



Scottish Touch Association Selection policy for the national squad

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe clearly to players, selectors, coaches and other interested parties the selection policy and process for the Scotland National Squad for the 2011/12 season onwards. It is effective from September 2011.

This document builds on previous policies produced for past Scotland squads. As a matter of course, this policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

This document should be read in conjunction with *The 2011/12 Scotland National Squad Selection Process*, which sets out key dates, as well as details of what will happen at each of those landmark points. The other key document is *The Scotland National Touch Squad Player Agreement and Code of Conduct*, which details the behaviours and actions required of national squad players and the squad's discipline system, including how that impacts on selection and continued participation in the squad.

National Squad Selection Panel:

National selection chair

National selection vice-chair

NSMC representative (chair or chair's appointee)

If you have any comments or questions about any aspect of selection, please contact: national.selection@scottishtouch.org.uk

Eligibility

To be eligible to represent Scotland, a player must meet the FIT eligibility criteria. These criteria can be downloaded from the [FIT website](#).

In addition to meeting FIT criteria, players must meet the following STA criteria:

- The player must be a financial member of the STA through affiliation with a Scottish regional touch association
- All players are expected to attend all national training sessions pre- and post-final national team selections
- Players not resident in Scotland are to discuss their attendance at training ahead of time. Please note there will be a strong expectation of attendance, and we will address each player's case individually
- Players must sign and agree to terms of the 2011/12 national squad player agreement at the first opportunity
- Players need to be at zero financial balance with the NSMC or have previously agreed an arrangement for their outstanding balance.

The STA is able to apply to FIT for an exemption for a player who does not meet these criteria, and will do this as it deems appropriate.

The decision to make an application for an exemption will be at the discretion of the National Squad Selection Panel. However, the decision whether to grant the exemption is at the discretion of FIT and outwith the control of the STA.

A player must not be ineligible to compete at FIT championships due to failure to comply with the FIT Anti-Doping Policy.

Selection Framework

Touch is a team sport, with teams made up of individuals. In this context, selection must cover both the individual and the team. Whilst an individual can do a great deal to develop their own skills, knowledge and fitness, ultimately that individual player has to be able to perform within a team.

The selection process aims to offer players the chance to develop themselves both as individual players and as team players. It aims to recognise individuals' skill levels, knowledge, fitness and other individual factors.

However, in selecting for a team sport, factors such as skill mix within a team, combinations, the balance of a team and the ability of players to play in more than one position, are also considered alongside individual factors.

Selection strategy stems from the national squad strategy, which is set jointly by the National Squad Management Committee and the National Squad Coaching Director prior to the training cycle. This strategy determines matters including, but not limited to, which teams the STA sends to designated events and which divisions are prioritised.

Talent Identification

For the next training cycle and selection process, there will be no automatic invitations to join the Scotland National Training Squad. Instead players will be assessed during the following events:

- The Scottish National Touch Championships on 3 September 2011 in Aberdeen
- An Open trial event to be held on 18 Sept (venue tbc)

The National Squad Selection Panel may also invite players who have been identified by other means including, but not limited to, the current season's Scottish Touch Series (STS) and the current season's International events. The decision to invite a player into the national training squad is open to discussion with the NSMC, and analysis of and reasons for inviting a player who has not previously represented Scotland should be recorded in a written form that is accessible to all members of the selection panel.

Acceptance into the Scotland National Training Squad will depend on a player responding to the invitation, signing and agreeing to the terms of *The Scotland National Touch Squad Player Agreement* and *Code of Conduct*, and paying their training deposit.

Structure of national squad

The Scotland National Squad for the forthcoming season will typically be made up of a number of teams in different divisions, with each team structured as follows:
Team (eg: MO, WO) = number in final squad + number of shadows

The structure of the national squad is decided during the process of the NSMC and the National Squad Coaching Director agreeing the national squad strategy.

The decision on the structure of the national squad is for the NSMC to make. However, the National Squad Coaching Director gives the NSMC a strong recommendation on the structure of the squad and which divisions are being prioritised (if any), and it is expected that the NSMC will look favourably upon and act on that recommendation.

If the NSMC chooses not to accept that recommendation, it must explain its decision in writing to the Ordinary Committee of the STA. The Ordinary Committee has the right of veto in the case of any impasse between the NSMC and NSCD in this matter.

Selection Process

At the start of each season *The Scotland National Squad Selection Process* will detail the process, including dates and venues for the forthcoming season.

A high level outline of the process is as follows:

- Players join the training squad in October, and are placed in one of six* specific training squads. (* this number may be changed at the discretion of the NSCD/NSMC and will relate closely to the divisions being targeted for the next main international event)
Note: Any incumbents who had intimated a desire to be selected but who fail to make selection at this point, can request feedback about their non-selection from the Chair of Selectors.
- Players receive feedback and advice about their strengths and development needs
- Training and assessing will be repeated at regular intervals through the winter. Feedback and suggested remedial action continues during this time.
- Preliminary teams are selected approximately five months before the major international tournament of the season via trials. These teams form the basis for selection discussion from then until the end of the selection process.

Selection will be based on a publicised set of criteria, detailed in the selection process document. These cover areas such as individual touch skills, team skills, athletic performance and mental skills.

Selection for each final squad (eg: MO, WO) will be determined by a selection team for that squad, and that selection team reports to the selection panel. Each selection team is responsible for drafting preliminary teams and giving a strong recommendation on the final selection of that particular squad. The national selection panel is expected to look favourably upon and act on that recommendation.

The selection panel will communicate the final team selections to players via a final squad announcement. This will be via email and on the STA website.

Prior to this announcement, the STA will contact and inform those players who:

- are being invited as shadow players
- are being selected for the first time.

Selection dispute resolution process

If a player disputes the decision made regarding their selection, for whatever reason, they can ask for an explanation and for the decision to be reconsidered.

Such a request will be made in writing to the chair of the national selection panel within 14 days of the final squad being announced. In the first instance, the chair will ask the relevant selection team to answer the query or dispute, giving clear reasons for the decision. This must be provided within seven days of the chair's request.

This will be communicated onwards to the player in question, who may choose to accept the decision or to ask for the matter to be escalated to the chair for the chair to consider the decision and justification.

If the player chooses to appeal to the selection panel chair, they must do so in writing within seven days of receiving the selection team's response, and provide clear reasons for why they continue to disagree with the decision.

The selection chair will then make a final resolution on the matter. That decision will be final and further correspondence on the matter will not be acknowledged or acted upon, except in exceptional circumstances.

Post-selection issues

Discipline and player conduct

All players are expected to comply with the behaviours and actions outlined in *The Scotland National Touch Squad Player Agreement* and *Code of Conduct*. Acceptance into both the training squad and final squad involves reading and signing this agreement.

The NSMC reserves the right to suspend or expel players from the squad for disciplinary reasons. Any player who is expelled can appeal that decision and must do so in writing to the NSMC within 14 days of receiving written notification of their expulsion. The NSCD, the player's team coach and the NSMC will review the decision and reply in writing within 14 days of receiving the review request.

A suspension or expulsion from the squad for disciplinary reasons will be considered in any future possible selection to the national squad.

Appointment of team captains and vice-captains

The appointment of team captains and vice-captains is a matter for the coaches of each team. These appointments should be done by the team's second training weekend together after the final selection.

Movement between teams

Movement of players between different teams within the Scotland squads will be allowed at any time as a reaction to circumstances or for reasons of team balance and competitive advantage.

During the main team selection process [for 2012 this will be in March/ April 2012] any decision to move a player from their team specific training squad must be agreed between the player and the Chair of the Selection Panel, the NSCD and the NSMC.

Outwith the main team selection process any decision to move a player must be agreed by all parties concerned: the player, both team coaches, the NSCD and the NSMC. This must be recorded in a note on the player's file, with all parties signing that written record.

Withdrawal from the squad

Players have the right to withdraw from playing for the squad. If a player intends withdrawing from the squad, they should do so at the earliest possible opportunity so as to minimise disruption to their squad.

When withdrawing from the squad, the player must inform their coach, the NSCD and the NSMC in writing, clearly stating the reasons for the withdrawal. The NSMC must

reply to the player, confirming their withdrawal, within 14 days. This correspondence will be confidential.

If the reasons for the withdrawal are deemed to be private and sensitive and the player does not wish to detail this in writing, they can request to discuss this with their coach and for their coach to act as their advocate to the NSCD and the NSMC. The player must indicate this choice of action in writing to the NSMC before the coach approaches the NSMC.

All withdrawals will be considered final. In some circumstances, withdrawal from the current year's squad may be considered in any future possible selection to the national squad. Any further involvement with the squad in a non-playing support capacity such as coaching, helping etc is at the discretion of the team coach and the NSMC/NSCD, and must be agreed to as soon as possible after the player's withdrawal.

Shadow players

Players who miss out on selection to a final team may be invited to join a team as a shadow player. Such players will train with their team as cover for the potential loss of a selected player for whatever reason.

A shadow player will only be brought into the final side to replace the loss of a selected player and not in any other circumstances. This may happen at any point up until the registration of final teams at the event (usually the day before the tournament starts).

The decision to bring a shadow player into the side to replace the loss of a player is at the discretion of the team coach. It should be based on which positions and players the shadow player would be covering, and the decision is open to question by the NSCD and the NSMC.

A shadow player who is not brought into the final squad ahead of the tournament but decides to attend the event anyway will not be given the opportunity to play during the tournament.

Overseas travel and extended absence from training

A player who is selected into the national training squad who then intends travelling or being absent from training for an extended period of time must discuss this with the NSMC and NSCD.

Such a player may keep their place in the squad but will be expected to meet a number of requirements. The player and the NSCD will jointly decide on a number of agreements covering areas such as how the player will meet their training requirements (both S&C and skills), communication, regular updates on their training record and performance, testing, injury updates and management, and other issues that arise.

Injuries and medical matters

Players are expected to inform their coach of any injury or medical matter that could have a bearing on their ability to train or compete. Similarly, if during training they are injured or fall sick, they are expected to tell their coach. Coaches are expected to treat such discussions with the appropriate discretion and sensitivity.

In the case of a return to training from injury or illness, consent from the player's own physio or doctor may be enough for them to resume training. The player's team coach may request that this consent is provided in writing.

However, their coach or the NSCD can request they undergo a fitness test, and their return to active training may depend on passing the test

A player injured at the tournament will be assessed by the squad physios and their continued participation will be agreed between the physios, the player and the player's team coach.

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