

SECTION 4: POLICIES



4.12 THE VIRTUS SPORT AND EVENT PROGRAMME

Approved by the Governing Board: **5th November 2023**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Virtus provides an annual programme of World, Regional and multi-sport championship events.
- 1.2 The Global Games are held every 4 years and feature competition in a range of sports.
- 1.3 All sports and competition are run to Virtus rules, which are based on IF rules with specific alterations as detailed in the relevant sport specifications. Details of the rules for each sport can be found in Section 7 of the Virtus rules and regulations.
- 1.4 The purpose this policy is to set out the global rules and regulations which are common to all sports and events including:
 - a) Becoming a Virtus Sport Page 2
 - b) Minimum age for Virtus competition Page 4
 - c) Entry rights to Virtus events Page 5
 - d) Combining eligibility groups in competition Page 6

2 BECOMING A VIRTUS SPORT

- 2.1 The Governing Board has sole authority to determine the official Virtus sports programme (at a World or Regional level). They will consider and make a decision on any new sports.
- 2.2 This does not apply to demonstration/non-medal event sports which can be determined at a Regional or Sports Committee level, however the Governing Board should be informed of any intention to include a demonstration sport within a Virtus event.
- 2.3 Only sports that are widely and regularly practised by a minimum of 3 Virtus nations from 2 regions may be considered for inclusion on the Virtus sport programme ("the minimum criteria").
- 2.4 'Widely and regularly practiced' is defined as nations that can demonstrate activities including some or all of:
 - a) Holding recognised National Championships within the last 4 years
 - b) Competing in international recognized competitions on a regular basis within the last 4 years
 - c) Demonstrating frequent and widespread domestic opportunities in the sport
- 2.5 Applications for a new sport should:
 - a) Be presented in writing to the Governing Board
 - b) Including detailed information and evidence regarding the level of participation, competition history and development of the sport
 - c) Explain how the sport will be managed (eg. details of Sports Committee)
 - d) Provide an overview of how the sport will be developed and grown
 - e) Detail any financial or other impacts on the organisation
 - f) Detail any links with the relevant International Federation
 - g) Include a draft sports specification document
- 2.6 All sports that feature on the sport programme will be managed by the relevant Sports Committee or, in their absence, the Sport Director.
- 2.7 All sports that feature on the programme will be those considered to have 'normal' risk (as defined by the Virtus insurance policy). High risk

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sports (for example boxing, motorsports or diving may only be considered where specifically permitted under the terms of the Virtus insurance.

- 2.8 The Governing Board, in consultation with Virtus Sports Committees, will be responsible for maintaining an event cycle determining the rota of World, Regional, Global Games and other competition over a 4-year period. All Sports, Regions, Members and other interested parties will respect the cycle and will not permit an event to occur that is outside the cycle without the express prior written permission of the Governing Board.

3 Virtus Events and Competition

- 3.1 To be considered as a “World Championship”, events must be contended by a minimum of 5 Virtus Nations from 2 Regions.
- 3.2 To be considered as a “Regional Championship”, events must be contended by a minimum of 3 Virtus Nations from 1 Region.
- 3.3 All events (World and Regional) must be subject to the Bid Process except where specific dispensation is granted by the Governing Board in advance.
- 3.4 All events must adhere to the Virtus policies on branding, and any variations must be with the prior written consent of the Governing Board.
- 3.5 All events must be fulfilled by an Event Hosting Agreement signed by all parties.

4 Partnership Sports

- 4.1 In some sports, Virtus may choose to work in partnership with an International Federation to grow a sport. In such cases, the IF will usually be responsible for the sport rules and its development, whilst Virtus will be responsible for eligibility.
- 4.2 The precise nature of the agreement will be set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

5 The Global Games Programme

- 5.1 The Governing Board will have the sole responsibility to determine the Global Games competition and demonstration event programme.
- 5.2 The Board will receive a recommendation from the Games Committee approximately two years before the event.

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- 5.3 Inclusion on the competition programme will be based upon the principles as set out in Section 3 above together with the consideration of the capacity/ability of the LOC to deliver the sport, likelihood of inclusion on future Games programme and venue availability
- 5.4 Demonstration events will be considered on a case-by-case basis according to the benefits that will be derived for the sport, taking careful account of the ability of the LOC to deliver the event.

6 Minimum age for selection to teams competing in Virtus competition

- 6.1 Being mindful of our collective safeguarding responsibilities and the interests of the safety of young people with an impairment in Virtus competition, Virtus has determined that the minimum age of athletes in Virtus competition will normally be equivalent to the recognised International Federation of the sport.
- 6.2 Exceptions to this rule may be considered by the Governing Board only where it can be shown that exclusion would be detrimental to the athlete' development as an elite athlete and that there is no other viable competitive opportunity. Applications must be made in writing and set out the rationale together with a full risk assessment and management plan.
- 6.3 In addition, careful judgement should be taken by Member Organisations based upon a thorough risk-assessment to ensure that athletes under the age of 18 are appropriately supported within the team environment during bot competition and non-competition times. This includes ensuring appropriate supervision is in place and that safeguarding issues such as rooming arrangements are place.
- 6.4 Where it is felt that safeguarding requirements are not met, Virtus reserves the right to reject an entry to competition even where the minimum age is met.
- 6.5 Exceptions will apply in respect of events specifically for younger athletes (eg. a youth competition, where the rules of entry will state any age restrictions) and for virtual competition (eg. para equestrian video competition) and online challenges.

7 Authority to enter Virtus competition

- 7.1 As set in the membership policy, the sole right to enter teams/athletes into Virtus competition rests with the National Member Organisations (NMO's).
- 7.2 However, increasingly, there are occasions where the NMO itself is not represented and all aspects of event entry management and attendance are delegated to a 3rd party. This might include a National Sports Federation or some other organisation, and occasionally, to parents.
- 7.3 Virtus allows NMO's to delegate responsibility for entry to competition to 3rd parties in this way, only where the following principles are followed:
 - a) The athlete should fulfil all the normal entry requirements (in respect of eligibility policy and minimum entry requirements etc). All support staff should be known to and approved by the NMO.
 - b) The normal terms of entry apply.
 - c) Parents should only act as team staff where they are the athletes official coach or key member of the support staff (eg. medical). That is, parents should not attend in a primarily parental role under any circumstances
 - d) Those present at competition will be considered to be representatives of the NMO and responsibility for the team whilst at competition remains with the NMO

8 Combining Virtus Eligibility Groups in competition

- a) There are occasions where eligibility groups receive too few entries to create a viable competition event and the Virtus sports rules include policies on how this will be managed on a sport by sport basis.
- b) Whilst it is acceptable for different eligibility groups to compete alongside each other within the same event – for example a swimming race may include I12 and I13 swimmers in the pool simultaneously – this should only occur where separate results are then awarded.

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- c) In no circumstances should athletes from different eligibility groups directly compete against each other for the same medal.