Rowing Ireland — Flatwater Selection Policy

1. Purpose, Scope & Principles

1.1 Purpose

To transparently, fairly, and consistently select the most competitive Irish athletes and crews to represent Rowing Ireland in international flatwater competition (World Cups, European Championships, World Championships, Olympic Games, U23 Worlds, U19 Worlds and designated development events).

1.2 Scope

Applies to all athletes eligible to represent Rowing Ireland in flatwater events, and to all selectors, coaches and administrators involved in squad selection.

In the case of Olympic and Paralympic games, Rowing Ireland's role with reference to this policy is to nominate athletes to the Olympic Federation of Ireland ("OFI") and/or Paralympics Ireland who have the formal responsibility and authority for selecting athletes and crews. All references to "selection" / "selecting" throughout this policy, in the context of Olympic or Paralympic games, shall be taken to refer to "selection to be nominated to the OFI and/or Paralympics Ireland".

1.3 Guiding Principles

- Merit-based: Selection prioritises performance data and demonstrable boat-moving ability.
- Transparent: Criteria, processes and timelines are published in advance.
- Fair: Objective measures and documented subjective judgements with appeal routes.
- Consistent: Process operated without prejudice or bias.

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2. Definitions

- **HPD** — High Performance Director (Rowing Ireland).
- **Selection Panel** — Group named to make selection decisions for a given selection window.

- **Selection Window** — The period/events used to gather evidence for a selection decision.
- **Objective Data** — Measurable outcomes: erg tests, on-water times, race results.
- **Subjective Data** — Coach observation, technical assessment, boat compatibility.
- **Discretion** — Formal, documented judgement applied when objective data is insufficient or when strategic considerations (e.g., future development, injury) apply.
- **Nomination** — The act of naming athletes/crews to be forwarded for ratification by CEO/Board (where required).
- **Ratification** — Formal approval step required by Rowing Ireland governance for final entry submission.

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3. Eligibility & Compliance

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for selection an athlete must:

1. Hold Irish nationality or meet World Rowing nationality/eligibility rules for Ireland.
2. Have a current Rowing Ireland membership.
3. Exhibit[1] the values and behaviours in the Rowing Ireland Athlete's Charter.
4. Be compliant with Sport Ireland anti-doping rules and WADA code.
5. Have completed any necessary medical/fitness-to-train clearance.
6. Attend the National Rowing Centre or other venue notified by Rowing Ireland when required.

3.2 Non-Compliance

Failure to meet any eligibility requirement may render an athlete ineligible. Selectors may consider extenuating circumstances (e.g., late medical clearance) only with documented evidence and HPD approval.

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[1] Not to have breached the Athlete Charter in the previous 12 months.

4. Selection Authority, Panel Composition & Conflict of Interest

4.1 Authority

- Primary selection decisions are made by the appointed Selection Panel.
- Final nomination to World Rowing / event entry is made by the CEO (or delegated official) following panel decision and consistent with Rowing Ireland ratification rules.

4.2 Panel Composition

- Independent Selection Chair
- High Performance Director
- Independent Selector
- Technical Lead / Coach / Performance Analyst (tbd by HPD)
- High Performance Committee Chair and/or Athlete Director (Advisory)

4.3 Selection Panel Processes

- Where the panel is tied, the chair shall have the casting vote.
- The quorum will be a minimum of three Selectors, which must include the HPD, the Independent Selector and technical lead.

4.4 Conflict of Interest (COI)

- All selectors must complete a COI declaration before each selection window.
- Any selector with a direct COI must declare and generally recuse from decision-making on that athlete; the recusal and management plan are documented in writing.
- The Selection Panel Chair has final say on COI.
- A quorum excludes any recused voting members.

5. Selection Criteria

The Selectors may make decisions using both objective and subjective assessments in their decision-making and to determine the relative importance of each on an individual basis. Such assessments will not establish precedent for future determinations. The criteria that may be considered include the following:

- Results in the Selection Trials Process.
- National and international racing results in the current or previous seasons.
- Ergometer (Erg) testing.
- Ability to maintain training loads.
- Coach assessments & technical evaluations (boat-moving ability, compatibility).
- Training performance, including internal racing and trials.
- Technical proficiency, level of skill, and fitness.
- Any past, current or recurring injury or condition (physical or otherwise) which has or may have the potential to inhibit an athlete or a crew's performance.
- Factors relevant to crew combinations and team dynamics, including but not limited to:
    1. Crew compatibility
    2. Technical compatibility
    3. Team balance and harmony
    4. Commitment to the HP plan/program
- Findings from medical examinations or sport science analysis.
- Relevant rowing conditions in relation to any trialling or results (e.g. wind and stream effects).
- Potential for future development as an individual or in crew combinations.
- Financial or other constraints or limitations imposed by, or imposed upon, Rowing Ireland.
- Equipment breakages or malfunctions.
- Ability to meet and maintain body weight targets (for lightweights and coxswains only).
- Behavioural & standards compliance (athlete agreement adherence, conduct).

5.1 Selection of Coxswains

In selecting coxswains, in addition to any relevant Selection Criteria set out above, the Selectors may also take into account:

- Ability to steer and handle the boat efficiently under training and race conditions.
- Leadership of the crew in training and racing.

- Ability to work positively with coaches and support staff.
- Ability to understand and support the crew's technical objectives and training program.
- Ability to focus on the technical development of individual crew members.
- Feedback and opinions offered by rowers.

5.2 Selection of Overseas Athletes

Rowing Ireland understands that a number of eligible Irish athletes are attending colleges and universities in the United States and other overseas countries who wish to be included in the selection process. It also recognises that Irish athletes participating in US or overseas rowing programs (referred to in this section as Overseas Athletes) may be at a disadvantage in any sculling or small boat trials.

Accordingly, when tasked with making a decision that involves comparing an Overseas Athlete to an Athlete based in Ireland, the Selectors may, in applying the Selection Criteria, give greater selection weighting to ergometer scores and big boat performances than to performances in single sculls or smaller boats.

The Selectors may also exempt Overseas Athletes from outlined trialling requirements if their participation in an overseas rowing program makes it unreasonable or impractical for them to meet any such Requirement. Overseas Athletes are not expected to travel to Ireland for all water assessments but must submit the relevant erg testing.

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6. Discretionary Selection & Special Circumstances

6.1 Discretionary Selection

Discretionary selection may be applied when:

- An athlete recovering from documented injury is likely to outperform current alternatives upon recovery.
- Emerging athletes show exceptional boat-moving ability but lack track record.
- Strategic selections for Olympic qualification (e.g., selecting a crew with highest qualification probability).
- Developmental athletes with long-term funnelling potential.

Requirements for Discretionary selections:

- Written rationale referencing objective evidence wherever possible.
- Time-limited: every discretionary selection is reviewed at pre-agreed milestones.

6.2 Special Circumstances

If, because of injury, illness, or personal extenuating circumstances (e.g., unforeseen family circumstances, academic calendar, etc.), an athlete is unable to meet any of the criteria set out in this document, an athlete may still be considered for selection to a National Team. The rower must advise the HPD in writing of any injury, illness, or personal extenuating circumstance prior to the assessment.

In the case of illness or injury, a medical certificate signed by the Athlete's doctor must be submitted to Rowing Ireland. In the event, a Rower who has been selected for an international team becomes injured or ill, and in the opinion of the HPD and/or appointed Head Coach (with advice of the Chief Medical Officer where relevant), is not deemed fit to compete, the Rower may be replaced with another Rower. The choice of replacement Rower is at the discretion of the HPD, in consultation with the relevant Lead Coach.

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7. Appeals & Review

Grounds for Appeal

- Procedural error (policy or process not followed).
- Failure to apply the published selection criteria.
- Conflict-of-interest not declared/managed.
- The decision was not one a reasonable person could make.

Appeal Process

Athletes may appeal selection decisions in accordance with the Rowing Ireland Selection Appeal Policy which is available on the Rowing Ireland website.

***Note*: Appeals are about process and fairness, not reselecting on merits alone unless process failures are proven.**

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8. Athlete Standards, Behaviour & Welfare

- Selected athletes must sign/adhere to the Rowing Ireland Athlete Agreement and Code of Conduct.
- Behavioural breaches may render an athlete ineligible[2] or subject to disciplinary process.

[2] For a period of up to 12 months.

- Selections are conditional on ongoing adherence to welfare and safeguarding requirements.

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9. Medical & Fitness-to-Train

- Medical clearance is required before athletes travel to international events.
- Chronic or acute medical concerns must be documented; selectors may require second opinions.
- Medical confidentiality is respected; selectors must balance athlete privacy with necessary fitness-to-train assurances.

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10. Appendices

- **Appendix A — Senior High Performance Selection Guidelines**
- **Appendix B — U23 High Performance Selection Guidelines**
- **Appendix C — Junior High Performance Selection Guidelines**
- **Appendix D — Rowing Ireland Selection Appeals Policy**
- **Appendix E — Athlete Agreement**
