

## New South Wales Fencing Association Selection Policy 2012

(For consideration at general meeting of members – 25 August 2011)

### Objectives

The primary objective of the NSWFA Selection Policy 2012 is to set out the process for selecting the NSW representative teams at national level. Teams will be selected on the basis of demonstrated performance for winning “on the day”, rather than for the purpose of athlete development. The selection process will be conducted in a fair, transparent and rigorous manner. These three principles will guide the selection process and take precedence over other contributory factors.

- **Fair** means that anyone, regardless of age, race, club affiliation or other demographic is in contention for selection on an equal basis of merit alone.
- **Transparent** means that the factors governing the selection process are clearly laid out and public, so that athletes are able to easily determine what they need to achieve in order to be selected. This process implies some determinism, in that athletes should be able to work out whether they are to be selected or in contention for selection from publicly-available data. However, this does not preclude the requirement for an independent selection commission to implement the selection policy and to use their best judgement in contentious cases. In practice, the commission’s expertise must be relied upon on occasion.
- **Rigorous** means that the factors leading to selection can be tested and the outcomes clearly expressed and justified, and that the selection process will be open to appeal.

### Executive Summary

- The selection process will be conducted independently of the NSWFA Executive.
- An independent Selection Commission will implement the selection policy.
- Registered NSWFA coaches and NSWFA Executive members cannot serve on the selection commission.
- The NSWFA Head Coach will not be a member of the Selection Commission. However, he may be called upon to provide expert advice to the Commission as required by the Commission.
- In cases where there is a conflict of interest (Col) between a member of the Selection Commission and an athlete in contention for selection, the Col must be clearly expressed to the Commission. Col does not necessarily disqualify a selector.
- Both A and B teams will be selected to achieve the primary objective of fielding the strongest teams. Athlete development will not be a factor in selection.
- Athletes in contention for selection will be identified in advance of the relevant competition and invited to participate in preparatory team training.
- Athletes in contention for selection will be identified by their *NSWFA ranking in the corresponding age category*. From these athletes, in order of priority: one member for the ‘A’-team will be selected on the basis of *highest AFF ranking*, one will be selected on the basis of *highest NSWFA ranking*, one will be selected from ranking at the end of the individual competition, and one *wild-card* athlete will be selected by the Selection

Commission. The same process will be repeated for the 'B'-team after the 'A'-team selections.

- Appeals will be handled by an Appeals Panel separate from the Selection Commission. Appeal Panel rulings are generally binding. However, to prevent the Appeals Panel from effectively becoming the de facto Selection Commission, rulings by the Appeals Panel can be overturned by a unanimous vote from the Selection Commission. Appeals can be made only on the basis of a failure of process and cannot be made against the inclusion of an individual member of the selected team.

## Selection Process

### Role of the Selection Commission

The Selection Commission will:

1. Select the NSW teams for all AFF competitions on the basis of the rules and guidelines in this document in their best judgement to the schedule outlined below.
2. Notify the athletes in contention for selection via the NSWFA Secretary, as well as the NSWFA Head Coach who will oversee preparatory training for the team.
3. Conduct the final selections following the individual event of the corresponding competition.
4. If required, deal with selection appeals in the schedule outlined below.

### Composition

The Selection Commission will comprise of three (3) *voting* members, who are:

- Capitulated members of NSWFA Inc.
- At least 18 years of age.
- Not a member of the NSWFA executive.
- Not a current registered and capitulated coach with NSWFA.

The Executive will call for nominations for appointment to the Selection Commission. Nominations will be accepted from any capitulated member of NSWFA. Selection Commission members will be appointed by the NSWFA Executive, taking into account their fencing experience and guided by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) guidelines for selection. Members of the Selection Commission are appointed for two year terms, from April to December of the following year.

### Conflicts of Interest

The following conflicts of interest must be notified to the other members of the Selection Commission if the selector is:

- In contention for selection in the weapon and age category of discussion.
- A parent or partner of an athlete in contention.

A conflict of interest does not automatically disqualify a selector from serving on the Commission. However, in the event that a selector is challenged over a real or perceived conflict of interest, the matter shall be referred to the NSWFA Executive for adjudication.

## Removal of a Selector

A selector can be removed from the Selection Commission by order of the NSWFA Executive at any time prior to, but not during, the selection process. This removal may be partial, for example, pertaining only to discussion of certain weapon and age categories. A replacement selector must be appointed in place of the removed selector before the selection process begins.

## Schedule for Selection

1. At least three (3) weeks before the relevant AFF competition: The top 10 NSW fencers by NSWFA ranking who are registered in the competition are the *athletes in contention* and identified as such by the Selection Commission.
2. The NSWFA secretary is to be notified by the Selection Commission as to the identity of these athletes as soon as they are selected and no later than two (2) weeks before the competition. These athletes will be notified by the NSWFA Secretary of their selection and invited to participate in team training under the NSWFA Head Coach. At this time, the Head Coach will be updated on the identity of the *athletes in contention* and whether they have accepted the training invitation. Athletes that decline team training will not be adversely impacted in the selection process.
3. Athletes that decline consideration for selection must notify the NSWFA within 2 days of notification of their contention for selection. The vacant slots will be filled on the decision of the Selection Commission.
4. Athletes in contention for selection must provide the Secretary with a mobile phone number on which they can be contacted during the competition.
5. Preliminary 'A' and 'B' teams will be drawn up from the guidelines below one (1) week before the competition. Athletes selected on the basis of top AFF or NSWFA rankings should be flagged, as well as 'wild-card' athletes.
6. The fourth member of each 'A' and 'B' team, selected on the basis of results in the corresponding individual event, will be notified within 30 minutes of the end of the final match.

## Team Selection

Pre-selected positions:

The Selection Commission is to preselect three athletes for each 'A' and 'B' team from the ten athletes in contention. This selection will be made sequentially in the following order:

1. First member of the 'A' team: selected on the basis of the highest AFF ranking of the ten athletes in contention
2. Second member of the 'A' team: selected on the basis of the highest NSWFA ranking of the remaining nine athletes in contention
3. Third member of the 'A' team: Wild Card selected from the remaining eight athletes in contention at the discretion of the Selection Commission
4. First member of the 'B' team: selected on the basis of the highest AFF ranking of the remaining seven athletes in contention
5. Second member of the 'B' team: selected on the basis of the highest NSWFA ranking of the remaining six athletes in contention

6. Third member of the 'B' team: Wild Card selected from the remaining five athletes in contention at the discretion of the Selection Commission

Selection on the basis of individual results at the competition:

1. The position of the fourth member of the 'A' team will be offered to the fencer with the highest ranking in the corresponding individual event at the competition who is one of the seven athletes in contention not already pre-selected for the 'A' team.
2. If this fencer has been pre-selected for one of the positions on the 'B' team, their position on the 'B' team will be awarded to the athlete of the remaining four in contention for selection who best fulfils the selection criteria for that position.
  - a. The position of the first member of the 'B' team will be refilled on the basis of AFF ranking
  - b. The position of second member of the 'B' team will be refilled on the basis of NSWFA ranking
  - c. The position of third member of the 'B' team will be a wild card refilled on the basis of the selection commission's decision.
3. The position of fourth member of the 'B' team will be awarded on the basis of highest ranking in the corresponding individual event out of the remaining athletes in contention.

### **Decision Making**

Selections will be made by a simple majority vote of the members of the Selection Commission. In the case of 'wild-card' selections, a brief (50-word limit) justification of the selection must be provided to the NSWFA Secretary for circulation at the same time as the team selection results.

### **Notification**

Pre-selected positions:

The Selection Commission shall send the team selection results to the NSWFA Secretary so that the athletes can be notified by email as soon as possible and no later than two (2) weeks before the competition. All ten of the athletes in contention will be notified of the selections made for each pre-selected position. A brief (< 50 word) explanation will be provided explaining the basis of the wild card selections.

Selection on the basis of individual results at the competition:

A member of the selection commission will notify the athletes selected for the fourth spot on the 'A' and 'B' teams on the basis of ranking in the corresponding individual event at the competition in person or by phone within 30 minutes of the end of the final match. If no member of the Selection Commission is present in person at the event, the Selection Commission may nominate a delegate to notify the athletes. Generally, this will be the appointed team manager/coach.

Replacement of a 'B' team member promoted to the 'A' team on the basis of individual results at the competition:

The athlete selected to replace a 'B' team member promoted to the 'A' team on the basis of individual results at the competition will be notified in person or by phone by a member of the Selection Commission or their nominated delegate within one hour of the end of the final match.

## Disqualification

The Selection Commission may disqualify an athlete from *contention* for selection by written notification to the NSWFA Secretary by providing a short (50-word) justification. Disqualifications can be made on the basis of:

1. 'Black card' penalties at any competition in the previous 12 months.
2. Failure to participate in previous team events after accepting selection in the previous 12 months, without valid reason.
3. Disruptive or intimidating behaviour which brings the sport into disrepute in the previous 12 months, including NSWFA Code of Conduct violations.
4. Failure to be a currently affiliated and capitated member of NSWFA at the time of selection.
5. A criminal conviction under NSW or Australian law.

## Appeals

Appeals must be lodged with the NSWFA Secretary within two (2) days after team selections are announced. There is a processing fee for lodging appeals, set at \$50 for the 2011-2012 season, which is refunded in cases where the appeal is successful.

Appeals cannot be made *against* a member selected for a team. Rather, the appeal must be directed for one of the three pre-determined slots (AFF ranking, NSWFA ranking, wild-card) on the basis of:

1. Incorrect determination of ranking in the case of the AFF ranking slot or NSWFA ranking slot.
2. To present a case for selection as the 'wild-card' member. As international competitions such as the Olympics and World Cups/Championships are factored into AFF and NSWFA rankings, these appeals are anticipated to be on the basis of results from foreign national competitions.

Appeals will be passed onto the Appeals Panel by the NSWFA Secretary, and the resultant decisions returned two (2) days after appeals close.

## Appeals Panel

The appeals panel shall consist of two members:

1. *Ex Officio*, the President of NSWFA, who will chair the Panel.
2. One senior member of the NSW fencing community, who:
  - a. Is over 18 years of age
  - b. A capitated member of NSWFA
  - c. Is not a current registered and capitated coach with NSWFA.
  - d. Has 10 years of experience in the sport.

The non-executive member of the appeals panel will be appointed by the NSWFA executive for a term of unrestricted length, and reappointed whenever there is a vacancy.

## Force Majeure Clause

Should the selection commission fail to convene or provide team selections within a reasonable timeframe as outlined in the schedule above prior to the AFF team event, the selections for 'A' and

'B' teams are to be made automatically by the highest-ranking member of the NSWFA Executive present at the competition on the basis of ranking in the preceding individual event, specifically:

1. The four highest-ranked NSW fencers available for the team event will be selected as the 'A' team.
2. The next four highest-ranked NSW fencers available for the team event will be selected as the 'B' team.

### **Team Management**

The NSWFA Executive, on the recommendation of the Head Coach, will appoint NSW Team Managers for national competitions. The Head Coach will appoint Team Captains.

Selection order does not imply team fencing order, which will be determined by the Team Manager in consultation as necessary with the Head Coach and Team Captain.

Team adjustments on the day of competition, e.g. the replacement of an injured team member, will be the responsibility of the Team Manager in consultation, where practical and necessary, with the Head Coach.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *Why does the policy select for “teams on the day” rather than “developmental” teams, the latter of which is arguably more important?*

The principal role of the NSW teams is to win at the nominated AFF competition, regardless of further athlete potential. Athlete development is a long term objective of NSWFA squads and the NSWFA coaching team, both of which are separate to team selection. This approach is consistent with the Collins Report.

### *Why are coaches excluded from the Selection Commission?*

1. In general, to reduce the perception of conflicts of interest arising in the Commission.
2. Specifically for NSWFA coaches, to ensure that NSWFA coaches are provided the maximum freedom to train NSWFA squads and teams free from external distractions.
3. To free up coach resources for athlete development.

### *Why can Appeals Panel decisions be overturned by the Selection Commission?*

To prevent the Appeals Panel from becoming a *de facto* Selection Commission. As appeals will either be procedural (in cases where simple calculations have gone awry), or for consideration of *wild card* selections which should typically be deferred to the expertise of the Selection Commission, the Appeals Panel is not anticipated to be an active participant in the selection process under most circumstances.

### *Why are there separate slots for AFF rankings and NSWFA rankings?*

1. For AFF: To enable athletes who participate solely at National and International level to be selected purely on that basis, without the adverse impact of not participating in state competitions.
2. For NSWFA: To enable athletes who participate principally in State competitions to have an opportunity for selection. These athletes are expected to have competing interests outside of fencing that prevent their regular appearance at National and International competitions. As NSWFA rankings also include AFF and International results, at present, athletes selected under the NSWFA scheme will either be under consideration for the AFF slot or of outstanding quality.

### *Is there a relationship between this selection policy and squads training and selection?*

No. Squads training and selection are separate from teams selection, and are designed for long-term development of athletes.

### *What is the purpose of the wild card?*

The wild card selection is to compensate for extenuating circumstances, as described in the Collins Report, to select exceptional fencers who have unrepresentatively low rankings for valid reasons. The wild card selection is restricted to the 10 athletes for contention selected from the top-10 NSWFA rankings to prevent completely unproven athletes from being selected under this scheme. As NSWFA rankings incorporate AFF and international results, it is anticipated that any athlete of sufficient standard to be considered for *wild card* inclusion will be in the NSWFA top-10.

***What is the motivation behind the selection of 10 athletes in contention in the four or five weeks prior to the competition?***

1. To enable athletes in contention to make the necessary preparations to be available for the team event.
2. To provide an opportunity for the probable team athletes to undergo further team-specific training under NSWFA coaches.
3. To simplify the selection process and promote transparency by establishing a minimum baseline of achievement for selecting NSW team fencers.

***Why is there a fee for lodging appeals?***

The fee is designed to discourage speculative or frivolous appeals. In cases where a failure of the selection process has occurred and the appeal is successful, this fee will be refunded.