



AUSTRALIAN
ATHLETICS

World Under-20 Championship

Introduction



- Purpose of this session
- Key Staff:
 - Team Leader – Craig Pickering (craig.pickering@athletics.org.au)
 - Lead Coach – Adam Didyk (adam.didyk@athletics.org.au)
 - Operations Lead – Miles Thompson* (miles.Thompson@athletics.org.au)
 - Performance Support Manager – Rob Mullard (rob.mullard@athletics.org.au)

What is the role of the World Under-20s?



- International Competition Experience
- Optimising Performance on the Day of Competition
- Experience in Planning for Performance (in the international season)

Pathway Strategic Plan:

- Experiences
- Support
- Learning

Lessons from 2024



- Best ever World Under-20s – 14 medals, 28 top-8s, 2nd on the placing table, 2nd most medals
- Our major advantage – significantly better prepared than our competitors
 - Climate
 - Good athletes
- Strong planning (managed by Adam D + coaches) helped ensure everyone was well prepared
- Personal coaches supported as well as possible
- Ability to deliver best performances when it mattered

Selection Policy



- The only person who can provide advice on the selection policy is Peter Hamilton, the Chair of Selectors – selectors@athletics.org.au
- **You should nominate now** if you have the intention of being selected – don't leave it too late!
- Key Dates:
 - Qualification window opens – October 1st 2025
 - Nominations close – 1st April 2025
 - Trials events (for most) – Under-20 Nationals
 - No trial in 3000m
 - Walks – Canberra 25th-26th Jan
 - CE – Open Nationals
 - Qualification window close – 23:59 AEST 30th April 2026
 - Selection meeting – within 2 weeks of close

Selection Policy



- Clause 4.6 – Compete in the event discipline in which you seek selection in at the 2026 Australian Athletics Championships, specifically in the Under-20 age group.
 - Athletes based outside of Australia
 - Injured athletes
 - Under-18 athletes
- Highest placed **eligible** athlete in each trial event is an automatic selection
- Can select up to two athletes per individual event
- Eligible performance – must be in a World Athletics permitted competition
- Athletes born in 2009 or 2010 can compete in a maximum of 3 track events, of which only 2 can be over 200m (whether an individual event or relay leg)

Competition



- Competition Dates – 5th – 9th August 2026
- Timetable is available on the World Athletics webpage
- It is a 5-day competition (historically 6 days)
- This creates some issues:
 - 800m and 1500m have the following program on consecutive days – 800m R1, 1500m R1, 800m SF, 800m F, 1500m F
 - Mixed 4x400m has heats and finals on the same day, with individual 400m and 400mH the next day (AM session)
 - 400mH finals in same session as the 4x400m finals
 - 4x100m is in the AM session, before 200m final and mixed 4x100m final in PM session
 - Mixed 4x100m heats in the AM, before 100m final in PM

Nationals

- Uniform fittings
- Meet with your team coach
- Reminder – you should compete in the event you want to be selected in, in the Under-20 age group.



Team Coach Roles



- Team Coaches will communicate with allocated athletes and personal coaches through the selection period and into the Championships
- Team Coaches provide regular updates to the Australian Athletics Performance Team
- Team Coaches are responsible for overseeing athlete training, warm-up, and competition – they are **not** replacing personal coaches in terms of training program design
- Team Coach is the main point of call for allocated athletes.

Other Staff

- Physiotherapists (x3)
- Soft Tissue Therapists (x2)
- Doctor
- Performance Enhancement Specialist
- Performance Psychologist
- Biomechanist
- AW&E Manager
- Team Managers
- Media Manager
- Competition Manager



Optimising Performance on the Day



- A key strategic pillar for Australian Athletics is to ensure our athletes can deliver close to their best performance when it matters – at the major Championships
- We measure our success in this through the number of athletes at or above 99% of their Season's Best at the World Under-20 Championships
- Three key pillars:
 - Long-term – months (and years!) before
 - Medium-term – weeks before
 - Travel, environmental changes, taper, acute injuries, illnesses
 - Change from “normal” – including boredom management
 - Short-term – day(s) of competition
 - Performing with pressure, warm up, nutritional support, recovery, tactics
 - Coach-athlete communication – stress contagion, sabotage.
- What can you do to set yourself up for success in Eugene?

Maximising Performance on the Day



Injury and Illness Prevention

- Consistent high-level training leads to increased likelihood of success
- Can complete > 80% planned training sessions
 - 7x more likely to achieve training/competition goals in the 6 months leading up to the main competition.
 - More planned high-level training that you can complete and recover from the better

“Injury or illness may lead to time loss from training or reduced training load and performance”

Maximising Performance on the Day



Maximise Performance while minimising time loss from injury / illness

- Understand potential factors contributing to injury and illness
- Implement Injury and Illness Risk Reduction Strategies
- Performance Support Team – Who can help support your training / competition goals?

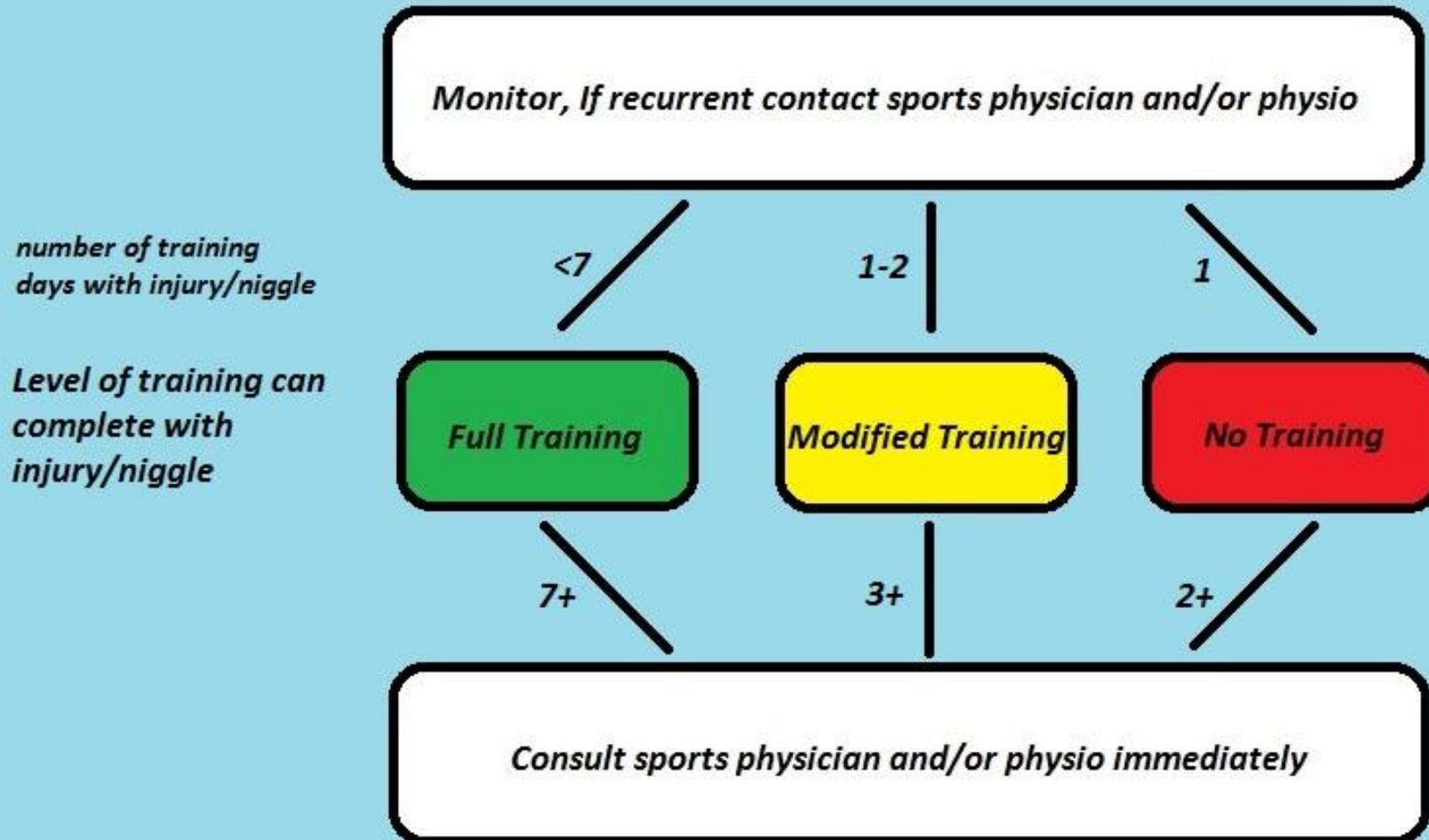
Maximising Performance on the Day



Minimise time loss from injury or illness and find ways to train to maximal safe capacity without significantly compromising performance.

- Accurate diagnosis and management plan
- Develop return to training and competition plan
- Minimise ongoing time-loss from training and impact on health and performance
- Reduce further injury risk
- Ongoing communication

When to seek advice/ treatment?



Post-Selection

- 5th – 8th June – Gold Coast Camp
- Sunday 26th July - depart for US
- 5th – 9th August – World Under-20 Championships
- 10th August – depart for Australia (landing 12th August)



Pre-Departure Camp



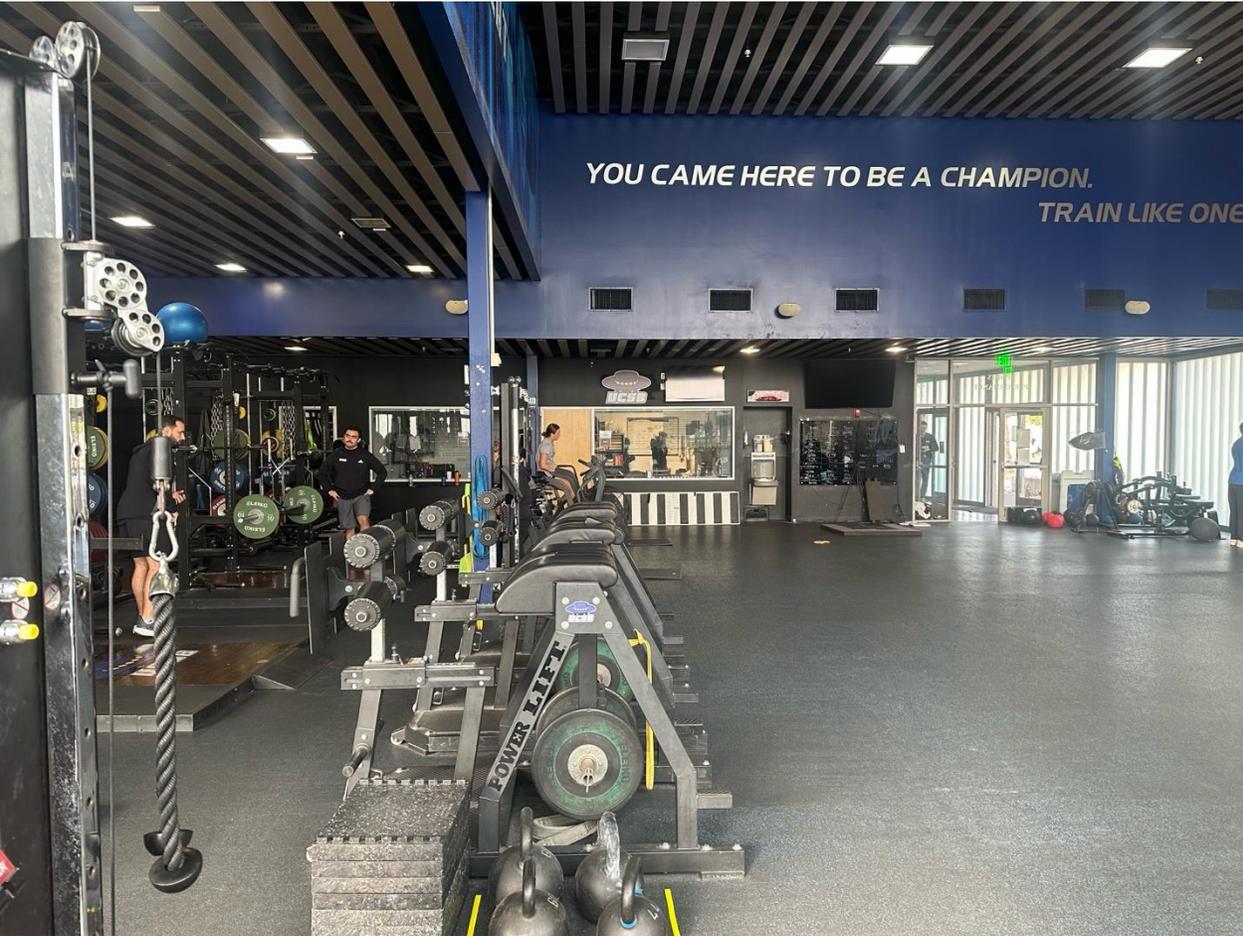
- Gold Coast – Friday 5th – Monday 8th June
- Goals for athlete:
 - Team building – develop relationships with other athletes and staff
 - Relay practice
 - Complete medical screenings
 - Speed-learning sessions on key topics

Pre-Competition Camp



- Given the extensive travel and time change, we will have a pre-competition camp at the University of Santa Barbara – the same place the AUS team will be based prior to the LA Olympics.
- Goal for this camp
 - Get over travel and time change
 - On-hand performance support
 - Build team culture
 - Prepare to perform

Santa Barbara



Santa Barbara



Eugene

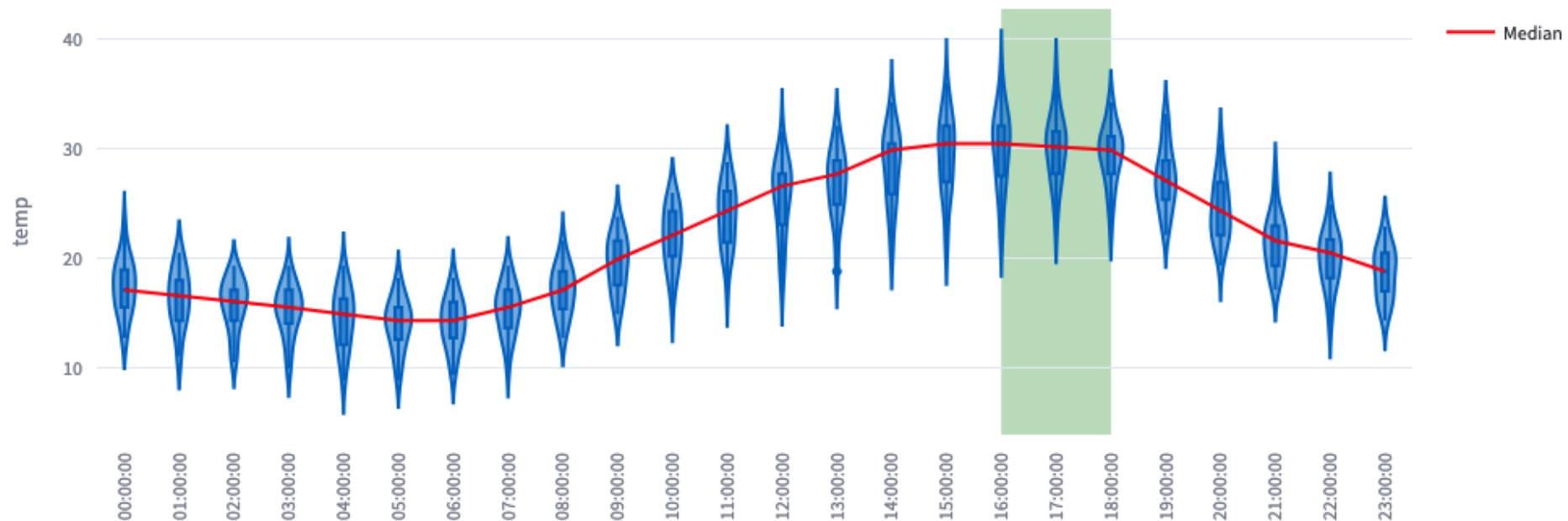


- 17 hours behind Australian East Coast
- Average daily temperature - 30°C
- Average August Rainfall – 10mm
- Average Humidity – 85%

- Accommodation in University Halls
- Warm-up
 - 3 lane 400m track
 - Likely additional warm-up at training venue (8 lane track)

Climate - Eugene

Temp Distribution per Hour

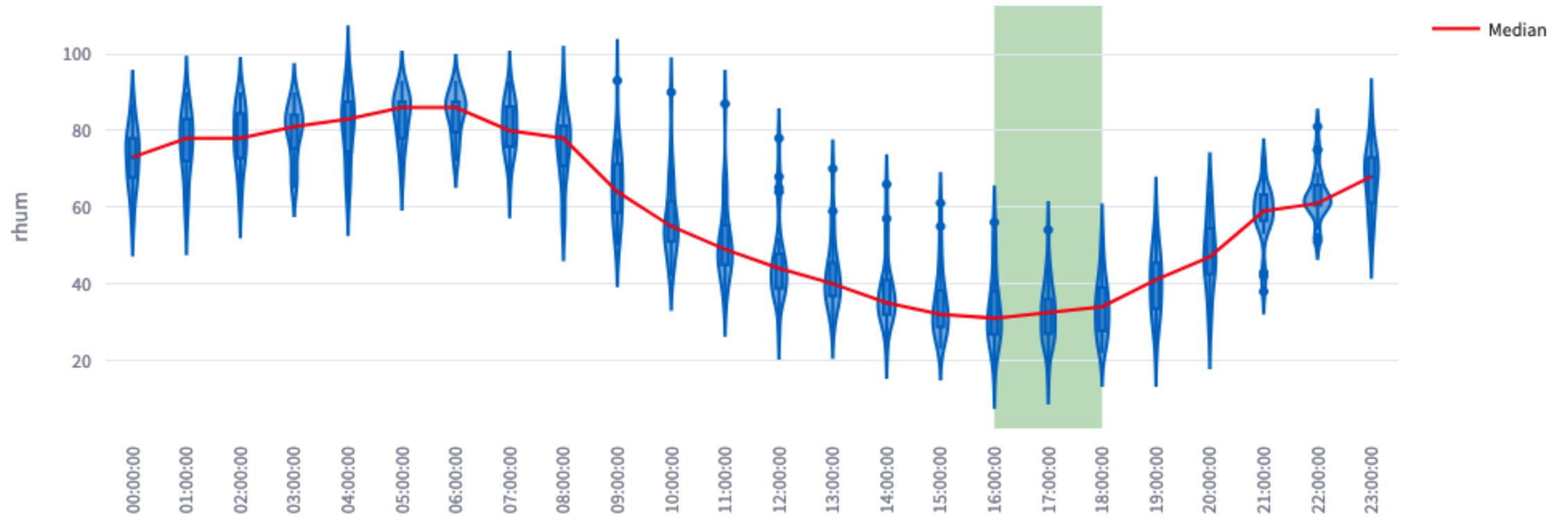


- Median temperature between 4-6pm is usually 27-31°C
- 2 days of rain
- AM session – likely cool; PM session likely hot

Climate - Eugene



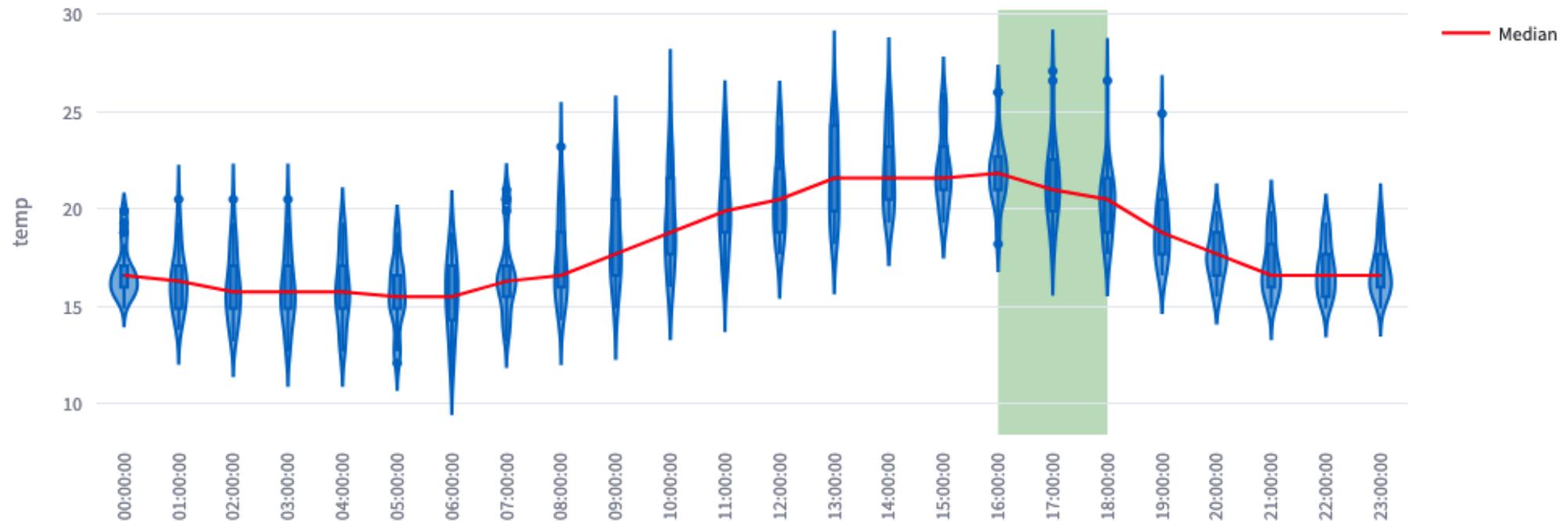
Rhum Distribution per Hour



Climate – Santa Barbara



Temp Distribution per Hour



- Median temperature between 4-6pm is usually 20-22°C
- 1 days of rain

Heat Acclimation – why?

- **Why is this needed?:**

- Heat impacts distance event performance
- Adjustment from AUS winter to summer heat.
- Supporting improved daily living, physiological, and psychological adjustment to heat = ‘Hit the ground running’
- Benefit of heat to training adaption for all athletes

Who is this aimed at?:

Key athletes: Distance + afternoon field ‘long duration’ athletes

Encouraged athletes: Everyone

How: All information to come post selection.

Training session - Where possible implement sauna post active training session

Refuel & Rehydrate - High carbohydrate and protein-rich snack
Fully hydrate post-session before sauna

Sauna - Start with 10min, increasing up to maximum of 30mins (pending tolerance)

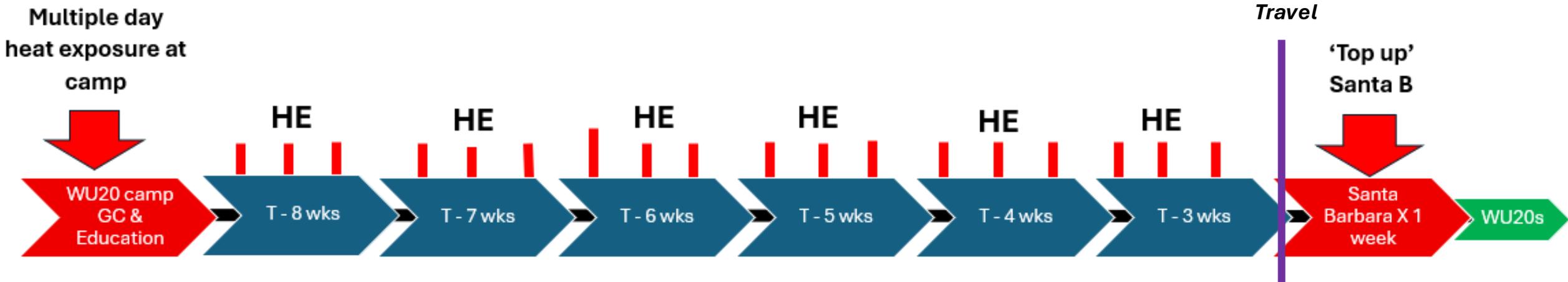
Hygiene:

- Shower before and after sauna
- Use a towel to sit on, creating a barrier between your skin and sauna benches
- Where flip-flops into sauna and in public areas
- Wash/sanitise hands well after sauna

Refuel & Rehydrate (again)! - Sauna dramatically increases energy, carbohydrate and fluid needs. **HIGH FUELLING REQUIREMENTS**

Prioritise fuelling, hydration, recovery and sleep -
Allow sufficient time to nap/sleep, recover and rehydrate to amplify adaptation gains from sauna and overall training

Heat Acclimation Plan – 6 week block



HE = Heat exposure (Sauna/Spa)

Precooling and post event cooling:

Recommendations and further information to come

Information session post selection to provide all details + health requirements

DO NOT attempt heat acclimation without professional support and oversight

Cost



- The total trip costs around \$1.2m – we heavily subsidise the cost of travel and competition for all athletes.
- At present, the levy is likely to be \$6,000 – the same as 2024
- Financial support is often available from:
 - State Governments
 - Schools / Universities
 - Member Associations / National Institutes
 - Australian Sports Commission (e.g., Local Sporting Champions)
- Relay-only athletes who are not selected to race at all for performance reasons will be reimbursed \$2,000 on return to Australia
- We don't ever want cost to be a reason an athlete doesn't attend – so in the case of genuine financial hardship we can work with you on a solution

Travel



- US Border Control
 - ESTA for entry – if not approved, then a requirement to get a Visa
 - US College students - make sure your visa permits entry from 26th July 2026; work with your college on this.
 - Border officers may ask to inspect your electronic devices; emails, text messages, or social media accounts.

July 26th:

- Flights from BNE, SYD, MEL to LAX
- Bus from LAX to Santa Barbara

Travel



- Sunday 2nd August
 - PM – bus from Santa Barbara to LAX
 - Overnight in airport hotel
- Monday 3rd August
 - 8am flight LAX – EUG
- Monday 10th August
 - Brisbane – Portland → LAX → BNE
 - Sydney – Portland → SFO → SYD
 - Melbourne – Portland → SFO → MEL

Travel



- Athletes who have parents in the USA can be dismissed into parental care at the conclusion of the competition if they are travelling onwards with their parents
- Athletes will need to let us know (via email) if they want a one-way flight booked for them (with a reduced levy)
- This will need to be done ASAP following selection – so start thinking now!
- Passports – we can't book your flights without a valid passport, and it has to be valid past March 2027
 - If you don't have a passport at the point of selection, it will slow down the administrative process significantly

Personal Coaches



- Personal coaches are welcome to travel to Santa Barbara and/or Eugene
 - Unfortunately, we can't arrange this travel / accommodation for you
 - We ask that you don't stay in the team hotel / accommodation
- We will get as many personal coach accreditations / tickets as possible
 - Noting that the limits on this are set by World Athletics, and often aren't communicated until very late
 - If you receive accreditation, we require passport details, team agreements, etc.
 - Without accreditation, you can't access the warm-up track
 - Worth considering whether you actually need to be there; how to best prepare your athlete(s)?

SRY Gene Testing



- As per World Athletics rules, athletes who wish to compete in the female category are required to have an SR Y Gene test
- This is a once per lifetime test
- ***At present***, World Athletics state they will carry out testing in Eugene, including permission protocols for under-18s
- Australian Athletics will support athletes (and parents in the case of under-18s) with an educational and informed consent process following selection

Post-Selection / Planning



Key things to consider:

- There are no pre-departure standards; prepare yourself to perform. If you need help – ask!
- What will your plan look like between Nationals and the World Under-20s?
 - # of Competitions?
 - Training Plan?
 - Taper?
- How will you handle the travel, time change, climate, and being away for almost 3 weeks?
- Do you need a plan for school / university work?
- What could go wrong? What are you doing to protect against this? What are your plans B and C?
- How will you pay for the lecy? Do you need to do any external fund raising?

FAQ



- Read the selection policy, then re-read it, and read it again
- I can't compete in my trial event – what can I do?
- Can parents / family travel to Eugene for the competition?
 - Do AA arrange this?
 - Accessing tickets
- What is the minimum age that you can qualify for the World U20s, and is it a requirement for the parent/guardian to accompany the athlete?
- Is there adequate time to undertake school/uni work whilst away?
- Do I travel with the team or my family?

FAQ



- Can athletes be selected for Oceania, World Under-20s, Commonwealth Games, etc.?
- I don't have a valid passport – can I still nominate?
- Relay selections
- Pole vault transport to/within US
- What happens if a selected athlete subsequently withdraws – can they be replaced?

Further Questions?



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