



Guidance on International Representation for Ireland and GB

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the routes for any hockey player within Northern Ireland to represent Ireland or Great Britain (and Northern Ireland) in international hockey. Hockey Ireland and Ulster Hockey want to ensure that any player within Northern Ireland can make an informed decision on which nation they would like to represent.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998.

According to the Belfast Agreement, **"It is the birth right of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves . . . as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly . . . to hold both British and Irish citizenship."**

This internationally recognised Agreement is encompassed in legislation through the Northern Ireland Act 1998; it allows Northern Ireland citizens to choose their identity and subsequently hold either a British or Irish passport, or both if desired.

Sporting Landscape In Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 impacts in a range of ways, on the complex and diverse landscape of sport in Northern Ireland. Governing Bodies of sport operating in Northern Ireland can be All Island, UK and Northern Ireland structures, which affiliate directly to either a European or an International Federation. Subsequently, the international sporting pathways for athletes differ depending on the sport played and its particular governing structure.

The Hockey Landscape in Ireland and the UK

Hockey in Northern Ireland is governed by the All Island Governing Body, Hockey Ireland and its Provincial Branch Ulster Hockey. Hockey Ireland governs across the two jurisdictions of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The Governing Structure for Hockey in Great Britain is Great Britain Hockey Ltd. Via the Great Britain Hockey Framework, one of the three individual National Governing Bodies (NGB's) - England Hockey, Scottish Hockey and Hockey Wales becomes the 'nominated country' to deliver all Great Britain hockey related activity. To date, this has always been England Hockey. For further details on Great Britain Hockey and the Great Britain Hockey Framework see:

<http://www.greatbritainhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=1436§ionTitle=How+GB+Hockey+Works>.

Hockey's Commitment to the Northern Ireland Act.

All Governing Bodies in the UK and Ireland have a duty to honour the Belfast Agreement which has been signed up to by both the British and Irish Governments.

To honour this agreement and comply with the legislation, Governing Bodies must allow the people of Northern Ireland personal choice to:

- identify themselves as British, Irish or both and,
- to promote the right of an athlete in Northern Ireland to compete for either Great Britain or Ireland.

In trying to fulfil this duty Hockey Ireland and Ulster Hockey have worked with the Governing Bodies of Hockey in the UK to ensure that this guidance for players from Northern Ireland on how to gain selection for Ireland or Great Britain is comprehensive and accurate.

Hockey Ireland and Ulster Hockey want to ensure that any player within Northern Ireland can make an informed decision regards their potential hockey career and ultimately they can choose which nation they would like to represent.

<p>How to Become an International Hockey Player for Ireland</p>	<p>To represent Ireland at Hockey at either underage or senior level, a player must meet the Hockey Ireland eligibility rules which can be found in paragraph 15. of the Hockey Ireland Byelaws.</p> <p>In addition to the Hockey Ireland Byelaws a player will also need to meet the FIH Regulations Governing the Eligibility of a Player to play International Hockey for a Country/National Association.</p> <p><i>A key point to note is that under the FIH regulations in order to represent Ireland in any under age or open FIH event a player must hold an Irish passport.</i></p> <p>Further details on eligibility to represent Ireland at Hockey are available from:</p> <p>Adam Grainger, High-Performance Director Hockey Ireland. Email: info@hockey.ie Website: www.hockey.ie</p>
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<p>How to become an International Hockey Player for Team for Great Britain.</p>	<p>1. To be eligible for Great Britain selection an athlete:</p> <p>1.1. must hold, or be eligible to hold, a British passport.</p> <p>1.2. must be affiliated to a Home Country Governing Body (England, Scotland or Wales), and not have played for another senior International team (other than GB, England, Scotland or Wales) in an FIH competition in the previous 3 years.</p> <p>1.3. must not be ineligible to compete at the Olympic Games by virtue of the operation of the BOA's Byelaw on "Eligibility for Membership of Team GB of Persons Found Guilty of a Doping Offence".</p> <p>Further details on eligibility to represent Great Britain Hockey are available from</p> <p>Ed Barney, GB Performance Director, +44 (0) 7702 258472 Website: http://www.greatbritainhockey.co.uk/gb_home.asp?section=1043&sectionTitle=GB+Hockey</p>
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	<p>2. Affiliating to and Representing England Hockey, Scottish Hockey or Hockey Wales. If an athlete wants to be eligible for selection for GB hockey they will need to affiliate initially to England Hockey, Scottish Hockey or Wales Hockey. It is recommended that players contact the Associations and also refer to their websites to find out up to date information about affiliating to and representing each Association. Below are the relevant website links and contacts within those Associations.</p> <p>England Hockey Ed Barney, GB Performance Director, +44 (0) 7702 258472 Website: http://www.englishockey.co.uk/core/core_picker/download.asp?id=2874</p> <p>Scottish Hockey Andy Tennant, Head of Performance Website: https://www.scottish-hockey.org.uk/international-performance/selection-policies/</p> <p>Hockey Wales Fern Burrage, Head of Performance . Website: http://www.hockeywales.org.uk/eligibility/</p>
<p>General FIH Regulations in Relation to: a) Junior and Senior Players b) Switching Countries when a Junior or Senior Player.</p>	<p>The FIH Regulations outline further principles for eligibility in relation to the definition of a Junior player (a player under the age of 21 at the relevant date) and Senior player.</p> <p>The FIH Regulations also outline the rules and procedures should a Junior or Senior player want to change from representing one country to another country. It is important when a player (Junior or Senior) is considering which country they will represent that the player refers to the Regulations to be sure that they know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The full definition of a Junior and Senior player; - The different regulations that apply should a Junior or Senior player decide to switch country having represented one country.

