



## What is grading and how does it affect selections?

Grading identifies the standard / level of an athlete according to set criteria.

It applies in Special Olympics Ireland to team sports: basketball, football and floorball. At club level, it is most often athletes of mixed ability that play together. Club teams compete in inter club events, leagues and regional advancement competitions. To advance to Special Olympics Ireland Games and European/World Games level of competition, athletes of similar ability are selected to form a composite team. Grading of a player is predominantly used for advancement purposes. Coaches also use it as a development tool for athletes.

Players are assigned a grade at four different levels against set criteria.

### The criteria are as follows:

**Basketball:** Fitness, Passing, Shooting, Ball Handling, Offence and Defence

**Football:** Positional Awareness, Ball Mastery, Passing and Fitness level

**Floorball:** A two-part process:

Games Based: Offence, Defence, Fitness level and Ball control

Skills Based: Passing & Receiving, Shooting for accuracy and Stick handling

For selection to a World Games prior to COVID 19, athletes were graded three times, once by their club coach, once at a regional event and again at Special Olympics Ireland Games to ensure that the grade assigned to a player was a true reflection of their playing ability.

As communicated, Ireland Summer Games will not take place in 2022. For this advancement cycle, athletes will be graded twice, once by their club coach and once at a regional grading day or regional event. The region will determine the second opportunity.

**Selections:** The grading process allows for selection of athletes to a team of similar ability. Where insufficient numbers in a particular grade exist, grades may be combined and offered by the Event/Games organisers. When combining grades, only grades adjacent to one another can be combined e.g. in football grade 1 cannot be combined with grade 3 or grade 4 (Ireland Games level only), similarly in basketball grade 3 cannot be combined with grade 1.

### Selection Process:

Athletes at Grade 4 will not be eligible for selection to European or World Games as this is deemed a development level in team sports.

1. First the grade is selected, (random draw). The levels are 1- 4 for Ireland Games level and 1-3 for World/European Games level.
2. Athletes then selected per position i.e.
  - a. Football (7aside) : goal keepers, defensive players, midfielders and forwards
  - b. Basketball: point guards, guards and forwards.
  - c. Floorball: goalkeepers and outfield players.
3. Positions are selected based on medal priority i.e. gold medal players in that grade and position are selected first.