

WN Position Statement Regarding Netball and the Olympic Games

WN is often asked whether netball is in the Olympic Games. The paper sets out:

- background information regarding the **Olympic Games, IOC Recognition**, and how the **Sports Programme** for each edition is determined;
- **WN's position** with respect to the Olympic Movement and inclusion in the programme of the Games.

The Olympic Games

The IOC (International Olympic Committee) 'owns' the Olympic Games. The honour and responsibility of hosting the Olympic Games are entrusted by the IOC to a city, which is elected as the host city of the Olympic Games. The Games of the Olympiad (4-year period) are celebrated during the first year of an Olympiad, and the Olympic Winter Games during its third year.

The Olympic Charter sets forth and recalls the Fundamental Principles and essential values of Olympism and is an excellent guide to how the Olympic movement works.

It defines the three main constituents of the Olympic Movement, namely the International Olympic Committee, the International Federations and the National Olympic Committees, as well as the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games, all of which are required to comply with the Olympic Charter.

IOC Recognition

In order to develop and promote the Olympic Movement, the IOC may recognise as 'International Federations' (IF's) international non-governmental organisations administering one or several sports at world level and encompassing organisations administering such sports at national level.

The statutes, practice and activities of the IFs within the Olympic Movement must be in conformity with the Olympic Charter, including the adoption and implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code.

IOC recognition does not mean automatic inclusion in the Olympic Games but it forms an important step in the pathway to inclusion.

The Programme of the Olympic Games

There are many sports that wish to be involved in the Olympics. There were 26 sports for London 2012, 28 sports at Rio 2016 and 33 at Tokyo 2020. Some sports have more than one discipline, such as track and road cycling or canoe sprint and slalom.

The criteria for inclusion in the Games were reviewed by the IOC as part of the **IOC Agenda 2020** programme of reforms and this included a move from a sport-based, to an **event-based programme** as follows:

1. Regular reviews of the programme based on events rather than sports, with the involvement of the International Federations, and with the following restrictions to be respected:
 - a. For the **Summer Games of the Olympiad**: approximately **10,500 athletes**, 5,000 accredited coaches and athletes' support personnel, and **310 events**,
 - b. For the Winter Games, approximately 2,900 athletes, 2,000 accredited coaches and athletes' support personnel, and 100 events.

2. The **IOC Session** (the general assembly of the IOC's members) **to decide on the inclusion of any sport/discipline** (IF) in the programme.
3. The IOC to allow the **Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (OCOGs) to make a proposal for the inclusion of one or more additional events** on the Olympic programme for that edition of the Olympic Games.
 - a. For Tokyo 2020 the OCOG proposed the inclusion of 5 additional sports (18 events and 474 athletes): surfing, skateboarding, sport climbing, karate, baseball (men) & softball (women) taking the total number to 33.
 - b. For Paris 2024 the OCOG proposed the inclusion of 4 additional sports: skateboarding, sport climbing, surfing and breaking and all have been confirmed for the 2024 Games so there will be 32 in total.
 - c. For Los Angeles 2028 the OCOG proposed the inclusion of 5 additional sports Baseball/softball, cricket (T20), flag football, lacrosse (sixes) and squash and these have all been accepted so the total will be 33.
 - d. The process to select the OCOG proposed additional sports for Brisbane 2032 was communicated to World Netball in September 2025 and will be split into two phases as follows:
 - i. **Phase 1 (September 2025 to December 2025)**: A review of all relevant International Federations (there are 37 IOC recognised eligible for consideration) utilising data and insights available to the OCOG and IOC. From this analysis, a selection of International Federations may be invited by the OCOG to make a formal submission for inclusion.
 - ii. **Phase 2 (from Q1 2026)**: Formal submission which will then be evaluated and any final recommendations made by the OCOG to the IOC for in mid-2026.
 - iii. **Decision (TBC mid-Q3 2026, earliest)**: The final decision regarding any sports proposed by the OCOG will sit with the IOC Session, following review by the Olympic Programme Commission and recommendation by the IOC Executive Board. The exact timing is to be confirmed but expected no earlier than mid-Q3 2026.World Netball and Netball Australia responded to the letter from the OCOG to confirm receipt and re-affirm netball's strong interests in participating in the above process.

The IOC has committed to changes that ensures the **Games is sustainable** and the programme of sports and events **remains relevant to society** and to young people of today:

- attracting **younger audiences**;
- **fostering gender equality** (one measure being the % of male and female athletes and the number of mixed gender events);
- **limiting the size of the Games** and the number of events, athletes, accredited coaches and support personnel.

The IOC has published **35 criteria to guide the evaluation of their Programme Commission**. These include items such as universality, global spread of excellence, venue requirements, number of days of competition, athlete quota, worldwide media interest, digital followers and volume of ticket sales. There is no published weighting to the criteria.

Recent decisions appear to have favoured events in which a significant number of countries can be represented by individual athletes and events that can take place in temporary facilities in urban locations or the natural environment.

Campaigning to be a part of the Olympic Games requires considerable financial investment by a sport and many hours lobbying IOC Members and OCOGS.

The World Games is a multi-sport games held every 4 years which features about 35 sports/disciplines that are not in the Olympic Games. The IOC has a cooperative relationship with the World Games regarding programme composition and their respective evaluations. Inclusion in the World Games can enable an IF to showcase their sport in a multi-sport setting.

WN's Position

World Netball (WN) and Netball Australia (NA) are actively engaged in discussions with Brisbane 2032 regarding the potential inclusion of netball in the 2032 Olympic Games.

This comes after WN, which has been recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) since 1995, commissioning a feasibility study and consulting multiple stakeholders to ensure that bidding for inclusion in the Brisbane 2032 Games is in the best interests of the sport.

WN and NA have re-affirmed to the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games netball's strong interests in participating in the selection process for Brisbane 2032 additional sports.

WN, NA, and their key stakeholders believe netball's inclusion in the Olympics would greatly enhance the Olympic movement and have a significant impact on WN's three core strategies: to grow, to play, and to inspire.

In line with WN's Articles of Association, we will continue striving for Olympic inclusion in 2032 as long as it aligns with the long-term vision of our sport.