

IBU MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (2025-2029)

Purpose and Governance Foundation

Biathlon is a high-performance environment, and its long-term sustainability requires structured, consistent, and ethical care for all participants. This strategy delivers a well-being framework centred on mental health, situated within the wider duty of care that includes physical, relational, career, and ethical wellbeing.

Formal Mandate

This strategy aligns with the IBU's legal and ethical obligations as laid out in:

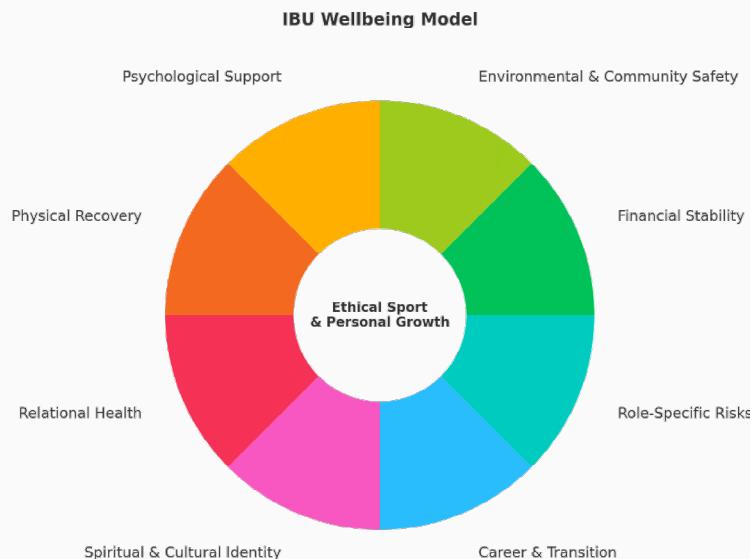
- **Article 2.1(d) of the IBU Constitution:** which mandates that the IBU shall "safe-guard the health, safety and wellbeing of its Athletes and Officials".
- **Article 4.3 and Article 6 of the IBU Integrity Code:** which require the IBU and all Biathlon stakeholders to act with integrity and ensure the safety, respect, dignity, and wellbeing of all participants in sport.
- **IBU Executive Board Decision:** during its 173rd meeting (25-26 September 2024), the IBU Executive Board formally recognised the need to strengthen mental health support across the sport and approved the establishment of a Mental Health Working Group (MHWG). The EB tasked the MHWG with assessing needs and developing appropriate programmes, providing a clear mandate for the IBU to lead this strategic work.

Strategic Vision and Link to the Wellbeing Charter

This strategy operationalises the aspirations of the IBU Wellbeing Charter, which states: "To ensure that every member of the biathlon family, including athletes, coaches, staff and volunteers, has access to meaningful, tailored mental health and wellbeing support."

The Biathlon Family Wellbeing Model

The IBU Wellbeing Model defines the eight core domains that contribute to mental health and broader wellbeing across biathlon. It reflects a whole-person approach grounded in ethical sport and personal growth. The model supports measurement, delivery, and accountability across all levels, from IBU strategy to National Federation and event implementation.



The IBU Wellbeing Model illustrates the key dimensions that underpin a healthy and supportive sport environment. It places “Ethical Sport and Personal Growth” at its centre, aligned with the IBU Integrity Code and Wellbeing Charter and recognises that wellbeing is multi-dimensional. This model informs how we track wellbeing, design education and support tools, and evaluate impact at organisational and individual levels.

The model also aligns with the IBU and its member organisations duty of care, ensuring support extends beyond performance to include relational, cultural, and financial factors that affect athletes, staff and stakeholders across their careers.

Strategic Roles and Responsibilities

Entity	Role
IBU / BIU	Strategic leadership, coordination, training, NF/OC engagement, performance measure
BIU	Integrity, safeguarding and ethical oversight
National Federations (NFs)	Financial year details
Organising Committees (OCs)	Event-based support, emergency protocols, staff training

Mental Health Delivery Flow

Level 1: IBU

- Sets strategic direction
- Develops tools, training and policy
- Leads campaigns to destigmatise MH
- Coordinates MHWG
- Tracks delivery and accountability
- Annually (formal report), Quarterly (dashboard updates)

Level 2: National Federations (NFs)

- Appoint MH Contact Points Note: Where possible, Mental Health Leads should report independently from high performance structures to build trust and confidentiality among participants
- Deliver education at national/team level
- Coordinate MH screening + referral
- Develop links to local services, which can be shared with other NFs
- Feedback data and learning
- Reporting as required by the IBU

Level 3: Organising Committees (OCs)

- Event-based support limited to emergency mental health response. OCs provide on-site protocols, staff/volunteer briefings, and immediate support for acute cases, but ongoing/long-term care remains with NFs supported by IBU/BIU. OCs may provide dedicated quiet areas or “mind zones” to help athletes manage stress and support wellbeing.
- Provide staff training and visibility
- Liaise with NF on onsite care
- Participate in post-event review and IBU surveys

Strategic Priorities and actions

A. Governance, Policy and Clarity

Action	Responsibility
Develop an IBU Mental Health Policy	IBU / BIU
Compile MH and Wellbeing contacts across NFs/OCs	IBU / BIU + NF/OCs
Clarify NF/OC responsibilities in official documents	IBU / BIU

B. Education and Awareness

Action	Responsibility
Deliver MH literacy training via IBU Academy	IBU Development / BIU
Public campaigns on stress, sleep, substance misuse	IBU / BIU
Integrate wellbeing into coach and ASP pathways	NFs + IBU Academy

C. Access and Emergency Response

Action	Responsibility
Map mental health services per NF/OC	IBU / BIU + NFs + OCs
Require MH emergency referral plans at all events	OCs + BIU
Multilingual helplines and peer support services	Specialist Third Party Services

D. Screening and Follow-up

Action	Responsibility
Include MH in athlete/ASP medical screening	NFs with medical advisors
Implement follow-up pathways post-screening	NFs + IBU oversight
Anonymous wellbeing check-ins post-season	IBU Development

E. Internal Capacity and Resourcing

Action	Responsibility
Wellbeing programme for IBU + OC staff	IBU / BIU
Develop digital and physical wellbeing toolkit	IBU / BIU
Provide certified MH First Aid training	NFs + IBU / BIU

Roles of Organizing Committee (OC)

OCs now have formal roles across the strategy, including:

- Preparing event-specific MH emergency response plans
- Delivering mental health awareness or training for staff and volunteers
- Participating in post-event wellbeing reviews
- Ensuring visibility of MH support to participants on-site

Operational Delivery Plan

All actions listed in this strategy will be delivered through a separate Operational Delivery Plan, which will:

- Define timelines, templates and tools
- Identify lead persons, partners, and resourcing needs
- Include event checklists and NF/OC readiness guidance

Monitoring and Review

Mechanism	Frequency
Biathlon Wellbeing Report	Annually
MH Dashboard	Annually
Strategy Review	Every 4 years
Stakeholder Feedback	Every 4 years

Timeline Overview

Year	Milestone
2025	MH contacts appointed, Policy finalised, Referral mapping begins
2026	All IBU events to include OC-led MH protocols
2027	IBU Academy full course integration complete
2028-29	Strategic refresh; evaluation against Target 2030 objectives