

Northern Ireland Fencing Ltd – Selection Policies and Procedures

Eligibility to fence for Northern Ireland

- 1) You must be a member of Northern Ireland Fencing.
- 2) You then have the right to represent Northern Ireland provided that:
 - a) You were born in Northern Ireland;
 - OR b) You have a parent or grandparent born in Northern Ireland;
 - OR c) You are normally resident in the country and have been for a period of time (length of time depends on age and connection).

Notification of Selection etc

- Fencers will be notified of selection 2 calendar months before the competition if it is a Home International. Selectors will be given a date by the NIF board by which selection decisions must be made.
- Fencers will be notified selection 3 calendar months before the competition if it is a Foreign International. Selectors will be given a date by the NIF board by which selection decisions must be made.
- NIF will endeavour to give as much notice as possible however this is dependent on the Competition and its position in the fencing calendar.
- The Chairman of the Selection Committee will notify the Board of Directors of Northern Ireland Fencing of all selection decisions prior to notifying the selected Fencers.
- All Fencers must respond in writing with their decision on the offer from the selectors within 10 days.

Selectors and Team Captain

- The selectors will be appointed by the Board of Northern Ireland Fencing and will serve for 1 Year in that capacity.
- All selection decisions shall be recorded along with the reasons for selection/non-selection. This will be kept by the Chairman of Selectors and will be required in the event of an appeal.
- NIF will be responsible for event administration and the selection of the Team Captain. The Team Captain will be appointed by the Board for a term of 1 Year and may apply to remain in that role at the end of each year. Maximum number of concurrent terms that an individual may remain as Team Captain is 4 Years.

Selection Strategy

Northern Ireland Fencing would like to have a clearly defined selection strategy, which is as transparent as possible, and easily understood. In practice, team selection for youth events is not that simple, with numerous ranking lists on which each fencer may appear: cadet rankings, junior rankings, senior rankings - and this ignores Leon Paul, Northern Ireland or other series rankings. For senior events, it makes sense to look primarily to senior rankings for selection, but for youth events where some fencers may appear on all of the above, it is more difficult.

We want to select those fencers who are either achieving or are striving to achieve best results. This is most likely to mean those fencers who are actively planning their competitive calendar around the GB age group circuit or the Irish rankings. Junior fencers should (generally) be concentrating on the events appropriate to their age group. By implication this means that their ranking in other age categories may not be a measure of their true potential, simply because they have not entered all of the events applicable to this 'other' age group. The following lists some of the issues that are often raised around team selections:

- a fencer has entered 3 out of 6 events in a season is ranked 50th. A second fencer has entered all 6 and is ranked 47th. Which is the better fencer?

- is injury early in a season justification for not selecting a fencer, when in the last season they finished, lets say, in the top 10. They are only just now starting back on the competition trail so are behind other possible team choices in the rankings.
- where a particular age group competition spans two age group ranking lists (e.g. NYI, U18), is a fencer placed 42nd in the junior rankings stronger than a fencer placed 9th in the cadet rankings (each age group may have an entirely different set of qualifying events)?

No selection policy can ever hope to mandate for every conceivable eventuality. However both British Fencing and the Irish Fencing Federation have clearly defined competition circuits and centrally maintained ranking lists, so it is logical to base selection for Northern Irish representative events on these. For the most important events: NYI, UKSG and Junior Commonwealths, the most appropriate age group ranking list will be used as the primary selection criteria.

Note that for team events, teams of either three or four may be selected, depending on the strength of fencers available for selection.

Junior Selection Criteria

Fencers must be current members of Northern Ireland Fencing and must meet current Northern Ireland eligibility criteria, or the criteria requirements of the competition/championship concerned.

All fencers selected will be required to sign a Code of Conduct Agreement. Any fencer under 16 years of age selected for the Northern Ireland team must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Cadet Winton - Team

This is a national inter-region event, held annually. This event is often used to trial fencers who have shown potential and fencers need not be selected on the basis of any particular ranking list (although this will often be the case).

Given that this is a regional event (rather than a National event), fencers who might in principal be eligible for Northern Ireland team selection, are able to fence for other regions if they are resident outside Northern Ireland.

Age Group: U18 on Jan 1st of the season concerned.

There are 4 fencers allowed per event so each home country will select 24 fencers, these must be the same fencers for the individual & team events.

Selection for the first 2 places will be done from the U20 GBR ranking list or the Irish Rankings.

Selection for the 3rd & 4th place will be made by 3 selectors. (The selectors should normally select the next fencer(s) on the ranking lists unless there are reasons not to (e.g. there may be very few eligible fencers on the junior ranking list & the selectors will prefer to look at results for the cadet ranking). These reasons should be recorded & made available to any fencer who feels they should have been selected.

The selectors reserve the right to omit a fencer from selection if they deem that fencer's disciplinary record to be unsatisfactory.

New Youth International – Team

This is a new competition to replace the Junior Home International and will include fencers from selected other European countries. The qualifying age groups have also changed.

There will be a team of 3 plus a reserve in each weapon for U16 fencers. There may be a one weapon team for U14 fencers if sufficient countries can raise teams. This will be confirmed in due course.

Selection will be based on the GB cadet rankings or the Irish Rankings at the beginning of November.

For each team of Under 16s there will be 4 fencers selected.

Provided that the fencer is eligible on the selection date and has a good disciplinary record with Northern Ireland, GBR or IRL, the first three places will initially be selected automatically from the appropriate rankings and the final place(s) will be discretionary.

In the selection of the discretionary place, and all subsequent replacements after the initial selection, selectors may take into consideration any factors including, but not limited to, injury, previous support and past results for Northern Ireland.

UK School Games – Team/Individual

The UK School Games is a multi-disciplinary event intended to introduce budding athletes to large multi-sport events. Held annually and first held in 2006. The intention is for more events to be added each year. Fencing was included as one of the inaugural sports.

There are 4 fencers allowed per event so each home country will select 24 fencers, these must be the same fencers for the individual & team events.

Selection for the first 2 places will be done from the U20 GBR ranking list or the Irish Rankings.

Selection for the 3rd & 4th place will be made by 3 selectors. (The selectors should normally select the next fencer(s) on the ranking list unless there are reasons not to (e.g. there may be very few eligible fencers on the junior ranking list & the selectors will prefer to look at results for the cadet ranking). These reasons should be recorded & made available to any fencer who feels they should have been selected.

The selectors reserve the right to omit a fencer from selection if they deem that fencer's disciplinary record to be unsatisfactory.

Junior Commonwealth Fencing Championships – Team/Individual

This was a new event in January 2006, hosted by India. It is hoped that this will become a regular event every three years. The next championships will be in 2012.

Any eligible Northern Ireland fencer may be selected for this event.

The top 2 fencers from the appropriate weapon GB Junior or Cadet Ranking, provided the fencer is in the top 30% of fencers on those ranking lists or from the Irish Rankings provided the fencer is in the top 10%. Remaining places (including the first two places if no fencers are selected as a result of the above criteria) may be assigned at selectors discretion, with particular consideration given to the following:

- Lower placed fencers in the GB Junior World Championship Ranking
- Lower placed fencers in the GB Cadet World Championship Ranking
- Lower placed fencers in the GB Senior Ranking or IRL Senior Ranking

Then results at:

- British Championships (age group & senior)
- Northern Ireland Junior Series

Note: Selectors will not be obliged to select complete weapon teams for this event. None, one, two, three or four fencers may be selected in any weapon. Where an incomplete team is selected, fencers selected in another weapon may, at the selectors discretion, be asked to double up in order to field a team in a particular event.

Senior Selection Criteria

Fencers must be current members of Northern Ireland Fencing and must meet current Northern Ireland eligibility criteria, or the criteria requirements of the competition/championship concerned.

All fencers selected will be required to sign a Code of Conduct Agreement. Any fencer under 16 years of age selected for the senior team must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Senior Selection – Commonwealth Fencing Championships

Fencers wishing to be selected for the CFC should have achieved a ranking in the Top 30 of the British Senior Rankings or the Top 10 of the Irish Senior Rankings. A maximum of five fencers can be selected at each weapon.

Fencers who have not achieved this level in the British or Irish Rankings may be selected, entirely at the selectors discretion, if:

- (i) NIF and the Northern Ireland Sports Council feel that investment in them is justified by their prospects for 2012/14 (i.e. junior fencers).
- (ii) Where the inclusion of an individual fencer who had not met the criteria would complete a team that could have a realistic chance of a medal.

The Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2010 will be held in Melbourne Australia from 29th September to the 5th October.

Senior Selection - 5 Nation's

Four fencers will be selected for each weapon.

The first three selected will be from the British/Irish ranking lists as at the date of selection. The fourth fencer (and any subsequent replacements) will be chosen by the Selectors, and ratified by the Board.

To be considered for the Northern Ireland 5 nations team a fencer must have demonstrated their commitment to fencing in Northern Ireland. Anyone wishing to be considered for selection must compete in at least one of the following; the Northern Ireland Open or the Derry Open. Fencers who wish to be considered but fail to attend at least one of these competitions must contact NIF in writing detailing reasons for the failure to attend. NIF board will consider each case on its merits and will take into consideration attendance at other Northern Ireland Fencing events in these cases.

Senior Winton Cup

It has been decided to keep the Winton Cup as an event where the selectors can provide a competitive experience for fencers who have not met the selection criteria for any of the other international teams. Selection will therefore be entirely at the Selectors discretion from fencers who have not qualified for the 5 Nations, Youth Quad or Commonwealth Teams.

Fencers who wish to be considered for the Northern Ireland Winton Cup Team must express their interest to NIF in the September of any given season. Selectors will take into consideration;

- GB and or IRL ranking.
- Attendance at NIF events.
- Attendance at the NIF training event.

Appeals etc

Appeals over fencing team selection must be made in writing through the office of Northern Ireland Fencing within 14 days of the selection being posted on the Northern Ireland web site. The Northern Ireland Fencing Board, or an independent panel appointed by the Board, will consider the selection.

Their decision is final.

There is no right of appeal over the selection of officials.

Any fencer who declines the offer of selection without providing the selectors with an adequate reason will be automatically disqualified for selection from the next team event.