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NSW Polocrosse
State Executive Officer
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Report of NSW Polocrosse Women's Selectors Committee 2015

Dear NSW Polocrosse Board,

On behalf of the selectors and myself I would like to thank the Board for the opportunity to work together to assist NSW Polocrosse at the elite level.

Since the Darwin Nationals women players have represented NSW Polocrosse at a number of events in Women's, Mixed and Masters competition with a high level of success, however this report will look at issues relating to the selection committee and selection process and how to improve the process rather than individual events as Managers and Coach's will have already provided reports.

The report has been divided into a number of sections with an overall summary to assist the Board.

The NSW Polocrosse Women's Selectors for the period 2014 to 2015 worked well together with a positive approach. There was a tendency within the group to work towards achieving consensus on selections, in place of voting. This is positive but not always achievable.

As the Board is well aware, typically people are much faster to provide criticism or express disagreement than positive feedback. As Chair of the Women's Selection Committee I have received a lot of feedback and this feedback distills down to the followings issues:

- **Communication**
 - Nominations
 - Selection dates
- **Conflict of Interest**
- **Beyond 2016**

COMMUNICATION

There was positive communication between the Selectors, the communication between the Selectors and Board was good with a general improvement in the delay in communications when compared to the last reporting period.

Nominations

Throughout 2014-2015 NSW selected a number of Women's, Mixed and Masters teams to compete at a range of events such as Barastoc and the Nationals.

The process of nominations still needs further refinement and in particular clear communication to the selectors, chair, SEO and especially players wishing to nominate. This process should be distilled to a single process for all selection committees, published then most importantly followed.

The use of different methods created confusion within the players group as they had difficulty following which method was being used for any given event. Some players expressed their frustration and concern that individual players were receiving special treatment.

An example is where a player failed to nominate, but was approached a number of times and encouraged to participate. This type of event creates ill feeling and ultimately damages the integrity of the process as other players seeking selection feel there are special deals being done.

Recommendation – A consistent method of nomination and generating a shortlist for each event be utilized and the same method is utilized by all selection committees.

Recommendation –NSW Polocrosse create and continue to publish a major events calendar, based on a 2 year cycle, Nationals to Nationals (2016-2018). The calendar would then show all major events within the cycle.

Discussion – Following the publication of the major events calendar, an inclusive and comprehensive approach towards nominations and generating a squad list would involve a 2 step process:

1. A general call for nominations at the beginning of the year, where all interested parties can go to the NSW Polocrosse web site to nominate for consideration to be included within the Women's squad.
2. A review of all Women players who have a grade equal to or higher than a level determined by the selectors.

These 2 steps provide a comprehensive list of players for selectors to generate a Women's squad or long list of players for major events.

Players would then be notified of their success in making the squad, they in turn would go to the NSW Polocrosse web site and complete the form for the nominations of their horse(s) and their availability for each event on the major events calendar.

Selection Dates

Throughout 2014-2015 the deadline for team selections to be finalized and handed to the Board continued to be an issue but less of an issue than the previous cycle. The selectors desired more time to finalise selections and in particular were aware other selection committees had been granted an extension.

Recommendation – NSW Polocrosse liaise with selectors to discuss the deadline for selection for each major event within the coming 2 year cycle, then publish these dates at the beginning of the cycle.

Announcement of Teams

Throughout 2013-2014 there was considerable variation in the time taken to announce teams following selection. When there is a long time between selections and the teams being announced the teams start to leak out. The fact that some players know and others don't gives rise to player uncertainty and frustration. In consideration that a major events calendar is published and the selectors know the deadline to finalise selections then the remaining step is for the Board to review and approve teams.

Recommendation – The Board adopt a performance target of reviewing, approving and publishing teams within a specified time frame after selectors complete selection.

Perhaps 2 weeks after the deadline for selectors to finalise selections maybe an appropriate target. The key point is to provide transparency for all stakeholders so they can see a clear path from nomination to teams being announced. Certainty around the process and timeframe will help build player confidence in the system and satisfaction with the performance of NSW Polocrosse.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The principle of “conflict of interest” is well understood but managing the perception of conflict of interest is challenging.

Everyone understands that a major strength of Polocrosse is that it is a family sport, with a number of families who have been playing for generations. This in turn provides a challenge on how to best manage the perception of conflict of interest during selections.

While NSW Polocrosse has a document that addresses conflict of interest for selectors, it seems it may have slipped from importance to a point where it receives lip service.

It is unfair for a player/selector to be placed in a position where they can be accused of improper conduct as they may be seen to be selecting themselves.

Therefore, it would be a positive step if the Board were to republish the conflict of interest policy and in particular updates the policy.

Recommendation - The Board update the Selectors Conflict of Interest Policy to prohibit a player being a selector on the selection committee that deals with that player.

A number of players spoke to me concerned there was a special deal going on where two of the women's selectors were on the shortlist for the four Women's Masters positions. It does a disservice to the players/selectors reputation and damages confidence in the selection process and degrades the perception the Board is managing the sport in a proper manner. If senior players wish to seek selection and also be a selector the Board can still achieve both by appointing the player as a selector in another division where they are not seeking selection. In effect a player could still be a selector in any of the selection committees other than the committee that may consider them as a player for selection.

Beyond 2016

Each time selectors meet there is a discussion around the introduction and development of new players and which events are best suited to introduce new players or allow others to gain experience.

A calendar of major events over the 2016-2018 cycle facilitates selectors to create a development program, if the Board were to provide some guidance as to which events it considers are more suited to the introduction of new players this would help avoid a situation where then Men's Selectors provide a top line section and the Women's Selectors provide a younger section for a mixed team.

Recommendation - The Board identify which events are more suited to development of players at the elite level to aid in a consistent approach by all selection committees.

Overall, the recommendations and points of discussion relate to common issues that each of the selection committees face.

Thank you for the opportunity to be the Chair of the NSW Polocrosse Women's Selectors Committee 2014-2015 and with the Boards approval I would like to continue in the Chair's position for 2016-2017.

Regards

David Lyall
Chair Women's Selectors
Polocrosse Association of NSW