

2025/26

**Northern Ireland Volleyball Indoor Athlete Selection Policy**



Effective from: [Insert Date]  
Following Review: [Insert Date]  
Approved by: NI Volleyball Board

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## **1. Introduction**

Northern Ireland Volleyball (NIV) is committed to creating an effective high-performance environment for indoor volleyball athletes across all age categories. This Selection Policy outlines a transparent, objective, and equitable process for identifying, assessing, selecting, and de-selecting athletes for participation in NI Volleyball's indoor national team programmes. These programmes include youth, junior, developmental, and senior squads across both genders. This policy applies to selections for training camps, development initiatives, competitions, and all international or representative fixtures sanctioned by the Northern Ireland Volleyball Association (NI Volleyball).

This document is binding upon all programme staff, selectors, athletes, and support personnel. It reflects NI Volleyball's commitment to athlete welfare, safeguarding, and non-discriminatory practices, ensuring a consistent standard of selection and accountability at every level.

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## **2. Legal and Ethical Compliance**

This policy is underpinned by adherence to Northern Ireland's legislative framework, including the Equality Act 2010 (as adapted for Northern Ireland), which prohibits discrimination based on protected characteristics such as age, gender, race, disability, religion, or sexual orientation. NI Volleyball ensures that no athlete is disadvantaged or excluded due to these characteristics.

When handling personal information during the selection process, compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 is mandatory. Athlete data is stored securely and used exclusively for selection, performance analysis, and communication.

Additionally, this policy aligns with the Belfast Agreement (1998), which safeguards the right of individuals born in Northern Ireland to identify as British, Irish, or both. For international eligibility, athletes may be eligible through birth, parentage, or residency (typically three continuous years) in line with FIVB, CEV, or Commonwealth Games Federation Byelaw 17.

Athletes must comply with the World Anti-Doping Code. Any athlete under investigation or serving a ban will be ineligible for selection. NI Volleyball's Safeguarding Policy protects all individuals under 18, and all team staff are required to hold AccessNI enhanced clearance.

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## **3. Policy Aim and Scope**

This policy aims to support the identification and development of volleyball players capable of competing at the highest levels while reinforcing the values of discipline, teamwork, respect, and integrity. It covers the selection of athletes across U16, U18, U20, U22, and Senior squads and is designed to guide decisions for both short-term performance and long-term development.

The scope includes initial nominations, training squad selections, final team selections, the identification of reserves, injury replacements, de-selections, and appeals. It also provides a legal and procedural framework to ensure all stakeholders understand how selection decisions are made and on what basis.

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#### **4. Athlete Eligibility**

For selection, athletes must be fully registered with NI Volleyball, be in good standing with their club and federation, and meet all eligibility requirements outlined by the FIVB and CEV.

Eligibility includes:

- Being born in Northern Ireland;
- Having a parent or grandparent born in Northern Ireland;
- Completing three consecutive years of residency in Northern Ireland before selection;
- Holding a valid UK or Irish passport.

Athletes must also:

- Be free from suspension or disciplinary investigation;
  - Comply with all NI Volleyball athlete agreements, codes of conduct and all applicable NI Volleyball policies and procedures;
  - Not be under sanction from any sports governing body;
  - Complete all mandatory CEV Medical M3 forms, including anti-doping declarations and medical disclosures, before competition.
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#### **5. Selection Philosophy and Objectives**

The guiding philosophy behind athlete selection is the holistic development of individuals who are capable of excelling in elite competition and making meaningful contributions to the team environment. NI Volleyball does not select athletes based solely on statistics or past results; instead, it evaluates the complete athlete profile.

Selections are made based on:

- Technical and tactical proficiency relative to the position played, including statistics from club performances via Hudl League Exchange;
- Demonstrated improvement across training cycles;
- Results from fitness testing benchmarks;
- Mental resilience and ability to handle pressure;
- Adherence to team rules, attendance expectations, and overall professionalism;
- Alignment with the team's performance behaviours and cultural expectations.

The selection panel strives to strike a balance between immediate competitive objectives and long-term player development and team cohesion.

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## **6. Performance Assessment and Criteria**

Athlete evaluations are ongoing throughout the season and include data from:

- Biometric and fitness testing (e.g., vertical jump, agility, speed, and aerobic tests);
- Match performance data from domestic leagues and international events;
- Technical assessments by coaches during training blocks and competitions;
- Peer and coach feedback on attitude, communication, leadership, and respect;
- Attend training camps, strength and conditioning sessions, and video review meetings.

While objective metrics are essential, qualitative factors such as leadership, team chemistry, and the ability to respond to coaching are critical components of the final selection.

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## **7. Selection Panel and Decision-Making Process**

The selection panel shall consist of:

- The NI Volleyball Indoor Performance Manager (Chair);
- The Head Coach of the specific age or senior squad;
- One nominated independent selector;
- (Optional) Performance Analyst or S&C Coach (non-voting advisory).

All selectors must declare any conflict of interest before discussions and have completed safeguarding training and induction. Selection decisions are made via majority vote, with the Chair holding a casting vote in the event of a tie.

The selection process follows a structured timeline:

1. Monitoring of athletes during the season;
  2. Mid-season and pre-competition evaluation meetings;
  3. Final selection meeting and documentation of decisions;
  4. Notification to athletes and coaches;
  5. Distribution of feedback and the opportunity for appeal.
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### **8. Reserves and Replacement Protocol**

Each final squad may include nominated reserve athletes who train with the group and may be called upon in case of injury, withdrawal, or disciplinary action. Reserve athletes must meet all eligibility and performance criteria and are subject to the same behavioural and fitness standards as selected athletes.

Injury replacements are considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the selection panel in consultation with the medical team. Replacement athletes must undergo any required fitness tests before final inclusion.

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### **9. De-Selection Grounds and Procedures**

An athlete may be de-selected at any point if they:

- Breach the code of conduct or team values;
- Fail to attend mandatory training or meetings without valid justification;
- Present a risk to team safety or performance cohesion;
- Are deemed unfit for competition following injury or illness, based on medical advice;
- Are suspended due to disciplinary or anti-doping violations.

All de-selection decisions must be formally documented and communicated to the athlete in writing. Athletes affected will have the right to appeal under Section 10.

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### **10. Appeals Process**

Athletes can appeal selection or de-selection decisions based on procedural irregularity, misapplication of the policy, or failure to consider relevant information.

The appeals process includes two stages:

### **Stage 1: Internal Review**

- Appeals must be submitted in writing to [selection@nivolleyball.com](mailto:selection@nivolleyball.com) within three (3) working days of notification;
- Appeals must detail the grounds and include supporting evidence;
- An Appeals Panel (3 members, including one independent) will review the submission;
- A decision will be issued within seven (7) working days.

### **Stage 2: External Arbitration**

- If unsatisfied with the outcome, the athlete may appeal to Sport Resolutions UK;
- Their decision will be final and binding on all parties.

Appeals cannot be made solely on the basis of disagreement with the subjective opinions of selectors.

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## **11. Safeguarding and Athlete Welfare**

NI Volleyball prioritises the safety, health, and well-being of all athletes. All team staff must undergo AccessNI enhanced disclosure checks and complete safeguarding training on an annual basis.

Athletes under 18 must have:

- Written parental consent for participation in residential or international activities;
- Access to a designated Welfare Officer within the programme;
- A protected environment for disclosing concerns confidentially.

Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately via the channels outlined in the NI Volleyball Safeguarding Policy.

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## **12. Review and Oversight**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the NI Volleyball Board and updated as necessary to reflect any changes in law, structure, or competition. Any amendments

will be published and distributed to clubs, coaches, and athletes at least 14 days before implementation. Emergency revisions (e.g., due to a change in FIVB eligibility rules) may be enacted with board approval and prompt notification.

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### **13. Appendices (Available Upon Request)**

- **Appendix A** – Performance Benchmark Standards by Age Category
- **Appendix B** – Athlete Code of Conduct
- **Appendix C** – GDPR Athlete Data Notice
- **Appendix D** – Anti-Doping Declaration Form via FIVB Clean Sport
- **Appendix E** – Safeguarding Reporting Procedures and Contacts

