

New Zealand Handball Selection Policy 2021

New Zealand Handball | Selection Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Application

The selection policy, process and procedures outlined in this document apply to all New Zealand High Performance Handball Players (Men, Women, Junior and Youth, Beach and Indoor)..

1.2. Responsibility

- 1.2.1 The New Zealand Handball High-Performance Panel is responsible for overseeing the application of the selection policy and due process
- 1.2.2 The High-Performance Panel is made up of the High-Performance Director, Head Coach National Men's programme and Head Coach National Women's programme and (optionally) one other person chosen by the NZHF Board in accordance with this policy for the additional skill set or experience they provide and/or to ensure the Panel comprises at least three people.
- 1.2.3 Responsibility for ensuring compliance with the policy and process outlined in this document is delegated to the appointed Convener of Selectors, who is accountable to the High-Performance Panel.
- 1.2.4 The High-Performance Director is responsible for overall compliance by coaches, managers and selectors with the selection policy outlined in this document.
- 1.2.5 The High-Performance Panel and the High-Performance Director are accountable to the NZHF Board for the effectiveness of this Policy, directly reporting to the President of New Zealand Handball.

1.3. Purpose and operational guidelines

- 1.3.1 The purpose of this document is to clearly outline the policy, operational process and procedures that apply to the selection of Handball players to participate in a specific event.
- 1.3.2 This includes both male and female Handball players, of all ages. These players could be selected for a squad or team group for a one-off game(s) or tournament in which the player represents New Zealand Handball, or they could be selected as a special invitee for a special event for example training camps, special coaching events, special tournaments, 'one-off' opportunities to play against visiting international teams or otherwise participate in a high performance event sanctioned by the NZHF Board.

1.4. Application of the policy and process

Consistent and conscientious application of the policy, operations process and procedures outlined in this document will help to ensure the following:

- 1.4.1 Transparency for all stakeholders who are involved in the selection process
- 1.4.2 Improved communication and understanding between stakeholders.
- 1.4.3 Improved planning and execution associated with all aspects of selection
- 1.4.4 Flexibility to respond to selection situations in a fair manner
- 1.4.5 Facilitation of analysis and review of the selection process to ensure quality, consistency and stability between all the selection events that are undertaken by New Zealand Handball in a given season.

1.5. Definitions

- 1.5.1 The word 'selection' refers to the process that is undertaken and the procedures that are followed within the constraints of the policies outlined in this document, which allow New Zealand Handball to identify a limited number of individual players capable of performing to a certain standard, and capable of performing in the teambased environment of Handball.
- 1.5.2 The word 'best' is often used with respect to selection for example 'the best player'. Please be aware that in this example the word 'best' is a subjective estimation of the worth of a player, against a set of criteria that relate specifically to Handball. It may also relate to a player's ability to undertake or fulfil a specific role in a team environment, or to perform to a specific standard, at a specific Handball event.
- 1.5.3 'Selection Event' refers to any formal Handball event that is observed by a member of the selection panel, which can be utilised for the purpose of making an informed selection decision. Where practicable, Selection Events will be identified prior to the commencement of the formal selection process. A selection event will include the relevant age national tournaments, and may include other events, for example inter regional games, talent programme training sessions, club fixtures, other games, squad training camps, etc. This is not a definitive list but is intended as an example only.

1.6. Philosophy

1.6.1 Handball is a complex, multi-faceted game, with a variable game environment that impacts on performance. Although the type of attributes that affect performance can be defined (as selection criteria), it is impossible to objectively define a set 'standard' for these criteria, relative to successfully performing in a specific event.

Consequently, the process of selection requires a selector to subjectively weigh up, assess and define what they believe the standard of an individual player is, against the criteria. This is a subjective decision tempered by the experience and expertise of the selector.

1.6.2 Subjectivity will always remain an unavoidable element of selection. However, the processes and procedures outlined in this document aim to help overcome any of the more undesirable elements of subjectivity in selection, such as bias, prejudice, inconsistency or lack of expertise. Many layers of procedure have been identified to ensure that the negative impact of these elements will have been counteracted prior to a final selection decision being made.

1.7. Selection objectives

- 1.7.1 The primary selection objective is to select the best available players and/or best available squad of players to represent New Zealand Handball for any particular national or international tournament or event.
- 1.7.2 The secondary selection objective is to recognise the potential of athletes to participate at an international event, and to assist those athletes to achieve their individual potential at national and international level.

1.8. Situations outside of selection policy

Situations outside of this selection policy are able to be considered on application to the High-Performance Director. Any requests for exemptions from this policy can only be approved by the High-Performance Panel, following consultation with the NZHF Board and subject to review by that Board. Conflicted members shall be removed from the approval process, if applicable.

2. SELECTION PANEL APPOINTMENTS

The High Performance Panel is responsible for convener and selector appointments, discussed at clause 3, following the process described below:

- 2.1 Applications for people with appropriate expertise will be called for every year for the convener and selector positions. These appointments are annual (calendar year) with an ongoing review.
- 2.2 The High Performance Panel will review the Convener of Selectors' applications and appoint the Convenor of Selectors each year. At any time the office of Convenor of Selectors is vacant, the High-Performance Director will fulfil the functions of the Convenor.
- 2.3 The High Performance Panel along with the appointed Convener of Selectors will review the selector applications and appoint a minimum of three selectors each year.
- 2.4 For the purpose of the selection process, the relevant New Zealand Handball Team Head Coach is automatically part of the selection panel for the team or squad for which they are responsible, with selection panels for any particular squad or team comprising a minimum of three individuals.
- Appointed selectors will become part of a 'pool' of selectors, who will be managed and allocated to specific selection panels by the Convener of Selectors.
- 2.6 If a coach has applied to coach a team that has or may have a family member involved, this will be allowed subject to approval from the High-Performance Director, and the coach is to stand aside when selection of the family member is discussed. Similarly, any selector with a family member under consideration for selection to any team is to stand aside when selection of the family member is discussed. In either case they are able to contribute to the discussion if requested, but may not vote on their family member's selection.
- 2.7 Ideally selections will be made by the relevant selection panel on a consensus basis, but failing consensus then by majority decision. When necessary, the coach will have the final approval on team selection (except where the coach has a conflict of interest). If there is a conflict of interest relating specifically to the coach, the High Performance Panel will have the final vote. Where there is a recognised conflict of interest, this must be noted in a conflicts register to be managed by the High-Performance Director.
- 2.8 It will be a requirement for the appointed selectors for a particular national team or training squad to attend as many events as possible identified by the High-Performance Panel as a Selection Event, and part of the criteria for appointment as a selector is the selector's commitment to meeting that requirement.

3. SELECTION PANELS

- **3.1** For National and Development Squad selections the selection panel will consist of a minimum of three selectors that will include (where possible) the relevant National Coach.
- **3.2** For U20 and U18 National Squads, the selection panel will consist of a minimum of three selectors, including (where possible) the team coach, NZHF Youth Director and at least one other member.
- 3.3 The Convenor of Selectors may (but is not required to be) part of any selection panel.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 All members of a selection panel will be required to sign a New Zealand Handball Confidentiality Agreement.
- 4.2 Contravention of the Confidentiality Agreement will lead to removal from the relevant selection panel and possibly from the selection pool, at the discretion of the Convenor of Selectors (or, in the case of a breach by the Convenor, at the discretion of the High Performance Panel).
- 4.3 Selection panel members will be required to declare any conflict of interest in relation to the player selection process they have been assigned to. The convener of selectors will manage a register of 'conflicts'. This 'conflicts register' will be available for review by New Zealand Handball selectors, the High Performance Panel, and the High-Performance Director.

5. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

5.1 National Team Eligibility

To be eligible for selection in a New Zealand Handball team, the following conditions apply:

- 5.1.1 The player must hold a current New Zealand Passport.
- 5.1.2 Players based outside New Zealand need not play for a Handball New Zealand affiliated club or association, but must still be registered or formally affiliated with such a club or association in accordance with the NZHF constitution.
- 5.1.3 Attendance at the relevant National Tournament is compulsory for selection, unless the High-Performance Director has granted an exemption. (For exemption requirements, please see clause 6)
- 5.1.4 If any National Tournament or Selection Event comprises more than one weekend or session, players are required to attend all weekends or sessions, unless an exemption is granted.
- 5.1.5 A player may be eligible for more than one national team.
- 5.1.6 There is no age eligibility with respect to National Squad or National Team selection; however, players must comply with age eligibility guidelines for relevant National tournaments.

- 5.1.7 Players must comply with any rules of eligibility applied by New Zealand Handball and relating specifically to the tournament or event that they are being selected for i.e. gender, age restrictions, performance or specific skill parameters.
- 5.1.8 The player must be nominated in accordance with clause 7 and submit an expression of interest in whatever form the relevant selection panel requires, and agree to a player contract prescribed by the NZHF Board for this purpose.
- 5.1.9 Players must be up to date with their financial commitments owed to the NZHF or their Club or regional association, including commitments to past national training squads or teams, or have a payment plan in place to clear commitments approved by the NZHF Board.

5.2 Regional Team Eligibility

To be eligible for selection in a Regional team to take part in a tournament sanctioned by the NZHF Board as a Selection Event, the following conditions apply:

- 5.2.1 The player must be a currently registered and financial playing member of a Regionally affiliated club or association.
- 5.2.2 The player must comply with rules of eligibility in accordance with the relevant National and Regional policy in place from time to time. Currently those rules of eligibility are as follows:
- a) Current National and Development squad members will play for their Region based on which club they are registered with for the relevant financial year, unless they apply to New Zealand Handball for a dispensation to be exempt from the Club Region rule for that year
- b) Players other than National and Development Squad members can elect to represent either their Region of Origin or their Region of Residence or the Region in which their Club is based
- c) Players may represent one Region only in any given year unless extenuating circumstances apply as approved by the NZHF Board

5.3 Multiple Eligibility

If there is a clash of priorities for a player who is eligible for more than one New Zealand Handball team, the matter shall be referred to the respective national coaches for discussion. A player's ability to play for multiple representative teams shall be accommodated to the extent reasonably possible, but ultimately the decision rests with the player concerned if selected for more than one team or squad and clashes cannot be resolved. National coaches are required to respect players' decisions in this regard.

6. EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 If a player is unable to attend a designated Selection Event or satisfy any other eligibility criteria and wishes to be considered for selection, they must request an exemption. The requirements for requesting an exemption are:
 - 6.1.1 All requests for exemption must be in writing and (subject to clause 6.1.2) received by the High-Performance Director no later than 5.00pm, five working days prior to the commencement of the Selection Event.
 - 6.1.2 If unforeseen circumstances cause a player to be unable to attend a Selection Event within 5 days of the Event, the player should notify the High-Performance Director as soon as possible of these circumstances and submit a subsequent written request for exemption.
 - 6.1.3 Requests for exemption must include evidence of the reason for the absence satisfactory to the High-Performance Director, if requested, such as a doctor's certificate or a letter stating a conflicting work commitment from the player's employer.

In circumstances where a player has exams during or within two days following the Selection Event, exemptions shall be automatically granted. In the event of bereavement or other extenuating circumstances, the High-Performance Director will make a decision on an individual case basis.

- All players who are unable to attend a Selection Event due to a commitment with a national Handball programme will be granted an automatic exemption.
- 6.3 Attendance at all selection trials and official training sessions is a critical aspect of selection. However, the requirement for an existing New Zealand squad player's attendance at selection trials and official training sessions will be subject to the discretion of the relevant selection panel, in consultation with the High-Performance Panel.
- Subject to 6.3, if a player is unable to attend selections trials or official training sessions for the squad or team they are seeking selection for, they must request an exemption in order to remain eligible for consideration in the selection of the squad/team. Requirements of an exemption are as in 6.1.3, with evidence to be provided to the team manager and selection panel.
- Other special circumstances for non-attendance at a Selection Event, selection trials or training sessions will be considered by the High-Performance Director on application.
- Any player whose request for an exemption from any selection eligibility criterion is declined may appeal that decision to the NZHF Board, whose decision shall be final.

7. SELECTION NOMINATIONS

- **7.1** NZHF clubs or associations competing at Selection Event may nominate eligible players who they wish to be considered for National Squad or team selection prior to the National Tournament.
- 7.2 The selectors may also approach players, or their respective team coaches or managers at any time (including during Selection Events) seeking the player's interest to be considered for National Selection, and nominate them for selection if interested.

8. CRITERIA

- **8.1** The selection criteria are determined by the High-Performance Panel in consultation with the National programme where appropriate.
- **8.2** The following criteria will apply in the selection process used by the selectors in respect of New Zealand Handball National Teams and Squads:
 - 8.2.1 Performance at events (within the twelve months prior to selection to the squad) which may include performance at International matches and National Tournaments identified as Selection Events by the High-Performance Panel for the purposes of this Policy, and any formal event observed by the national coaching staff or selectors i.e. High-Performance camps or training sessions, and local competition performances.
 - 8.2.2 Physical capacities includes speed over a variety of distances (0-10m, 30-40m & 0-40m and the Cooper Test), aerobic, strength and agility.

Formal testing for all these attributes may not necessarily be performed. Aerobic capacity may be tested utilising the 'beep' test and/or the 'Yo-Yo' test. All players may be fitness tested during squad training for all national teams as part of the overall selection criteria.

- 8.2.3 Technical Competence core skills include receiving, possessing, shooting, dribbling, tackling, intercepting, marking, footwork, and set plays
- 8.2.4 'Tactical Nous' tactical ability includes reading the play, involvement in the game, on decision-making and positional flexibility. Ability to apply and utilise information provided by coaching staff and related to team or individual performance.
- 8.2.5 Potential to Improve present performance level relative to past performances.
- 8.2.6 Competitive Ability mental toughness, strength, temperament, determination, commitment, performing in adverse conditions, coping with setbacks/criticism and persistence.
- 8.2.7 Attitude individual application in training and competition. Attendance, availability and ability to rehabilitate from injury.
- 8.2.8 Team/Squad Orientation an individual's ability within a team sport, to 'fit in' and influence the squad/team in a positive manner, and contribute positively to the team strategy.
- 8.2.9 Positional fit the player's relative proficiency in a particular position or positions, and the needs of the Team/Squad for players whop can perform that role.
- 8.2.10 Communication the ability of the player to communicate clearly and constructively with staff and be open to accept suggestions from coaching staff regarding performance improvement. Players should be able to verbalise concerns regarding coaching and team issues in a calm, mature and un-emotive manner to allow for positive discussion to resolve problems.

- 8.2.11 Performance statistics past international performance statistics, to the extent available and verified as reliable. Any such statistics are to be used as a guide to the player's ability to compete effectively at an international level, but should not be determinative, recognising the potential for players to improve (or decline) and the variability of opposition and team-mate quality that can impact on a player's stats.
- 8.2.12 Nationality constraints for players with dual nationality or not born in New Zealand, selections may be limited by any applicable IHF constraints on team composition.

9. SELECTION PROCESS

9.1 Assessment

The selection of national teams representing New Zealand at International competitions, matches and special events is based on:

- 9.1.1 Performance over a 12-month period
- 9.1.2 Assessment by the relevant selection panel against the selection criteria
- 9.1.3 Attendance and performance at Selection Events and selection trials
- 9.1.4 Selectors may also take into account:
 - Proven performance during the competition season
 - Performance at High-Performance camps and national competitions
- 9.1.8 With respect to player performance at a number of Selection Events, it should be clear that while the selection panel will have the final responsibility for making a selection decision, input regarding performance may be sought from a number of different people with varying degrees of expertise. These people may or may not be restricted to include New Zealand Handball selectors, national team coaches, performance network coaches, other officials attending camps r observing Selection Events, coaches of invitational teams, association coaches, and national programme coaches.

9.2 Extenuating factors

When considering the selection or non-selection of a player into either a national team or squad, or for any event sanctioned by New Zealand Handball, the selection panel may, at their discretion, give weight to extenuating factors or circumstances not specifically outlined in this document. If something unforeseen does arise, the selection panel will make recommendations to the High-Performance Director for consideration and, if warranted, an exemption.

9.3 Selection Events

9.3.1 The selection process may be conducted over several Selection Events; and performance at a number of events may be taken into consideration by the selection panel.

- 9.3.2 All Selection Event formats are subject to budgetary constraints and must be approved by the High-Performance Director.
- 9.3.3 Selection Events may be conducted in regional areas.
- 9.3.4 Information regarding Selection Event dates, times and venues will be circulated as soon as practicable to all participants. Any difficulty in attending should be conveyed immediately to the High-Performance Director in writing.
- 9.3.5 Where late changes are necessary the selection panel will be authorised to make the necessary adjustments to eligibility criteria. The adjustments will be subject to final approval by the High-Performance Director and President.
- 9.3.6 The Convener of Selectors in consultation with the High-Performance Director will organise team and match sheets and present copies to selectors prior to and during each selection event.
- 9.3.7 Elimination of players during the trial period will be made, if necessary, at the discretion of the selectors and wherever possible, players will be notified that they have not met the selection criteria or have not made the cut for players still under consideration.

9.4 Administration

- 9.4.1 In addition to seeking an exemption under section 6 (where applicable), players unable to compete at tournaments, Selection Events, training camps or other attendances required under this policy, must advise the relevant National Coach in writing of this fact and the reasons for their absence, at least 24 hours before the commencement of the specific event. Inside 24 hours players are to advise the relevant national team coach and/or manager. This is an administrative courtesy requirement to ensure coaches and management are aware of absences, independent of the exemption process, although absences that are not notified and explained in advance can be treated as a factor in dropping or declining to select a player.
- 9.4.2 If a player has not been selected in a squad when an unforeseen or extenuating circumstance has impacted on the player's ability to perform to their potential, and provides a written submission to the High-Performance Panel supporting a claim that he or she has not been given a fair and equal opportunity, the High-Performance Panel, if satisfied following consultation with the relevant selection panel that, but for the extenuating circumstances, it would have been reasonably likely that the player would have been selected for the relevant training squad, reserves the right in its absolute discretion to add that player to the appropriate squad, for the duration of the selection period, even if the maximum number of players has been filled.

10. SQUAD SELECTION

10.1 Senior Squads Men and Women

A squad with a maximum of 25 players will be selected each year.

10.2 National Development Squads Men and Women

A development squad with a maximum of 10 players will be selected each year.

10.3 NZ Age Grade Representatives

A squad will be selected for each officially recognised age grade each year (usually Under 20 and Under 18, but subject to the IHF calendar for the year in question and the year ahead), unless the High Performance Panel determines in any year that it is not appropriate for a particular age grade squad to be selected. Each squad can be added to following Selection Events and age group tournaments where players are age eligible, or with the nomination of the High-Performance Panel, or as required.

11. TEAM SELECTION

The relevant selection panel shall select teams from the relevant selection squad, by such time each year as notified by the High-Performance Panel as the selection deadline. That deadline shall be communicated to the New Zealand Handball community in a timely fashion once it has been confirmed.

12. APPROVAL AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF NATIONAL SQUADS

- 12.1 Squads are selected by the relevant selection panel and may be announced following the conclusion of a Selection Event, and a period of consideration and consultation, and are subject to final approval by the High-Performance Panel. The Convener of Selectors will submit squad details to the High-Performance Director at the conclusion of the final squad selection event.
- 12.2 National Senior Squads and National Development Squads for men and women will be named no later than November each year in accordance with the selection process and policy
- **12.3** Announcement dates will be determined on an annual basis in consultation with the High-Performance Director, Convener of Selectors and the national team coaches.

13. APPROVAL AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF NATIONAL TEAMS COACHES AND SUPPORT STAFF

- **13.1** Staff as selected by the selection panel are subject to ratification by the High-Performance Panel.
- The staff announcements process will be determined by the High-Performance Director, Convener of Selectors and High-Performance Panel.

14. REPLACEMENT OF SELECTED PLAYERS

14.1 Grounds for Replacement

- 14.1.1 Injury or Illness: A player who is injured or ill may be assessed by a doctor nominated or agreed to by New Zealand Handball, who will assess the player in conjunction with the National Team Coach.
- 14.1.2 Loss of Form: A player being considered for replacement due to loss of form shall be counselled by the relevant National Coach to give them the

- opportunity to rectify the situation. The High-Performance Director will be advised of the situation and a mutually agreed time frame will be set by the coach and player for the situation to be reassessed.
- 14.1.3 Breach of Discipline: A player being considered for replacement due to a breach of discipline, including failure to observe any relevant New Zealand Handball policy, the New Zealand Handball Code of Conduct or the New Zealand Handball Player Contract, will be counselled by the relevant national coach to give them an opportunity to rectify the situation, if possible. The High-Performance Director will be advised of the situation and a mutually agreed time frame will be set by the national coach and player for the situation to be reassessed. The High-Performance Director will report such breaches to the President and High-Performance Panel in a timely manner.

The High-Performance Panel has discretion at all times to remove any player from a squad for breach of discipline reasons, without prior notice or counselling, if the Panel determines on reasonable grounds that the continued involvement of the player in the relevant squad would be detrimental to squad unity or create an unsafe environment for any player or member of the coaching staff.

- 14.1.4 Breach of Anti-Doping Policy: Any player who breaches the New Zealand Handball Anti-Doping Policy will automatically be removed from the relevant national squad or national team and will be replaced. All penalties relating to these breaches will be as per the New Zealand Handball guidelines. The High-Performance Director will report such breaches to the President in a timely manner.
- 14.1.5 Breach of Match-Fixing Policy: Any player who breaches the New Zealand Handball Match-Fixing Policy will automatically be removed from the relevant national squad or national team and will be replaced. All penalties relating to these breaches will be as per the New Zealand Handball guidelines. The High-Performance Director will report such breaches to the President in a timely manner.
- 14.1.6 Ineligibility: Any player who is deemed ineligible or becomes ineligible for the national team or squad will automatically be removed and replaced. The National Coach will report such breaches to the High-Performance Director in a timely manner.

14.2 Replacement Process

If a selected player is unable to continue or is removed as a representative of a national team, the procedure for a replacement player is as follows:

- 14.2.1 The Convener of Selectors will be consulted.
- 14.2.2 Consideration will be given first to identified national squad athletes.
- 14.2.3 Consideration will then be given to other identified players from the selection process should this be necessary.
- 14.2.4 The selectors will then fill this position with the player judged most suitable, having regard to the required degree of skill, selection criteria and consistent performance.

15. REQUEST FOR APPEAL

- 15.1 A player may request a review of any given selection decision by submitting a request for an appeal including the grounds for a review to the High-Performance Director within five working days of the announcement of the relevant selection decision.
- 15.2 The request for the appeal must state the grounds for review, or why the selection decision should be changed. It must specifically address issues regarding how the player was evaluated under situations that put them at a distinct disadvantage to other players being evaluated.
- The NZHF President shall appoint an Appeals Panel to determine the appeal. The Appeals Panel will consist of a minimum of 3 people, one of which will be a representative of the New Zealand Handball High-Performance Panel. In the event the NZHF President has a conflict of interest in considering the appeal, the NZHF Board shall take over the appointment of the Appeals Panel, with conflicted Board members excluded from the appointments and appeal process.
- **15.4** All requests for appeals must be submitted in writing and may be submitted by email.

By email to:

The High-Performance Director

High-performance@handball.org.nz

- 15.5 It should be remembered that in general an appeal will only be considered if the selection policy was not adhered to, or the player was not given 'fair' and 'equal' opportunity during the selection process.
- **15.6** An appeal will not be heard, just because a player or a representative of the player thinks that the player is better than, or more deserving than a named player.