Swim Ireland National Team Selection Governance Policy

1. Introduction

The Swim Ireland National Team Selection Governance Policy establishes the overarching principles, governance structures, eligibility requirements, obligations, and procedures that apply to the selection and management of all Swim Ireland National Teams unless otherwise stated within an event-specific selection policy.

This Policy is intended to provide a clear, transparent, fair, and consistent framework for the nomination, selection, confirmation, management, and, where necessary, removal or replacement of athletes and team personnel representing Ireland in international competition. It also defines the roles and responsibilities of Swim Ireland, the National Selection Panel, the National Performance Director, and the Performance Senior Leadership Team throughout the selection process.

Event-specific selection policies will outline the qualification opportunities, performance standards, timelines, quotas, and selection priorities applicable to a particular competition or programme. In all circumstances, event-specific selection policies should be read in conjunction with this National Team Selection Governance Policy.

Swim Ireland is committed to selecting athletes and team personnel who demonstrate the capability, readiness, professionalism, and behaviours required to contribute positively to the performance objectives, standards, and values of the Ireland National Team.

This Policy applies to all athletes, coaches, team managers, sports science and sports medicine practitioners, and other support personnel seeking nomination or selection to any Swim Ireland National Team. By accepting selection, all individuals agree to comply with the requirements, obligations, codes of conduct, policies, and standards referenced within this document and any associated event-specific selection policy.

Nothing within this Policy limits the authority of Swim Ireland, the National Selection Panel, the National Performance Director, or the Performance Senior Leadership Team to exercise discretion where appropriate and necessary, provided such discretion is exercised fairly, reasonably, and in the best interests of the Ireland National Team and the sport.

2. Governance & Decision-Making Authority

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

The Performance Senior Leadership Team comprises the National Performance Director, the Performance Operations Manager, the Head of Sports Science and Sports Medicine, the National Para-Swimming Head Coach, and the three National Centre Head Coaches. It is the expert group that selects additional coaches, team managers, and sports science and sports medicine practitioners to the Ireland National Team.

3. International Federations & Regulatory Authority

World Aquatics (AQUA) is the global governing body administering international competition in able-bodied aquatic sports.

European Aquatics (EA) is the continental governing body administering able-bodied aquatic sport within Europe. European Aquatics is affiliated to World Aquatics.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is the global governing body of the Olympic Movement and is responsible for the organisation, development, and delivery of the Olympic Games.

The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is the international governing body responsible for the governance, organisation, and delivery of the Commonwealth Games and the Commonwealth sport movement.

The Olympic Federation of Ireland (OFI) is the National Olympic Committee of Ireland responsible for selecting athletes to represent Team Ireland at an EOC or IOC competition.

Commonwealth Games Northern Ireland (CGNI) is the organisation responsible for selecting athletes to represent Team Northern Ireland at the Commonwealth Games.

World Para Swimming (WPS) is the international federation responsible for the administration of international para-swimming competitions.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is the global governing body of the Paralympic Movement and is responsible for the organisation and delivery of the Paralympic Games.

Paralympics Ireland (PI) is the National Paralympic Committee of Ireland responsible for selecting athletes to represent Team Ireland at the Paralympic Games.

All Swim Ireland National Team selections are subject to the rules, eligibility requirements, competition regulations, and entry procedures of the relevant international federation and/or competition organiser.

In the event of any inconsistency between this Policy and the regulations of World Aquatics, European Aquatics, the International Olympic Committee, the Commonwealth Games Federation, the Olympic Federation of Ireland, Commonwealth Games Northern Ireland, or another recognised competition organiser, the applicable international federation or competition regulations shall prevail where required.

4. Team Personnel Eligibility and Nomination Procedure

i. Team Leader and Team Head Coach

The Team Leader and/or Head Coach for each Ireland National Team will be nominated for selection by the National Performance Director to the Performance Senior Leadership Team following completion of the Nomination/Selection Trials.

ii. Team Coach/es

a. Depending on the requirements 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
b. Team Coaches may be selected in an offsite (Holding Camp only), onsite (Championships only), or combined (Holding Camp and Championships) role. Such selections will reflect the Team requirements, the number of accreditations available, the needs of the individual athletes and/or relays selected, and the optimum balance of the Team as a whole. As such, a Team Coach may not be required or selected.

iii. Team Manager/s

a. Depending on the requirements 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

b. Team Managers may be selected in an offsite (Holding Camp only), onsite (Championships only), or combined (Holding Camp and Championships) role. Such selections will reflect the Team requirements, the number of accreditations available, the needs of the individual athletes and/or relays selected, and the optimum balance of the Team as a whole. As such, a Team Manager may not be required or selected.

iv. Sports Science/Sports Medicine Practitioners

a. Depending on the requirements of the Ireland National Team, any sports science/sports medicine practitioner 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

b. Sports science and sports medicine practitioners may be selected in an offsite (Holding Camp only), onsite (Championships only), or combined (Holding Camp and Championships) role. Such selections will reflect the Team requirements, the number of accreditations available, the needs of the individual athletes and/or relays selected, and the optimum balance of the Team as a whole. As such, sports science and sports medicine practitioners may not be required or selected.

5. Ireland National Team Obligations

By accepting selection to the Ireland National Team for which they are selected, athletes accept and agree that training with and competing for that Ireland National Team takes precedence over training for or competing in any other competition, including for another team, club, or university programme in Ireland or elsewhere in the world. Swim Ireland requires any athlete, coach, team manager, or sports science and sports medicine practitioner selected to represent the Ireland National Team for which they are selected to meet and fulfil a suite of obligations. Non-adherence is subject to Section 8. Swim Ireland requires all selected athletes and, where relevant, all Ireland National Team staff to:

i. Agree not to disclose the name of any selected Ireland National Team member to the press or any other media, including their own social media, until Swim Ireland has announced the selection to the press and other media;
ii. Make themselves available to compete in other Swim Ireland events during the relevant season, if selected and required to do so by the National Performance Director;
iii. Sign and comply with the Swim Ireland National Team Code of Conduct;
iv. Complete a Swim Ireland Medical Form prior to travelling to the relevant Ireland National Team holding camp and/or competition;
v. 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;
vi. At the date of the National Selection Panel's selection decision, have maintained regular contact with the National Performance Director or National Para-Swimming Head Coach and Head of SSSM;
vii. Comply with Swim Ireland and World Aquatics swimwear regulations;
viii. Adhere to all prescribed travel arrangements which might involve different travel dates to other members of the Ireland National Team;
ix. Not take holidays or elected periods away from training between selection to the Ireland National Team and the conclusion of the relevant National Team competition, unless approved in advance by the National Performance Director;
x. 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 days or 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. In exceptional circumstances, written approval to be excluded from activities may be given by the National Performance Director.

6. Team Uniform/Kit

i. Team uniform, including racing caps and racing suits, will be provided to the Team by Swim Ireland;
ii. Athletes who accept racing suits from Swim Ireland must wear those suits, or another branded suit of the same sponsor, for all their races. Athletes may exercise 'freedom of choice' in wearing a non-sponsor suit, but such a suit must be unbranded.

7. Competitive Readiness

i. 'Competitive Readiness' means the combined professional opinion of the National Performance Director and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s, following advice where necessary from a member/s of the Sport Ireland Institute Medical Team, as to the ability of an athlete selected to represent the Ireland National Team for which they are selected to achieve an equal or superior performance in their selected event(s) compared with the performance achieved to qualify for selection;
ii. Athletes who, in the opinion of the National Performance Director and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s, 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 the Ireland National Team for which they have been selected;
iii. 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 the athlete's ability to compete at their highest level for the Ireland National Team for which they are selected to the National Performance Director and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s in writing, via email;
iv. In the case of lack of fitness, injury, or illness, it shall be necessary for the National Performance Director and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s to consider recommendations made by a member/s of the Sport Ireland Institute Medical Team;
v. In the case of application to training, performance behaviour, or other reasons, it shall not be necessary for the National Performance Director and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s to seek recommendations from a member/s of the Sport Ireland Institute Medical Team;
vi. 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 National Performance Director, the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s, and an appropriate member/s of the Sport Ireland Institute Medical Team. The Proof of Readiness Test will consist of a controlled performance, such as a competition, an observed test, or a time trial;
vii. Athletes who are notified of a Competitive Readiness concern shall not travel with the Ireland National Team for which they are selected to any National Team event and/or associated Holding Camp unless and until the National Performance Director and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s have communicated to the athlete that, in their opinion, the athlete meets the standard of Competitive Readiness. If the athlete is at the National Team competition or associated Holding Camp and the opinion is that the athlete is not Competitively Ready, the athlete may be required to return home immediately;
viii. The opinion on Competitive Readiness made by the National Performance Director and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s is final.

8. Withdrawal & Removals

At any stage, an athlete, team coach, team manager, or sports science and sports medicine practitioner may withdraw from the Ireland National Team for which they are selected but may only do so in extenuating circumstances.

An athlete, team coach, team manager, or sports science and sports medicine practitioner may be removed from:

i. Eligibility for nomination;
ii. Nomination for selection; or
iii. Selection to an Ireland National Team for any of the following reasons:

a. Behaviour that is inconsistent with the National Team Code of Conduct. A copy of this document is available via niamhmcdonnell@swimireland.ie;
b. Being 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);
c. Being unable or unwilling to fully comply with the Ireland National Team Obligations;

iv. An athlete may be removed from an Ireland National Team before or after nomination for selection, or before or after selection, if, in the opinion of the National Performance Director and the appointed Ireland National Team Head Coach/s, the athlete does not have Competitive Readiness.

9. Replacement or Addition

i. If an athlete, team coach, team manager, or sports science and sports medicine practitioner is removed from or withdraws from the Ireland National Team for which they are selected, that individual may be replaced by another eligible individual who meets the required standards set out in this Policy;

ii. Where the National Performance Director considers it to be in the best interests of an Ireland National Team they may recommend that additional athletes, team coaches, team managers, and/or sports science and sports medicine practitioners be added to that selected Ireland National Team, subject to those individuals meeting the required standards set out in the relevant event-specific selection policy;

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

10. Appeals

i. Any appeal against a selection made by the National Selection Panel must be made in accordance with the Swim Ireland Selection Appeals Procedures, available via International Competitions - Swim Ireland;

ii. Athletes should be aware of the strict time limits contained within the Swim Ireland Selection Appeals Procedures, which are designed to resolve issues expediently and fairly.

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