



# **FIT Operations Policy No 1 – Player Eligibility**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Player eligibility for international sporting competition can be a complex and often emotive issue. The defining elements are at the very heart of global competition and key issues involved in ascertaining eligibility include aspects of nationality, passport, residency, ancestry, place of birth, playing history, the respective country’s selection process and even a player’s gender and age.
- 1.2 A player’s eligibility to represent a country requires some form of direct link between the individual and the represented country. The International Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has ruled that Legal Nationality and Sporting Nationality may be “different”, one defined in Public Law and the other in Private Law.
- 1.3 The Federation of International Touch (the Federation) therefore has the authority to decide appropriate eligibility criteria. The criteria may differ from Legal Nationality and should be subject to any internationally endorsed anti-discrimination or equality policies. The focus of this Eligibility Policy is that the criteria are both fair and equitable to most.
- 1.4 The Federation also agrees that basis of International Sport should be just that, about individuals competing for their country against individuals from another country. Further, any national team should always be just that, i.e. a Member country’s representative national team.

## **2. Application**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Member countries which are deemed responsible to ensure all individuals representing that Member country meet the eligibility criteria.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all competitions and events sanctioned by the Federation.
- 2.3 Member countries are encouraged to apply this policy to all events that are not afforded Federation sanction status.
- 2.4 This eligibility policy applies to representative players. The policy does not apply to officials, coaches, referees, support staff or to representative players eighteen (18) years of age or younger.



- 2.5 Because of the status of some Developing Nation countries, the Federation may allow certain eligibility criteria to be waived for those countries for some competitions and events.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1 Birth Certificate: A formal, statutory document recording the place, date and time of birth of an individual. For the purposes of this policy a certified copy of a Birth Certificate or “Birth Extract” is deemed to be a Birth Certificate.
- 3.2 Citizenship: A process whereby an immigrant individual achieves the requirements to satisfy a country’s criteria for becoming a legitimate national.
- 3.3 Country: A geographic region as defined by the 2008 FIT Constitution.
- 3.4 Developing Nation: A country not yet affiliated with the Federation, not a Federation Full or Associate Member but which has been awarded the status of “Developing Nation”.
- 3.5 Driving Licence: A current, photographic, identification card issued by a government department entitling an individual to drive.
- 3.6 International competition (either Test Match or Non-Test Match status): Competition between two or more Member countries. The competing teams are national representative teams.
- 3.7 Legal National: An individual who is formally recognised by the respective government as a person of origin of a country, on the basis of birth, parentage, residency or other legal criteria.
- 3.8 Member: Countries affiliated with the Federation and they may be either Full Members or Associate Members.
- 3.9 Open (division): A playing division in which there are only gender qualifications.
- 3.10 Parent: Either a biological (blood) parent or a legal guardian (adopted) of an individual. For the purpose of this policy a step parent or foster parent does not apply unless they are the legal guardian.
- 3.11 Passport: An official document issued by a government department certifying nationality of a country and used by an individual for international travel.
- 3.12 Place of Birth: The location of birth as recorded on an individual’s Birth Certificate.
- 3.13 Represented: An individual selected on the basis of merit through a formal selection process, listed on the player registration sheet for a country participating in international competition, is deemed to have represented that country.



3.14 Residency: Continuous domicile in a country except for short periods of absence away from the normal place of residence for holidays and the like.

3.15 Senior (divisions): Playing divisions that have minimum age eligibility criteria.

#### 4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1 For an individual to be eligible to represent a Member country in international competition, the individual must be able to prove:

4.1.1 They are a Legal National (including Citizenship) of the Member country; or

4.1.2 They have parent (mother or father) who was born in the Member country; or

4.1.3 They have been a resident of the Member country for three (3) years; and

4.1.4 The individual has not represented another Member country in international competition in the sport during the previous three (3) years.

4.2 In addition to the criteria listed in paragraph 4.1 to be eligible to participate in Federation events, an individual must also meet:

4.2.1 Membership requirements of the Member country association especially with regards to registration, insurance and financial status; and

4.2.2 Gender criteria (male / men's or female / women's); and

4.2.3 Age criteria in Senior aged divisions. It is normal for age-related divisions to specify a minimum age by the year of competition or a minimum year of birth. Tournament regulations will specify the specific criteria.

4.3 An individual participating in any Federation event must be able to clearly prove their identity by having available to present one of the following as required:

4.3.1 Current driving licence; or

4.3.2 Current passport; or

4.3.3 Other, suitable photographic evidence.

4.4 Member countries may seek clearance to enable non-eligible individuals to represent their country. Member countries may apply in writing to the Secretary General not less than three months before the respective competition. The submission should contain all relevant detail and specify the reason for exemption request.



## 5. Second Representation

- 5.1 An individual who has represented one Member country in international competition may seek a clearance to represent a second Member country provided that individual meets the eligibility criteria listed in paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 above, for the second Member country.
- 5.2 An individual is entitled to one change only. Once a change has been undertaken in an individual's lifetime, no further changes will be allowed.
- 5.3 Consideration of the circumstances of any request for change should be applied and may include immigration, marriage, employment, development of the sport and personal matters.
- 5.4 The following clearance procedures applies should an individual wish to change intended representation to a second Member country:
  - 5.4.1 An application for clearance is to be completed and submitted by the individual to the original Member country, the intended Member country national association and to the Federation Secretary General. A Clearance Application Form is at Appendix AAAA.
  - 5.4.2 Should both Member country national associations agree to the clearance, then that individual should be clear to represent the second Member country. However and provided no other issues are involved the Federation Secretary General will advise that clearance has been agreed and forward a copy of the written clearance document to all three parties.
  - 5.4.3 Should either of the Member countries not concur with the application for clearance then the individual may submit the clearance application, together with any supporting evidence, reasons for non-concurrence by Member countries and associated documentation from Member countries, to the Federation Secretary General for consideration and decision.
  - 5.4.4 The Federation Secretary General is to advise the individual and both Member countries of the decision within a reasonable period of time. The decision is considered final and no internal appeal will apply.
  - 5.4.5 The Federation Secretary General is to maintain a record of all clearance requests and associated results. Clearance requests and results are to be maintained for not less than ten (10) years from the date of initiation.



## 6. Sanctions for Policy Breaches

- 6.1 Should a Member country allow an ineligible individual to represent that Member country and participate in any match during any Federation event and the ineligibility is proven, the Federation may take appropriate action. The following penalties may be imposed:
- 6.1.1 Deduction of competition points;
  - 6.1.2 Monetary fines;
  - 6.1.3 Banning of individuals from competitions or remaining matches;
  - 6.1.4 Combination of any of the above.

## 7. Protests and Appeals

- 7.1 A Member country may protest to the Federation about an individual either intending to represent or who is representing or has represented another Member country at a Federation competition. Any eligibility protest must relate to the eligibility criteria detailed at paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2.
- 7.2 Any eligibility protest must be submitted using the Player Eligibility Protest Form shown at Appendix BBBB. The protest circumstances are to be clearly advised.
- 7.3 The Federation will consider the matter in accordance with the Federation Judiciary and Disciplinary Procedure Policy and will advise all associated Member countries and the individual concerned of the decision within the specified time frame.
- 7.4 The complainant Member country may appeal the Federation decision in accordance with the Judiciary and Disciplinary Procedure Policy.

## 8. Policy History / Approval

- 8.1 This policy was approved by the FIT Board on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009.
- 8.2 The policy is due for review in October 2010.

Appendix 1: Clearance Application Form (Reserved)  
Appendix 2: Player Eligibility Protest Form (Reserved)  
Appendix 3: Club Championships Eligibility (Reserved)