



# **NITOWA Constitution & Rules 2022**

## Contents

1. MEMBERSHIP .....	4
2. OBJECTIVES .....	4
3. HEADQUARTERS .....	4
4. MANAGEMENT .....	4
5. FINANCES .....	4
6. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING .....	5
7. VACANCIES .....	5
8. Equal Opportunities Policy for NITOWA .....	5
9. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY.....	6
10. DOPING .....	6
11. DISPUTES OUTSIDE THE ORGANISATION .....	6
12. COMPETITIONS.....	7
13. MEMBERS.....	7
14. RULES .....	7
15. SUBSCRIPTIONS .....	7
16. JUDGES.....	7
17. DISCIPLINE .....	8
18. MEETINGS .....	8
19. CHAMPIONSHIPS .....	8
20. TEAMS AND SUBSTITUTIONS .....	9
21. CONDITIONS FOR USING A SUBSTITUTE .....	9
22. DETERMINATION OF RANKING IN QUALIFYING COMPETITION .....	9
23. ELIGIBLE PULLERS .....	10
24. DOPE TESTING .....	10
25. RULE CHANGES.....	10
APPENDIX 'A' .....	10
STANDING ORDERS FOR MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION .....	10
1. BUSINESS BEFORE THE MEETING .....	10
2. SELECTION OF SPEAKERS.....	10
3. CHAIRMAN'S RULING .....	11
4. MISCONDUCT .....	11
5. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER.....	11
6. SCRUTINEERS.....	11
7. VOTING PROCEDURE.....	11
8. CASTING VOTE .....	11

APPENDIX 'B' .....	11
RULES FOR PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATION .....	11
Appendix 'C' .....	12
APPEALS .....	12

## 1. MEMBERSHIP

The name of the Association shall be “Northern Ireland Tug of War Association” (N.I.T.O.W.A.) The Association shall consist of bona fide Tug of War Clubs, who shall pay an annual subscription as laid down by the General Committee.

Honorary membership of the Tug of War Association (with no voting rights) shall be allowed to individual members who reside outside Northern Ireland.

All clubs applying for membership of the Northern Ireland Tug of War Association may be granted Associate membership, with a reduced annual fee of £30.00, such membership to be reviewed by the Executive Committee after a period of two years with a view to granting full membership thereafter with full voting rights, on the understanding that bona fide interest is shown during the period of Associate Membership in the pursuance of the sport of Tug of War in Northern Ireland, such interest to consist of participation in a minimum of three Northern Ireland Championship fixtures at either indoor or outdoor level.

Any Senior Affiliated Club that does not participate in NITOWA Championships in any consecutive two-year period will no longer be considered a Senior Club, not unless they show a genuine interest during this time in competing at local club competitions but due to a shortage of pullers or other circumstances, are unable to participate in championships. They lose their voting status and will be known as a Junior Club paying junior club fees until they compete in a Championship again, they will pay the additional £70 and receive full voting status immediately. This proposal is not to penalise Clubs, it's to have teams pulling in the NITOWA Championships to help our Sport

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Association shall be to promote and encourage the holding of Tug of War tournaments and competitions in conformity with the principles as laid down by the N.I.T.O.W.A. and TWIF.

## 3. HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters and registered office of the Association shall be the address of the Chairman in office at the time.

## 4. MANAGEMENT

The management of the Association's affairs shall be vested in the executive Committee which shall consist of - Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. All officers shall be elected or re-elected annually at the A.G.M. of the Association and shall have the power to co-opt members if required.

The A.G.M. shall also elect annually, an International Representative, International Delegate, an Anti-Doping Officer, a Youth Development Officer and two Press officers. A delegate from each affiliated club may attend general committee meetings. A delegate from each affiliated club must be present at all Association meetings.

At all meetings where any member of the Ex Co may be involved in any discussion where there is any conflict of interest, they shall declare that interest at the start and may be excused by permission of the general meeting

## 5. FINANCES

The financial year shall be from 1st November until 31st October. The finances of the Association shall be vested in the General Committee and the treasurer shall publish an annual balance sheet.

Association signatories to cheques shall be from the Association Chairman and Treasurer. All monies shall be deposited in a bank of the Treasurer's choice in the name of the Northern Ireland Tug of War Association.

## 6. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting shall be held in the month of November. All affiliated clubs shall be given one months' notice in writing, of the date and venue of such Annual General Meeting. All meetings of the Association shall be conducted in accordance with the constitution.

All resolutions for discussion at the AGM must be forwarded in writing to the Secretary at least 14 days prior to the date of the AGM and on discussion.

All resolutions passed by an annual general meeting, shall be implemented with immediate effect.

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association may be called by the Executive Committee, if considered necessary for the good of the Association.

The NITOWA can host meetings via Zoom or a similar online network if there are circumstances which do not allow the members of the association to meet at a public meeting.

## 7. VACANCIES

Any vacancies occurring in the offices of the Association between AGM's shall be filled by vote of the General Committee at the next available committee meeting.

## 8. Equal Opportunities Policy for NITOWA

- The NITOWA are committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members of whatever level of authority to abide and adhere to this general principle and the requirements of the Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality.

- All members are expected to abide by the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1986 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Specifically, Discrimination is prohibited by:

- o Treating any individual on grounds of gender, colour, marital status, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability less favourably than others.
- o Expecting an individual solely on the grounds stated above to comply with requirement(s) for any reason whatsoever related to their membership, which are different from the requirements of others.
- o Imposing on an individual requirement which are in effect more onerous on that individual than they are on others. For example, this would include applying a condition which makes it more difficult for members of a particular race or sex to comply than others not of that race or sex.
- o Victimisation of an individual
- o Harassment of an individual, by virtue of discrimination
- o Any other act or omission of an act, which has as its effect the disadvantaging of a member against another, or others, purely on the above grounds. Thus, in all the Club's recruitment, selection, promotion and training processes, as well as disciplinary matters, it is essential that merit, experience, skills and temperament is considered as objectively as possible.

- The NITOWA commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims of discrimination on the above grounds and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice cease forthwith, restitution of damage or loss (if

necessary) and to the investigation of any member accused of discrimination.

- Any member found guilty of discrimination will be instructed to desist forthwith. Since discrimination in its many forms is against the NITOWA policy, any members offending will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

- The NITOWA commits itself to the disabled person whenever possible and will treat such members, in aspects of their recruitment and membership, in exactly the same manner as other members. The difficulties of their disablement permitting assistance will be given, wherever possible to ensure that disabled members are helped in gaining access. Appropriate training will be made to such members who request it.

## 9. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Northern Ireland Tug of War Association is committed to a practice which protects children and vulnerable adults from harm. Members, coaches and officials of the Association must accept and recognise their responsibilities about safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and should endeavour to carry these out by; -

- a. having an awareness of the issues which cause children harm
- b. adopting child protection guidelines for coaches and officials
- c. providing information about child protection and good practice to children, parents, coaches and officials.
- d. Sharing information about concerns with children, parents and others who need to know
- e. Following carefully the procedures for the recruitment and selection of coaches and officials

- f. Being involved in training

- g. Keeping child protection under regular review

(Full details of the Code of Conduct for coaches and Officials can be read on our web page. For more information details are available in the handout entitled Code of Ethics, Good Practice for Children's Sport available from the Honorary Secretary or from Northern Ireland Sports Council)

## 10. DOPING

A doping policy is in place as per TWIF regulation and as set down in WADA guidelines.

As an Association we will comply with these regulations and also use the UK's antidoping rules which are aligned to the World Anti-Doping Code. A copy of these guidelines can be examined by reference to the Executive Committee or can be viewed on the NITOWA and TWIF websites.

## 11. DISPUTES OUTSIDE THE ORGANISATION

(1) Members and clubs shall agree to recognize CAS as an independent judicial authority and ensure that their members, officials, and individuals comply with the decisions passed by CAS.

(2) Recourse to ordinary courts of law in matters associated with transgressions against articles and clauses contained in the TWIF Constitution and Rules is prohibited.

(3) To ensure the foregoing, Members shall insert a clause in their statutes stipulating that their clubs and individuals are prohibited from taking a dispute to ordinary courts of law and are required to submit any disagreement to the jurisdiction of the Member of TWIF.

## 12. COMPETITIONS

All tournaments and competitions, not benefiting the Association, shall be subject to permission being granted by the N.I.T.O.W.A. and to a fee as shall be determined by the Association.

For both indoor and outdoor seasons all clubs must host an association pull to be eligible to compete at that years Northern Ireland Championships. The host club of an Association Pull must pay a fee of £50 to the Associations Treasurer no later than the day of the competition.

All Saturday competitions shall commence not later than 7.00pm, with the weigh-in not later than 6.00pm. Competitions organised to include other T.W.I.F./NITOWA member clubs, shall at all times have the approval of the N.I.T.O.W.A.

All club competitions approved by the Association shall go ahead as listed. Any alterations to time, weights or venue shall be notified in writing to the Secretary at least two weeks before the date listed.

At weigh-ins, clubs shall be allowed to have a maximum of two attempts and the weigh-in is to be completed 15 minutes prior to the start of the competition.

## 13. MEMBERS

All members of the Association shall abide by the rules of Tug of War as laid down by the N.I.T.O.W.A. Competitions will be held under TWIF rules.

## 14. RULES

Any matter not provided for in the rules shall be referred to the Executive Committee, whose decision shall be final.

## 15. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members' subscriptions are due on the 1st January each year. Clubs must affiliate and have paid their affiliation fee by the 1st April to compete in that year's outdoor Championship.

Clubs must affiliate and have paid their affiliation fee by the 1st October to compete in that year's indoor Championships.

Any Club wishing to join our Association after the closing date of registrations, whether Indoor or Outdoor, should be allowed to compete at NITOWA Club Competitions but cannot participate in the Championships of that season. Their Club can pay the registration fee for that season prior to participation at their first competition. This is to encourage any new or existing clubs to participate at any stage of the season in our sport and will not be prevented from doing so, due to failure to registering before the recognised date.

The names and addresses of all club members must be received in writing or via email/electronic means by the Honorary Secretary not later than two weeks prior to the first Championship.

The names of all club members will be scrutinised by the secretary and where any discrepancies are found, the clubs concerned, and the individual will be contacted and the matter resolved prior to a list of team members being recorded against each club. All members' names and addresses shall be entered on registration forms, which will be made available when requested and may be audited by SPORT NI at any time.

## 16. JUDGES

All qualified Tug of War judges shall register annually by payment of the individual fee of £5 and shall be members of the N.I.T.O.W.A. A membership card shall be issued to all registered judges.

Upgrading or recommendation to become a TWIF judge will be assessed by the NITOWA

Executive and may only be recommended on successful completion of a period of two years at each grade and being recommended as a suitable candidate as a prospective TWIF judge.

It is the responsibility of the judge in charge of competitions to submit a detailed result sheet to the Honorary Secretary within seven days.

## 17. DISCIPLINE

When competitors or supporters interfere with, physically or verbally abuse officials, members or any other person, both he/she and the clubs are liable to be penalised. All complaints must be sent in writing to the Honorary Secretary. All matters of discipline shall be placed before the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee, who shall generally be the Vice-Chairman of the Association and shall be conducted in accordance with Appendix B of the constitution.

Should a disciplinary hearing be necessary, the Disciplinary Committee shall be, the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee normally the Vice Chairman) (who shall take the chair and have no Voting Rights), the Association Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. If a member of the Disciplinary Committee is the subject of a disciplinary enquiry, or witness to such enquiry, that person shall, for the time being, be replaced by another member of the General Committee.

All matters of discipline shall be published in the minutes of General Committee meetings.

## 18. MEETINGS

A special meeting of the N.I.T.O.W.A. may be called at any time by the executive committee or by not less than 75% of the total affiliated clubs. Each club making such a request must do so individually in writing to the Chairman.

All affiliated clubs attending meetings shall be entitled to two votes per club and in the event of equal voting, the Chairman shall have the casting vote. An individual member shall not have a vote.

Where clubs, who intend to represent the Association at UK, European or World events, fail to attend meetings called for the conduct of business of the Association, no allowances shall be paid by the Association in respect of that team during the next upcoming event or for the event they will represent at.

## 19. CHAMPIONSHIPS

Only pulling members of a club who have been registered members of that club for at least two weeks before the first Northern Ireland Championship of that season shall be eligible to pull for that club in a Championship Event. Any team winning first place in more than one championship weight can select at which of the weights they wish to represent Northern Ireland.

Clubs entering the Championships, or any other local competition may enter a second team.

Any team not able to make the weight with eight pullers (consisting of 8 male or 7 male & 1 female) may if desired enter a competition, including Championships, with seven pullers, provided that the seven pullers do not exceed the maximum weight limits.

Only teams of eight pullers (consisting of 8 male or 7 male & 1 female) winning Northern Ireland Championships at relevant weight classes shall be invited to represent the country for one year. If for any reason teams are unable to compete, the Executive Committee shall invite the appropriate team to take their place.

The Executive Committee of the N.I.T.O.W.A. shall be empowered, if they so wish, to select all representative teams for Regional and World Championships from and including 640Kgs upwards.

The following championship weights are recognised by the N.I.T.O.W.A. – 560kilo, 600



Kilo, 640Kilo, 660Kilo, 680Kilo and CW. Ladies Championship weights 480Kilo and 520Kilo (indoor) 520kgs and 560kgs (outdoor) plus a youth Championship at 420kgs (team of six). Clubs hosting a Championship shall provide suitable ground for the Competition to be held on (Measurements should be a minimum of 30m x 50). If any team withdraws from a Championship before it starts, there should be a new draw to avoid upsetting rest periods. It is the responsibility of the NITOWA to pay for the venue for all Championship pulls, all gate money from Championship pulls will also be given to the association. Cost of entry to championship pulls to be £5.

## 20. TEAMS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Teams shall consist of eight pulling members at the start of the competition or where any team is unable to field a team of eight; seven pullers may be used, provided that their combined weight does not exceed the maximum weight limit for the competition. The contest will have been deemed to have commenced, for particular teams, when they are in a position to pull under the direct supervision of the judge.

## 21. CONDITIONS FOR USING A SUBSTITUTE

The substitute may replace any one puller for the duration of the competition. After the substitution has taken place; no other changes may occur. Substitution may be used for tactical reasons or due to injury.

Substitution may only take place after the team has weighed in and has finished the first end of the first match it pulls in. The replaced puller shall not participate in any subsequent matches of that weight class. The substitute must be a registered puller of the specific club for which he/she acts as a substitute.

### SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURES

Both the puller to be replaced and the substitute, must report in full pulling outfit (shirt, shorts, stockings and footwear) to the Chief Judge, who may designate an official to deal with the substitutes. Weights from the official weigh in will be used to determine the pullers weights.

The substitute puller must be of equal weight or less than the puller he/she replaces. The total weight of the team cannot be increased by the weight of the substitute, even if the team originally weighed less than the maximum weight for that weight class. If a puller is to be subbed on for any puller receiving a weight advantage, there must a weight difference greater than that of the advantage the puller on the rope provided the team. For example, if a senior puller is subbed on for a novice, the senior puller must be a minimum of 5kg lighter.

Directly after the change, the Chief Judge or designated official shall cancel the stamp or marking of the replaced puller and indicate a similar marking on the substitute, with an indelible marker. The Chief Judge or the designated official shall note the substitution on the appropriate weight certificate, by adding and deleting the accreditation numbers of the pullers involved with the changes.

A second substitution will not be permitted. Should a second injury occur, the team is allowed to continue with seven pullers. A team is not allowed to continue a competition with less than seven pullers.

A maximum of six (6) minutes may be claimed between matches, beginning when the team leaves the arena and ending when a team is in the marshalling area ready to re-enter the Arena.

## 22. DETERMINATION OF RANKING IN QUALIFYING COMPETITION

In the event that after the qualifying competition, teams are in contention to enter into the

semi-finals, the following rules will apply to determine which team(s) will qualify for the semi-finals. These rules will also apply to rank teams with equal points in qualifying competition; -

1. Result of matches

The team(s) with the best results in the matches between the teams concerned during the qualifying rounds will be first to qualify for participation in the semi-finals.

2. Matches Won

In case the results between the teams do not break the tie, the team with the most matches won will go to the semi-finals.

3. Cautions

In case the first two options do not break the tie the teams(s) with the least cautions in the qualifying rounds will be the first to qualify for participation in the semi-finals. (A team being disqualified in the qualifying rounds will be considered to have accumulated 3 cautions during the match)

4. Team Weight

In case the first three options do not break the tie, the lightest team(s) will be first to qualify for participation in the semi-final. For this criterion the certified weight on the weighing sheet will be used.

5. Toss or draw

In case all of the above criteria have not broken the tie, the qualification for participation in the semi-finals will be decided by a coin toss or a draw.

## 23. ELIGIBLE PULLERS

At all club competitions, except Association pulls where there must be at least six club members, a team may be made up of any seven or eight affiliated pullers.

A novice puller will receive a 5kg weight advantage, a novice is deemed as anyone who has 2 years' experience or under within our sport. A female puller will receive a 10kg weight advantage.

## 24. DOPE TESTING

Any competitor must, if requested by an official of the Governing body, submit to a doping control test. Failure to do so shall be taken as if a positive test result had been obtained and shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

## 25. RULE CHANGES

None of the foregoing rules shall be revoked or added to except by a two thirds majority vote of the members present at the A.G.M. or specially convened meeting.

## APPENDIX 'A'

### STANDING ORDERS FOR MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION

#### 1. BUSINESS BEFORE THE MEETING

The meeting will proceed in accordance with the agenda before it. The motions to be debated shall be received by the Honorary Secretary in accordance with any instructions that may have been issued.

#### 2. SELECTION OF SPEAKERS

Every member shall stand when speaking and shall address the Chairman as Mr Chairman. When more than one member rises to speak, the first to rise shall be given precedence, the decision resting with the Chairman. The member who rose immediately after the first shall have the right to speak at the close of such member's address, again the decision resting with the Chairman.

### 3. CHAIRMAN'S RULING

If the Chairman rises to call a member to order, or for any other purpose connected with the proceedings, the member speaking shall thereupon resume their seat and no other member shall rise until the chair be resumed.

The ruling of the Chairman on any question under standing orders, or on points of order, shall be final unless challenged by not less than 4 members and unless the majority of the delegates present vote to the contrary.

### 4. MISCONDUCT

If any member interrupts another whilst addressing the meeting or uses abusive or profane language, or causes any disturbance and refuses to obey the Chairman when called to order, he/she shall be named by the Chairman. He/she shall thereupon be expelled from the meeting and shall not be allowed to enter again until such apology; satisfactory to the Chairman is given.

### 5. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER

In the event of any matter of urgency, the Chairman may accept a motion for suspension of Standing Orders. The member moving such suspension must clearly state the nature of urgency of the business, the number of the standing orders affected and the length of time (not exceeding 20 minutes) he desires such suspension to last. At the option of the meeting, further extension may be allowed but no suspension shall take place except by a majority of the delegates present.

### 6. SCRUTINEERS

Scrutinisers may be appointed from delegates attending, to assist the Chairman. A scrutineer cannot be a candidate for office but may vote.

Their duties are; - To count numbers on "card votes" and inform the Chairman and to collect and count votes on ballot papers and inform the Chairman.

Ballot papers may not be destroyed except with the consent of the meeting. Voting cards will be surrendered by delegates to be destroyed in accordance with instruction of the Chairman.

### 7. VOTING PROCEDURE

The only person entitled to vote at an Annual General Meeting are; -

Two officially appointed representatives of a club of which they are registered members.

No proxy voting shall be permitted.

A transfer policy should operate within the Association, where a Puller can pull for another club, but vote for the Club that he/ she has been a member of and recognise as so as long as that club is in good standing with the Association, not unless he/ she indicates to the Executive Committee that they have changed Clubs permanently. The reason for this is, Pullers at times may have to switch Clubs as their own club may not be participating during that season or possibly pulling for a club who competes in our sport which is opposite (indoor or outdoor) to his/ her club

### 8. CASTING VOTE

In all cases where an equality of votes exists, the Chairman of the meeting shall use a casting vote.

## APPENDIX 'B'

### RULES FOR PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATION

1. The N.I.T.O.W.A. shall be notified within 14 days of any complaint. On receipt of a complaint against an individual or club, the Honorary Secretary or officer appointed by the Executive Committee to investigate the complaint shall: -

2. Send to the person or club concerned by recorded delivery letter, details of the

allegation to be investigated together with the date, time and place for the hearing of the investigation so that the person or club concerned, receives the notice at least 21 days before the date of the said hearing. A club or member shall be informed that it can make a written reply to the allegation prior to the full investigation taking place.

3. Summon such person or other officer of such club to attend the said hearing or to answer such allegation in writing before the date fixed for the hearing.

4. Inform such person or officer of his rights to be represented at the hearing by another member of his club or any other person who is a member of the association, particulars of the person attending to assist the club or official to be given to the investigating officer at least 14 days before the hearing. In this case both persons are entitled to attend the hearing and to inform the committee of any witnesses who it is felt can assist the investigation.

5. Require the attendance of such witnesses as the committee considers able to help the investigation with their evidence.

6. An investigation may proceed even if the person or club officer is not present at the hearing.

7. The findings and recommendations of a Disciplinary Committee shall be put in writing and the result of such proceedings shall be published in the minutes of the next meeting.

## Appendix 'C'

### APPEALS

A person or Club may appeal against a decision of the N.I.T.O.W.A. Disciplinary Committee to an Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman of Discipline and shall consist of five members, none of whom served at the Discipline Hearing. The Appeals Committee, on hearing an appeal against the findings of a Disciplinary Committee hearing, will not only have the power to uphold or dismiss the appeal, but also be able to reduce or increase any disciplinary action imposed by the Disciplinary Committee.

A person or club appearing before a Disciplinary Committee will be notified that the person or Club has the right to appeal. Notification of lodging an appeal must be received in writing by the Honorary Secretary within 14 days of being notified of the result of the Disciplinary Committee hearing. Anyone appearing before an Appeal Committee will be entitled to be represented by a friend.