

1.0 Introduction

This Selection Policy sets out the principles, criteria, and procedures governing the selection of players and team staff to represent Swim Ireland Water Polo at the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships**

The objective of this Policy is to ensure that selection decisions are made in a **fair, consistent, transparent, and accountable** manner that advances the performance objectives of Swim Ireland Water Polo

This Policy will only apply if the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships** are:

- 1- Held on the existing dates of 3rd-9th Aug 2026
- 2- Held in Oeiras, Portugal

*If there is any postponement of the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships** beyond this period and/or a change of location, a new Selection Policy may be required.*

To be considered eligible for selection to the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team for the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships**, players and team staff must meet the '**Eligibility Criteria**' outlined in in **Section 3 & 4**

This Policy applies to all players and team staff seeking selection, and to members of the '**Selection Panel**'

This Policy supersedes all previous Selection Policies relating to the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships**

2.0 Roles and Definitions

The role of Swim Ireland Water Polo National Programme Coaches is to make recommendations on player selection to the '**Selection Panel**'

The role of the '**Selection Panel**' is to select the players to the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team for the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships**

The role of the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Head Coach is to:

- Chair the '**Selection Panel**'
- Make recommendations on team staff selection to the '**National Water Polo Committee**'

The role of the National Water Polo Committee is to:

- Appoint a '**Selection Panel**'
- Select the team staff to the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team for the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships**
- Appoint an '**Appeals Panel**'
- Ensure the process and procedures outlined within this Policy are adhered to

European Aquatics is the European federation/governing body for aquatic sports. World Aquatics is the international federation/governing body administering international competition in aquatic sports. European Aquatics is affiliated to World Aquatics

3.0 Player Eligibility Criteria

At the time of selection players must meet the following criteria to be eligible for selection:

- i. Be an Irish citizen at the time of entries being submitted to European Aquatics
- ii. Be eligible to represent Ireland as per European Aquatics Competitions Regulations at the time of entries being submitted to European Aquatics
- iii. Hold an Irish passport at the time of entries being submitted to European Aquatics
- iv. Be a registered Swim Ireland member for the 2025-2026 season
- v. Hold a valid Swim Ireland Water Polo Licence for the 2025-2026 season
- vi. Be in good standing with Swim Ireland
- vii. Be available to fulfil all the Swim Ireland Water Polo **National Team Obligations outlined in Section 9**
- viii. Not be the subject of an anti-doping ban, a doping violation and/or a pending doping violation

4.0 Team Staff Eligibility Criteria

At the time of selection team staff must meet the following criteria to be eligible for selection:

- i. Be a full-time resident within Ireland
- ii. Be a registered Swim Ireland member for the 2025-2026 season
- iii. Be a registered coach on the Swim Ireland Register of Aquatic Professionals (team coaches only)
- iv. Be holders of the relevant Swim Ireland Team Managers qualification (team managers only)
- v. Be in good standing with Swim Ireland
- vi. Be available to fulfil all the Swim Ireland Water Polo **National Team Obligations outlined in Section 9**
- vii. Other than in exceptional circumstances, have provided first hand service or support as a coach as part of the National Programme (coaches only)
- viii. Not be an immediate family member of a player under consideration for selection, except in clearly defined exceptional circumstances
- ix. Have not acted in such a manner to bring himself/herself, Swim Ireland and/or the sport into current disrepute. For the avoidance of doubt, the evaluation of this requirement is at the sole discretion of the National Water Polo Committee for the purposes of identification: the public disrepute referred to within this clause includes potential and/or actual disrepute

5.0 Player Selection Process

- I. The '**Selection Panel**' will compile a shortlist of players under consideration for selection
- II. All female players training with the 2006 National Programme Squad will be automatically included on the shortlist
- III. Additional players born 2006-2009 can be added to the shortlist based on recommendations received from National Programme Coaches
- IV. The '**Selection Panel**' will hold a '**Selection Review Meeting**', where all players on the shortlist will be evaluated
- V. More than one '**Selection Review Meeting**' may be required by the '**Selection Panel**'
- VI. A maximum of 14 players will be selected as part of the travelling team
- VII. Up to 2 players may be selected as reserve players, who may not travel with the team
- VIII. The '**Selection Panel**' will make their final team selection as soon as reasonably practicable after the '**Selection Review Meeting**' and no later than May 31st
- IX. The '**Selection Panel**' will base their selection decisions on the '**Selection Considerations**' outlined in **section 8**
- X. The '**Selection Panel**' agrees to notify the National Water Polo Committee and the Swim Ireland Water Polo office of their selection decisions as soon as reasonably practicable after the '**Selection Review Meeting**' process has ended
- XI. Players not making selection will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable after the '**Selection Review Meeting**' process has ended
- XII. Players not making selection are still entitled to attend National Programme training sessions and would be encouraged to keep training with their squad
- XIII. The selection decisions made by the '**Selection Panel**' shall be subject to an **Appeals Process** outlined in **Section 15**

6.0 Team Staff Selection Process

- I. The Head Coach for the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team for the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships** will be the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Head Coach
- II. If the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Head Coach is not available to attend the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships**, then the National Head will make a recommendation to the National Water Polo Committee for selecting a replacement Head Coach
- III. The Swim Ireland Water Polo National Head Coach will make recommendations to the National Water Polo Committee for the selection of the Assistant Coach and Team Manager for Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team for the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships**
- IV. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the selected Assistant Coach will have provided first hand service or support as a coach as part of the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Programme
- V. All team staff should not be an immediate family member of a selected player, except in clearly defined exceptional circumstances
- VI. The Swim Ireland Water Polo National Head Coach may make further recommendations to the National Water Polo Committee to select additional staff to undertake Sports

Science/Sports Medicine roles during the Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships

- VII. The National Water Polo Committee will confirm the selection of team staff as soon as reasonably practicable after the '**Selection Panel**' have confirmed the team player selections

7.0 Selection Panel

The National Water Polo Committee will appoint the '**Selection Panel**' comprising:

1. National Water Polo Committee Representative or Swim Ireland Representative (non-voting, to oversee the process)
2. Swim Ireland Water Polo National Head Coach (Chair)
3. 2006 Swim Ireland Water Polo National Programme Assistant Coach or Coaches
4. One other Swim Ireland Water Polo National Programme Coach

Decisions shall ordinarily be reached by majority vote, and the Chair shall exercise a casting vote where required

8.0 Selection Considerations

The '**Selection Panel**' as outlined in **section 7** will consider all relevant factors in exercising its discretion to select a squad which, in its reasonable opinion, demonstrates the strongest blend of current performance capability and future potential

The aim is to identify players who not only contribute effectively to the current programme but also show clear potential to progress towards senior international level

Consideration will be given to the overall team composition, and selection decisions will be made to ensure that the selected players combine to make the best possible overall team

The '**Selection Panel**' will consider:

- I. Current performance in International Competition, National Programme training sessions, National Cups, and National League Fixtures
- II. Past international level tournament performance
- III. Attendance at pre-arranged National Programme training sessions
- IV. Individual competencies:
 - a. Technical ability across a wide range of skills
 - b. Physical ability to compete in tournament format
 - c. Tactical understanding and decision making under pressure
 - d. Position-specific expertise
 - e. Potential to improve / coachability
 - f. Consistently positive attitude and commitment
 - g. Ability to communicate positively and pro-actively
 - h. Discipline record in National Leagues & Cups

9.0 National Team Obligations

In accepting a selection to the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team for the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships** players accept and agree that training with/competing for the Ireland National Team takes precedence over training for/competing in any other competition, including that for another Team/Club or University programme in Ireland or anywhere in the world. Any player, coach, or team manager who has been selected to the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships** team must meet and fulfil a suite of obligations, where non-adherence is subject to **Section 11**

All selected players and, where relevant, all team staff shall:

- I. Agree not to disclose any selected Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team members name to the press or any other media (including their own social media) until Swim Ireland Water Polo have themselves announced this to the press and other media
- II. Comply with the Swim Ireland Code of Conduct
- III. Complete a Swim Ireland Water Polo Medical Form prior to competing at the **Women's 2026 European Aquatics Under 20 Championships**
- IV. Adhere to all prescribed travel arrangements which might involve different travel dates to other members of the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team
- V. Make themselves available for National Programme training sessions as designated by the National Head Coach
- VI. Only in exceptional circumstances and with the express permission of the National Head Coach, miss National Programme training sessions
- VII. Communicate in advance, in writing, via email, to the National Head Coach and team manager, the reason for missing National Programme training sessions
- VIII. Agree to wear the provided team uniform as directed by the team staff

10.0 Competitive Readiness

'Competitive Readiness' means the combined professional opinion of the '**Selection Panel**', following advice, where necessary, from a sport science/medical practitioners, as to the ability of a player who has been selected to represent this Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team to perform at a level equal to their performance observed for selection

- I. Players who, in the opinion of the '**Selection Panel**' 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 this Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team
- II. Players and their home club coaches shall immediately report any injury, illness, change in training, change in application to training and/or performance behaviour, that could affect their ability to perform at their highest level on this Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team, to the National Head Coach in writing, via e-mail
- III. In the case of lack of fitness, injury or illness, it may be necessary for the '**Selection Panel**' to consider recommendations made by a sport science/medical practitioner
- IV. In the case of application to training, or performance behaviour or other reasons, it shall not be necessary for the '**Selection Panel**' to seek recommendations from a sport science/medical practitioner

- V. In the case of lack of fitness, injury or illness, such players may be subject to a 'Proof of Readiness Test' to be determined by the **'Selection Panel'**
- VI. Players who, in the opinion of the **'Selection Panel'**, are not Competitively Ready, may be replaced on this Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team by another player, as outlined in **Section 11**
- VII. If the player is at the National Team tournament and the opinion is that the player is not Competitively Ready, then he/she may be required to return home immediately
- VIII. The opinion on Competitive Readiness made by the **'Selection Panel'** is final

11.0 Withdrawal & Removals

At any stage a player, team coach, or team manager may withdraw from the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team but may only do so in extenuating circumstances

A player, team coach, or team manager may be removed from the shortlist of players under consideration for selection or selection itself for the following reasons:

- Behaviour that is inconsistent with the National Team Code of Conduct and the Water Polo Respect Charter. A copy of these documents can be found on the Swim Ireland Water Polo website [Ireland Water Polo](#)
- 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)
- Unable or unwilling to fully comply with the Swim Ireland Water Polo National **Team Obligations** outlined in **section 9**
- An athlete may be removed from the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team before or after selection if he/she, in the opinion of the **'Selection Panel'** does not have **Competitive Readiness** outlined in **Section 10**

12.0 Replacement or Addition

If a player, team coach, or team manager is removed from or withdraws from the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team, that individual may be replaced by another eligible individual who meets the requirements set out in this Policy

- I. Replacement players will be chosen from the shortlist of players under consideration and will take into consideration the playing position of the player who needs replaced
- II. The National Head Coach, where in his opinion it is in the best interests of the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team, may recommend to the National Water Polo Committee, that any number of additional athletes, team coaches, team managers and/or sports science/sports medicine practitioners be added to the selected Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team, subject to such additional individuals meeting the requirements set out in this Policy
- III. Any replacement or addition of an individual to the Swim Ireland Water Polo National Team shall be made by way of nomination by the National Head Coach and ratified by the National Water Polo Committee

13.0 Unforeseen Circumstances

- I. In the event that this Policy is silent on any matter which arises in the administration or application or interpretation of any selection process or decision, then the National Water Polo Committee shall have discretion to determine any issue as they deem fit so long as it is exercised fairly and quickly

14.0 Amendments

- I. The National Water Polo Committee reserves the right to make changes to this Policy which, in its discretion, are necessary
- II. No such changes shall be made within one month of the date of the championships set out in the **introduction to this Policy**, unless the changes relate to the National Water Polo Committee exercising its discretion under the 'Unforeseen Circumstances' provisions **Section 13**
- III. The National Water Polo Committee reserves the right to review and modify this Policy or a decision related to the selection process in the case of rule or policy changes from European Aquatics and/or World Aquatics that affect the criteria set out in this Policy
- IV. Any changes to this Policy shall be communicated via the Ireland Water Polo website [Ireland Water Polo](http://IrelandWaterPolo)

15.0 Appeals

- I. Any appeal against a selection decision must be made to the National Water Polo Committee, in writing, via email to waterpolo@swimireland.ie
- II. The National Water Polo Committee shall appoint an appeals sub-committee to review any appeal made relating to a selection decision
- III. Any appeal so determined by the appeals sub-committee may not be further appealed
- IV. All appeals will be reviewed with the intention of resolving issues expediently and fairly