



**International
Handball
Federation**

XI. Regulations for International and Continental Referees

Edition: 12 August 2023



Table of contents

Article 1 – Purpose of the Categories “International” and “Continental” Referees	2
Article 2 – IHF Global Referee Training Programme and Official IHF Referee Assessments	2
Article 3 – Recognition of Special Groups within the International Referee Category	3
Article 4 – Eligibility for the International Referee Category	3
Article 5 – Removal of Referees from the International Referee Category	4
Article 6 – Procedures Related to the Annual List of International Referees	4
Article 7 – Reimbursements at IHF Events	5
Article 8 – The Continental Referee Level	5
Article 9 – Intercontinental Referee Exchanges	6

Close collaboration between the IHF, the Continental Confederations and the National Federations is a prerequisite for the smooth functioning of the referee system worldwide. Invitations of referees from one continent to another shall go through the IHF PRC, with the acceptance and cooperation of the Continental Confederation concerned.



Article 1

1. Purpose of the Categories “International” and “Continental” Referees

1. The purpose of recognising a group of referees as “International” and publishing annually a “List of International Referees” is to make official which referees are eligible at a given point in time to be nominated for World Championships, Olympic Games, and other IHF events.
2. It follows that only referees who currently (or in a near future are expected to) meet these high requirements should be considered for promotion to the International level and for inclusion in the List of International Referees. (The requirements for being considered and the contents of the examinations are contained in the separate Regulations for Official IHF Referee Courses).
3. The limited purpose of IHF involvement in the recognition of “Continental” Referees in the individual continents is to protect the interests of the IHF, in the event that some specific Continental Referees may be given permission to handle games that form part of IHF competitions (such as qualifications for World Championships or Olympic Games).



Article 2

2. IHF Global Referee Training Programme and official IHF Referee Assessments

1. The essential purpose of the IHF Global Referee Training Programme (GRTP) and official IHF Referee assessments is to recruit and train young, talented referees from all continents in a standardised and first-rate programme that will enable these referees to progress to the “International” level and to form a pool of referees to be used for all IHF events.
2. Following the introduction of the GRTP, the List of International Referees will consist of: (i) referees who have reached the IHF level through the GRTP or an official IHF Referee assessment and (ii) referees who qualified for the International level prior to the introduction of the GRTP and fully meet the purpose enunciated in [1.1.](#) above.
3. During a GRTP course and official IHF Referee assessments, the candidates must at least referee two matches and pass a rule test, shuttle run test and video test. Such course/assessment may take place (i) in a competition of sufficient level, (ii) as an observation in the candidates’ own country where the couple should be assessed in top league matches of sufficient level and (iii) in a Junior or Youth World Championship. The number of candidates at such events should not exceed one

third of the total number of referees participating in the championship.

4. After a successful completion of the GRTP or an official IHF Referee assessment, the referees will be awarded (i) a light blue IHF badge after a first GRTP course or an observation in their own country or (ii) the standard blue IHF badge after a second GRTP course or a Junior or Youth World Championship.
5. Referees who participate in a Junior or Youth World Championship without having the standard blue IHF badge will officiate the tournament with the light blue IHF badge.



Article 3

3. Recognition of Special Groups within the International Referee Category

1. Under the IHF Statutes, the IHF PRC is expected to recognise an “Elite” Group and a “Prospect” Group within the overall group of International Referees.
2. The Elite Group will essentially consist of the referees who have shown in previous IHF events that they already maintain the level required for nominations to “A” World Championships and Olympic Games. The members of the Elite Group will be announced periodically, at times appropriate to the nomination of referees for “A” World Championships and/or training groups for such events.
3. The Prospect Group will essentially consist of those referees who have reached the IHF level through the GRTP or an official IHF Referee assessment, and still remain under the age of 40 years. Members of the Prospect Group who pass that age limit will be evaluated for possible inclusion in the Elite Group.



Article 4

4. Eligibility for the International Referee Category

1. A referee can be promoted to the level of International Referee only through successful participation in an official IHF examination of candidates for such promotion (see Regulations for Official IHF Referee Courses).
2. Basically, up to 4 referee couples per National Federation may be nominated for inclusion in the Annual List of International Referees issued by the IHF Playing Rules and Referees Commission. Furthermore, additional female couples may be nominated. In genuinely exceptional cases, however, the IHF PRC may take the initiative to authorise two or four additional referees from the same National Federation to participate in an official IHF examination for the purpose of being promoted to the List of International Referees. The criteria in each such case are determined by the IHF PRC.

3. The normal maximum age for promotion to the International level has been set at 40. This allows also former players and coaches to achieve the standards required after finishing their active careers. The age limit of 40 is a limit virtually without exceptions. Any exceptions are the exclusive prerogative of the IHF PRC, with factors such as desirable gender and geographical balance being taken into account.
4. Only Continental Referees are eligible to be nominated for participation in examinations for the International level. The nominations are the prerogative of the IHF PRC. As referees participate in the GRTP and official IHF Referee assessments with the support of their respective Continental Confederations and National Federations, the IHF takes for granted that they enjoy the same support when nominated for IHF events.



Article 5

5. Removal of Referees from the International Referee Category

1. In an annual review of the performance and potential of all International Referees (see Article 6 for procedures), the IHF PRC determines for each referee whether the continuation at the International Referee level can be justified. The IHF PRC may decide to consult with the relevant Continental Confederation, but the decision of the IHF PRC is binding and not subject to appeal. A decision to remove a referee may not be an indication of problems; it may simply be a matter of a re-evaluation of future potential in light of a constantly changing competition.
2. In addition, all referees who have reached the age of 50 must be automatically removed from the International level.
3. Outside the routine annual review, on the basis of its review of problems related to performance and/or conduct, the IHF PRC has the right to remove a referee from the International level. Such removal, which cannot be appealed, generally takes effect immediately after the decision has been announced, and may be permanent, „until further notice“, or for a specified period of time.
4. Similarly, on the basis of sufficient justification, the IHF PRC will generally honour a request from a Continental Confederation or National Federation that a referee be removed from the International level. The action presupposes that corresponding measures are being taken by the Continental Confederation and National Federation.



Article 6

6. Procedures Related to the Annual List of International Referees

1. The annual list is in effect from 1 August to 31 July in the following year.

2. The IHF PRC undertakes its annual review on such a timetable that all National Federations and Continental Confederations are informed during the month of May about the IHF PRC decision as to which International Referees would be accepted for the following year.
3. No later than 30 June, the respective Continental Confederation must indicate to the IHF PRC (through the IHF Head Office), which of the referees who were declared eligible by the IHF PRC are being re-nominated by their National Federation and Continental Confederation. In the absence of timely confirmation, the referees will automatically be removed.
4. The re-nomination must be accompanied by an updating of the personal data for each referee, on the forms provided by the IHF.



Article 7

7. Reimbursements at IHF Events

Referees nominated for IHF events shall be reimbursed for the following:

- return travel costs from their home to the duty destination (by air in economy class for distances exceeding 600 km, by train or boat/ferry in first class, or alternatively by private car); journeys must be coordinated with the organiser.
- visa costs
- vaccinations costs
- board and lodging costs
- any other costs as specifically agreed with the IHF in advance
- daily allowance according to the IHF Regulations for Travel Expenses
- amounts prescribed in the Regulations for IHF Competitions.



Article 8

8. The Continental Referee Level

1. In principle, each Continental Confederation establishes its own List of Continental Referees under its own procedures.
2. A continent's List of Continental Referees may include both referees who are seen as prospective candidates for subsequent promotion to the International level (through the GRTP or an official IHF Referee assessment), and referees for whom (e.g., due to age, language skills or talent) there are no such expectations. Accordingly, a Continental Confederation may wish to deviate from IHF rules regarding aspects such as language requirements and age limits.
3. In the case of prospective candidates for the International level, Continental Confederations are

strongly urged to pay attention to the above regulations for International level referees and to the separate Regulations for Official IHF Referee Courses, so that these referees are appropriately prepared to take advantage of possible opportunities for promotion.

4. Continental Confederations are required to submit to the IHF annually, on the same timetable as for the International List, a copy of their List of Continental Referees, together with personal data of an extent and format similar to that which applies for the International level.
5. The nomination of Continental level referees to matches which are part of events controlled by the IHF requires explicit approval from the IHF PRC. This approval is obtained either for the nomination of specific Continental Referees for a specific event, or for the general utilisation of specific Continental Referees for one year at a time.



Article 9

9. Intercontinental Referee Exchanges

1. If a Continental Confederation or National Federation wishes to request the assistance from another continent with referees for a specific continental or national level event, this assistance must be sought from the Continental Confederation concerned, through the IHF Head Office. In the case of referees for events under the control of the IHF, such as qualifying events for World Championships or Olympic Games, the assistance must be sought from the IHF.
2. A request must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the start of the event for which assistance is being sought.
3. It should be left to the Continental Confederation that is being asked to provide the assistance to select the referees, in consultation with the IHF. It is not appropriate to request a specific referee couple.
4. A Continental Confederation or National Federation must not contact a National Federation in another continent directly. It is absolutely prohibited to contact a referee couple directly. National Federations or referees receiving such prohibited inquiries are not allowed to accept an invitation and must turn the matter over to the IHF immediately.
5. The conditions offered to the invited referees must be fully in accordance with Article [7](#) above.