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INDIAN RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION (IRFU)

National Team Selection Policy for Asian Games 2026

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles, criteria, and procedures for selecting players to represent India in Rugby Sevens (Men's and Women's) at the Asian Games 2026. It ensures that selection is transparent, consistent, and based on merit, performance, and potential to deliver success at the continental level.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all players, coaches, selectors, team officials, and support staff involved in the national team selection process for the Asian Games 2026 Rugby Sevens competition.

3. Selection Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Select the strongest possible teams capable of achieving desired finishes at the Asian Games.
- Promote fairness, transparency, and accountability in selection decisions.
- Encourage performance excellence and consistency in domestic and international competitions.
- Support the long-term development of Indian rugby talent.

4. Governance

The selection process will be overseen by the National Selection Committee (NSC), constituted by the IRFU board.

- The NSC shall operate under the chairmanship of IRFU President and report to the IRFU board.
- The final team list shall be approved by the IRFU and submitted to the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and relevant authorities as per timelines.



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5. Composition of the National Selection Committee

The NSC will consist of:

- IRFU President, Chairperson as mandated by the national sports code.
- Head Coach (Men/Women) – for respective teams.
- Eminent Indian International Athlete to be appointed by IRFU board.
- General Manager – High Performance as the convener

6. Selection Process

Basis the recommendation of the scouts, coaches and high-performance unit the NSC will finalize a long list of up to 30 probable's for the Asian Games considering objective performance metrics, fitness testing, and performance under pressure. The long list of probable's shall be selected as per the below mentioned criteria:

1. Top 16 players basis the performance at the Asia Rugby Sevens Series 2025 (women) & Asia Rugby Sevens Trophy (men) subject to fitness, availability and adherence to the S & C program given in the off-season.
2. The remaining players or replacement for the injured/unavailable players from the top 16 shall be selected basis performance at the domestic competitions which include the Senior National Championship.
3. Players must Hold valid Indian citizenship and passport.
4. Meet eligibility criteria set by Asia Rugby, Government of India and the Indian Olympic Association.

The announcement of the probable's will be done by April 2026 immediately after the conduct of Sr Nationals and the players will join Asian Games preparation camp effective June 2026.

Once at the camp the players will undergo rigorous training as well as foreign exposure trainings. The NSC shall select a list of 18 players comprising of 13 squad members and 5 reserves shall be submitted as per the entry by name timeline of Asian Games (tentatively July 2026).

The NSC shall make all selection decisions considering the following factors:

- Performance: Consistency and impact in competitions.
- Fitness: Compliance with benchmark standards.
- Tactical Suitability: Alignment with team strategy.
- Team Balance: Positional requirements.
- Attitude & Discipline: Commitment and teamwork.

Indian Rugby Football Union

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- Availability: Medical clearance and readiness.
- Potential: Capacity for improvement.
- Data & Analytics: GPS, video analytics, and performance statistics will be used to support evidence-based decision-making.

Injury Replacement: In case of injury or unavailability, replacements will be made from the approved reserves list following medical clearance and NSC approval.

7. Appeals and Grievance Procedure

Players may lodge a written appeal within 48 hours of selection announcement. Appeals will only be considered on grounds of procedural error or non-application of stated criteria.

An Independent Appeals Panel constituted by IRFU will review and decide within 7 days.

8. Conduct and Compliance

All selected players and officials must:

- Adhere to the IRFU Code of Conduct,
- Anti-Doping Policy,
- Social Media Policy;
- Participate in all mandatory training, promotional, and pre-Games commitments.

9. Confidentiality

All deliberations and documentation related to selection are confidential and must not be disclosed publicly without IRFU authorization.

10. Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed post-Asian Games 2026 and updated as necessary by the IRFU board, based on feedback and evolving best practices.