

South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee

POLICY AND GENERAL SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES LONDON 2012

The national debate and discussion on representation of our sports teams in international competitions has prompted SASCO to reiterate its policy on team selection. From its foundation in 2004 SASCO made it clear that South African Sport Federations needed to accelerate the development of the historically disadvantaged sector so that South Africa's sport teams are representative of the country's demography.

Until recently the IOC, working in conjunction with the International Sports Federations (IFs), had a defined qualification criteria for each sport on the Olympic Programme. However, the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) from the developing worlds argued that such criteria would seriously restrict the entry of participants from their respective countries. In effect the qualification criteria will disqualify most developing countries from entering competitors in the Olympic Games. It was stated that many countries would be forced to send only their flag-bearers who would take part in the opening and closing ceremonies.

Qualification for the Olympic Games now takes place via established standard measures which include times, distance, heights, rankings and elimination tournaments. These criteria are effected at worldwide and at continental elimination competitions for National Olympic Committees. The IOC policy, therefore, now caters for both quality and universality. Quality will ensure that the world's best athletes participate in the Olympic Games while Universality would guarantee that there is adequate representation at the Olympic Games from all countries and provide the inspiration and opportunity to developing athletes for greater performances.

South Africa, being a member of the African continent, is eligible to enter via general international qualification competitions and also through continental elimination tournaments. It is a well-known fact that many Olympic sports in Africa are still at the development stage, whereas others enjoy an extremely high standard. This poses a serious dilemma for SASCO.

South Africa's sport is highly developed; but because of inequities of apartheid, many of these sports are still dominated by one sector of the population. It would be easy to exploit the Olympic qualification system and thus dominate continental representation but this would be cynical and even dishonest and it would, in our view, go against the spirit of the IOC's policy of universality.

It would mean that only one section of our population would dominate our National Olympic Team under the dubious banner of "merit" and the majority of our team would come from exclusive sports bodies. We respect the IOC policy with regard to universality and widespread participation. However this is there for those countries that do not qualify athletes for the Games, which is not so in our case and therefore the route of universality should not apply for us.

This will ensure quality selection and will not, in any way, restrict high level competition. It is high time we remove the cloak of hypocrisy and examine issues honestly. We will guarantee a place for any athlete who is a probable medal hope or will return commendable performances. This will be in line with our drive towards 12 by 2012.

In effect, the SASCO selection policy for the Olympic Games will still respect the IOC policy.

And always at the back of our minds will be the quote from the Olympic Charter.
“The goal of Olympism is to place everywhere sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.”

RELEVANT EXTRACTS FROM THE OLYMPIC CHARTER:

Rule 28-Mission and Role of NOC's

Paragraph 3:

The NOCs have the exclusive authority for the representation of their respective countries at the Olympic Games and at the regional, continental or world multi-sports competitions patronised by the IOC. In addition, each NOC is obliged to participate in the Games of the Olympiad by sending athletes.

Bye –Law of rules 28 and 29

2. NOC's task:

The NOC's perform the following tasks:

- 2.1 They constitute, organise and lead their respective delegations at the Olympic Games and at the regional, continental or world multi-sports competitions patronized by the IOC. They decide upon the entry of athletes proposed by their respective national federations. Such selection shall be based not only on the sports performance of an athlete but also on his ability to serve as an example to the sporting youth of his country. The NOCs must ensure that the entries proposed by the national federations comply in all respects with the provisions of the Olympic Charter.

PARTICIPATION IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Rule 41- Eligibility Code

To be eligible for participation in the Olympic Games a competitor, coach, trainer or other team official must comply with the Olympic Charter as well as with the rules of the IF concerned as approved by the IOC, and the competitors, coach, trainer or other team official must be entered by his/ her NOC

The above mentioned persons must notably:

- Respect the spirit of fair play and non violence, and behave accordingly; and

- Respect and comply in all aspects with the World Anti- Doping Code.

Bye –Law to Rule 41

1. Each IF establishes its sports own eligibility criteria in accordance with the Olympic Charter. Such Criteria must be submitted to the IOC Executive Board for approval.
2. The application of the eligibility criteria lies with the IFs, their affiliated national federations and the NOCs in the fields of their respective responsibilities.
3. Except as permitted by the IOC Executive Board, no competitors, coach, trainer or official who participates in the Olympic Games may allow his/her person , name, picture or sports performances to be used for advertising purposes during the Olympic Games.
4. The entry or participation of a competitor in the Olympic Games shall not be conditional on any financial consideration.

Rule 45- Invitations and Entries

1. The invitations to take part in the Olympic Games shall be sent out by the IOC to all NOCs one year before the opening ceremony.
2. Only NOCs recognised by the IOC may enter competitions in the Olympic Games. Any entry is subject to acceptance by the IOC, which may at its discretion, at any time, refuse any entry, without indication of grounds. Nobody is entitled to any right of any kind to participate in the Olympic Games.
3. An NOC shall only enter competitor upon recommendations for entries given by national federation. If the NOC approves thereof, it shall transmit such entries to the OCOG. The OCOG must acknowledge their receipt. NOCs must investigate the validity of the entries proposed by the national federations and ensure that no one has been excluded for racial, religious or political reasons or by reasons for other forms of discrimination.
4. The NOCs shall send to the Olympic Games only those competitors adequately prepared for high level international competition. Through its IF, a national federation may ask that the IOC Executive Board to review a decision by an NOC in a matter of entries. The IOC Executive Boards decision shall be final.

Bye-Law to Rule 47

6. Qualification Events Organised by the IFs:

- 6.1 For certain sports, the IFs (International Federations) may organise qualifying event or otherwise establish a limited participation in order to designate the competitors, particularly teams in team sports, who will take part in the Olympic Games.
- 6.2 The systems of restrictions and of qualifying events are subject to the provisions of the Olympic Charter to the extent decided upon by the IOC

Executive Board. The Formula for qualification must be submitted to the IOC Executive Boards for qualifying events organised by the IFs.

IOC POLICY IN ESTABLISHING QUALIFICATION CRITERIA AND ENTRIES FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The IOC, in co-operation with ANOC (Association of National Olympic Committees) and the IFs) international Federations), has established qualifications and entry criteria to ensure the preservation of quality and universality at the Olympic Games. Quality will ensure that all the top athletes and teams will have adequate opportunities to qualify and gain the highest positions possible at the Olympic Games. At the same time, the IOC, ANOC and the IFs are determined that there is worldwide representation at the Olympic Games. This policy, generally termed "universality" guarantees the adequate and acceptable possibility of the development of Olympic Sports in all parts of the world. The reason for continental qualification and representation is the direct result of this policy. In short, the IOC entry qualification ensures a two-tiered qualification.

SASCOC's SELECTION POLICY

SASCOC's Olympic Selection Policy complies with the letter and spirit of the IOC Qualification Criteria.

However, SASCOC contends that it will not be fulfilling the IOC criteria if it utilises its continental qualification as entry for the Olympic Games for individuals and teams from the former establishment sector of the population. In fact it would be dishonest if such individual athletes and teams used the continental qualification system to compete in the Olympic sports on a worldwide basis. If we allow the advantaged sectors to qualify via the continental system, South Africa would qualify with little or no effort in many sports because of the low development of many sports in the rest of Africa. In fact, South Africa would qualify automatically in some sports because of the non- existence of certain sports in the rest of Africa.

Therefore, SASCOC will focus on quality qualification and selection in its drive towards 12 by 2012.

SASCOC SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection to London 2012 will be considered if the SASCOC Board is satisfied that one or more of the following criteria can be fulfilled:

Entry via Preliminary Qualification:

1. If the performances and placing of the teams, individuals or combination of athletes in the qualification competition are likely to receive the highest commendation in international sport;
2. If the standard and level of the qualifying competition is of a very high international quality;

Direct Entry of the Olympic Games:

1. If the individual athletes or combination of athletes can each reach the final or level that is equated to a final in that particular sport;
2. If a team qualifies through its respective Worlds Championships or by virtue of its winning the competition at the previous Olympic Games.

Replacement in case of Withdrawals:

On certain occasions, South Africa might be called upon to replace individuals, combination of athletes or teams, which have withdrawn after obtaining qualification positions in some competitions, SASCOC will not consider replacements.

CRITERIA FOR EACH SPORT

The preliminary requisites for all non-team sports seeking entry to the Olympic Games are that athletes and/ or combination of athletes, but excluding relays, must have:

- competed in the Federation's National Championships in their respective events/ immediately preceding the Olympic Games and / or;
- Competed in the World Championship or its elimination competitions officially representing South Africa, in their respective even/s immediately preceding the Olympic Games.

In the past, some athletes and teams have refused to accept the entry criteria and have made unwarranted and unjustified representations to government and other sources for inclusion in the Olympic Team. Any athlete (this includes the athlete's and team's manager, coach, parent or guardian) making such representation/s will be deemed guilty of bringing the sport into disrepute and appropriate action will be taken against such athlete/team. However, recourse to appropriate representation is provided for in Rule 49 of the Olympic Charter.