



Scottish Touch Association The 2009/10 Scotland National Squad Selection Process

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to detail clearly to players, selectors, coaches and other interested parties the selection process for the Scotland National Squad for the 2010 European Touch Championships.

This document applies to the 2009/10 national squad training cycle, which begins in October 2009 and finishes at the end of the 2010 European Touch Championships.

As a matter of course, the selection process will be reviewed and updated for each future training cycle and international tournament.

This document should be read in conjunction with *Selection policy for the national squad*, which details the objectives and framework of selection, as well as other matters.

Other key documents are: *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; and *Post Injury Fitness Testing Procedure*, which details the process for a player's return to full training and competition following injury.

Landmark dates

L1: W/C 10 August: national coaches begin work on player assessment reports to be submitted to NSCDs

L2: 23 August: Scottish National Touch Championships

L3: W/C 24 August: Invitations to new players to first national training weekend

L4: 10 October: First national training weekend

L5: W/C 8 February: Preliminary teams drafted

L6: W/C 8 March: Preliminary teams updated

L7: W/C 29 March: Final teams announced

L8: 22 – 25 July: European Championships

Selection process

W/C 10 August:

Following the Home Nations, all national coaches will prepare player assessments and season reviews to the NSCDs. These player assessments will form the basis for the comments going into the first section of the player's 2009/10 assessment form (see appendix).

23 August, Edinburgh:

National selection panel appointed. Following the SNTC, the selection panel will finalise the list of players to be invited into the 2009/10 national training squad.

During this week, invitations will go out to players to join the 2009/10 training squad and attend the first squad session on 10 October.

For previously unselected players, observations from the SNTC, STS and from regional coaches will form the basis for the comments going into the first section of the player's 2009/10 assessment form.

Between this week and 10 October, the national selection panel will create the selection teams for each division and appoint team leaders.

10 October, Edinburgh/Aberdeen:

First national squad session. Players tested and results recorded on assessment form. All players to read and sign *The Scotland National Touch Squad Player Agreement and Code of Conduct* and to pay training deposit. Failure or refusal to do either will result in that player leaving the training squad.

Selection process explained. Players will be asked to indicate their preferences for selection; for example, their preferred team and/or position. Please note that the selection panel will decide how much weight to give players' preferences and will have the final say on that matter.

Players and coaches go through assessments, actions agreed for weaknesses and intended outcomes noted.

Players, coaches and selectors receive copy of assessment forms this week.

9/10 January, Edinburgh/Aberdeen:

Retesting and progress assessment, results recorded on assessment form.

Progress assessment will include feedback from player, regional coaches, national coaches, S&C coach and physios (if necessary).

Players and coaches go through assessments, actions agreed for weaknesses and intended outcomes noted.

Players, coaches and selectors receive copy of updated assessment forms this week.

6/7 February, Edinburgh/Aberdeen:

Retesting and progress assessment as above.

Coaches to provide selectors with views on issues regarding team balance and make-up (ie: specialists vs utilities, which areas to cover, what particular attributes they want in their side)

The selection teams draft preliminary squads for discussion among the selection teams and selection panel. These preliminary teams will not be made public.

6/7 March, Edinburgh/Aberdeen:

Retesting and progress assessment as above.

On the Sunday, the squad will play a series of games in allocated sides. Each player will play at least two games, and may receive specific instructions from the selectors. These games will be used to observe general game play and technical and tactical aptitude, as well as other factors such as, but not limited to, ability to play particular positions, particular combinations of players, and ability to follow specific tactical instructions.

Following this weekend's training sessions, the selection teams will update their preliminary squads for internal discussion. These preliminary squads will not be made public. However, the selection teams and selection panel will have the right to approach individual players to discuss selection issues with them and to ask and answer questions with those players.

27/28 March, Edinburgh/Aberdeen:

Retesting and progress assessment as above.

On the Sunday, the squad will play a series of games in allocated sides. The details of this are as above (6/7 March notes).

Following this weekend's training sessions, the selectors will finalise the teams. During this process, the selection panel will have the right to approach individual players to discuss selection issues with them and to ask and answer questions with those players.

The final teams will be announced no later than 4pm Friday 2 April.

National squad structure

The final 2010 national squad will be made up of the following teams, and it is anticipated that each team will have 16 players plus 3 shadows:

Men's Open (MO)
Women's Open (WO)
Mixed Open (XO)
Men's 30s (M30)
Women's 30s (W30)
Men's 35s (M35)

The STA also reserves the right to select a Mixed 30s (X30) team should there be enough players of the appropriate skills, knowledge and fitness levels.

For 2009/10, the MO and WO teams will be prioritised in terms of strength, with the remaining order of priority to be confirmed in February 2010.

Selection and assessment criteria:

Selection of the final teams for the 2010 European Championships will be according to two principles:

- assessment of players as individuals, as per the individual criteria below
- consideration of the final make-up of teams, as per to the team criteria below.

Individual criteria

In considering players as individuals, selectors will assess the following areas: individual skills; team skills; fitness; vision and decision-making; communication; mental strength; and performance-oriented behaviour.

Individual physical skills:

Attack skills: passing, catching, dumping, scooping, diving, sidestepping, swerving, scoring, support running.

Defence skills: making the touch, body position, balance and weight distribution, ability to quickly get back onside.

Team skills:

Positional awareness: correct positioning in attack and defence, rarely caught out of position, awareness of team-mates' and opponents' positioning, support running and use of support runners, gets back into position without disrupting others.

Sub-unit skills: driving, switches, wraps, buddies and quickies, switch defence, wrap defence.

Team skills: ability to interact with team-mates, knowledge and application of attack patterns/policies/moves/game plan, knowledge of rules, maximises strengths and minimises weaknesses, cohesive and adaptable, ability to both lead and/or to follow, unselfish, positive attitude to referees/officials; encouraging and supportive.

Defence skills: knowledge and application of defence policies, commitment, stays calm under pressure, communication, reads attacking play.

Response to instructions: ability to carry out a game plan, ability to carry out instructions from coach/captain/team-mates.

Fitness:

Testing: level of results and evidence of continuous improvement in the fitness tests carried out at squad sessions.

On-field: ability to maintain physical and mental performance over a game and/or tournament with minimal visible fatigue, high work-rate in games, quick recovery, consistently error-free, contributes on both attack and defence.

Vision and decision-making:

Vision: sees what is happening/read the game, evidence of peripheral vision and knowledge of positioning of team-mates and opposition, reads tactical play and trends in a game, sees things early, reacts quickly, good understanding of team-mates' and oppositions' strengths and weaknesses.

Decision-making: ability to select the right option in attack and defence that will benefit the team, decisive and acts/reacts quickly, confident in taking options, takes responsibility, reacts quickly to assist a team-mate's decision, does not rely unduly on others for direction.

Communication:

Communication: talks positively and effectively for the benefit of team, clarity and precision of communication, clear and audible communication in defence, vocal but not distracting, assists others to see problems and opportunities, encouraging and supportive and positive towards team-mates, influences game via communication.

Mental skills:

Mental toughness: performs tasks well while under stress and pressure, repeats training field form and skill in match situations, brushes off errors and/or poor decisions and remains focussed, reacts positively to setbacks (opposition scoring, injury etc), is highly motivated and able to maintain that, steps up in big games.

Discipline: respectful of officials and opposition, remains disciplined and focussed following refereeing decisions, supportive and encouraging of team-mates in difficult situations, reacts positively and encouragingly following mistakes, remains calm in face of provocation and/or intimidation, commitment to maintaining high personal standards in any situation, helps team-mates to keep discipline.

Performance-oriented behaviour:

Personal preparation: committed to proper and adequate personal training, follows appropriate nutrition and hydration habits, has an appropriate sport-life balance, manages injuries and illnesses effectively, plans for potential sport-life clashes, reviews team and squad resources about tactics/techniques/game plans etc.

Training session behaviour: punctual and appropriately prepared for training, trains to achieve the best results for player and team, behaviour helps team effectiveness and harmony and does not hinder these, high work-rate and motivation and attention.

Self-improvement: seeks to understand own strengths and weaknesses, seeks advice on practical ways to address weaknesses and to maximise strengths, researches and asks questions, open and receptive to feedback and advice, shows commitment to improving self as a player and an athlete.

Team selection criteria

When considering the formation of specific teams, selectors will cover the following areas: the balance of a team; skill mix within a team; combinations; ability of players to play in more than one position; and national squad strategy.

Team balance:

The number of players in each position, physical attributes for different positions, balance of utility players and specialists, balance of leaders and followers.

Skill mix:

Mix of playmakers and workhorses, mix of strong attackers and strong defenders and leaders in both areas, mix of attacking strengths such as strong passers and scoopers and steppers and finishers.

Combinations:

Potential for particular players to form attacking or defensive subgroups, existing effective combinations of players.

Covering positions:

Coach's strategy of utilities vs specialists, players who can cover mid-link, players who can cover link-wing, injury cover or potential tactical changes.

National squad strategy:

How many teams are being selected and in which divisions, which divisions are being targeted for medals, which divisions are targeted for development.

Player assessment

Players who represented Scotland (full cap and development squad) at the 2009 Home Nations and Mainland Cup will be assessed following their performances at those tournaments and during the 2008/09 training cycle.

Players who are invited to the national training squad will be assessed on performances in STS/SNTC/other arenas and at the October training session.

Players will undergo physical testing and screening at the October session. This will set baseline scores and times, and check for physical weaknesses and areas needing development and/or management.

At the training sessions from October until March, players will be continuously assessed for both performance and improvement. They will be retested at the sessions already listed above in 'Selection process'.

An individual record of all players will be kept throughout this process. A copy will be kept by the national selection panel and available to squad coaches and the NSMC and players will get their own copies.

A copy of the template assessment form is below.

Appendix: sample player assessment form 2009/10 training cycle

Scotland squad 2009/10

Player: A Player

Age: 21

Session assessments



| Session | Comments (include progress from last assessment) | Areas for improvement | Suggested actions | Intended outcomes | Signed (assessor and player) |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 10 October (HN/MC/Nationals review) | | | | | |
| 9/10 January | | | | | |
| 6/7 February | | | | | |
| 6/7 March | | | | | |
| 27/28 March | | | | | |

Test scores

| | Best jump | Best 10m | Best reaction | Best throw | Both endurance | Skills (R/L) |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 10 Oct | | | | | | |
| 6 Feb | | | | | | |
| 27 Mar | | | | | | |