



NATIONAL RANKING TOUR: RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Ranking Tour is a series of 9 events carried out during the bowling season on a monthly basis to determine the current ranking of each player. It also defines, when needed, who will be representing Northern Ireland in a particular event each year.

The Events

Every year (certain events occur bi-annually) Northern Ireland, through the NITBF, selects bowlers for the following competitions:

Competition	Squad Members (M/F)	Senior Squad Members (M/F)	Juniors	Open (All)
Qubica/AMF World Cup				1M, 1F
Commonwealth *	2M, 2F			
European Champions' Cup (ECC)				1M, 1F**
Adult Triple Crown	6M, 6F			
World Men's Championships (WMC)*	6M			
World Women's Championships (WWC) *	6F			
European Men's Championships (EMC) *	6M			
European Women's Championships (EWC) *	6F			
Senior Triple Crown		6M, 6F		
European Senior Bowling Championships		6M, 6F		

(ESBC)				
Junior Triple Crown (U19s)			6M, 6F	
YAC (U24s)			6M, 6F	
European Youth Championships (U19s)			4M, 4F	
World Youth Championships * (U23s)			4M, 4F	

* Bi-annual competitions

** Winner of the Ranking Tour is entitled to go to ECC

As can be seen, to represent Northern Ireland on most International Competitions, a bowler must belong to the current squad and within the squad, he or she must make the team according to the competition rules and the selection criteria stated below.

The Ranking Tour – Tournament Rules and Regulations

Entry fees:

Adults and Seniors: £26.00

Juniors (Under 19s): £10.00

(Note: If any Junior (U19) bowler wishes to receive adult ranking points they must pay the adult entry fee of £26.00)

Optional Handicap Section: £5.00 extra

Optional Scratch Section: £5.00 extra

General Rules:

- Registration for each event opens 30 minutes prior to starting time.
- Only bowling balls that appear on the latest 'USBC Approved Bowling Ball List' may be used in each event.
- Once play has commenced no alterations to the surface of any bowling ball is permitted. Surface changes are only permitted during the practice period.
- Bowling ball cleaners or any equivalent are not permitted to be used once play has commenced.
- Resin bags/Grip-sacks are only permitted to be used at the back of the players' area. Resin bags/Grip-sacks should be kept on the table/platform area to the back of each players' area. All residue must be wiped/removed completely from the surface of any bowling ball used.
- The use of Easy-Slide or any equivalent substance is not permitted for use on bowling shoes at any time.
- Appropriate bowling attire should be worn. No jeans or hats/baseball caps are permitted.
- In every ranking event, each bowler (male and female) bowls eight (8) games in four (4) blocks of two (2).

- Lanes are changed every two games in the following sequence: Players in the right lane move: 4 lanes to the right / 2 lanes to the right / 4 lanes to the right. Players in the left lane move: 4 lanes to the left / 2 lanes to the left / 4 lanes to the left. Lane assignment is made randomly by the tournament committee prior to commencement of the event.
- Scores for the event are required to be filled in on the official score sheets provided upon registration.
- In order to score points in a ranking event, the bowler must be a current member of the NITBF.
- In the event of a tie for any position, the highest last game will decide the highest positioned bowler; if a tie still exists the highest positioned will be the bowler with the highest second last game, then the player with the highest third last game, etc.
- Mobile phones are not permitted during the event however exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration. If any bowler is considered to be in clear violation of the ruling the appropriate action to be taken will be at the discretion of the tournament committee.
- No bowler shall be allowed to play under the influence of alcohol or consume alcohol at any point throughout the event. Any bowler found to be in non-conformance will be disqualified from the event and will be subject to disciplinary action by the NITBF.
- Anti-doping procedures will be in place, as stated in the Constitution, random checks may be carried out by the NITBF during any event.
- Attention will be paid to any bowlers considered to be showing slow-play. Any slow-play will be brought to the attention of the tournament committee who will take appropriate action.
- All protests must be submitted to the tournament committee within 30 minutes of the game in which the infraction occurred.
- Complaint procedure – all complaints must be submitted in writing to the tournament committee within 5 working days of the event.

After every ranking event, each bowler scores ranking points determined by their finishing position (within the category in which they are competing) and their average as follows:

Categories: The categories under which bowlers can compete are:

- Open Male
- Open Female
- Senior Male
- Senior Female
- YAC (Under 24s)
- Under 19s Junior Handicap Section
- Optional - Scratch Section (open to all) with prize fund
- Optional - Handicap Section (no current member of Male International Squad can participate) with prize fund

Points: Every bowler must bowl 8 games after which he or she will be awarded points equal to 1/10th (10%) of their average.

The position points are awarded to the top 12 in all categories (except in optional scratch and handicap sections).

Points Distribution

1 st – 30 pts	4 th – 17 pts	7 th – 8 pts	10 th – 3pts
2 nd – 25 pts	5 th – 14 pts	8 th – 6 pts	11 th – 2pts
3 rd – 20 pts	6 th – 11 pts	9 th – 4 pts	12 th – 1pt

Joining the Squad

In order to join the squad, a bowler must purchase the relevant Gold Card membership, ie. To join the FIC Squad the bowler must purchase the Adult Gold Card membership or to join the Senior Squad the bowler must purchase the Senior Gold Card membership. By joining the squad you will be eligible for both national and international tournament selection.

Making the Team on FIC and Senior Squads

In order to make the team for a particular competition (except for World Cup, and European Champions' Cup) the criteria for ranking the squad members is as follows:

There are two categories that need to be taken into consideration – Ranking Points and Ranking Average.

In both sections, points are awarded to the squad members according to their ranking points and ranking average. To qualify for squad points a bowler must have bowled at least 56 games (7 events) out of the last 9 events played. The ranking points and average are calculated for the best 7 events played out of the last 9. The points are awarded using a descending linear scale based on the number of bowlers in the squad, for example 12 man squad with points awarded from 12 to 1, bowler in 1st position will receive 12 points, bowler in 2nd position will receive 11 points and so on in each ranking points and average.

The ranking within the squad is determined then by the sum of the ranking position points and average points. If there is a tie in a cut position, the Tie-Breaker Criteria applies.

Under 19s Junior Handicap Section

The U19 Junior handicap section is open to all current NITBF members who are under 19 years old at 1st September in the year which the current season has started.

The handicaps will be calculated as 75% of 190. A handicap will be calculated for each bowler in each centre based on all their previous ranking event totals for that particular centre. Handicaps will be recalculated after each event.

Optional - Handicap Section

The handicap section is open to all male and female bowlers who are current members of the NITBF except for current members of the MALE FIC squad. The entry to the handicap section is an additional £5 and prizes will be awarded to the top 5 bowlers (depending on the number of entries into the section. Tournament Committee will have the last word regarding prizing position in each tournament). The handicap will be calculated based on the current centre average of the bowler in the previous 3 ranking events in that particular centre. The handicap for each bowler in each centre will remain fixed throughout the season and will be recalculated at the start of the following season. Handicap is calculated as 75% of 210 (maximum handicap of 60).

All eligible bowlers' handicaps are calculated from their last 3 ranking events in each centre. It may be necessary, in some cases, to count ranking events from previous seasons to fulfil this requirement. If the bowler has played less than 3 ranking events in a centre their handicap will be calculated from the ranking events that they have played in that centre, their handicap will be recalculated until they have played 3 ranking events in total in that centre. Handicap for these bowlers will then be fixed for the remainder of the season once they have played 3 ranking events in the particular centre. (Handicap for each bowler lies at the sole discretion of the council)

If a bowler has not participated in a ranking event previously their handicap will be calculated from the first 4 games of their first event in the centre and will be recalculated for the following event at the same centre at the end of 8 games. This process will be repeated for all centres that the bowler has never played a ranking event previously. The bowler's handicaps for each centre will then be fixed for the remainder of the season. (Handicap for each bowler lies at the sole discretion of the council)

Optional - Scratch Section

The scratch section is open to all male and female bowlers who are current members of the NITBF. The entry to the scratch section is an additional £5 and prizes will be awarded to the top 5 bowlers (depending on the number of entries into the section. Tournament Committee will have the last word regarding prizing position in each tournament).

Injury/Withdrawal Criterion

In case of an injury (of which a partial decision is made on site by the tournament committee and then validated at the following NITBF council meeting) or a bowler withdrawing during the course of the event, the following ruling is activated:

Ruling: Player shall receive points for their **average based on 8 games** with zero (0) scores added in for any games not played. The player is **not** entitled to gain any bonus ranking points (ie. 30 for 1st, 25 for 2nd, 20 for 3rd, 17, 14, 11, 8, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1 for 12th) for finishing in the Top 12 if their 8 game pinfall total places them within this.

Tie Breaker Criterion

If there is a tie in a cut position (i.e. tie in 4th place between 4th and 5th place team when a 4 bowler team is needed), the tie-breaker criteria is to look at the number of wins in the current tour for each bowler, the one with most wins gains the tie-breaker. If there is a tie in this category then second places are used, then third places, 4th places, etc. until a clear winner is determined. (This tie-breaker criterion applies to all team selections except the World Cup Qualifier).

Tournament Committees

A tournament committee will be in place at each ranking event throughout the season. The tournament committee will be formed by at least one member of the FIC committee and a maximum of 3 members. When present at an event the President and Treasurer will form the tournament committee. The tournament committee will be responsible for enforcing the rules of the ranking tour at each event. The tournament committee will be also responsible for the following: Event registration, lane assignment, lane rotations, scores, make decisions on injuries and any dispute or eventuality occurring during the event.

EXCEPTION EVENTS

The World Cup Qualifier

The Qubica/AMF World Cup is a yearly event open to all FIQ federation members. Each federation can enter one male and one female bowler for the event. Each federation establishes its own selection criteria.

Qualifier format and criteria will be agreed by the FIC committee each season. The Qualifier will be played as per the Rules & Regulations outlined for the National Ranking Tour. Details of the format and additional rulings in place for each season will be outlined and distributed separately to this document, this will be advertised by the Federation and made available at www.nitbf.org.uk

European Champions' Cup

This tournament requires 1 Male and 1 Female bowler. The bowlers entitled to go to this event are the winners of the male and female section of the rankings. Note that to go to this event the selected players don't need to belong to the previous year's squad.

Additional Information: If you would like to raise an issue for the council to discuss send an e-mail to contact@nitbf.org.uk. This document along with results can be found on the NITBF website: <http://www.nitbf.org.uk>

**Rules & Regulations correct and updated as of September 2008*