



Northern Ireland Information Forum

Thursday, 19th August 2010
Radisson Blu Hotel, Belfast

7:30 pm

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Governance:

Q1: *Who is the “Governing Body” for Northern Ireland?*

A1: Ice Hockey UK (IHUK) is and always has been the Governing Body for Northern Ireland. The IIHA is not and never has been the Governing Body for Northern Ireland. In fact, **the IIHA cannot be the Governing Body for Northern Ireland under the IIHF Statutes and Bylaws**, which stipulate that a Member National Association (MNA) can only be the Governing Body for a sovereign state.

Q2: *Does the recent amendment to the IIHA’s Memorandum & Articles of Association have any bearing on my eligibility to play for Team Ireland or in the IIHA’s leagues?*

A2: No. The amendment was only made to clarify the point that the IIHA is **not** the Governing Body for Northern Ireland as stated above. **Eligibility to play for Team Ireland and in the IIHA’s leagues is governed by the IIHF Statutes and Bylaws and/or respective Regulations.**

National Team Eligibility:

Q1: *I only have Irish citizenship, but have never played in the IIHA’s leagues. Can I play for Ireland or do I have to play 2 years in the IIHA’s leagues before I can represent Ireland?*

A1: Yes. **If you only have Irish citizenship and have never held any other citizenship then you can only represent Ireland** in an IIHF competition and you can represent Ireland without having to play 2 years in the IIHA’s leagues.

Q2: *I live in Northern Ireland, but I have played in the IIHA Leagues for 2 (or more) years, so are you telling me that because I do not meet the residency requirement nor the ITC requirement, I wont be able to play for Team Ireland?*

A2: No. For one, **if you have previously represented Ireland, then you are fine and will continue to be eligible to represent Ireland.** If you have not previously represented Team Ireland, then we are confident that if you have played in our leagues for 2 years and you do not meet the residency requirement or the ITC requirement currently, then you will still be declared eligible as it is not your fault you do not have an ITC (it is the IIHA’s fault) and the residency requirement is not practical whatsoever for our situation on the island. However, we have asked this question specifically to the IIHF and we have not yet received an official answer. Rest assured, we will follow up with the IIHF on this and any other questions/concerns you may have.

ITCs:

Q1: WHY DOES THE IIHA NEED TO HAVE ITCs ANYWAYS?

A1: As a member of the IIHF, **the IIHA are obliged to abide by the IIHF Statutes, Bylaws and Regulations and these include the IIHF International Transfer Regulations** which outline the IIHA's responsibilities to international player transfers and ITCs. The IIHF International Transfer Regulations state that "the goal of the program is to maintain the worldwide good order of the sport and to protect club teams and players alike."

Q2: I have an Irish Passport. Therefore, I am Irish. Why do I have to have an ITC to play in the Irish Ice Hockey Leagues?

A2: Because **needing an ITC has nothing to do with citizenship.** You need an ITC when you move from one country (UK) to the MNA of another (IIHA).

Q3: I have never played ice hockey before coming to Ireland nor was I registered with the association of my previous country. Do I still need an ITC to play in the IIHA's leagues?

A3: Yes. **Needing an ITC has nothing to do with whether you have or have not played hockey in your previous country or whether you were or were not registered with the association of your previous country.** You need an ITC when you move from one country (UK) to the MNA of another (IIHA).

Q4: How come I have never needed ITCs before? Why is this being brought about now?

A4: **Players from Northern Ireland have always required an ITC to play under the IIHA.** Nothing within the IIHF Statutes & By-Laws has changed nor within our own governance or jurisdiction. **The IIHA have simply not adhered to these rules. The IIHF have brought this non-compliance to our attention and it is our responsibility to rectify this situation.**

In summary, up until now, we **HAVE NOT** complied with the rules, and now, going forward, we must comply with the rules or suffer the consequences, which include hefty fines and/or suspensions from international and/or national competition.

Q5: Does the IIHA receive any financial benefit from the implementation of these ITC rules and regulations?

A5: No. Both the IIHA and IHUK have agreed for some time now that neither association would charge the administration fees associated with ITCs for players going from IHUK to the IIHA or vice versa. **Therefore, as it stands currently, any players from Northern Ireland who require an ITC to play in the IIHA will only have to pay the IIHF administration fee of 300 Swiss Francs.** This is payable to the IIHF and neither IHUK nor the IIHA will receive any financial benefit from ITCs & Northern Irish players.

Q6: I have heard that the IIHA have a "Financial Plan" in place if ITCs are indeed required for all IIHL RD/DD. What exactly is this plan and how will it affect me?

A6: Yes. We have approached the IIHF with a plan, with the hope of spreading the cost of ITCs for the IIHL RD/DD over a number of years. We are still awaiting approval of this plan, but pending its approval by the IIHF Financial Department, we would most definitely implement this plan for Teams that might be affected by the issue of Northern Irish players needing ITCs to play in the IIHA-run leagues. In essence, each team would be treated on a case-by-case basis based

on how many ITCs their team would need. Essentially, the IIHA is fronting the bill of ITCs by paying the IIHF up-front, and then the teams will pay the IIHA back, in a reasonable amount of time, which depending on the team, could be a number of seasons.

What are the IIHA Planning to do?

Q1: What are the IIHA doing about the fact that someone born in Northern Ireland has to wait 2 years before they can represent their country?

A1: First, we have spent the last 9 months clarifying the rules that have applied and what currently applies now. This is what we have presented to you today. Now, **we currently have proposals with the IIHF that would allow a player born in Northern Ireland the ability to choose to play for Ireland or Great Britain without having to wait the 2 years.** We are asking for an exception to be made by the IIHF. You must understand that in order for such an exception to be made, there is a cumbersome process involved. As stated above, however, we are constantly asking for updates from the IIHF and we will continue to follow-up on our proposals. **At present, we await the decision to be made by the IIHF and until then, what we have outlined above is what currently applies.**

Q2: What is the IIHA going to do if the IIHF say no to our proposals?

A2: Our plan, pending your input today, is to **put a “working-group” together and to re-evaluate our approach with a view to re-submitting a formal Northern Ireland Proposal to the IIHF Semi-Annual Congress in September 2010.** In the event that this is not successful then **the IIHA would need to further re-evaluate with a view to taking our case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.** These are short term solutions and in the absence of any success with any of these options then **the long term solution would be to have an IIHF Bylaw which is exclusive only to Northern Ireland in its application voted on, approved and adopted at the 2012 IIHF General Congress.**