



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 13:00 GMT 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**INF World Rankings – Annual Update 2021 Policy and Revised Qualification Date for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games**

The INF Board has considered two key policies that will impact those netball nations vying to qualify a team to participate in the netball competition of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. There are twelve (12) places in total for Commonwealth Games Associations (CGAs) and these are awarded as follows: the host CGA automatically qualifies, and the remaining places are determined from the INF World Rankings. The INF has made some important decisions to ensure as much as possible that Covid-19 postponements and cancellations of international test matches do not affect the integrity of the qualification process adversely and that teams are given the maximum possible time to arrange qualification fixtures.

The INF World Rankings are updated regularly throughout the year to include international matches that take place between INF Member nations around the world. The current rankings reflect matches up to 29<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Once each year an additional process known as the 'Annual Update' takes place.

This process normally takes place on 30<sup>th</sup> June each year and involves removing from the data the oldest of the four years of results used to calculate the rankings. This process thereby ensures the rankings continue to reflect



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recent form. This is the one and only time each year when a team's ranking may change other than by the outcome of an international netball event.

Taking advice from David Kendix, the statistician who developed the World Rankings for INF in 2008, the Board recognised that with very few international tests taking place in the past 12 months due to Covid-19, the update process would remove about one third of the total data. Given the importance of the INF World Rankings for qualification and for national funding decisions, the Board concluded that delaying this year's annual update until more matches have been played would help to protect the integrity of the rankings for the benefit of all Member nations. Therefore, **the INF Board has decided to defer the Annual Update until after the qualification date for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.**

The second area considered by the Board was the date on which qualification for the Commonwealth Games would be determined. The INF and Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) have agreed to delay the qualification date from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 by two months to include all eligible international matches until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. This will provide additional time for fixtures to be played before the 2022 domestic netball season begins. The CGF has agreed similar extensions for qualification of other sports within the sports programme.



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Liz Nicholl CBE, INF President said “We were keen to recognise the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our Members while providing the maximum opportunity for teams to play qualification matches for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The two decisions should be considered in parallel – the first decision removes one aspect of uncertainty for all teams. The second decision recognises the day to day challenges our Members face during the ongoing pandemic and the difficulty of returning to international play. In making this decision, we considered the perspectives of those nations currently in the Commonwealth Games qualification zone and those that aspire to be so. On balance, the Board felt it important to provide maximum opportunity to play for qualification for a significant event in the global sporting calendar.”

The Board will review the return to play on a regular basis throughout 2021 and will consider the timing of the Annual Update again during October 2021. However, the Annual Update **will not** take place before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. In the meantime, the results from those fixtures that qualify for World Rankings will be included as normal in the rankings.

**ENDS**



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**Image:**



**Image Caption:**

Netball at the Commonwealth Games, Gold Coast 2018.

**Notes to Editors:**

### **International Netball Federation**

Over 20 million people play netball around the world, in more than 80 countries. The International Netball Federation (INF) is the sole, internationally recognised, governing body for netball, affiliated to GAISF, the International World Games Association and the Association of Recognised International Sports Federations (ARISF), receiving funding from the International Olympic Committee.

Currently, 76 National Netball Associations are affiliated to the INF, grouped into five Regions - Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe, and Oceania - each with a respective Regional Federation.

### **INF World Rankings**

The INF World Ranking system was developed by statistician, David Kendix in 2008. The first list was published on 11 February 2008 and the latest list has been updated on 29th November and includes matches up to this date. The ranking list relates to senior teams of member countries that are playing regular international test matches.

To view the current INF World Rankings, click [here](#).