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USA TEAM HANDBALL

Senior Women's National Team (WNT) Selection Procedures

2027 Pan American Games Qualifier vs. Canada

September 26–27, 2026 | Quebec, Canada

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline the official athlete selection procedures for the USA Team Handball (USATH) Senior Women's National Team (WNT) that will compete against Canada in the 2027 Pan American Games Qualifier scheduled for September 26–27, 2026.

These procedures are intended to ensure that the athlete selection process is fair, transparent, consistently applied, and compliant with applicable USA Team Handball and United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) policies and requirements.

Selection for this competition represents the culmination of an ongoing and cumulative athlete evaluation process conducted throughout the 2026 National Team season. Athletes have been evaluated through multiple opportunities, which may include Senior WNT tryouts, identification events, National Team training camps, residency training, physical performance testing, domestic and international competitions, match performance, statistical analysis, video evaluation, and other National Team activities.

An additional video and statistical submission period will be provided prior to final selection. This supplemental submission period provides eligible Senior WNT Player Pool athletes an opportunity to submit updated information regarding their current competitive performance.

The supplemental submission period does not restart or replace evaluations previously conducted during the 2026 National Team season. All available information may be considered as part of each athlete's cumulative evaluation.

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2. AUTHORITY

USA Team Handball is recognized by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport of Team Handball in the United States.

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USA Team Handball has the authority to establish, implement, and enforce selection procedures for National Teams representing the United States in international competition.

These Selection Procedures are subject to review and approval by USA Team Handball and any additional review or approval required under applicable USOPC policies.

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3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for selection to the Senior Women's National Team roster for the 2027 Pan American Games Qualifier against Canada, an athlete must:

- Be a current member of the USA Team Handball Senior Women's National Team Player Pool at the time of final roster selection;
- Be eligible to compete in the Senior Women's category under applicable International Handball Federation (IHF) and North American and Caribbean Handball Confederation (NACHC) regulations;
- Be a U.S. citizen and eligible to represent the United States in international competition under applicable IHF regulations;
- Hold a valid U.S. passport satisfying applicable international travel requirements;
- Be a current member in good standing of USA Team Handball;
- Be compliant with applicable USOPC, USA Team Handball, U.S. Center for SafeSport, and anti-doping requirements;
- Be medically cleared for high-performance training and international competition; and
- Be available for required National Team travel, preparation, team activities, and both qualifier matches unless otherwise approved by USA Team Handball.

Meeting all eligibility requirements does not guarantee selection to the final competition roster.

3.1 Senior Women's National Team Player Pool Requirement

Selection for the Pan American Games Qualifier roster will be made exclusively from athletes who are members of the Senior Women's National Team Player Pool.

Athletes designated solely as members of the Senior Women's National Team Development Player Pool are not eligible for selection to the Pan American Games Qualifier roster under these Selection Procedures.

Placement in the Development Player Pool does not constitute placement in the Senior Women's National Team Player Pool.

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Membership in the Senior Women's National Team Player Pool establishes eligibility for consideration but does not guarantee selection to the final competition roster.

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4. SELECTION PROCESS TIMELINE

The selection process for the Pan American Games Qualifier represents a cumulative evaluation conducted throughout the 2026 Senior Women's National Team season.

Selection/Evaluation Period: 2026 Senior WNT season through final roster selection

Additional Video and Statistical Submission Period Opens: Upon publication of these procedures

Additional Submission & Sport:80 Entry Registration Deadline: August 25, 2026

Final Team Nomination: On or about August 27, 2026

Pan American Games Qualifier: September 26–27, 2026

USA Team Handball reserves the right to adjust dates because of competition requirements, international federation requirements, travel considerations, roster-entry deadlines, unforeseen circumstances, or other legitimate operational needs.

Any material changes to the selection timeline will be communicated to affected athletes as promptly and transparently as reasonably possible.

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5. ATHLETE EVALUATION SOURCES

Selection will be based upon a cumulative and holistic evaluation of eligible athletes.

The Selection Committee may consider information obtained throughout the 2026 National Team season from sources including, but not limited to:

- USA Team Handball Senior WNT tryouts and identification events;
- Senior WNT training camps;
- Senior WNT residency training;
- Physical performance testing;
- Technical and tactical assessments;
- Domestic competitions;
- International competitions;

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- National Team matches and scrimmages;
- Club competition;
- Full-match video;
- Statistical performance;
- Previous Senior National Team performance;
- Performance against international-level opposition;
- Training performance;
- Coach observations and documented evaluations;
- Position-specific evaluations;
- Athlete development and performance progression;
- Supplemental video and statistical information submitted during the additional submission period; and
- Other documented performance information relevant to the published selection criteria.

Athletes are not required to have participated in every evaluation opportunity listed above to be considered for selection.

No single tryout, training camp, competition, physical test, statistical category, video submission, or previous National Team selection will independently determine final selection.

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6. ADDITIONAL VIDEO AND STATISTICAL SUBMISSIONS

USA Team Handball will accept additional video, statistics, physical performance information, and other relevant performance documentation from eligible Senior Women's National Team Player Pool athletes seeking consideration for the Pan American Games Qualifier roster.

The purpose of the additional submission period is to provide eligible athletes with an opportunity to demonstrate current competitive form, performance progression, or other relevant developments since their most recent National Team evaluation.

This additional submission period:

- Does not constitute an open tryout;
- Does not reopen eligibility to athletes outside the Senior Women's National Team Player Pool;
- Does not provide Development Player Pool athletes eligibility for this competition;
- Does not replace previous evaluations; and

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- Does not guarantee an additional in-person evaluation opportunity.

6.1 Game Film

Athletes submitting video should provide recent competitive game footage whenever possible.

Full-match, unedited game footage is strongly preferred.

Athletes should clearly identify:

- Athlete name;
- Jersey number;
- Primary and secondary position(s);
- Team;
- Opponent;
- Competition or league;
- Date of competition; and
- Any additional information necessary to identify the athlete in the footage.

6.2 Performance Statistics

Athletes may submit verified or reasonably documented competition statistics where available, including:

- Games played;
- Minutes played;
- Goals;
- Shot attempts;
- Shooting percentage;
- Assists;
- Turnovers;
- Steals;
- Blocks;
- Defensive actions;
- Two-minute suspensions;
- Seven-meter performance;
- Fast-break performance;
- Goalkeeper saves and save percentage;

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- Position-specific performance statistics; and
- Other relevant competition metrics.

6.3 Physical Performance Information

Athletes may also submit recent physical performance testing when available.

Such testing may include measures relevant to Senior WNT evaluation, including speed, change of direction, aerobic capacity, strength, power, or other relevant physical-performance measures.

Externally obtained testing may be considered by the Selection Committee but does not automatically supersede testing conducted or verified through USA Team Handball.

6.4 Submission Instructions

All supplemental materials must be submitted by the published deadline to:

Sarah Gascon, PhD
Senior Women's National Team Head Coach & Program Director
sarah@handballusa.org

Submission of supplemental materials does not guarantee selection.

All submitted information will be considered within the athlete's cumulative evaluation alongside information already obtained during the 2026 National Team season.

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7. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection will be based upon a holistic evaluation of each athlete's demonstrated ability to contribute to the competitive performance of the Senior Women's National Team.

No single criterion guarantees selection.

7.1 Technical Performance

Technical evaluation may include:

- Passing and receiving;
- Ball handling;
- Shooting mechanics;
- Shooting effectiveness;

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- Shot selection;
- Individual offensive execution;
- Individual defensive execution;
- Defensive positioning;
- Defensive contact management;
- Footwork;
- Fast-break execution;
- Transition skills;
- Decision-making under pressure; and
- Position-specific technical skills.

7.2 Tactical Performance

Tactical evaluation may include:

- Understanding and execution of Senior WNT offensive systems;
- Understanding and execution of Senior WNT defensive systems;
- Tactical decision-making;
- Ability to recognize and exploit numerical and positional advantages;
- Offensive collaboration;
- Defensive collaboration;
- Transition decision-making;
- Ability to execute specific game plans;
- Communication;
- Adaptability to tactical adjustments;
- Ability to perform within different player combinations and lineups; and
- Understanding of position-specific responsibilities.

7.3 Physical Performance

Physical evaluation may include:

- Acceleration;
- Sprint speed;
- Change-of-direction ability;
- Aerobic capacity;
- Anaerobic capacity;

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- Repeat-effort capacity;
- Strength;
- Power;
- Movement quality;
- Physicality appropriate for international competition; and
- Ability to sustain performance across the physical demands of training and competition.

Physical testing will be considered within the broader athlete evaluation and will not independently determine selection.

7.4 Competition Performance

The Selection Committee may consider demonstrated performance under competitive conditions, including:

- International competition performance;
- Performance against high-level opposition;
- Domestic or club competition performance;
- Consistency of performance;
- Execution under pressure;
- Decision-making during critical phases of matches;
- Contribution to team performance;
- Ability to execute the Senior WNT game model;
- Performance in close or high-pressure situations;
- Response to mistakes or adversity; and
- Ability to recover and perform across consecutive competition days.

7.5 Positional Requirements and Roster Construction

Selection will not be based solely upon ranking athletes individually.

The Selection Committee will select the combination of eligible athletes it determines provides the United States with the strongest competitive roster for the Pan American Games Qualifier against Canada.

Roster construction may therefore consider:

- Positional depth;
- Primary and secondary positions;

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- Roster balance;
- Offensive roles;
- Defensive roles;
- Specialist roles;
- Player combinations;
- Tactical matchups;
- Goalkeeper composition;
- Seven-meter responsibilities;
- Defensive capabilities;
- Transition capabilities;
- Ability to play multiple positions;
- Complementary skill sets; and
- Anticipated tactical requirements of the competition.

An athlete may be selected over another athlete with stronger results in one or more individual evaluation categories when the Selection Committee determines that the selected athlete better satisfies the overall positional, tactical, or roster-construction requirements of the team.

7.6 National Team Standards and Team Contribution

The Selection Committee may evaluate factors relevant to an athlete's ability to function effectively within a high-performance National Team environment, including:

- Coachability;
- Communication;
- Professionalism;
- Reliability;
- Preparation;
- Training consistency;
- Responsiveness to coaching;
- Ability to implement coaching feedback;
- Adherence to team standards;
- Conduct during National Team activities;
- Commitment to team objectives; and
- Ability to contribute effectively to overall team performance.

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These considerations will be applied consistently and must relate to legitimate high-performance, conduct, or team-functioning considerations.

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8. CUMULATIVE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Senior National Team selection cannot be adequately determined through a single tryout, camp, match, physical test, or other isolated performance.

Accordingly, cumulative performance evaluation will be a fundamental component of this selection process.

The Selection Committee may consider an athlete's performance, development, and progression throughout the 2026 evaluation period, including information obtained through:

- Tryouts;
- Training camps;
- Residency training;
- Physical performance testing;
- National Team training;
- Domestic and international competition;
- Club competition;
- Match film;
- Statistical analysis; and
- Supplemental submissions.

The Selection Committee may consider both the athlete's cumulative body of work and current competitive readiness.

More recent performance may receive greater consideration when the Selection Committee determines that it provides a more accurate representation of an athlete's current ability and readiness for the qualifier.

A strong performance at one evaluation opportunity does not automatically supersede the athlete's cumulative performance record.

Similarly, one below-standard performance does not automatically exclude an athlete when the athlete's broader body of work demonstrates readiness for international competition.

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9. SELECTION COMMITTEE AND AUTHORITY

9.1 Selection Committee Composition

The Senior Women's National Team Selection Committee will be constituted in accordance with applicable USA Team Handball and USOPC requirements.

The Selection Committee will be comprised of:

- Senior Women's National Team Head Coach;
- Senior Women's National Team Assistant Coach(es); and
- Athlete Representative(s) selected or appointed in accordance with applicable athlete-representation requirements.

USA Team Handball may appoint additional non-voting technical, medical, performance, statistical, or administrative advisors when appropriate.

9.2 Responsibilities

The Selection Committee will be responsible for:

- Applying these published Selection Procedures;
- Reviewing available athlete evaluation information;
- Evaluating athletes consistently under the published criteria;
- Considering both objective and discretionary selection information;
- Constructing the final competition roster of not more than 16 athletes;
- Documenting the selection process as appropriate; and
- Nominating the final roster and any designated alternates.

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10. DISCRETIONARY SELECTION

Team Handball is an interactive team sport in which individual performance must be considered within the athlete's role and contribution to overall team performance.

Accordingly, athlete selection requires consideration of both objective performance information and professional coaching judgment.

Discretionary considerations may include:

- Positional depth;

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- Roster balance;
- Tactical requirements;
- Opponent-specific considerations;
- Player combinations;
- Functional team compatibility;
- Versatility;
- International experience;
- Current competitive form;
- Performance trajectory;
- Performance under pressure;
- Ability to execute specific offensive or defensive responsibilities;
- Injury or medical considerations; and
- Overall contribution to team performance.

Discretionary selection shall be exercised in accordance with the criteria contained in these procedures and applied consistently to athletes under consideration.

No individual performance metric, ranking, testing result, statistical category, previous National Team selection, or coach evaluation independently guarantees selection.

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11. GOALKEEPER EVALUATION

Goalkeepers may be evaluated using additional position-specific criteria because of the specialized demands of the position.

Goalkeeper evaluation may include:

- Overall save percentage;
- Save percentage by shot type or location;
- Seven-meter performance;
- Fast-break saves;
- Wing-shot performance;
- Backcourt-shot performance;
- Six-meter performance;
- Positioning;
- Anticipation;

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- Reading of shooters;
- Movement efficiency;
- Communication with defenders;
- Organization of the defense;
- Outlet passing;
- Distribution;
- Fast-break initiation;
- Tactical decision-making;
- Consistency; and
- Performance under competitive pressure.

Goalkeeper selection may also consider how the combination of selected goalkeepers complements the team's defensive systems, tactical approach, and anticipated competition requirements.

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12. AVAILABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Selected athletes must be available for required pre-competition training, meetings, travel, competition, and other required National Team activities unless an exception is approved by USA Team Handball.

Availability may be considered in final selection when an athlete's inability to participate in required preparation materially affects the athlete's or team's competitive readiness.

Participation in every previous Senior WNT activity is not required for consideration.

Likewise, the number of National Team activities attended will not independently determine selection.

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13. INJURY, ILLNESS, MEDICAL CLEARANCE, AND RETURN TO PLAY

All selected athletes must be medically cleared to participate in high-performance training and international competition.

An athlete returning from injury or illness may be required to provide:

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- Written medical clearance from an appropriately licensed healthcare provider;
- Additional evaluation by USA Team Handball medical or performance personnel; and/or
- Evidence demonstrating sufficient readiness to safely meet the demands of international competition.

The existence of an injury or illness does not automatically exclude an athlete from consideration.

However, the Selection Committee may consider whether an athlete is reasonably expected to be medically cleared and competitively ready by the required reporting, travel, or competition date.

Failure to obtain or maintain required medical clearance may result in removal from or replacement on the competition roster.

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14. ALTERNATES AND REPLACEMENT POLICY

USA Team Handball may designate alternate or replacement athletes in addition to the final competition roster.

Alternates may be identified by position, role, or other roster requirements.

If a selected athlete becomes injured, ill, unavailable, withdraws, fails to maintain eligibility, or otherwise becomes unable to participate prior to the competition, USA Team Handball may nominate a replacement athlete in accordance with applicable competition regulations and USA Team Handball policies.

Replacement decisions will consider the selection criteria contained in these procedures.

A replacement is not required to be selected solely according to a numerical ranking. The Selection Committee may consider the specific position, tactical role, roster balance, opponent-specific need, or other competitive requirement created by the loss of the originally selected athlete.

Any replacement athlete must satisfy the eligibility requirements contained in these procedures at the time of replacement.

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15. FINAL ROSTER NOMINATION

The Selection Committee will nominate the final Senior Women's National Team roster and any designated alternates on or about:

August 27, 2026

The final competition roster will be selected exclusively from athletes who satisfy the eligibility requirements contained in these procedures, including membership in the Senior Women's National Team Player Pool.

Athletes designated solely as Development Player Pool athletes are not eligible for selection under these procedures.

Selection to a previous National Team roster, training camp, competition, residency program, Player Pool activity, or other Senior WNT event does not guarantee selection to the Pan American Games Qualifier roster.

Similarly, an athlete's absence from a previous competition roster does not automatically preclude selection when the athlete otherwise satisfies these procedures.

The final roster will be based upon the Selection Committee's determination of the combination of eligible athletes that provides the United States with the strongest competitive team for the September 26–27, 2026 Pan American Games Qualifier against Canada. The final roster and identified replacements will be published on by USA Team Handball not later than September 5, 2026, following notification to selected athletes on or about September 3.

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16. REMOVAL OF AN ATHLETE AFTER SELECTION

An athlete nominated or selected to the competition roster may be removed prior to the event if the athlete:

- No longer satisfies the eligibility requirements contained in these procedures;
- Is unable to compete because of injury or illness;
- Does not receive or maintain required medical clearance;
- Withdraws from participation;
- Becomes unavailable for required competition activities;
- Becomes ineligible under applicable IHF, NACHC, USOPC, USADA, SafeSport, or USA Team Handball rules or policies; or
- Is otherwise determined to be ineligible under applicable governing rules or policies.

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Any removal will be handled in accordance with applicable USA Team Handball and USOPC requirements, including applicable athlete rights and grievance procedures.

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17. APPEALS AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Athletes may challenge selection decisions in accordance with applicable USA Team Handball Athlete Grievance Procedures and applicable USOPC requirements.

Appeals or grievances must be submitted in writing within the timelines and according to the procedures established by USA Team Handball and any other applicable governing requirements.

Information regarding the applicable grievance process may be obtained through USA Team Handball.

Nothing in these Selection Procedures limits any rights available to athletes under applicable law, the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, USOPC Bylaws, or other applicable policies.

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18. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All members of the Selection Committee must comply with applicable USA Team Handball and USOPC Conflict of Interest policies, including disclosure of conflict of interests prior to deliberations.

Any selector with an actual or perceived conflict of interest must disclose that conflict and comply with applicable requirements regarding recusal or participation in deliberations and decision-making concerning the affected athlete or athletes.

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19. ANTI-DOPING COMPLIANCE

Athletes must comply with all applicable anti-doping rules, policies, testing requirements, and procedures established by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), International Handball Federation (IHF), Panam Sports, USOPC, USA Team Handball, and other applicable governing organizations.

This may include participation in in-competition and out-of-competition testing as required.

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Failure to satisfy applicable anti-doping requirements may affect an athlete's eligibility for selection or continued participation.

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20. ATHLETE OMBUDS OFFICE

The Office of the Athlete Ombuds provides independent, confidential, and cost-free advice regarding athlete rights, selection procedures, grievance processes, and other matters involving participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

Athletes may contact the Athlete Ombuds regarding these Selection Procedures, athlete rights, grievance options, or other selection-related concerns.

Office of the Athlete Ombuds

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

Anti-Retaliation

No employee, contractor, agent, volunteer, committee member, coach, or other representative of USA Team Handball or the USOPC shall take or threaten retaliatory action against an athlete for appropriately seeking assistance from the Office of the Athlete Ombuds, exercising applicable grievance rights, reporting a concern, or otherwise engaging in activity protected under applicable policies or law.

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21. AMENDMENTS AND UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

These Selection Procedures are intended to govern athlete selection under circumstances reasonably anticipated at the time of publication.

If circumstances arise that were not reasonably foreseeable or addressed by these procedures, USA Team Handball may determine an appropriate course of action consistent with applicable governing requirements and the principles of fair and transparent athlete selection.

Any material amendment to these procedures will be reviewed and approved as required and communicated to affected athletes as promptly as reasonably possible.

USA Team Handball will not modify these procedures solely for the purpose of advantaging or disadvantaging a particular athlete.

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22. APPROVAL AND SIGNATURES

These Selection Procedures were developed and reviewed by USA Team Handball in accordance with its authority as the National Governing Body for the sport of Team Handball in the United States and applicable athlete-selection requirements.

Name: Patrick Jalabert
Title: President, USA Team Handball
Date: 8/21/2026
Sign: Signed by: Patrick Jalabert

Name: Sarah Gascon, PhD
Title: Senior Women's National Team Head Coach & Program Director
Date: 8/21/2026
Sign: Signed by: Sarah Gascon

Name: Andrew Donlin
Title: Team USA AC Athlete Representative
Date: DocuSigned by: 8/22/2026
Sign: Andrew Donlin