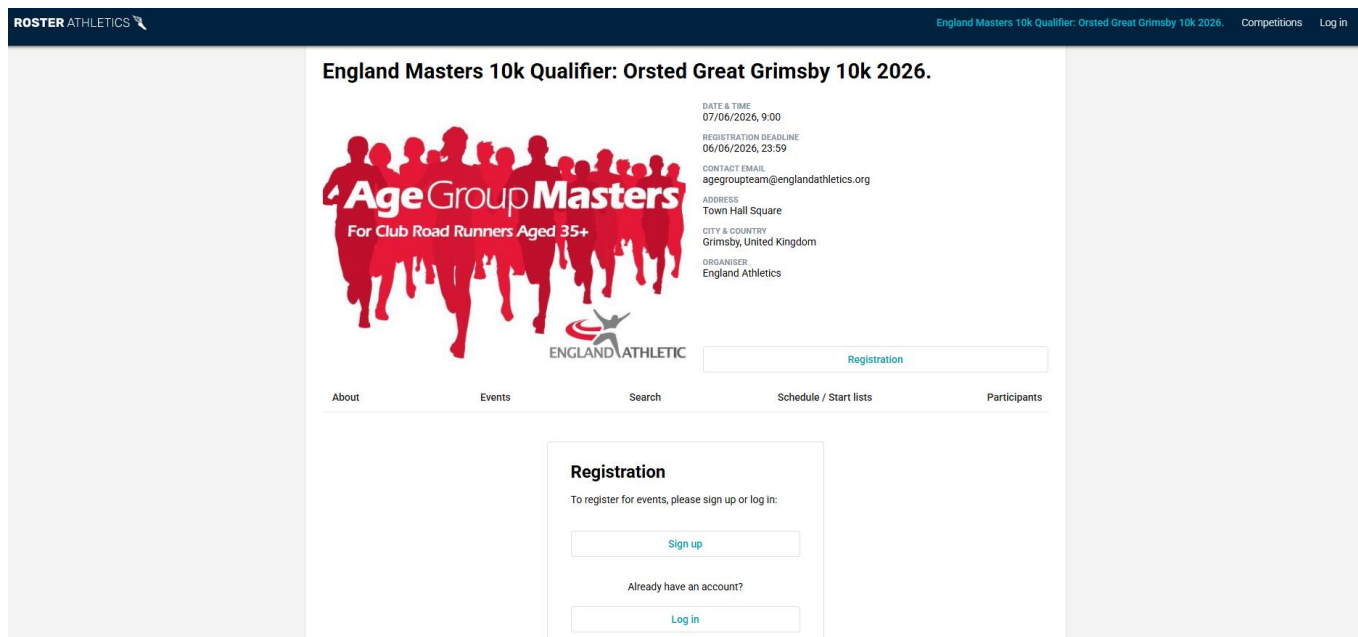
1. Click the registration link under each race and register on Roster to be a part of the Masters qualification race.
- AND
2. Enter each individual race where you intend to try to qualify on the race organiser's website

How do I register on Roster?

When you click on the registration link on our website you will be taken to the event page on Roster;

The screenshot shows the Roster Athletics website interface. At the top, there's a dark blue header with 'ROSTER ATHLETICS' on the left and navigation links 'England Masters 10k Qualifier: Orsted Great Grimsby 10k 2026', 'Competitions', and 'Log in' on the right. The main content area has a white background. The event title 'England Masters 10k Qualifier: Orsted Great Grimsby 10k 2026.' is at the top. Below it is a large red graphic of a group of runners with the text 'Age Group Masters For Club Road Runners Aged 35+'. To the right of the graphic, key details are listed: DATE & TIME (07/06/2026, 9:00), REGISTRATION DEADLINE (06/06/2026, 23:59), CONTACT EMAIL (agegroupsteam@englandathletics.org), ADDRESS (Town Hall Square), CITY & COUNTRY (Grimsby, United Kingdom), and ORGANISER (England Athletics). Below this is a 'Registration' button. A navigation bar with links 'About', 'Events', 'Search', 'Schedule / Start lists', and 'Participants' is present. The 'About' section is expanded, showing text about the registration process, the race organizer's responsibility, a link to the race website (https://tape2tape.co.uk/upcoming-events/), and instructions on how to register and indicate age category.

Click 'Register Here.' You will then see a page asking you to 'log in' or 'sign up.' When you use Roster for the first time you will need to set yourself up with a (free) account so unless you are already registered click 'sign up.' Once you have signed up you will be able sign up to compete as a masters athlete by selecting either the male or female race. Your age group will be automatically determined from your date of birth. Please remember you must also enter the race using the race's own entry system.



By registering on Roster you will be able to see which other athletes are aiming for Masters qualification at that race and their age category and be able to verify your qualification position more quickly after the race.

I didn't hear about this opportunity until after the qualifying race, can I register post-race?

No. **You must register your intent to be considered prior to the qualifying race.** Information regarding competition opportunities are given on our website and promoted in advance and is accessible to all visitors to the site and all members who are signed up to our e-bulletins.

Can I register interest in more than one qualifying race?

Yes, you can enter as many of the listed qualifying races as you wish. Remember you must register on Roster separately for each individual qualification race you intend to do.

I have registered my interest with England Athletics, does this now mean I am entered in the qualifying race?

No, you must enter the race separately via the race organiser's own entry page.

How will I know my registration was received?

You will know if your registration was successfully completed if you see your name listed under the 'participants' tab of the relevant qualification race on Roster.

What about registration of interest at the point of race entry?

This is not a system we use; you must express interest using the registration links on our website in order to be eligible to qualify.

The qualification race I intend to run does not have a registration link, what does this mean?

If the race you plan to qualify at does not yet have a registration link on our website it means the race is not yet live. Please check the website regularly as the link will be added once the race goes live and will be set up well in advance of the race date.

How can I identify other runners aiming for qualification on the day of my qualification race?

In 2026-27 qualification races we are asking runners intending to qualify for England Masters to indicate their age category (e.g. 35, 65 etc. based on their age on race day) through the use of a back number*.

* BACK NUMBER - A back number stuck or pinned on the back of your vest. Back numbers can be ordered as bibs or stickers online or runners can create their own. If you are making your own back numbers, please ensure it will survive inclement weather. Whichever method you choose, your age category should be clear and visible to other competitors to make the qualification process as engaging and as fair as possible.

Whilst we cannot mandate this as we will not be physically present at all qualification races, we ask athletes to do what they can to indicate their intention to qualify on the day of the qualification race. Whilst we will not disqualify athletes who are unable to do this, we ask people to try in the spirit of the competition.

QUALIFICATION & MINIMUM STANDARDS

I qualified in one age group, but by the time of the representative race I will be in another category.

What does this mean for qualification?

You must compete in the correct age category at the time of the given race. For example, you might run the qualifying race as a 54 year-old and qualify as a V50, but by the time of the representative race you have turned 55, meaning you will compete as a V55 in your England vest.

In simple terms you cannot qualify in an older age group for which you have not yet reached.

Where must I finish to qualify?

Barring race cancellations there will be five qualification races per event distance. The top three athletes in age category, male and female, (of those who have registered to qualify) will qualify provided they also have achieved the relevant time standard.

Please note you must finish in the top three of those athletes who registered. For example, if you finish 4th in your age category but the third placed runner has not registered to qualify you will be the third placed qualifier.

I finished within the top three places eligible for selection, but my time was slower than the advertised minimum standard, have I qualified?

You must have both a qualifying position and a minimum standard to secure selection, but the times do not have to be achieved on the day of the qualifying race.

If you have a minimum qualifying standard achieved within **3 months** prior to the qualifying event, in addition to your qualifying position, then you will be eligible for selection.

Times must be achieved in a UKA licensed races that appear on the Power of 10 results and ranking website. We cannot accept performances not listed on either site.

Please note that England Athletics reserves the right not to accept times achieved on courses that have been measured short. These races are indicated on the ranking websites.

I am in the V80 age group category but there is no standard time listed in the minimum standards table. How do I gain selection?

There are no standard times in the V80+ categories for either the half marathon or the full marathon. If you are aiming for selection and are a V80+ athlete then you will need to enter one of the listed qualification races and finish in the top 3. These serve as the route to selection for the following year's representative race. Please note that you will need to be 80+ on the day of the qualification race. If you are 79 for the selection race but will be 80 for the representative race you will need to achieve the V75 qualification standard.

I didn't run in any of the qualifying races, but I have a time or ranking that is better than other runners who have been selected for the team. Can I be considered for the team?

No, selection can only be achieved through taking part in a qualifying race. The qualifying races are a key part of the Masters programme and are the only route to selection.

How are the minimum standards decided?

The minimum standards are intended to be both aspirational but achievable by a good number of age group club runners. We regularly review the standards and adjust these, year on year.

I finished just outside the qualification places in my qualifier races, but I know that one of the qualifiers in the age group above will have moved up an age group by the time of the representative race, which opens up a qualification place. Can I be considered?

No, you must finish in the qualifying position on the day regardless. Many runners will move up an age group by the time of the representative race and as such we do not aim to back fill places.

Are places based on gun time or chip time?

Given the range of different race set ups, and size of races and different starting procedures which may be required finishing places will usually be based on **CHIP TIME**. Runners will be notified if circumstances dictate that results are based on Gun Time.

Are the minimum standards based on gun or chip time?

Both minimum standards and finishing places in qualifiers are based on chip time.

SELECTION DECISIONS

How is the team selected?

Selection is ultimately determined by

- (i) eligibility
- (ii) qualification by position in an advertised qualifying race
- (iii) achievement of a minimum standard either in the qualifier or 3 months prior

England Athletics reserves the right to de-select athletes who have met (ii) and (iii), but subsequently are found to be ineligible due to club affiliation or lacking athlete registration for example.

Whilst there is no reserve system England Athletics reserve the right to add places to the team if they see fit. Additions may be made in line with the above criteria and in the case of extenuating circumstances or where the standards may have been set too high, meaning that there are vacancies on the team.

When will I be notified of my selection?

England Athletics aims to notify all qualifiers by email as soon as possible. However, please be aware that we are a very small team working on this programme and at busy times this may take up to 21 days and individual enquiries may not be answered until all checks have been completed and the team is ready to announce. Official confirmation will only come after the race results are officially verified and added to the Power of 10.

Due to the large volume of runners registering interest, if you have not heard from us within 21 days you will not have been selected. If you believe a mistake has been made and that you should have been selected please email agegroupteam@englandathletics.org.

To assist with the process please ensure that you keep your contact details on Roster up to date.

Appeals

Given the friendly nature of qualification and selection for the England Masters teams, and the volume of runners involved, we do not operate a formal appeals process on selection decisions.

If having read the FAQs document you still have an unanswered question regarding a selection decision then you should email agegroupteam@englandathletics.org with your proof of registration and your query.

Please note that we will only deal directly with the person for whom the query is about and therefore please do not send in queries on behalf of or regarding other athletes.

ENGLAND AGE GROUP MASTERS REPRESENTATION

What does it mean if I qualify for an England Age Group Team?

Depending on the number of automatic places offered for a particular team you will join an England team of between 100 to 200 fellow age group runners from across the country. Around 9-15 of these runners will be in your same gender age group category on the day.

What will it cost me?

With over 450 age group representatives qualifying for different events each year all team members will need to cover the cost of their own entry fee, travel costs and where required accommodation.

England kit will also be available to purchase through our kit partner Kukri.

Race Entry Costs

Entry costs to qualifying races and representative races will vary and are the decision of the event provider. Entry fees may vary depending on what time of year you qualify, with many races offering early bird discounts.

Elite Starts

England Athletics works with all of our event providers to ensure that the England team and opposition teams have access to special starting pens. Depending on the race this will not always be at the very front of the race but will ensure you are able to compete directly with the other qualified athletes, and any opposition teams, in your age category.

What if I get ill or injured and am unable to take up my place on the England Age group Team? Can I defer my place to a future team?

Unfortunately, the nature of competition and sport does mean that from time to time some runners will sadly not be able to take up their place on the team for which they qualified.

We do not defer team places and unfortunately if you do miss out you will need to look to re-qualify for a future event. This is no different than the athlete who qualifies for the Olympics and has to withdraw.

AGE GROUP MASTERS ENGLAND KIT

How do I purchase my England kit?

Kit is made available for purchase for all England Masters representatives through our kit partner Kukri. Following confirmation of your selection you will be sent a link and password to place your order. This is only available to England Masters qualifiers and should not be shared.

The kit shop will be open for designated periods in the year leading up to the representative event and these details will be communicated to you via email in the team up-dates.

What kit is available to purchase?

A wide range of kit is available from racing vests and shorts to tracksuits, hoodies and t-shirts.

How is the kit different to the England International kit?

The England Age Group Masters kit has been specially designed for the England Masters runners and is different in design from the kit our elite senior international teams wear. The items selected in the kit range have also been selected with road running and masters runners in mind.

Do I have to purchase kit if I am selected?

We would ask that you wear an England vest to compete. You do not have to purchase any of the additional kit if you are selected to represent the England Masters team, although of course we hope you will be proud to do so.

I did not qualify, but can I purchase kit?

No, the purchasing of kit is only available to age group masters earning selection to an England Age Group Masters team.

When will I receive my kit?

Your kit will be dispatched to you by Kukri, who will advise on delivery at the time of your order.

I received my kit and it is the wrong size, can I return it?

Please check details on returns and refunds on the Kukri website and direct all kit queries to Kukri.

Can I choose to race in kit that is not Kukri?

Provided that you are wearing the England Masters vest it is your own choice as to what other kit you choose to race in. For example, you may wish to wear your own shorts with your England vest.

OPPOSITION

Who will I compete against if I qualify?

The England Masters Programme is a representative programme primarily focused on giving masters runners the opportunity to represent their country in their age category. As with our senior international teams on the road this means there will not always be an opposition team to compete against. England Athletics have put resources in to support the programme but we are not able to control masters decisions made by other home nations governing bodies or masters associations.

Teams currently involved in the Representative race series are:

- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- United Kingdom Armed Forces

QUALIFYING RACES

Why is London included in the qualifying races for the marathon?

We have had many requests for the London Marathon to be included as a qualification race for the marathon. We recognize that the marathon is an event many athletes do not want to race regularly and that they want to compete in one of the best marathons in the world. Most masters athletes will be in a position where they can apply for good for age entries for London.

The qualifying race I intended to do is full, can England Athletics get me a race entry?

No, England Athletics do not hold reserve entries with the event organizers. We aim to promote the masters qualifying races at the earliest opportunity and where possible from the point at which the race entries officially open. We would encourage all interested runners to ensure they check out the England Athletics website and e-bulletins on a regular basis to avoid disappointment.

The standard at the qualifying race I opted to do was higher than the others and I whilst I missed out on an automatic qualifying spot at my chosen qualifying race, my time would have placed me as a qualifier in the other race, therefore can I be considered for selection?

No, qualification must be by placing in the relevant qualifying race and not time.

We do take into consideration size of event, course profile, time and past results when selecting our qualifying races and aim to get some parity, but no course or race is the same and race day conditions will inevitably vary. We also aim for a North, Midlands and South region qualifying option and therefore the standards at qualifying races will vary.

Many of the participating masters who took part in the qualifiers have reported how much they valued the high-quality qualifying races in their age bands regardless of whether they made the team or not.

Will the qualifying races be the same each year?

No, not necessarily. We try to strike a balance between working with known race providers who have provided excellent qualifying opportunities in the past, whilst at the same time taking qualifying opportunities to different parts of the country and working with new race providers.

What happens if a qualifying race is cancelled due to extreme weather?

In the rare instances where a qualifying race might be cancelled due to extreme weather conditions, as was the case with the Great South in October 2024, then England Athletics will look to select qualifiers in either one of the following ways:

- (i) If the event is rescheduled within a time frame that makes qualification and selection for the linked representative opportunity possible, then we will select from the revised competition date and field on that day.
- (ii) If the event is not rescheduled within an appropriate time frame, then we will look at finding a replacement race over the same distance.
- (iii) If the event is not rescheduled within an appropriate time frame and it is not possible to find a replacement race over the same distance then we will select from the Power of 10 rankings from the previous 3 months prior (from the time that the race would have taken place) from the runners who registered interest for that specific qualifying race.

In the event of qualification by (iii) only results in UKA licensed races (that are not short in distance) and from the previous 3 months and on the road (not multi-terrain) will be considered. Athletes must have logged a minimum standard in the age group they would have challenged for as a qualifier, which for some runners changing up an age group may mean is less than a 3 month time frame.

How do I get involved if there isn't a qualifying race near to me?

England Athletics aims to ensure there are fair qualifying opportunities in the North, Midlands and South of England. Qualifying competition is largely area based, but England Athletics work with a wide range of event providers and are committed to creating opportunities across the country and rotating qualifying and representative races to different parts of the country and different race providers. As is often the case with Area competition runners interested in getting involved may have to be prepared to travel.

OTHER MASTERS COMPETITIONS

England Athletics works closely with the British Masters Athletics Federation in promoting the England Age Group opportunities. These representative opportunities aim to add value to existing masters competition and to widen opportunities to masters runners from across the England Athletics membership.

The key difference between the England Athletics programme and that of BMAF events are that:

- (i) the England Athletics programme focusses on trail and road running competition as part of our wider organizational work in supporting off track clubs and membership
- (ii) runners are not required to be affiliated to a masters specific club in order to take part, as long as they are a registered athlete with an affiliated England Athletics club

British Masters Athletics Federation promote a wide range of opportunities that cover all disciplines, including their own BMAF Road Running Championships. Some of these Championship events take place within the same race as the England Masters representative events, particularly at the longer distances such as the marathon, where it makes good sense to do so given many of the runners involved will be both part of the England Masters team and also looking to contest the BMAF Championships at the same time.

Further details on BMAF events can be found on their respective websites:

<http://bmaf.org.uk>