

USA Team Handball – Men’s National Team

Selection Procedures

Period: September 1, 2025 – January 31, 2027

Covered Events

- North American & Caribbean Championships (NorCa): May 11–17, 2026
 - Pan American Games Qualifier vs. Canada (October 2026)
 - 2027 IHF World Men’s Handball Championship (Germany, January 13–31, 2027)
 - All related training camps, friendlies, internal weeks, and preparation periods during the stated period
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0) Definitions & Scope

- **Protected Competition** – As defined by USOPC Bylaws (Olympic/Paralympic Games, Pan American/Para Pan American Games, World Championships). If a covered event is designated a Protected Competition, the USOPC grievance/Section 9 process applies.
 - **Selection Committee** – The USA Men’s National Team Selection Committee established under §8. These procedures were developed and approved by the Selection Committee as the Designated Committee, in compliance with USOPC Bylaws §8.4.1(d).
 - **Match Squad** – The 16 players entered on the official IHF match report.
 - **Pan American Games and Olympic Games** – May have 14 or 15 players on a match report, depending on IHF rules for that tournament.
 - **Definitive List** – Up to 18 players and 6 officials registered for an IHF event.
 - **Provisional List** – Extended roster (usually 28 players, sometimes up to 32) submitted to the IHF by a required deadline. All final rosters and alternates must come from this list.
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1) Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for selection during the Period, athletes must meet all of the following:

Citizenship & Passport

- Must be a U.S. national at the time of selection.
- Must hold a valid U.S. passport that will not expire for at least six (6) months after the conclusion of the event.

IHF Eligibility

- Athletes must comply with all International Handball Federation (IHF) eligibility regulations, including nationality, transfer, and player registration rules.
- Athletes not recognized as eligible under IHF statutes will not be considered for final rosters.

Age

- Must be at least 16 years old on the first day of competition.

Membership & Good Standing

- Must be a current member of USA Team Handball in good standing.
- Must sign and adhere to all applicable USATH policies and the USOPC Athlete Code of Conduct.

Athlete Safety & Compliance

In Accordance with the USOPC Athlete Safety and Background Check Policies and USATH's MAAPP & Athlete Safety Policy

- **SafeSport Training**
 - Age 18+: Complete and maintain current Adult SafeSport Training.
 - Under 18: Complete the SafeSport for Minors course.
- **Background Screening** – Required for all athletes age 18+ and other applicable roles, completed via the USOPC/NGB-approved provider.
- **Anti-Doping** – Must comply with all IOC, WADA, USADA, IHF, NACHC, and USOPC anti-doping rules, testing procedures, and education requirements.

Failure to comply with all stated eligibility requirements will prevent consideration for selection. An athlete may be removed as a nominee to the Team or from the Team for an adjudicated violation of IOC, IPC, Panam Sports, APC, WADA, IF, USADA and/or USOPC anti-doping protocol, policies and procedures, as well as the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code, the USOPC Athlete Safety Policy and USA Team Handball's SafeSport policies, as applicable.

2) Selection Pathways

Athletes may be recognized, evaluated, and selected through: - USA Men's National Team training camps and competitions.

- Professional/semi-professional handball leagues worldwide.
- Collegiate and domestic club competitions.
- USA Team Handball-sanctioned camps/tournaments.
- Military recognition camps (e.g., Fort Benning).
- Full-Time Training Center (USA): If established, participation will serve as an additional evaluation pathway.
- Video/data submissions to National Team staff (per Appendix A specifications).

Event Timeline (2025–2027)

- Sep–Oct 2025: Open recognition camps across the U.S.
- Oct 27–Nov 1, 2025: International Training Week (evaluation-based, no official competition)
- Jan 2026: International Week
- Feb 2026: Open recognition camps
- Mar 2026: International Week
- May 11–17, 2026: International Week & NorCa Championships
- Summer 2026: International period and Open recognition camps
- Oct 2026: International Week & Pan American Games Qualifier vs. Canada
- Jan 13–31, 2027: IHF World Men's Handball Championship – Germany

3) Selection Process & Evaluation

Selections are made by the Selection Committee using both objective and discretionary measures.

Statement of Consistency: The criteria below will be consistently applied to all athletes under consideration, balancing objective and discretionary measures in a manner appropriate to international handball.

Objective/Observed Performance

- Match impact (goals, assists, shot efficiency, GK save %, turnovers, steals/blocks).
- Defensive effectiveness (1v1, positional responsibilities, system fit).
- Transition play (sprint repeatability, decision-making, ball security).
- Set-piece execution (attack and defense).
- Fitness testing (Yo-Yo/Beep, sprint, jump, strength, medical readiness).
- Reliability (attendance, adherence to training loads, recovery compliance).

Tactical/Technical Competencies

- Mastery of position (Back, Wing, Pivot, Goalkeeper) and two-way utility.
- System understanding and adaptability to opponent scouting.

Team & Culture

- Cohesion, communication, leadership, mental resilience.
- Professionalism and code-of-conduct adherence.

3.1 Roster Pools and Evaluation Framework

Before each International Week, the Selection Committee will identify:

- "A" Team (16 athletes): Primary competition roster.
- "B" Team (14 athletes): Developmental roster and immediate reserve pool.
- Special Consideration List (10 athletes): Maintains evaluation of athletes with potential to impact the MNT in the near future.

For all official competitions, USA Team Handball will submit a Provisional List to the IHF by the required deadline. This list will normally include 28 players but may be extended to 32 if permitted. All final rosters, alternates, and replacements must come from this Provisional List.

Alternates will be selected during each Selection Committee meeting in advance of competitions. Based on availability and special circumstances (e.g., injury, form, club conflicts, Selection Procedure Compliance), alternates may be called up from the Provisional List when needed.

For events where an expanded roster is permitted (e.g., 18 players at World Championships), the Selection Committee will identify and announce alternates at the same time as the primary roster—no later than the 45-day nomination deadline.

Additional selection considerations include:

- Athletes submitting compliant video analysis (Appendix A).
- Recently recognized athletes with elite-level potential.
- Athletes demonstrating world-class athleticism and/or transferable skills from professional or collegiate sports.

- Athletes identified via the World Class Athlete Program or other military high-performance pathways.

Internal weeks and international weeks without official competition provide additional evaluation opportunities for established and emerging athletes, ensuring the national team pool remains dynamic. Evaluations and invitations will be logged by the coaching staff using the same process as official competitions and maintained by USATH staff to ensure transparency.

3.2 International Week without Official Competitions

During international weeks that do not include official competitions, rosters will be selected using all criteria in §§3.0–3.1.

4) Discretionary Selection

Discretionary selection supplements objective measures. Considerations include:

- National Team experience and international readiness.
- Tactical/positional needs.
- Leadership and role acceptance.
- Form against elite competition.
- Recovery from medically documented injury/illness.
- Unique impact profiles (e.g., specialist defenders, pivots, goalkeepers).

Petitions/Medical Byes: Athletes missing evaluation opportunities due to injury, illness, force majeure, or national duty may petition with sufficient medical documentation (e.g., physician's letter or official medical report).

5) Mandatory Training & Competition

- Rosters are selected 45 days prior to competition.
- Attendance at training and competition is required unless a waiver is granted.
- **Waiver definition:** A written request submitted in advance with supporting documentation (medical, academic, military, or professional club letter).
- Waivers may be granted at the discretion of the Selection Committee, with input from medical and performance staff, or with approval from the Head Coach.

6) Removal of Athletes

An athlete may be removed if they:

- Withdraw in writing.
- Fall outside the A/B roster pool.

- Sustain a medically documented injury/illness that prevents participation.
- Fail to attend mandatory events without an approved waiver.
- Violate Code of Conduct or eligibility policies.
- Fail anti-doping, SafeSport, or background checks or otherwise violate USOPC policy.
- Engage in conduct detrimental to the team/federation.

Process: Written notice provided; grievances may be filed (§11).

7) Replacement of Athletes

Vacancies filled by Committee decision per §§3–4. For IHF events, replacements must comply with IHF substitution rules and must come from the submitted Provisional List.

8) Selection Committee (2025–2027)

- **Chair (Voting):** Head Coach, USA MNT – Mark Ortega
- **Athlete Representatives (Voting):** Minimum of two representatives, per USOPC definitions, as named by USATH Team Handball Athlete Advisory Council.
- **Staff Representatives (Voting):** Minimum of two members from the Men’s National Team staff.
- **Non-Voting Observer:** USA Team Handball staffperson (designated by the CEO).

For Protected Competitions such as the World Championships, the Selection Committee will consist of five voting members: three MNT staff representatives and two athlete representatives. This expanded structure ensures fairness, technical expertise, and athlete representation.

Voting Member Selection: Voting members will be appointed by the Head Coach in consultation with the CEO. USATH AAC appoints athlete committed representatives who are not affiliated with the selection pool (i.e., Women’s or Beach National Team Representatives for a Men’s National Team Selection).

Conflicts of Interest: Must be disclosed; recusals recorded. Any individual with an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest will recuse themselves from the related decision, and such recusals will be recorded in the Selection Committee minutes.

Records: Maintained ≥6 months post-event or longer per USOPC requirements.

9) Nomination Timelines & Communication

- A and B Team selections, along with the Special Consideration List, will be published before each International Week (official or developmental).
- Provisional Lists for IHF competitions will be submitted according to IHF rules (normally 28–32 players). These lists will be finalized and communicated to athletes prior to submission deadlines.
- Competitions: Final selections 45 days before events, unless IHF/USOPC deadlines differ.

Examples:

- NorCa (May 11–17, 2026): ~45 days prior.
- Pan Am Qualifier (Oct 2026): 45 days prior.
- IHF World Championship (Jan 2027): Finalized by Dec 1, 2026 (or earlier if IHF requires).

Roster announcements posted on USATH website.

10) Anti-Doping

Compliance required with relevant IOC, WADA, USADA, IHF, NACHC, PASO and USOPC standards and the USATH Anti-Doping Policy. Violations may result in removal and sanctions.

11) Opportunity to Participate & Dispute Resolution

- **Right to Participate:** Athletes have the right to a fair pathway and may file a complaint and proceed to a hearing to protect their opportunity to participate in Protected Competitions.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Athletes and staff have the right to report any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in the selection process. All Staff, Athletes, and Committee members are required to disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with the USATH Conflict of Interest Policy, recusals will be documented.
- **Non-Retaliation:** No individual will be subject to retaliation or adverse treatment for raising concerns, asking questions, or filing a complaint. This includes protection for those seeking confidential advice from the Office of the Athlete Ombuds.
- **Grievances/Appeals:** May be filed per USATH policy, as described in the USATH Bylaws. For Protected Competitions, athletes may also file Section 9 complaints with the USOPC.

- USA Team Handball Bylaws and Grievance Procedures can be found at: <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-team-handball/about/governance/corporate-documents>

12) Athlete Ombuds (Contact)

The Athlete Ombuds Office provides cost-free, independent and confidential advice regarding athlete rights, grievance procedures and any other related guidance pertaining to selection procedures and can assist in mediating disputes between athletes and their NGB/PSO.

Office of the Athlete Ombuds (confidential, independent, and free support):



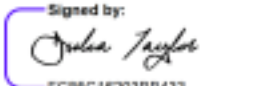
- **Phone:** (719) 866-5000
- **Email:** ombudsman@usathlete.org
- **Web:** www.usathlete.org

13) Publication & Required Documents

- **Publication:** Procedures posted on USATH website under Team USA → Selection Procedures.
- **Required Forms:** Athlete agreements, Codes of Conduct, SafeSport certificates, background checks, anti-doping acknowledgements, medical clearances, and event accreditation forms.

14) Signatures

I certify that I have read and understand the standards/criteria set by our IF and/or CF and incorporated those standards/criteria into our Selection Procedures. I further certify that the information provided herein regarding Athlete Selection Procedures represents the method approved by NGB/PSO.

Position	Print Name	Signature	Date
CEO/Executive Director	Michael King	 Signed by: Michael King D26791*0229442...	9/22/2025
USATH MNT Head Coach	Mark Ortega	 Signed by: Mark Ortega 7FC12743B81D4D4...	9/22/2025
Team USA Athletes' Advisory Council Representative*	Julia Taylor	 Signed by: Julia Taylor 7CB5C16293B8433...	9/22/2025

- * If the USOPC AAC Representative has delegated authority to the Alternate AAC Representative to sign the Selection Procedures, attach a letter from the AAC Representative indicating the reason he/she has delegated authority.
 - * Signature by the Athlete Representative constitutes that he/she has read and understands the Selection Procedures. If the Athlete Representative reads and does not agree with the Athlete Selection Procedures being submitted by the NGB/PSO, he/she may submit those reasons in writing to his/her USOPC Sport Performance Team.
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15) International Disclaimer

These procedures are based on IOC, IPC, Panam Sports, APC, as applicable, and/or the International Handball Federation rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the selection procedures caused by a change in IOC, IPC, Panam Sports, APC, as applicable, and/or your IF/CF rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected athletes immediately. The selection criteria are based on the latest information available to USA Team Handball. However, the selections are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency.

If any force of nature, or force majeure, should cause the alteration or cancellation of any of the selection events listed in this document, these selection procedures may require revisions,

Appendix A – Video/Data Submission Specifications

- **Submissions:** Mark@handballusa.org
 - **Video Requirements:** Half-court/full-court view, clear timestamps, opponent identification.
 - **Stats to Include:** Goals/assists, shot zones, turnovers, steals/blocks, fouls, exclusions, GK save log, minutes played.
 - **Athlete Profile:** Height/weight, handedness, primary/secondary positions, injury history, current club/college/military status.
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