

Guidance on International Representation for Ireland and Great Britain

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the routes for any lacrosse player within Northern Ireland to compete in international Lacrosse.

Ireland Lacrosse is an all-island body which is responsible for the Ireland lacrosse teams, and British Lacrosse is the body responsible for the lacrosse teams within Great Britain, and both bodies want to ensure that any player within Northern Ireland has a pathway to participate with either team and can make an informed decision on which nation they would like to represent.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the "Northern Ireland Act")

According to the Belfast Agreement entered into between British and Irish Governments on 10 April 1998, both Governments "recognise the birth right of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as British or Irish, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments."

This internationally recognised Agreement is enacted in legislation through the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which allows citizens of Northern Ireland 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 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 Lacrosse Landscape in Ireland and the UK

The governing entity for lacrosse in Great Britain is British Lacrosse Limited (company number 13006926) ("British Lacrosse"). Each of the three National Governing Bodies (NGB's) - England Lacrosse, Scottish Lacrosse and Wales Lacrosse are stakeholders in British Lacrosse. British Lacrosse was admitted as a member of the British Olympic Association in {insert when approved}. For further details on British Lacrosse and the British Lacrosse Framework see:

Lacrosse in Northern Ireland is governed by the all-island national governing body, Ireland Lacrosse (company registration number: 475980), and is recognised as such by the European Lacrosse Federation and by World Lacrosse (the international federation).

Ireland Lacrosse covers both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and was admitted as an Associate Member of the Olympic Federation of Ireland in April 2024 and as a Full Member in June 2025.

<https://main.irelandlacrosse.ie/>

British Lacrosse is affiliated to World Lacrosse, the international lacrosse governing body, via its Multi Nation Members (MNM) status and the MNM and framework outlines British Lacrosse's role in participating in identified sixes events including Olympic games.

Lacrosse's Commitment to the Northern Ireland Act.

All national governing bodies in GB and Ireland have a statutory obligation to comply with the Belfast Agreement as enacted by both the British and Irish Governments.

To comply with the Northern Ireland Act, governing bodies must allow the people of Northern Ireland the personal choice to:

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

In their commitment to these rights, British Lacrosse and Ireland Lacrosse have worked with the governing bodies of Lacrosse in the UK & Ireland to ensure that the guidance for players from Northern Ireland on how to seek selection for British Lacrosse or Ireland Lacrosse is transparent, comprehensive and accurate.

British Lacrosse and Ireland Lacrosse want to ensure that any player within Northern Ireland has a pathway to participate with either team and ultimately, allow them to make an informed decision as to which nation they would like to represent.

How to become an International Lacrosse Player for British Lacrosse

The British Lacrosse player eligibility rules are aligned with the World Lacrosse regulations governing the Eligibility of a Player to play International Lacrosse for a Country/National Association.

To be eligible for British Lacrosse selection an athlete:

- must hold, or be eligible to hold, a British passport.
- must not have played for another senior International team (other than Britain, England, Scotland or Wales) in a World Lacrosse competition in the previous 3 years.

- 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".

Please note that eligibility criteria may be updated from time to time as a result of World Lacrosse or BOA requirements. Further details on eligibility to represent British Lacrosse are available from

Website: www.britishlacrosse.org

How to become an International Lacrosse Player for Ireland

To represent Ireland at Lacrosse at either underage or senior level for any European or World Lacrosse Championship event, a player must meet the Ireland Lacrosse eligibility rules which are published at <https://main.irelandlacrosse.ie/>. In summary, a player must have an Irish passport, or if they do not have an Irish passport, they must be born on the island of Ireland, or naturalised, or have a parent or grandparent born on the island of Ireland or be resident on the island of Ireland for a defined period of time (minimum of a two-year residency period within the preceding five years prior to the tournament in which the athlete is seeking to compete). However, World Lacrosse rules on athlete eligibility restrict the number of these non-Irish-passport-holders spots available on the roster of a given national team (typically a maximum of 4 for Field lacrosse and for Box lacrosse, and 2 for Olympic Sixes lacrosse).

In relation to players from Northern Ireland, for any European or World Lacrosse Championship event, such players may play for Ireland if they meet the criteria outlined above, or, as per decision of the World Lacrosse Board in 2024, Northern Irish athletes with a UK passport (i.e. for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) are allowed to use this passport as proof of eligibility to be a member of the Ireland team, provided they also provide evidence of a direct connection (birth certificate of athlete, or of their parent or grandparent) to Northern Ireland.

This provision does not apply to any Olympic, or Olympic-related (qualifiers, World Games, etc.) events, where players must have an Irish passport to compete for Ireland, or a UK passport to compete for Great Britain (as part of British Lacrosse), as per the rules of the Olympic Federation of Ireland, the British Olympic Association, and the International Olympic Committee.

Athletes electing to change national representation

Athletes in Lacrosse can change the nation they represent due to a range of circumstances effecting their eligibility such as emigration, domestic circumstance or that they are eligible to represent more than one nation such as being a dual passport holder.

World Lacrosse rules on Change of Country

Any athlete who has represented one country in a recognised event, and who elects to represent a different country, must wait a minimum of three (3) years from the end of the event where they last represented their former country.

Transfer will be permitted if and when:

- The three-year period has elapsed between playing for one country and then playing for another
- WL agreement has been sought / given
- Eligibility criteria have been met and documentation to confirm provided.

Note this excludes an athlete from playing for one country in one form of Lacrosse (e.g., Field) and then playing for another country in another form (e.g., Box) within the three year period.

Any athlete wishing to change country needs to contact British Lacrosse or Ireland Lacrosse to start the above process.

General World Lacrosse Regulations

For the full set of World Lacrosse rules and regulations, including those relating to athlete eligibility, see Appendix 24 of the WL Event Hosting and Competition Manual https://worldlacrosse.sport/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Event-Hosting-Competition-Manual-for-Website_2025May6.pdf

These rules and regulations also address:

- a) Junior and Senior Players
- b) Switching Countries when a Junior or Senior Player.

The World Lacrosse 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.

The World Lacrosse 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:

- 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.