




Athletes Director Terms of Reference

Version	Date	Author	Changes	Board Approval
1.0	03 Sep 2025	RI Governance Committee	New doc	18 Sep 2025
2.0	01 Nov 2025	RI Governance Committee	Updates	25 Nov 2025 

1. Introduction

This is the Rowing Ireland Terms of Reference for the position of athletes director (the “**Athletes Director**”). The position is subject to the provisions of the constitution (the “**Constitution**”) of Irish Amateur Rowing Union Company Limited by Guarantee (the “**Company**”).

2. Purpose

The Constitution provides at article 38, that an Athletes Director shall be in place (/ appointed) no later than 2025). The Athletes Director is an elected representative for the athletes and the foundational mechanism for direct athlete feedback to the organisation which will assist the organisation in its fulfilment of its mission and the pursuit of an athlete-centred sport environment.

3. Scope

This document lays out the parameters for the role of the Athletes Director and the methodology as to how the election to the position will take place.

4. Reference

Articles 38 and 85 of the Constitution provide for the appointment of the Athletes Director to the position, with article 39 providing for the required gender balance to be achieved.

Article 38. *Unless otherwise determined by ordinary resolution the number of Board members shall not be more than thirteen (13) and shall never at any time be less than nine (9). This shall be made up as follows, from the 2023 AGM:*

- President
- Secretary
- Connaught /Ulster Director
- Leinster Director
- Munster Director
- Northern Ireland Director
- Coastal Director
- Athlete’s Director (to be in place no later than 2025)
- up to three (3) Independent Directors



Article 39. *The Board shall comprise at least 40% (e.g., 5 of 12) of each gender amongst its Directors. Any committees established by the Board or reporting to the CEO shall endeavour to achieve a similar composition.*

Article 85. *To ensure Board continuity, the election of the various Board positions shall be staggered. The following is the rota to be followed with effect from the 2022 AGM:
2023: Connacht/Ulster Director, Northern Ireland Director, Coastal Director, Munster Director, Leinster Director
2024: President, Secretary,
2025: first full 4 year rotation of addition of Athlete's Nominated Director
2026: first full 4 year rotation of Connacht/Ulster Director, Northern Ireland Director
2027: first full 4 year rotation of Munster Director, Leinster Director
2028: President, Secretary, Coastal Director*

5. The Role

The Athletes Director shall be a member of the board of the Company (the “**Board**”) on behalf of the athletes, to ensure that their concerns are heard and acted upon, and to ensure that our sport is focused on the needs and interests of the athletes. In addition:

- a. they will be expected to connect regularly with the High-Performance Athlete Representative Group (minimum of three times a year) to maintain a regular flow of communication to and from the athletes;
- b. they will be expected to bring additional knowledge to the organisation, and by joining subcommittees, to engage fully in the activities of the organisation;
- c. the role makes the Athletes Director a primary link between the organisation and its key stakeholders—the athletes;
- d. they will be called upon to filter the diversity of stakeholder views back to the organisation; and
- e. they shall ensure the views, comments and opinions of the high-performance athletes are communicated as appropriate.

6. Importance of the Role

The Athletes Director shall:

- a. provide the most relevant and up-to-date perspective of the key stakeholders of the organisation;
- b. act as a direct and effective conduit between the active athletes and decision-makers of the sporting organisation;
- c. help to build closer relationships and develop trust between athletes and the organisation;
- d. ensure the rights of athletes are properly represented at the highest level of decision-making and policy creation;
- e. be empowered to hold Rowing Ireland accountable for decisions and responsibilities, which is a good governance practice;
- f. develop into an experienced and effective sport leader;
- g. help to shape the future of the sport organisation and opportunities for improvement;



- h. be aligned to have more intimate knowledge of the success of the organisation's operations at ground level; and
- i. provide insight into the current sport culture, which will influence the business of Rowing Ireland.

7. Election Process

The Athletes Director shall be recruited via an open, publicly advertised recruitment process from which suitable candidates for the role will be selected. The Rowing Ireland Nominations Committee (Board sub-committee) will assess and approve suitable candidates that will go forward for election to the role.

The Rowing Ireland executive will run the election with assistance from the High-Performance Athlete Representative Group. The candidate with the most votes will be duly elected.

The process has been approved by the Board. It is intended to provide a transparent, fair and straightforward process for the election of the Athletes Director to the Board and shall be conducted in the following manner:

- a. Rowing Ireland shall advertise the role through appropriate channels and undertake a transparent application and selection process to ensure fairness and alignment with governance standards;
- b. eligible high-performance athletes will elect a person to act as the Athletes Director who will following election be appointed by the Board as the Athletes Director;
- c. following election, the person so elected shall, subject to the provisions of the Constitution, be appointed to the Board;
- d. the Athletes Director shall be appointed for a term of up to four years as provided for in the Constitution; and
- e. upon appointment, Rowing Ireland shall issue a press release in relation to the appointment of the new director and file the update with the Companies Registration Office.

8. Eligibility

a. Candidates

Eligible candidates are those who have represented Rowing Ireland in the Olympic or Paralympic Games, World Championships, European Championships, Coupe de la Jeunesse (the "**Coup**"), or Home Internationals, but who are not in competition for a team place in the current cycle and are at least twenty-one (21) years of age at the time of the election. The Nominations Committee will review candidate eligibility.

b. Electorate

Eligible voters are those who have represented Rowing Ireland in the Olympic or Paralympic Games, World Championships, European Championships, Coup, or Home Internationals and are at least eighteen years (18) of age at the time of the election and members of an affiliated club. Voter eligibility is restricted to those HP athletes who have represented Rowing Ireland up to 12 years prior to the election. The Rowing Ireland executive will



generate the list of the eligible electorate and will be verified by the High-Performance Committee.

9. Election

- a. The advertised recruitment material will outline the role of Athletes Director and the requirements placed on the person elected to the post.
- b. If only one candidate applies for the post, they will, subject to a positive recommendation made by the Nominations Committee, be appointed to the position of Athletes Director for a term of up to four years.
- c. If there are two candidates, an election must be held. The process for election will be as follows:
 - I. the High-Performance Athlete Representative Group will notify the Rowing Ireland high-performance eligible athletes as to the candidates, the manner and time within which votes may be cast (which shall include but not be limited to post, e-mail, or other means like a verifiable poll) and how an athlete may abstain from voting;
 - II. each of the High-Performance athletes will cast a vote within the time specified; a vote received outside of the time specified will not be counted; and
 - III. the election shall be decided by a simple majority. If there is a tie a second poll will be conducted, but the candidates will be limited to those who received the equal number of votes. If after a second vote there is a tie, the result will be determined by the drawing of lots.

10. Appointment

Following the result of the election process, Rowing Ireland will announce the candidate who shall be appointed Athletes Director by the Board.

The winning candidate shall be appointed as Athletes Director for a term of up to four years as provided for in the Constitution.

11. Re-election

If the Athletes Director resigns, or is at, or near, the end of the prescribed term of office, an open and publicly advertised recruitment process will commence. The re-election process will be as per the election process set out above.

12. Confidentiality

The personnel involved in the process and election of the Athletes Director are bound to confidentiality.

13. Resources

The Rowing Ireland executive will manage the election process and will engage with the Nominations Committee and the High-Performance Athlete Representative Group to ensure the process is conducted fairly and efficiently.



14. Review and Amendments

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed every two years or as required, and any amendments must be approved and recorded in writing by the Board

15. References

Rowing Ireland Constitution

Rowing Ireland Code of Conduct

16. Appendices

Appendix A – Sample voting form.

Appendix B – Election Flowchart.



Appendix A:

Sample Voting Form Text

I confirm that I, [_____] wish to vote for [_____]
for the role of Athletes Director on the Board of Rowing Ireland, for a four-year term of office,
commencing Dec 2025. I understand that the Athletes Director will represent Rowing
Ireland Athlete's at Board level and contribute their high-performance experience to support
strategic decision-making and the monitoring of key organisational targets.

Appendix B:
Election Flow Chart

