

OLYMPIC ZONAL QUALIFYING EVENT SELECTION POLICY - DRAFT

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 The objective of this policy is to select fencers for the European Olympic Zonal Qualifying Event to
- maximise the chances of qualification and medal success at the Paris Olympic Games 2024 and
 - maximise the chances of medal success at future Olympic Games.
- 1.1.2 Notwithstanding anything written in this document, BF reserves the right to amend the document in the light of changed circumstances. All changes will be communicated to the fencers as soon as reasonably possible.
- 1.1.3 For the avoidance of doubt BF is not responsible for the scheduling of major events and qualification tournaments. This is the responsibility of the International Federation (the FIE). The dates in this document are based on the expected 2023-24 qualification schedule which is subject to change by the FIE.

2. OLYMPIC GAMES SELECTION CONTEXT

- 2.1.1 The Federation Internationale D'Esime (FIE) and International Olympic Committee (IOC) final qualification system for 2024 has been published and can be found on the IOC website https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/Olympic-Games/Paris-2024/Paris2024-QS-Fencing.pdf?_ga=2.42986789.1284756619.1682844749-138025882.1674766823 Referred to as the FIE Olympic Qualification System in this document.
- 2.1.2 There are two routes to direct qualification. In the first instance there is the **Team qualification route**. For the nations where a Team does not qualify there is then an **Individual qualification route**.

Should no Team or Individual fencer qualify by World Ranking from a weapon, there is a further opportunity to qualify through winning the Olympic Zonal Qualifying Events.

This policy covers the selection for the European Olympic Zonal Qualifying Event.

3. GOVERNANCE

- 3.1.1 The BF Board delegates the implementation and execution of the policy including any related processes, procedures, and structure to the CEO.
- 3.1.2 In turn, the CEO delegates the responsibility to the Athlete Development Programme (ADP) to administrate the policy.
- 3.1.3 The ADP

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- a) is responsible for putting in place the structures, processes, and procedures in accordance with this policy.
- b) is responsible for ensuring that all athletes being put forward for consideration by the Selection Panel are eligible under the policy.
- c) will assign an individual within the ADP (normally the Weapon Lead) to create the list of athletes to be put forward to the Selection Panel in accordance with this Policy.

3.1.4 BF reserve the right to undertake regular periodic reviews to ensure that it takes account of any external rule or policy amendment; and to consider including any relevant feedback. There is an increased likelihood of such periodic review leading to amendment in the current circumstances where:

- a) COVID and measures to control it by Governments/FIE/EFC and/or BF OR
- b) Changes to qualification events as a result of changes and uncertainty around FIE/IOC participation rules

may affect events and competition opportunities and/or athletes' participation in them.

3.1.5 The BF Board reserves the right to make changes to this policy in exceptional circumstances, including but not limited to those circumstances covered in 2.1.4

4. ELIGIBILITY

Athletes are eligible for consideration for Selection provided they:

- are a British citizen with a valid British passport valid for at least six months after the Paris Olympic Games in 2024
- are a member of British Fencing (BF)
- satisfy all eligibility criteria of the BOA and/or the International Olympic Committee (IOC) from time to time, including (but not limited to) in respect of anti-doping and nationality requirements
- have satisfied all eligibility criteria under the FIE rules including national eligibility and minimum age as may be adopted by the FIE from time to time
- satisfy all eligibility rules as contained within the 2023-24 British Fencing GBR Selection Policy, and
- satisfy any other eligibility rules as may be imposed by BF from time to time.

5. ZONAL SELECTION PANEL (ZSP)

BF will form a Zonal Selection Panel (ZSP) to deal with all Selections, non-Selections and de-Selection/nomination issues.

The Selection Panel should be constituted and run according to Appendix A & B.

The Selection Panel is responsible for selecting individuals plus any reserves after scrutinising the information provided by the ADT in accordance with the Selection process, including any proposed use of discretionary places (individual and team).

The members of the ZSP will be appointed by the ADP and will be published on the BF website in advance of selection.

The ZSP will be made up of a minimum of:

	How many	Do they vote?*	Example
Chair	1	Y	BF Pathways Director
ADP Performance Rep	1	Y	BF Head of Olympic Teams
ADP Weapon Rep	3 (min)	N	BF nominated Weapon Leads/Reps
Weapon Selectors	3 (min)	Y	Normally taken from members of BF Senior Weapon Selection Panels. Min one from each of the 3 weapons. Foil Epee, Sabre
ADP Sport Science & Medicine Rep	1	N	
Independent BF Board Observer	1	N	
Data Analyst & Note taker	1-2	N	
*Stand-In	1-2	N	

*Any person with a close relationship with any eligible athlete or their coach or any person with a conflict of interest (perceived or otherwise) that is considered by the BF Board to be unmanageable will not be eligible to be a voting member of the panel or an independent observer.

Stand-ins can be co-opted by the Chair to act in a voting capacity should this situation arise.

The ZSP may request information from Team Managers or Coaches but all such information must be presented to the ZSP in writing.

Decisions of the ZSP will be subject to the BF Appeals Policy and Procedures. The BF Conflict of Interest Policy will apply.

6. QUALIFICATION & DISCRETIONARY SUMMARY

6.1 SUMMARY

6.1.1 There are 4 routes to selection:

- a) Qualification Route 1: Direct **FIE Individual Official Ranking** (the FIE Senior World Ranking) – Top 50
- b) Qualification Route 2: **FIE Senior Individual Adjusted Olympic** Ranking – Top 3 ranked fencer from European countries where no athletes/teams have already qualified.
- c) Discretionary Route 1: Athletes with trajectories and ambition to medal at the Olympics in 2028 and/or 2032.
- d) Discretionary Route 2: Individual performance records of athletes (at FIE events, within the preceding 12 months) **prioritising performances** against the other European fencers likely to attend the event.
- e) **Discretionary Route 3: Further discretionary considerations based on individual cases.**

6.1.2 Unless illness, injury or pregnancy applies, athletes with birth year of 2000 or earlier **are expected to have achieved** a minimum of a top 120 Senior World Ranking (T3 pathway standard) **by 1st April 2024** to be considered for Discretionary selection.

6.1.3 If no athletes meet the qualification standards, BF reserves the right not to select.

7. QUALIFICATION

7.1 QUALIFICATION ROUTE 1: DIRECT SENIOR WORLD RANKING

7.1.1 **The FIE publishes an Individual Official Ranking List as defined in the FIE Olympic Qualification System document (see 2.1.1.).**

7.1.2 Qualification standard = Top 50 in the FIE **Individual Official Ranking List as at 1st April 2024.**

7.1.3 If more than one (1) athlete reaches the qualification standard, selection from the qualified athletes will be based on the FIE **Individual Official Ranking List as at 1st April 2024.** The 2nd highest ranked fencer will be selected as a reserve.

7.2 QUALIFICATION ROUTE 2: INDIRECT SENIOR WORLD RANKING

7.2.1 If no athletes qualify through Qualification Route 1, the selectors will refer to the FIE Senior Individual Adjusted Olympic Ranking list (FIE AOR) as at 1st April 2024.

Note – the FIE AOR is created by the FIE in accordance with the published FIE Olympic Qualification System, see 2.1.1 above. To create the FIE AOR, the FIE Individual Official Ranking List is modified by removing all the athletes from nations with qualified teams, leaving only the highest ranked athletes by zone. The live AOR is published here: <https://paris.fie.org/>, currently including all ranked athletes from nations outside the team qualification positions.

7.2.2 The FIE AOR as at 1st April will be modified if required to ensure:

- all athletes from non-European countries have been removed
- only the highest ranked athletes from unqualified European Nations remain
- the top 3 GBR athletes on the FIE Individual Official Ranking are included (added back in if necessary) by ranking.

7.2.3 Qualification standard = GBR athlete in the top 3 of the list described in 7.2.2

7.2.4 If more than one GBR athlete is in the top 3 of the list described in 7.2.2, the highest ranked GBR athlete on that list will be selected.

7.2.5 If one GBR athlete is in the top 3 of the list described in 7.2.2, they will be selected.

8. DISCRETIONARY

8.1 DISCRETIONARY ROUTE 1

8.1.1 If as at 1st April no athlete qualifies through Qualification Route 1 and Route 2 above, discretionary selection will initially focus on athletes with trajectories and ambition to medal at the 2028 and/or 2032 Olympic Games. Discretionary performance indicators will include:

- Individual medal winning performances*
- Performance trajectories
- Percentage finishes*
- IADP focussed on 2028 or 2032 Olympic medal outcomes
- Pathway stage assessment
- Preparedness to compete (training schedule, injury status)

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Discretionary indicators are not assigned a priority order or weighting.

*Performances in

- Senior FIE World Cups, Grand Prixs, European Games
- Junior and Senior European and World Championships

8.2 DISCRETIONARY ROUTE 2

8.2.1 If no athlete is selected using Discretionary Route 1. then consideration will be given to the individual performance records of athletes (at Senior FIE events, within the preceding 12 months as at 1st April 2024) prioritising performances against the other European fencers likely to attend the event.

8.3 DISCRETIONARY ROUTE 3

8.3.1 If no athlete is selected using Discretionary Route 1 & 2, then the selectors may consider discretionary cases from athletes:

- a) who have achieved a Senior World Ranking of 120 or less (ie between 50 & 120) as at 1st April 2024, or
- b) who have previously achieved a Senior World Ranking of 120 or less within the previous 18 months, but present a case around injury, illness, pregnancy or similar life changing event.

8.3.2 Athletes that wish to be considered under Discretionary Route 3 must submit a Zonal Discretionary Form in accordance with the process published on the BF website.

9. APPEALS

9.1.1 An athlete may appeal their non-selection by BF, only in cases where the procedure outlined in this policy document is not adhered to.

9.1.2 There is no appeal against discretionary selection decisions.

9.1.3 Appeals against decisions must be made within 3 working days of the notification from BF confirming the selection decision(s).

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- 9.1.4 An athlete must lodge their appeal, with BF Head Office headoffice@britishfencing.com, copying athletedevelopment@britishfencing.com alongside a deposit of £250.00, which will be reimbursed should the athlete win their appeal. The appeals policy can be found on the British Fencing website.

10. APPENDIX A - CONSTITUTING SELECTION PANELS

- 10.1.1 Voting members. The panel should consist of a minimum of three voting members to prevent dead lock. There can be more than three members but an odd number (five, seven, nine) is recommended. All voting members must have a fundamental technical understanding and experience of the event being selected for, and all of the athletes under consideration.
- 10.1.2 Chair. A chair is required to lead the process (briefing members, applying the policy and criteria, and overseeing the communication of the results). The chair needs to have proven 'chairing skills and experience of being a selection/nomination panel member. The chair of the selection/nomination panel for Major Championships is responsible and accountable to the Chief Executive for the operation of the selection/nomination panel. For other International Competitions the chair is responsible and accountable to the Pathways Director.
- 10.1.3 Recording of decisions and outcomes. Decisions and outcomes of the selection/nomination panel must be recorded. Major Championships selection/nomination panel meetings must have a formally nominated note-taker. This can be a decision log or a full set of minutes. An audio recording can also be made, which is only used to support any appeal process. All decisions and outcomes must be agreed and recorded before the selection/nomination panel is concluded, which includes any areas of conflict of opinion. Notes must be factual and not contain personal observations.
- 10.1.4 Independent member or observer. An independent member or observer to provide confidence to athletes about the fairness and objectivity of the process. The independent member or observer must be familiar with high performance sport, either as an athlete, coach or legal expert. Their role is to act as an observer – scrutinising the process, holding the panel accountable to the policy and its criteria, and ensuring the principles of fairness and acting without bias are upheld.
- 10.1.5 Data Analysis. Where appropriate, a data analysis should support the operation of a selection/nomination panel.

11. APPENDIX B - GOOD PRACTICE FOR SELECTION/NOMINATION PANELS

The following good practice underpins the way in which selection/nomination panels operate.

Apply selection/nomination criteria fairly and consistently. The Chair should provide a thorough briefing on the standards expected and those selectors understand and agree to their responsibilities.

- The panel must follow the published policy and not be influenced by any other interests. All eligible athletes should be given a fair chance of selection/nomination using all the criteria identified in the selection/nomination policy.
- BF (or any individual associated with delivery of the Athlete Development Programme) must not reach verbal or written agreements with any individual athlete which conflict with the published criteria.
- Acting fairly requires that where discretion needs to be exercised, then it should be restricted to the area and scope identified. For example, if no athletes have met the criteria outright or all selection/nomination places have not been filled, then the policy may allow selectors to use their discretion to select the athlete they consider most suitable to fill the place(s), or not to make a selection/nomination, as consistent with the overall aims set out for the selection/nomination.

Act honestly, in good faith and in an unbiased manner. The selectors must act rationally and with integrity and professionalism. They must be impartial and not show bias or favouritism, or even appear to show it. They must not pre-judge the outcome but must let their consistent application of the agreed criteria and processes drive their decisions.

- Selectors should have no personal or business involvement with any of the competitors in question – they should not stand to gain (or lose) personally or financially because of the decisions. They must not be related to the competitors or have any personal preference as to which of them is selected/nominated.
- A selector who has a personal coaching relationship (even in the recent past) with any of the athletes under consideration provides a risk of allegations of bias. Where this is unavoidable, coaches must not have a vote regarding this athlete(s) and may only be present to give their opinion on the respective merits of each eligible athlete with others making the final decision.

Declare any conflict of interest. If selectors are concerned that they may have a conflict of interest (or potential conflict of interest) - including as acting as a personal coach to any eligible athlete -they should declare it. This gives the Chair and other selectors the opportunity to consider the conflict, assess the risk and agree how to manage it. Whenever possible, the person with the conflict should be replaced by another suitably qualified person. If this is not, then the other selectors will need to consider the recommendations or opinions of the conflicted selector, keeping in mind how the conflict may be influencing their views. The conflicted panel member cannot vote.

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Communicating decisions respectfully. The outcome of a selection/nomination decision can be life changing for an athlete. For example, selection/nomination for a funded programme may be the point at which an athlete commits to around a decade of full-time training and puts their education or career path on hold. Selection/nomination for a Major Championships is often the culmination of a significant amount of time and resources from athletes (and their parents). Even when a selection/nomination policy has been well communicated in advance, the decision itself, particularly on occasions when close calls have to be made, can be devastating for athletes who are not selected/nominated.

For all Major Championships:

- The Chair of the Selection/Nomination Panel must give careful consideration about how the decisions are communicated, especially to those who are not selected/nominated.
- The formal decision should be conveyed in writing and, if practical, should include the offer of a de-brief with an informed coach. The timing on this de-brief will be dependent on the proximity of the selection/nomination to the event and in some circumstances may have to take place afterwards. The athlete should be invited to bring a companion. For some athletes, this will provide the necessary understanding and acceptance of the decision, for others it may provide a focus on future performances and selection/nomination opportunities.
- BF will refer athletes to additional appropriate sources of support at this time for example:
 - Performance Lifestyle (for funded programme athletes), whose advisers are specially trained to support athlete transitions.
 - the BAC (support@britishathletes.org) for any athlete thinking of making an appeal.

Selection/nomination decisions must be described as 'provisional' until the end of the appeal process relevant to the particular selection/nomination process.

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