

ATHLETE IDENTIFICATION, DEVELOPMENT & SELECTION POLICY INCLUDING TEAM OFFICIALS



UGANDA PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE (UPC)

ATHLETE IDENTIFICATION, DEVELOPMENT & SELECTION POLICY INCLUDING TEAM OFFICIALS

1. Purpose

This policy governs how athletes are identified, developed, and selected to represent the country at national and international competitions. It also establishes the standards and criteria for the appointment of team officials. The policy is founded on the following core principles:

- Merit - All decisions are performance-based and objectively assessed
- Fairness - Equal opportunity is guaranteed across genders, ages, and regions
- Transparency - All criteria are published and communicated in advance
- Consistency - The same standards are applied uniformly to every candidate
- Inclusion - Regional representation and diversity are actively encouraged
- Eligibility Compliance - All IPC and international federation rules are strictly observed
- Athlete Welfare - The physical and psychological well-being of all athletes is prioritized at every stage

2. Athlete Development Pathway

The pathway consists of four progressive levels. Progression is based on demonstrated performance, commitment, and compliance with classification requirements.

Level 1: Grassroots / Community

Target groups include school athletes, community clubs, University athletes, regional disability sport initiatives, and talent identification camps.

Identification Methods

- Disability Sports Galas and school sports days
- Community outreach programmes and regional sports festivals
- Referrals from coaches and physical education teachers
- Regional and National trials

Minimum Entry Requirements

- Verified eligible impairment (medical documentation required)
- Basic classification screening completed where possible
- Demonstrated commitment to regular training

Level 2: Regional Level

Athletes progress to regional level after demonstrating consistent participation, basic technical skill, competitive performance at district level, and a positive recommendation from their coach.

Selection Method

- Performance results from district-level competitions
- Observation and assessment by regional selectors, coaches, and PE teachers
- Physical and technical assessment against regional benchmarks
- Attendance and discipline record review

Level 3: National Level

Athletes compete at National Championships, National Disability Sports Galas, official qualification events, and national trials.

Criteria - Individual Sports

- Performance results (medals, rankings, times, or scores)
- Achievement or near minimum qualifying standards where available
- Technical evaluation by the national coach
- Medical and classification compliance
- Training attendance and engagement record

Criteria - Team Sports

- Performance in national league or championship competitions
- Demonstrated tactical understanding and game intelligence
- Physical fitness level relative to competition demands
- Team compatibility and collaborative behaviour
- Coach assessment against position-specific requirements

3. Underage Athlete Provisions (Athletes Under 18 Years)

The National Paralympic Committee recognizes that underage athletes - those below 18 years of age -represent a critical part of the national talent pipeline. These athletes require specialised identification pathways, additional safeguarding protections, and age-appropriate development frameworks that prioritise their long-term well-being alongside their sporting performance.

3.1 Definition of an Underage Athlete

For the purposes of this policy, an underage athlete is any registered athlete who has not yet reached their 18th birthday on the date of the relevant selection event or competition. The following sub-categories apply:

Sub-Category	Age Range	Primary Competition Platform
Youth Pathway	12 – 17 years	School Games , National Trials and Youth Championships, Continental Championships, Grand Prix and series , World Championships, Commonwealth games, All African Games and Paralympic Games

> *Athletes below 12 years of age may participate in grassroots and community events but are not eligible for national squad selection until they reach 12 years of age and meet minimum identification criteria as alihned to the international classifications rules.*

3.2 Identification of Underage Athletes

The NPC actively seeks to identify talented underage athletes through the following channels:

- School-based sports days and physical education teacher referrals
- District and regional disability sports galas with designated youth/ junior categories
- Community outreach programmes targeting special schools, rehabilitation centres, and disability support organisations
- Talent identification camps conducted at regional level with a minimum of two qualified selectors present
- Referrals from parents, guardians, physiotherapists, and healthcare providers
- Youth-specific national trials held separately from senior trials where resources allow Like Kids Athletics.

3.3 Selection Criteria for Underage Athletes

Selection of underage athletes to any national squad / team or development programme is based on the following criteria, applied proportionally to the athlete's age and stage of development:

Criterion	Description
Physical Potential	Evidence of physical attributes suitable for the sport - assessed by a qualified coach, not solely by current performance results.
Technical Skill	Demonstrated foundational technique appropriate to the athlete's age and years of training.
Competitive Performance	Results from recognised youth competitions, including times, scores, or rankings relative to peers in the same age group.
Coachability	Openness to instruction, willingness to learn, and positive responses to coaching feedback.
Commitment & Attitude	Regular attendance at training, discipline, and respect for teammates and officials.
Medical Fitness	Medical clearance confirming the athlete is physically fit to compete and train at the relevant level.
Classification Status	Verified eligible impairment with classification screening conducted or scheduled.
Parental / Guardian Consent	Written consent from a parent or legal guardian for participation in training camps, travels, and competitions.

3.4 Underage Athletes in the National Squads

An underage athlete may be considered for inclusion in a national squad / team only where all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- The athlete has met or exceeded the qualifying standard set for senior-level competition in their event.
- The national coach has formally recommended the athlete in writing, citing specific performance evidence.
- Written consent has been provided by the athlete's parent or legal guardian.
- The team medical officer has confirmed the athlete's physical and psychological readiness for senior-level demands.
- A formal individual duty-of-care plan has been prepared and approved by the Team Manager before any travel or competition.
- A designated Chaperone or Safeguarding Officer is confirmed as part of the travelling squad.

> *NOTE: No underage athlete may travel to any national or international competition without written parental or guardian consent and a confirmed Chaperone/Safeguarding Officer. This requirement is non-negotiable and applies regardless of competition level.*

Level 4: Elite / International Representation

This level applies to Continental Championships, World Championships, Paralympic Games, Commonwealth Games, and All-Africa Games.

Selection Principles

1. Meeting international qualification standards set by the relevant international federation (IFs)
2. Performance trends assessed across multiple competitions, not a single event
3. Realistic medal or podium potential at the target event
4. Current international classification status confirmed , review or new
5. Fitness and injury status verified by the NPC Director medical
6. Commitment demonstrated through attendance at training camps
7. Compliance with discipline standards and the Code of Conduct

> *NOTE: Final approval for all international squads rests with the Technical Committee and the Executive Board.*

3.2 Selection Principles for Mixed-Age Squads

- Athletes are selected on merit regardless of age, provided they meet the qualifying criteria for the relevant competition level.
- Youth athletes who achieve senior-level qualifying standards are eligible for consideration in the senior squad subject to parental or guardian consent and medical clearance.

- Adult athletes must never be disadvantaged in selection solely because a younger athlete is available; performance data must justify all decisions.
- Where a youth athlete is selected to a senior squad, a formal duty-of-care plan is prepared by the management team before departure.

3.3 Training Camp & Travel Arrangements

- Youth athletes (under 18) travelling with senior squads must have written consent from a parent or legal guardian.
- Accommodation for youth athletes shall be separate from adult athletes unless a parent, guardian, or designated chaperone is present.
- Training load and recovery protocols for youth athletes must be individually managed by the medical and coaching staff to safeguard long-term athletic development.
- A designated chaperone must accompany any squad that contains athletes under 18.

3.4 Development Priority for Youth Athletes

While performance is the primary selection criterion, the NPC recognises the long-term value of exposing high-potential youth athletes to elite environments. Where squad slots permit, and where two athletes are of broadly equal standard, preference may be given to the younger athlete as a deliberate development investment. This must be explicitly documented in the selection rationale.

4. General Selection Principles

Criterion	Description
Physical Potential	Evidence of physical attributes suitable for the sport - assessed by a qualified coach, not solely by current performance results.
Technical Skill	Demonstrated foundational technique appropriate to the athlete's age and years of training.
Competitive Performance	Results from recognised youth competitions, including times, scores, or rankings relative to peers in the same age group.
Coachability	Openness to instruction, willingness to learn, and positive responses to coaching feedback.
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Medical Fitness	Medical clearance confirming the athlete is physically fit to compete and train at the relevant level.
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5. Sport-Specific Adjustments

Each sport federation/Assocaitons or technical committee may develop sport-specific benchmarks. Examples include:

- Minimum qualifying times for athletics and swimming
- Ranking points for badminton and table tennis
- Scoring averages and total lifted weight for powerlifting
- Tactical performance metrics and positional assessments for team sports

> *NOTE: Sport-specific standards must be formally approved by the Technical Committee and published at least 60 days before any selection event.*

6. Individual Sports vs Team Sports

Area	Individual Sports	Team Sports
Selection Focus	Measurable performance results	Role within team structure and balance
Ranking	National rankings and qualifying times	Team balance and tactical requirements
Squad Composition	Based on qualification slots available	Based on competition regulations
Substitutions	Determined by ranking order	Determined by position and strategy
Youth Integration	Youth can qualify on times or results	Youth selected based on role suitability
Athletes discipline and code of conduct is highjly considered in any selections		

7. Team Officials Selection Criteria

The performance and conduct of team officials - coaches, medical staff, managers, and support personnel - directly influence athlete outcomes. This section establishes the criteria and process for their appointment.

7.1 Categories of Team Officials

Role	Responsibility
Head Coach / Technical Director	Overall technical preparation and performance strategy
Assistant Coach(es)	Sport-specific or event-specific technical support
Team Manager/Leader	Administration, logistics, communication, and athlete welfare coordination
Medical Officer / Physiotherapist	Injury prevention, treatment, and athlete health management
Classification Officer	Ensures all athletes meet IPC classification requirements
Chaperone / Safeguarding Officer	Mandatory when squad includes athletes under 18
Performance Analyst	Data collection, video analysis, and tactical reporting
Interpreter	Support for athletes with communication-related impairments
Aide	Helper/Guide for officals/athletes with impairments

7.2 Mandatory Requirements for All Officials

All candidates for team official positions must meet the following baseline requirements before appointment:

- Valid accreditation or certification relevant to the applied role (coaching licence, medical registration, etc.)
- No active or unresolved disciplinary proceedings within sport or related professional fields
- Signed and current Code of Conduct agreement with the National Paralympic Committee of Uganda
- Up-to-date safeguarding and child protection training (mandatory for all officials on squads that include athletes under 18)
- Anti-doping awareness certification
- Commitment to attend all designated training camps, competition travel, and pre-departure briefings

7.3 Head Coach / Technical Director Selection Criteria

Criterion	Requirement
Coaching Qualification	Minimum Level 3 (national or internationally recognized) in the relevant sport
Experience	At least 3 years coaching athletes with impairments at national or international level
Track Record	Demonstrated progression of athlete performance under their guidance
Classification Knowledge	Working understanding of IPC classification rules for the sport
Youth Experience	Experience coaching youth athletes preferred for mixed-age squads
Conduct	No history of abuse, harassment, or serious disciplinary violations
Availability	Able to commit full-time or part-time as required by the programme

7.4 Team Manager/Leader Selection Criteria

Criterion	Requirement
Administrative Experience	Minimum 2 years in sports administration or event management
UPC Familiarity	Understanding of UPC structures, policies, and reporting requirements
Communication Skills	Proven ability to liaise effectively with athletes, officials, and host organisations
Safeguarding Awareness	Current safeguarding certificate (essential for mixed-age squads)
Logistics Competence	Experience managing travel, accommodation, and competition accreditation
Financial Accountability	Understanding of management and budget reporting

7.5 Medical Officer / Physiotherapist Selection Criteria

Criterion	Requirement
Registration	Current registration with a recognised national medical or allied health council
Paralympic Experience	Experience treating athletes with physical, visual, or intellectual impairments
Anti-Doping Knowledge	Certified in WADA / national anti-doping regulations
Emergency Response	Current first aid and emergency response certification
Youth Health Protocols	Knowledge of age-appropriate care for youth athletes in mixed-age squads
Confidentiality	Strict adherence to athlete medical confidentiality standards

7.6 Chaperone / Safeguarding Officer (Mixed-Age Squads)

This role is mandatory whenever any squad member is under 18 years of age. Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the physical safety and emotional well-being of youth athletes at all times
- Overseeing appropriate accommodation and curfew arrangements
- Acting as the designated point of contact between youth athletes and their parents or guardians during travel
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns immediately to the Team Manager, UPC Executive or UPC Safe guarding focual person
- Maintaining a daily welfare log for delegation members with paying special attention to each minor/youth athlete

> *NOTE: No squad that includes athletes under 18 may travel to any competition without a confirmed, credentialled Chaperone/Safeguarding Officer. This is non-negotiable.*

7.7 Selection Process for Team Officials

1. Vacancies are advertised internally and/or externally with clear role descriptions and selection criteria.
2. Candidates submit a formal application including qualifications, experience, and references.
3. A selection panel comprising at least three members (Technical Committee, NPC Secretariat, and an independent member) reviews applications.
4. Shortlisted candidates are interviewed and, where appropriate, observed in a coaching or management setting.
5. Final appointments are approved by the Technical Committee and ratified by the Executive Board.
6. All appointees receive a formal letter of appointment outlining responsibilities, tenure, and conduct expectations.

7.8 Performance Review of Officials

All team officials are subject to a structured performance review after each major competition or programme cycle. Review criteria include athlete performance outcomes, athlete feedback, conduct and professionalism, administrative compliance, and effective management of any minor/youth athletes in the squad. Poor performance or conduct violations may result in non-renewal of appointment.

8. Athlete Obligations

To remain eligible for selection and continued squad membership, all athletes must:

- Attend all scheduled training camps and mandatory sessions
- Respect the UPC Code of Conduct at all times
- Maintain fitness levels appropriate to their competition level
- Comply with all classification requirements and medical directives
- Avoid any anti-doping violations in accordance with WADA and national regulations
- Participate in monitoring, evaluation, and performance review processes
- Notify team management promptly of any injury, illness, or personal circumstance affecting availability

> *NOTE: Failure to comply with any of the above obligations may result in suspension or permanent removal from the national squad.*

9. Appeals Process

Any athlete or official who believes the selection process was not followed correctly may lodge a formal appeal. The procedure is as follows:

1. A written appeal must be submitted to the UPC Secretariat within 7 calendar days of the disputed decision.
2. The Selection Appeals Committee will convene to review the appeal within 10 days of receipt.
3. The decision will be communicated to the appellant in writing within 14 days of the appeal submission.
4. The final decision rests with the Executive Board and is binding on all parties.

> *NOTE: Appeals must address a specific procedural failure. Dissatisfaction with a selection outcome alone, where the process was correctly followed, does not constitute grounds for appeal.*

10. Practical Implementation Notes

Given the current resource environment, the following pragmatic measures are endorsed to ensure the policy is operational and effective:

- Use existing national competitions as the primary selection platforms wherever possible
- Prioritise sports with active and well-structured programme delivery that have clear pathways to Paralympic qualification
- Introduce minimum qualifying standards progressively, allowing structures to mature before strict thresholds are enforced
- Focus on consistent participation and coaching consistency before applying strict performance cut-offs at grassroots levels
- Invest in building a network of regional coordinators to strengthen the grassroots identification pipeline
- Ensure all sport-specific standards and this policy are reviewed annually and updated following each major competition cycle

Policy Approval & Review

Item	Detail
Policy Title	Athlete Identification, Development & Selection Policy
Version	1.0
Approved By	UPC Executive Board
Date of Approval	5th December 2025
Next Review Date	5th December 2029
Policy Owner	Uganda Paralympic Committee

END OF POLICY DOCUMENT

ATHLETE IDENTIFICATION, DEVELOPMENT & SELECTION POLICY INCLUDING TEAM OFFICIALS

MISSION

PROMOTE, SUPPORT GRASS ROOT STRUCTURES AND CREATE AN ENABLING HUMAN RIGHTS RELATED ENVIRONMENT TO ENABLE PARA-ATHLETES, PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS AT ALL LEVELS

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