



International Ringette Federation

Board of Directors

GOVERNANCE POLICY

DRAFT

To be approved as a draft by the Autumn General Assembly 2023

Please note new addition (marked yellow) to the draft.

To be finally accepted by the Spring General Assembly 2024

Baseline

This Governance Policy states principles that the International Ringette federation (IRF), as a registered association, uses in its decision making and operations. Governance Policy is based on the Association Rules of the IRF and does not overrule them in any respect.

For full accountability, IRF Governance Policy is accepted by General Assembly of the IRF. The IRF Board has, however, a mandate to amend any principle of the Governance Policy, if an amendment doesn't change obligations and privileges of full members of the IRF and the suggested amendment is unanimously approved by the Board.

IRF Governance Policy binds not only the entities of the IRF, but also the members or representatives of members whenever they participate an IRF Process or an IRF sanctioned event. By applying membership of the IRF, the members also approve all principles and regulations of this Governance Policy and other IRF Policies, rules and regulations. This approval doesn't prevent members from having different policies within their national associations or other ringette entities.

International Ringette Federation

Created in 1986, the International Ringette Federation (IRF) is a federation of member national ringette associations governing the sport of ringette in accordance with this the Association Rules and this Governance Policy of the IRF.

The IRF was officially registered in Helsinki on 22nd August 2022. The IRF Constitution was then replaced by registered Association Rules, which are further practicalized by this Governance Policy.

The official language of the IRF is Finnish as per the Association Rules. English, however is used as the common language until it is legally required to present one or more IRF document in Finnish. In this case, existing respective IRF documents will be translated to fulfil this requirement.

All IRF documentation, including rules, policies, and regulations, minutes, reports and other communications shall be initially published in English.

Name, logo and font of the IRF

The name of the Federation is “International Ringette Federation” when referenced in the English language. The registered name is Kansainvälinen Ringetteliitto. This Finnish name is used only in official correspondence with Finnish governmental authorities.

Logo of the IRF is presented in the beginning of this document. The IRF preserves all rights in the use of the IRF logo. The Board makes all decisions concerning use of the IRF logo and can delegate this mandate to one or more of the other entities of the IRF.

The IRF uses font “Century Gothic” in its official documents, statements, and media releases, including all web-related media.

World Ringette Championships

The IRF reserves the exclusive rights to the use of the words IRF or World Ringette Championships (WRC) in connection with any championships, competitions, promotion, or communications related to ringette.

Definitions

IRF Rules mean verbatim binding operating principles and guidelines, which are either legally endorsed, like the Association Rules or approved by the IRF Board. Example: International ringette rules.

Association rules: legally binding foundation for mission, objectives, memberships, operations, budgeting, and decision-making of the IRF.

IRF Policy means a course or principle of action adopted by the IRF. Example: Governance Policy

IRF Regulations mean operating principles and guidelines, which are more flexible than rules, thus allowing some leverage in application of them. IRF Regulations are approved by the Board, but the Board can

delegate approval of regulations to another IRF entity. Example: Hosting Guidelines of World Ringette Championships.

General Assembly: meeting of members, which holds the highest decision-making authority of the IRF.

Board of Directors: elected group of trusted volunteers, who are in charge of implementing decisions made by General Assembly; abbreviated as the Board.

President of the IRF: Chairperson of the Board, who is elected by the General Assembly.

Vice President of the IRF: Vice chairman of the Board, who is nominated by the Board.

Executive Director of the IRF: Highest permanent official of the IRF (in case nominated).

Entities of the Association: Committees, working groups and other organizational elements needed in the operations of the IRF. These bodies formed by the Board. Roles and responsibilities and working mechanisms of permanent bodies are included in Governance Policy of the IRF.

Full member: an individual or a legal entity, who or which fulfils membership requirements set by these rules and accepted by the Board.

Supporting member: any individual or organizational member, who or which supports the purpose of the IRF. Supporting member has the right to participate General assembly but does not have voting rights.

Chairperson of General Assembly: the person elected to chair the General Assembly. Election takes place in the beginning of the meeting of General Assembly

Country means a self-governing geographical area of the world recognized as a country, which has certain aspects of self-government at least to the extent of being autonomous in the control of its sports and is recognized as such by the IRF. The IRF automatically recognizes those counties, from which the IRF accepts a member.

NSGB means National Sport Governing Body. Only National Sport Governing Bodies for the sport of ringette may be members of the IRF. The IRF approves only one NSGB from any one country.

The IRF Board

The IRF Board is – by rules and design – a strategic one. This means that it will focus on strategy, resources, and admin affairs. For operational activities, the IRF will have semi-professional Committees, which will be supervised by the Board.

To succeed in the strategic role, the Board needs to have a clear understanding of the status of ringette, internationally and nationally, a foresight on forces and trends shaping future of comparable sports, and ability to select pragmatic guiding principles and priorities.

The roles and responsibilities of the Board are, but not limited to:

1. Overall planning, execution, and supervision of the strategies, operations, events, meetings and other activities of the IRF, as approved by the General Assembly.
2. Financial responsibility over IRF funds and other assets.
3. Preparation of General assembly meetings and accountability to General Assembly and governmental authorities as per Finnish Association Law requirements.
4. All contracts, documents or other instruments in writing requiring the signature of the IRF.

In decision-making, the Board operates as one entity, thus making all Board Members accountable for Board decisions unless a Board Member recuses herself/himself by presenting an opinion statement which will be included in the minutes of the respective meeting.

Absence of a meeting doesn't count as an opinion statement. If a Board Member is absent, and doesn't approve the Board decision, She/he must present a written opinion statement.

The IRF President

The IRF Presidents, as the Chairperson of the Board, has a special position in IRF operations and activities. This position is emphasized until the IRF has a separate hired Executive Officer. The President may, without a Board decision:

1. represent the IRF in official events, unofficial meetings and communications with members, external stakeholders or media.
2. sign or approve IRF regulations and other operational documents below Association Rules or IRF Policies, without approval of the Board.
3. prepare agreements with possible external partners to the extent of factual resource related implications. All these implications need to be approved by the Board before signing any agreement or contract.
4. release an IRF statement on any current issue if the urgency of the issue requires.
5. communicate with representatives of members when clarifying status of any IRF-related operation, event or other activity.
6. control the IRF Bank account or accounts, send invoices and pay bills according to the IRF Budget and Board decisions.

7. in urgent situations, make limited purchases outside the annual IRF Budget in case Board decisions are not available

Otherwise, the President's mandate is limited to the ones of the Chairperson as per the Association Rules of Finland, the Association Rules of the IRF, and the policies and regulations of the IRF.

The Vice President has all powers of the President if the President is not able to exercise her/his powers.

In case the President or Vice President are not residing in Finland, responsibility of all financial activities needs to be officially given by the Board to the Board member, which resides in Finland.

Honorary President

The Board suggests nomination of an Honorary President to the General Assembly. There will be only one Honorary President of the IRF at any given time.

Committees

For operational activities, the IRF has two permanent Committees, the WRC Committee and the Promotion Committee. Both Committees will have one full-time professional member from Ringette Canada and Ringette Finland to provide continuity for the work done in Committees.

Both Committees will reinforce themselves with volunteers. In case a developing ringette nation (supporting member or one in the way of becoming one later) wishes to be supported by the IRF, it is mandatory for it have a member at least in the Promotion Committee.

Both Committees will be chaired by either a full-time professional or a volunteer. Chairpersons are nominated by the Board, for a two year period. Any one Chairperson can hold that position for two consecutive terms. Any term begins in the beginning of a Fiscal year.

It is highly recommended that each Member and Supporting member has at least one person participating or observing the Committee work. The Board approves all members of the Committees.

The Committees are responsible for planning, budgeting and supervising the operational activities within their roles and responsibilities, within the plans and budgets approved by the General Assembly and endorsed by the Board.

The Committees present their working plan for two years to the Board within 3 months of their nomination.

The Committees may be given tasks by the Board, especially concerning long-term planning, amendments of rules and regulations, and arrangements of IRF-sanctioned events like the WRCs.

The Committees are not decision-making bodies of the IRF unless they are temporarily mandated by the Board. The Committees prepare and issue suggestions and recommendations to the Board in their areas of responsibility. In its decision-making, the Board is not tied to Committee suggestions.

WRC Committee

The WRC Committee is responsible for internationally played ringette, which includes common sports rules of international ringette, all practical arrangements concerning WRC or other IRF-sanctioned events and guidelines and regulations concerning them.

The WRC Committee develops common sports rules of international ringette in close co-operation with member nations, to facilitate development of ringette as a sport, and to make possible to more nations to participate in international ringette events.

Major sport rule changes need to be announced to members no later than one full ringette season before the next WRC or an IRF-sanctioned event. Minor rule changes can be announced six months before the next WRC or an IRF-sanctioned event if the Board so decides and all participating members concur.

WRC Committee responsibility over IRF events include all aspects of those events except accepting hosting, amending hosting guidelines or game format or any other matter of that scale. The WRC Committee is not responsible for matters connected to agreements with third parties, like media, facilities management, ticketing and other spectator services or other matters of that kind.

WRC Committee prepares amendments for any regulations or other guidelines connected to matters in the area of its responsibility, in co-operation with the parties necessary, and makes suggestions and recommendations to the Board if needed.

All preparatory work of the WRC Committee needs to be done well ahead of respective events. Major amendments like in game formats, new pools etc. or analysis of a bid to host a WRC or an IRF-sanctioned event will need to be presented to the Board at least two years before that particular event.

Promotion Committee

The Promotion Committee is responsible for growth of international ringette, which includes getting new nations involved in ringette, supporting developing ringette nations in improving their organizational maturity in the sports, enhancing the image of ringette internationally to make ringette more attractive and interesting as a competitive sport or a hobby, and to support members in their promotional efforts by using available networks and existing or new ringette events.

For the Promotion Committee, it is important to have a good understanding of the opportunities provided by social media, forces and trends and their development cycles among children and especially young girls or other promotional target groups, image offerings of sports competing for same resources or target audience, unique or exceptional features of ringette as a team sport, and the ways to attract wider international audience for ringette.

As the Promotional Committee is new within the IRF, the Board will issue some initial guidelines for the first Promotional Committee, which then prepares their medium-term (4 years) and short term (2 years) working plans.

Operating and meeting principles

The IRF will be operate without the purpose of gain for its members. Any profits or other accretions to the IRF will be used in promoting its objectives.

The IRF will follow the association Law of Finland and the Association Rules of the IRF in conduction General Assemblies and Board meetings. The IRF Board and other IRF entities follow principles Robert's Rule of Order when applicable. The IRF, however seeks flexibility and decisiveness over bureaucracy, thus giving the Board a mandate to amend meeting principles. The amendments approved by the Board in 2023 are the following:

1. Matters which are not placed into the agenda before the meeting, and thereby adequate background information have not been sent to Board members before the meeting, will not be decided in the meeting. This doesn't prevent discussions in AOB-section of the Board meeting.
2. As a consequence, all matters to be decided need to be prepared to some level before the meeting. As all members have the right to present matters to the Board, they need to prepare their suggestions (motions) and send them to the Chair before the meeting
3. As another consequence, the Chair has a right to suggest a motion (also before the meeting).
4. A motion doesn't need to be seconded to initiate discussion. The motion needs to be seconded to reach decision. This doesn't apply to elections (including nomination of Vice-President or secretary of the Board).
5. If the motion will be challenged, the challenge needs to be in a form of a new motion.
6. If there are more than one motion, and none of them are seconded, there are no decisions.
7. If there are more than one seconded motion, there will be a vote.
8. No "in favor" or "against" are used.

9. If discussion indicates that the matter is not ready for decision-making, it can be either removed from future Board agendas or postponed to the next Board meeting. More than one postponement will mean removing the matter from future Board agendas for the ongoing year.
10. Suggestions and recommendations of the Committees do not override the Boards privilege in decision-making. Suggestions and recommendations do not count as direct motions but are mainly ignitors for Q&A and preparatory discussions.
11. The Board will use two or three meetings to decision-making based on Committee suggestions or recommendations. Two meetings should be the norm, to allow enough time for out-of meeting deliberations and preparations for the actual motion for the meeting. Three meetings are needed only in decisions in which the members need to be involved more deeply in decision-making. This, however, needs to be an exception and not the rule.

Committee meetings will be organized less formally than General Assembly or Board meetings, to maintain high quality dialogue, efficiency and flexibility. The Committees do not prepare minutes of their meetings, they only mark down participants, substance and action points. The Committees, however, prepare their suggestions to or recommendations the Board in forms of memorandums, which are signed by the chairperson of the Committee in question. If there are any disagreements, which will influence the suggestion or recommendation, they need to be included into the documents as an annex.

Conflict of interests

A Board or Committee member who has an interest, or who may be perceived as having an interest, in a proposed contract or transaction with the IRF will comply with the IRF's rules and regulations and will disclose fully and promptly the nature and extent of such interest to the Board, as the case may be, will refrain from voting or speaking in debate on such contract or transaction, from influencing the decision on such contract or transaction and will otherwise comply with the requirements of the IRF's rules and regulations regarding conflict of interest.

Applying for an IRF membership

The Association Rules of the IRF define main regulations concerning memberships. In addition to those, an organization requesting membership to the IRF must fulfill the following conditions. It:

1. must be the ringette association of a sovereign country
2. If an association governs other sports than ringette, it can be a member of the IRF if the rules of that national association provide

adequate mandate for the entities and officials in charge of national ringette.

3. must be recognized by a national sport authority within its country, deemed acceptable in unanimous IRF Board's decision
4. must be in a position to control IRF ringette events like the WRC in the country if played in the country
5. must confirm that it will abide by the Rules and Regulations of the IRF and be representative of the players, clubs, game officials and, if any, regional ringette organizations
6. must furnish the IRF with its Rules and Regulations
7. must provide additional information as requested by and to the satisfaction of the IRF.

No additional application for membership will be considered from a country where there is an existing IRF Member National Association that is in control of ringette in that country. IRF membership is subject to the approval of the Board.

Full Membership

Full membership may be accorded to a national ringette association that meets all of the following criteria:

1. solely controls ringette,
2. has ongoing coaching and officiating development programs,
3. has a minimum of 150 registered players and
4. has taken part in an IRF World Championship in the senior or junior categories within the last two cycles.

The Board has the authority to amend requirements for full membership.

Supporting membership

Supporting membership may be accorded to either a ringette association that does not operate independently of any other organization that does not solely control ringette; or an independent ringette association controlling ringette but whose operations do not fulfil full membership requirements.

The Board may temporarily grant full membership status to a supporting member that has made considerable progress toward full membership independent and has a clear transition plan.

Supporting membership may also be accorded to a ringette association, organization, club or league or group in a country where a full or supporting membership does not already exist. This membership class shall also be available to any college, university, or special institution, being public or private, as approved by the IRF Board.

Supporting membership entitles the Member National Association to participate in all activities and affairs of the IRF. Those supporting

members which do not present their countries, cannot participate in World Ringette Championships. Supporting Members are neither entitled to vote nor to nominate Board Members.

A Supporting Member shall be accorded Full Member status as soon as it has fulfilled the specified criteria for Full Membership and receives Board approval.

The Board shall revoke and/or change any Membership status if the Full or Supporting Member no longer fulfils the specified criteria for such membership status.

Membership Fee

The joining fee and the membership fee charged to full members and supporting members for each group of members is decided separately by the General Assembly of the Association.

The IRF Board invoices membership fees in February, with a due date defined in a way to check voting status of full members before they are called to Spring General Assembly.

Anti-doping requirements

IRF Membership includes acceptance of the World Anti-Doping Code (Code) and a requirement that the policies, rules and programs of Member National Associations are in compliance with the Code.

Amendments

This Governance Policy will remain in force until it is amended at a Fall General Assembly meeting. Proposed amendments shall be submitted three months before the Fall General Assembly to the President of the IRF. Other policies, rules and regulations of the IRF, and other business or agenda items of a non-technical nature, shall be considered only if submitted by a Member of the Board or a Committee. The President or Vice President shall distribute all such proposals to the Board members at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

Interpretation

In all cases where questions arise concerning the Association Rules, the final authority is the General assembly. Regarding all other policies, rules or regulations, the final authority will be the Board.