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FIELD HOCKEY CANADA NATIONAL MASTERS ATHLETE SELECTION POLICY

Masters Hockey is recognized by Field Hockey Canada (“FHC”), World Masters Hockey (“WMH”) and the Fédération Internationale de Hockey, as outdoor and indoor hockey for athletes aged 35 and older (“Masters”). Masters hockey is a recognized program of FHC.

In this Policy, National Masters Field Hockey Teams are comprised of Masters athletes aged 35 and over that represent Canada at international competitions and for whom FHC provides training, competition, coaching and administrative support, through the FHC Masters Committee and otherwise. National Masters teams are formed under the auspices of FHC in accordance with the Masters Team Formation Policy, with the goals of providing international competition and continued development for Masters athletes, coaches and administrators.

FHC is dedicated to the continued development of its Masters hockey program. The Masters program seeks to develop athletes, coaches, administrators and national teams capable of winning international matches and WMH competitions. .

FHC’s athlete selection process for its Masters National Teams aims to be transparent and fair. This policy formalizes how Masters athletes are selected for National Teams.

1. Objectives of the Athlete Selection Policy

The objectives of this athlete selection policy are

- a. to outline a clear and fair process for the identification and selection of athletes for Masters National Teams that will have the best possible chance of achieving positive, competitive results for FHC at WMH events, and
- b. to encourage the development of Masters athletes and the Masters program over the short and long term.

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply in this Policy:

- a. **Age Group Coordinator** –one or more persons appointed by the Masters Committee to develop and coordinate, as described in section 4 of the Masters Team Formation Policy, a National Team for a specific Masters Age Group for a specified term.



- b. **Coach** -- one or more persons appointed by the Masters Committee to coach a National Team for a particular Masters Age Group for a WMH sanctioned event, and who is appropriately qualified to coach pursuant to FHC policies
- c. **Manager** – one or more persons appointed by the Masters Committee to manage a National Team for a particular Masters Age Group for a WMH sanctioned event.
- d. **Masters Age Group** – a five-year incremental men’s and women’s age group beginning at 35 years old, as defined and determined by WMH.
- e. **Masters Committee** – a committee appointed by the FHC Board of Directors pursuant to the FHC Bylaws to oversee Masters hockey in Canada, and which is authorized to create sub-committees relating to Masters hockey.
- f. **National Squad** – Masters athletes who register in the Masters program with FHC and who are invited to trial to be selected for a National Team for a Masters Age Group.
- g. **National Team** - the athletes for a team in a Masters Age Group selected by the Selector(s) to represent Canada at a particular international Masters competition sanctioned by WMH, including men’s, women’s, outdoor and indoor hockey competitions.
- h. **Selector(s)** - means the Coach and, if requested by the Coach and subject to their appointment by the Masters Committee, one or more assistant coaches or other assistant selectors, to select athletes for a National Team in accordance with this Policy.

3. Responsibilities of Field Hockey Canada, Coaches and Athletes

With respect to Masters athlete selection, FHC (primarily through the Masters Committee), Coaches and athletes have complementary responsibilities:

- a. FHC:
 - i. to establish an appropriate athlete selection policy;
 - ii. to periodically review and, if necessary, revise its athlete selection policy;
 - iii. to communicate the selection criteria to athletes and Coaches;
 - iv. to implement the selection policy appropriately, for the benefit of the Masters program and consistent with the objectives of this Policy; and
 - v. to respect the selection decisions of the Selector(s) made in accordance with this Policy.
- b. Coaches:
 - i. to be familiar with, and utilize appropriately, this Policy and the athlete selection criteria set out in this Policy;
 - ii. to enter into and abide by the Masters Coaching Agreement with FHC;
 - iii. to use their expertise and technical knowledge as may be appropriate for Masters athletes;
 - iv. to educate themselves on the particular coaching requirements appropriate for Masters athletes;
 - v. to comply with all elements of FHC’s Safe Sport program and code of conduct;
 - vi. to communicate and provide appropriate feedback to athletes with respect to the selection process and selection decisions; and
 - vii. to support FHC in the continuing development and application of clear and comprehensive athlete selection policies.
- c. Athletes:
 - i. to review and familiarize themselves with this Policy, other relevant FHC policies and the athlete selection criteria and, if necessary, request further information or clarification;





from Coaches or FHC to ensure they clearly understand the requirements for athlete selection;

- ii. to comply with all elements of FHC's Safe Sport program and code of conduct; and
- iii. to pay when due the costs, charges and levies, as may be determined by the Age Group Coordinator, of and related to talent identification process and other elements of the athlete selection process;
- iv. if selected for a National Team, to pay when due their share of costs, charges and levies, as may be proposed by the Age Group Coordinator and approved by FHC, with respect to participation on the National Team, which may include (without limitation) expenses related to travel, accommodation, uniforms, tournament registration, coaches, managers, FHC administrative levy, training and team equipment; and
- v. If selected for a National Team, to enter into and abide by the FHC Masters Athlete Agreement and WMH's code of conduct.

4. Eligibility for Selection

a. **FHC Requirements** - All athletes who wish to be considered for selection to a National Squad or National Team must:

- i. be a Registered Participant of FHC, as defined in the FHC By-laws;
- ii. register in the Masters program with FHC's on-line database;
- iii. not be under suspension or sanction by FHC or Sport Canada for any doping
- iv. or doping related offence, or be subject to any other sanction recognized by FHC or by a member of FHC;
- v. hold or be eligible to hold a Canadian Passport or have been a permanent resident of Canada for twelve (12) months;
- vi. commit to sign any applicable Masters Athlete Agreement and Release as required by FHC; and
- vii. Be eligible to compete in WMH events under the current WMH Eligibility Policy standards (<https://worldmastershockey.org/wmhdocuments/eligibility/>).

b. **Age Calculation** - Except for athletes eligible for a National Team in the oldest Masters Age Group (where there is no upper age limit), an athlete is only eligible for selection to a National Team if their age is classified within the 5-year Masters Age Group of the Masters Team at issue. Pursuant to the WMH Eligibility Policy, an athlete's age is calculated by their year of birth, not their actual age at the time of an event. For example, e.g., for a WMH event in 2026, an athlete born on the 10th December 1976 would be classified as 50 years old from the 1st of January 2026 to the 31st of December 2026. Therefore, that athlete would be classified as over-50 from 1st January 2026 until 31st December 2031. On the 1st of January 2032, they would be re-classified as over-55.

c. **Overage athletes** - Notwithstanding sub-paragraph b. above, an athlete may be selected for a National Squad or National Team in a younger Masters Age Group than applicable to their age calculation only where no contemporaneous National Team in their Masters Age Group is formed or being formed. For example, an athlete classified over-50 may be selected for an over-45 National Team where no over-50 National Team is entered in the same WMH event.





d. **Underage athletes** - At the request of a Coach, the Masters Committee may, in its unfettered discretion, apply to WMH for an “underage dispensation” pursuant to WMH’s Eligibility Policy, to permit an athlete to be selected for a National Team older than applicable to their classified age. FHC’s Trans Inclusion Policy applies to Masters athlete selection (<https://fieldhockey.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FHCTransinclusionPolicyMarch13.pdf>)

5. Talent Identification

Talent identification for selection to National Squads by Coaches, and selection to National Teams by the Selector(s), may occur from any of the following sources:

- a. National Team selection camps, selection tournaments and open try-outs.
- b. national Masters championships or other domestic Masters events;
- c. performance at past international events;
- d. performance at domestic competitions, including club, regional or invitational events;
- e. video submissions; or
- f. recommendations from club, regional or provincial coaches.

Coaches, Selector(s), Age Group Coordinators and Managers shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate athletes who seek selection but may be unavailable to attend a selection event due to an extenuating factor, such as distant travel, unreasonable expense, significant work or personal commitments. If appropriate, selection events are encouraged to be held in various parts of the country to encourage participation and accommodate all interested athletes. Athletes not able to attend any specific selection event are not excluded from selection.

Any Provincial Association may request that a Masters talent identification selection camp or open try-out be held in their province or region for athlete identification. FHC will take all reasonable steps to publicize any scheduled open try-out events.

6. Athlete Selection Criteria

In order to be selected for and remain on a National Team, all athletes must:

- a. submit to and accept evaluation by the Selector(s) pursuant to the Athlete Evaluation System set out below;
- b. meet and maintain fitness requirements as determined and publicized by the Coach;
- c. sign and submit to FHC the current form of FHC Masters Athlete Agreement and Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims and Indemnity Agreement;
- d. demonstrate commitment to winning medals at international competitions and other WMH events;
- e. demonstrate commitment to the rigors of National Team training and competition, including travel, fitness, lifestyle, and personal sacrifice.;
- f. exhibit the ability to adapt to new training environments;
- g. demonstrate a positive and cooperative attitude toward other athletes, the National Team, Coaches and FHC staff;
- h. comply with the requirements of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, including the Canadian Safe Sport Program and anti-doping requirements;
- i. demonstrate commitment to injury reduction practices and injury management programs;





- j. demonstrate a commitment to fair play; and
- k. meet all financial commitments required pursuant to this Policy.

(collectively, the “**Selection Criteria**”). Athletes wishing to be considered for selection to a Masters Team are strongly encouraged to have a complete medical evaluation and be medically cleared for high intensity training and competition, and to advise Coaches of any physical limitations or issues.

7. Athlete Evaluation System

Athlete evaluations for National Teams will be conducted by the Selector(s) based on FHC’s evaluation matrix, taking into account international Masters standards within each Masters Age Group. The development of this system of evaluation and understanding of the qualitative measures will be on-going and used by the Selector(s) as a tool to aid in the selection process.

Conducting athlete evaluations for selection to a National Team involves weighing the needs of the team and the perceived relative strengths and weaknesses of the athletes in order to select a National Team deemed most appropriate to represent Canada.

Where multiple Selectors are appointed, the Coach shall make the ultimate selection decisions.

The evaluation system analyzes athletes’ abilities and characteristics in 5 categories: technical, tactical, position-specific skills, physiological, and psychological. In selecting athletes for National Teams, Selector(s) have broad discretion, to be reasonably applied, in interpreting, emphasizing, weighting, assessing and applying the following factors:

Technical, tactical and position-specific skills:

- a. A high standard and consistency in the execution of the basic skills at speed and under pressure. These skills include hitting, pushing, dribbling, tackling, intercepting, receiving, possessing, scooping, marking, leading, eliminating, shooting and goalkeeping-specific skills, as applicable.
- b. Ability to apply skills to the game situation.
- c. Appropriate selection, decision-making and application of general and position specific skills in the context of the game.
- d. Specific set play skills (eg. PC hitter or drag flicker, defensive post player, etc).
- e. Ability to “read” and respond to game situations.
- f. Ability to make correct decisions under pressure.
- g. Understanding of individual, positional and team tactics.
- h. The ability to play in more than one position.

Physiological:

- a. Aerobic and anaerobic fitness.
- b. Acceleration and speed.
- c. Agility.
- d. Coordination.
- e. Strength.

Psychological:

- a. Leadership.
- b. Experience.
- c. Special skills or abilities
- d. Cooperation and respect for teammates, Coaches and administrators.
- e. Commitment to team and training schedule.



- f. Program requirements.
- g. Sportsmanship.

8. Disqualification

The Masters Committee, on the recommendation of the relevant Coach and after reasonable notice to the Athlete and an opportunity to be heard, may remove an athlete from a National Team at any time if they do not maintain the requirements of the Selection Criteria, as determined by the Coach. In order to remain on a National Team, selected athletes must commit to the training and competitive programs as established by the Coach. A Coach may require an athlete to provide a written or oral injury report from appropriate medical or paramedical personnel. The Masters Committee may remove an athlete from a National Team if the athlete, after reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard, fails to meet their financial commitments pursuant to this Policy.

9. Non-Travelling Reserve Athletes / Substitutions

Selector(s) are encouraged to select one or more non-travelling reserve athletes (a “**Reserve**”) for a National Team. If an athlete who is selected to a National Team is injured, unfit to play, disqualified or otherwise unable to compete, the Coach may replace that athlete with a Reserve, provided, in the opinion of the Coach:

- a. the Reserve has maintained a reasonable commitment to the National Team;
- b. the Reserve continues to meet the Selection Criteria;
- c. the Reserve continues to meet the eligibility for selection criteria;
- d. the selection of the Reserve would not create a breach of a WMH rule; and
- e. the Reserve is an appropriate replacement for the athlete they are to replace on the National Team.

If, in the opinion of the Coach, a Reserve does not meet these criteria, the Coach may select another eligible athlete.

10. Appeals

An athlete may seek an appeal of a selection decision under this Policy in accordance with FHC’s Appeal Policy.

11. Notifications.

The announcement of the athletes selected to a National Team shall be made and communicated by the relevant Coach to the athletes who sought selection. The final roster shall be posted on the FHC website.

12. FHC Policies

Athletes and Coaches should review and familiarize themselves with all FHC policies that apply, or may apply, to them pursuant to this Policy or as Registered Participants of FHC. FHC policies are available on FHC’s website: <https://fieldhockey.ca/about-us/governance/policies/>

13. Extenuating Circumstances

FHC recognizes that in an effort to establish a policy that can be applied in most situations, extenuating circumstances may occur from time to time which may require deviations from this Policy. FHC, through the Masters Committee, will assess the extenuating circumstances and has the sole and unfettered discretion to determine whether the circumstances are to be considered extenuating and, if so, to determine an appropriate course of action.

