

# 2026 EUROPEAN AQUATICS JUNIOR OPEN WATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2026, Hungary

## SELECTION POLICY (OPEN WATER SWIMMING)



### Introduction

*This Policy provides the avenue by which an athlete can be selected to represent Ireland at the 2026 European Aquatics Junior Open Water Swimming Championships. This avenue (or "Selection Stage") is described in further detail below*

*This Policy will only apply if:*

1. *The 2026 European Aquatics Junior Open Water Swimming Championships are held on the existing dates of 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2026*
2. *The 2026 Irish Open Championships are held on the existing dates of 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> April 2026*

*This Policy sets out the Swim Ireland process for athletes, coaches and/or team managers to:*

- (a) be considered eligible for nomination for selection which involves meeting the 'Eligibility Criteria' in Section 3 and the achievement of Consideration Times and requirements set out in the Section 4 – 'Selection' below;*
- (b) be nominated for selection and;*
- (c) be selected to the Ireland National Team for swimming at the 2026 European Aquatics Junior Open Water Championships*

*Athletes, additional coaches, sports science/sports medicine practitioners and team managers must satisfy certain criteria to be considered eligible for nomination for selection.*

*The role of the National Performance Director is to compile the names of athletes, additional coaches, sports science/sports medicine practitioners and team managers who meet the criteria for nomination for selection and to make recommendations to the National Selection Panel (athletes) and the Performance Senior Leadership Team (additional coaches, sports science/sports medicine practitioners and team managers)*

*The National Selection Panel is the expert panel, as defined in the 'Swim Ireland Selection Panel Terms of Reference' which selects athletes to the Ireland National Team*

*The Performance Senior Leadership Team comprises of the National Performance Director, the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations, the Head of Physical Preparation, the Head of Performance Analysis, the Performance Manager and the three National Centre Head Coaches, and is the expert group which selects additional coaches, team managers and sports science/sports medicine practitioners to the Ireland National Team. The selection of additional coaches, team managers, and sport science/sports medicine practitioners will be overseen by an external observer*

*European Aquatics is the European federation/governing body for aquatic sports. World Aquatics is the international federation/governing body administering international competition in aquatic sports. European Aquatics is affiliated to World Aquatics*

### 1. Nomination for Selection

- i. *The National Performance Director will nominate athletes to the National Selection Panel for selection to the Ireland National Team as expediently as possible following the conclusion of the Nomination Trials as described below*
- ii. *To be considered eligible for nomination for selection to the Ireland National Team, athletes must:*
  - a. *Satisfy the conditions and standards set out in Section 4 (Selection) below; and*
  - b. *Meet the athlete eligibility criteria set out in Section 3 below*
- iii. *Nomination Trials*
  - a. *The Nomination Trials for the pool swimming criterion for selection will be the 2026 Irish Open Championships (50m)*
  - b. *Athletes must have competed in a sanctioned Open Water event in the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 12<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Athletes who have not competed in an event organised by Swim Ireland, European Aquatics, or World Aquatics may nominate another sanctioned event provided it meets equivalent organisational standards.*

*Minimum qualifying distances:*

    - i. *5km for athletes born in 2010, 2011, or 2012*
    - ii. *10km for athletes born in 2007, 2008, 2009, or 2010*

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### 2. Ireland National Team

- i. The National Selection Panel agrees to notify Swim Ireland of its selection or its refusal to select any nominated athlete as soon as reasonably practicable after the National Selection Panel receives the National Performance Director's nominations after the conclusion of the Nomination Trials
- ii. At the recommendation of the National Performance Director, the National Selection Panel will determine the athlete team size

### 3. Athlete Eligibility

At the time that the National Performance Director is nominating athletes for selection to the National Selection Panel, athletes must meet the following criteria to be considered to be eligible for nomination:

- i. Be an Irish citizen and hold an Irish passport by the conclusion of the 2026 Irish Open Championships (50m);
- ii. Be eligible to represent Ireland as per 'World Aquatics Competition Regulation No.3 - Sport Nationality' by the conclusion of the 2026 Irish Open Championships (50m);
- iii. Comply with any European Aquatics and/or World Aquatics eligibility criteria and/or requirements. Swim Ireland, in consultation with European Aquatics, will decide on any question of eligibility (having regard to all eligibility criteria set by Swim Ireland, European Aquatics and World Aquatics) with the Swim Ireland decision being final
- iv. Be born in the period 2007-2012;
- v. Be a registered Swim Ireland member for the 2025-2026 season;
- vi. Be available to fulfil all of the Ireland National Team obligations;
- vii. Other than in exceptional circumstances, have accepted their place on the National Programme in September 2025 (if offered);
- viii. Be in good standing with Swim Ireland and their registered Swim Ireland club, specifically by:
  - a. demonstrating behaviours, standards and expectations consistent with the Swim Ireland Performance Team Charter, and aligned with the aims and aspirations of the Swim Ireland Performance Plan 2024-2028; and
  - b. refraining from any conduct that has, or could reasonably be considered to have, brought themselves, Swim Ireland, and or the sport into disrepute; and
  - c. not being the subject of, or serving a sanction for, any Anti-Doping rule violation and/or a pending doping violation

### 4. Selection

- i. To be considered for nomination for selection to represent Ireland in the 2026 European Aquatics Junior Open Water Swimming Championships athletes must:
  - a. Achieve one or more of the Consideration Times detailed in Table 1 at the 2026 Irish Open Championships (50m), and
  - b. Have competed in a sanctioned Open Water event in the period 1st April 2025 and 12th April 2026. Athletes who have not competed in an event organised by Swim Ireland, European Aquatics, or World Aquatics may nominate another sanctioned event provided it meets equivalent organisational standards.

Minimum qualifying distances:

- i. 5km for athletes born in 2010, 2011, or 2012
- ii. 10km for athletes born in 2007, 2008, 2009, or 2010

Table 1

MALE			Event	FEMALE		
Consideration Time Born 2007-2008	Consideration Time Born 2009-2010	Consideration Time Born 2011-2012		Consideration Time Born 2011-2012	Consideration Time Born 2009-2010	Consideration Time Born 2007-2008
08:18.63	08:28.74	08:37.90	800m Freestyle	09:17.72	09:16.84	09:06.18
16:00.46	16:11.31	16:28.62	1500m Freestyle	17:49.08	17:44.88	17:22.02

### 5. Athlete Nomination Procedure

- i. At the conclusion of the Selection Stage, those athletes who have achieved the criteria requirements within Sections 3 and 4 will be considered eligible for nomination to the National Selection Panel
- ii. Athletes born in 2011 or 2012 will be nominated for the 5km Open Water Event
- iii. Athletes born in 2009 or 2010 will be nominated for the 7.5km Open Water Event
- iv. Athletes born in 2007 or 2008 will be nominated for the 10km Open Water Event

- v. In the event that more than three athletes in the 2009-2010 age band achieve the criteria requirements within Sections 3 and Section 4, athletes will be ranked as a percentage inside the Table 1 times in the event which gives them the highest percentage inside the Consideration Standard. The fastest three athletes will be nominated on this basis
  - vi. The decision of the National Selection Panel shall be subject to an Appeals Process (Section 16)
- 6. Team Leader/Head Coach**
- i. The Team Leader/Head Coach for the Ireland National Team at the 2026 European Aquatics Junior Championships will be the Assistant Head Coach of National Centre (Dublin)
- 7. Team Coach Eligibility and Nomination Procedure**
- i. Depending on the size of the Ireland National Team, any additional coach being considered for nomination must meet the eligibility and selection criteria outlined in the *Team Personnel Selection Policy for National Programmes and National Teams*. A copy of this document can be requested by emailing [niamhmcdonnell@swimireland.ie](mailto:niamhmcdonnell@swimireland.ie)
  - ii. Team Coaches may be selected in an offsite (Holding Camp only), onsite (Championships only) or combined (Holding Camp and Championships) role and such selections will be reflective of the Team size, the number of accreditations available, the needs of the individual athletes and/or relays selected, as well as considering the optimum balance of the Team as a whole. As such, a Team Coach may not be required/selected
- 8. Team Manager Eligibility and Nomination Procedure**
- i. Depending on the size of the Ireland National Team, any team manager being considered for nomination must meet the eligibility and selection criteria outlined in the *Team Personnel Selection Policy for National Programmes and National Teams*. A copy of this document can be requested by emailing [niamhmcdonnell@swimireland.ie](mailto:niamhmcdonnell@swimireland.ie)
  - ii. Team Managers may be selected in an offsite (Holding Camp only), onsite (Championships only) or combined (Holding Camp and Championships) role and such selections will be reflective of the Team size, the number of accreditations available, the needs of the individual athletes and/or relays selected, as well as considering the optimum balance of the Team as a whole. As such, a Team Manager may not be required/selected
- 9. Ireland National Team Obligations (General)**
- In accepting an invitation to represent Ireland in the 2026 European Aquatics Junior Open Water Swimming Championships, athletes accept and agree that training with/competing for an Ireland representative team takes precedence over training for/competing in any other competition, including that for another Team/Club or University programme in Ireland or anywhere in the world. Swim Ireland require any athlete, coach or team manager who has been selected to represent Ireland at the 2025 European Aquatics Junior Open Water Swimming Championships to meet and fulfil a suite of obligations, where non-adherence is subject to Section 11. Swim Ireland oblige all selected athletes and, where relevant, all declared coaches/team managers to:
- i. Agree not to disclose any selected representative name to the press or any other media (including their own social media) until Swim Ireland have themselves announced this to the press and other media
  - ii. Compete in other Swim Ireland events in 2026 (if selected and required to do so by the National Performance Director)
  - iii. Complete, sign and comply with the Swim Ireland National Team Code of Conduct
  - iv. Commit to the values of the Swim Ireland Performance Team Charter
  - v. At the date of the decision of the National Selection Panel of selections, all Ireland National Team athletes must ensure that they are submitting a daily online submission via the Swim Ireland Management System (a space formerly occupied by Kitman) each training and competition day
  - vi. Complete a Swim Ireland Medical Form prior to competing at the 2026 European Aquatics Junior Open Water Swimming Championships
  - vii. Abide by the Uniform Policy, the Media Policy, the Appearances Policy, the Betting, Gambling & Integrity Policy and the Sports Supplements Policy of the Swim Ireland National Team
  - viii. Comply with Swim Ireland and World Aquatics swimwear regulations
  - ix. Adhere to all prescribed travel arrangements which might involve different travel dates to other members of the Ireland National Team
  - x. Not take holidays/elected periods away from training between the 2026 Irish Open Championships (50m) and the 2026 European Aquatics Junior Open Water Championships
  - xi. Make themselves available for all Ireland National Team activities designated by the National Performance Director (including, but not limited to, any associated Ireland National Team camps) as part of or in addition to the National Programme or Regional Programme. No Team member will be allowed to leave a National Team camp or undertake any activities that are not directly relevant to the Ireland National Team camp, including any external media, sponsor

or social activities. Under exceptional circumstances, written approval to be excluded from activities can be given by the National Performance Director

### 10. **Competitive Readiness**

'Competitive Readiness' means the combined professional opinion of the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach following advice, where necessary, from a member/s of the Sport Ireland Institute Medical Team as to the ability of an athlete who has been selected to represent this Ireland National Team to achieve an equal or superior performance in their selected Olympic event(s) over their performance achieved to qualify for selection

- i. Athletes who, in the opinion of the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach, do not remain Competitively Ready by reason of lack of fitness, injury, illness, application to training, performance behaviour or other reasons, may be removed from this Ireland National Team
- ii. Athletes and their home programme coaches shall immediately report any injury, illness, change in training, change in application to training and/or performance behaviour, that could affect their ability to compete at their highest level on this National Team, to the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach in writing, via e-mail
- iii. In the case of lack of fitness, injury or illness, it shall be necessary for the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach to consider recommendations made by a member/s of the Sport Ireland Institute Medical Team
- iv. In the case of application to training, or performance behaviour or other reasons, it shall not be necessary for the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach to seek recommendations from a member/s of the Sport Ireland Institute Medical Team
- v. In the case of lack of fitness, injury or illness, such athletes may be subject to a 'Proof of Readiness Test' to be determined by the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations, the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach and appropriate a member/s of the Sport Ireland Institute Medical Team. The Proof of Readiness test will consist of a controlled performance such as a competition or an observed test or a time trial
- vi. Athletes who are notified of a Competitive Readiness concern shall not travel with the Ireland National Team to any National Team event and/or an associated Holding Camp, unless and until the opinion of the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach has been communicated to that athlete that the athlete does meet their opinion of Competitive Readiness. If the athlete is at the National Team competition or the associated Holding Camp and the opinion is that the athlete is not Competitively Ready, then he/she may be required to return home immediately
- vii. The opinion on Competitive Readiness made by Head of Performance Pathways & Operations and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach is final

### 11. **Withdrawal & Removals**

At any stage an athlete, team coach, team manager or sports science/sports medicine practitioner may withdraw from the Ireland National Team but may only do so in extenuating circumstances

- i. An athlete, team coach, team manager or sports science/sports medicine practitioner may be removed from:
  - a. Eligibility for nomination, or;
  - b. Nomination for selection, or;
  - c. Selection to the Ireland National Team for any of the following reasons:
    - Behaviour that is inconsistent with the National Team Code of Conduct. A copy of this document is available via [niamhmcdonnell@swimireland.ie](mailto:niamhmcdonnell@swimireland.ie);
    - found to be in violation of any Anti-Doping policy or procedure as outlined by Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland and/or the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA);
    - unable or unwilling to fully comply with the Ireland National Team Obligations (Section 9)
- ii. An athlete may be removed from the Ireland National Team before or after nomination for selection or before or after selection if he/she, in the opinion of the Head of Performance Pathways & Operations and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s, does not have Competitive Readiness (Section 10)

### 12. **Replacement or Addition**

- i. If an athlete, team coach, team manager or sports science/sports medicine practitioner is removed from or withdraws from the Ireland National Team, that individual may be replaced by another eligible individual who meets the required standards set out in this Policy
- ii. The National Performance Director, where in his opinion it is in the best interests of the Ireland National Team, may recommend that any number of additional athletes, team coaches, team managers and/or sports science/sports

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medicine practitioners be added to the selected Ireland National Team, subject to such additional individuals meeting the required standards set out in this Policy

- iii. Any replacement or addition of an individual to the Ireland National Team shall be made by way of nomination by the National Performance Director, and which nomination is approved by the National Selection Panel (in the case of athletes) or the Senior Leadership Team (in the case of team coaches, team managers and/or sports science/sports medicine practitioners)

### 13. Unforeseen Circumstances

- i. In the event that this Policy is silent on any matter which arises in the administration or application or interpretation of any invitation process or decision, then the National Selection Panel shall have discretion to determine any issue as they deem fit so long as it is exercised fairly and quickly

### 14. Amendments

- i. The Performance SLT reserves the right to make changes to this Policy which, in its discretion, are necessary. No such changes shall be made after the commencement of the 2026 Irish Open Championships (50m) unless the changes relate to the National Selection Panel exercising its discretion under the 'Unforeseen Circumstances' provisions (Section 13)
- ii. The Performance SLT reserves the right to review and modify this Policy or a decision related to the selection process in the case of rule or policy changes from European Aquatics and/or World Aquatics that affect the criteria set out in this Policy
- iii. Any changes to this Policy shall be communicated via [www.swimireland.ie](http://www.swimireland.ie)

### 15. Appeals

- i. Any appeal against an invitation made by the National Selection Panel must be made in accordance with the Swim Ireland Invitation Appeals Procedures, available via [www.swimireland.ie](http://www.swimireland.ie)
- ii. Athletes should be aware of the strict time limits contained within the Swim Ireland Invitation Appeals Procedures, which are designed with the intention of resolving issues expediently and fairly

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