



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

1. National Sports Governance Rules, 2026 – Polity

The Union Government has notified the National Sports Governance (National Sports Board) Rules, 2026 and the National Sports Governance (National Sports Tribunal) Rules, 2026 under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025. These rules represent a comprehensive overhaul of India's sports governance framework, transitioning from executive guidelines to legally enforceable statutory regulations. The notification marks a watershed moment in Indian sports administration, establishing institutional mechanisms for transparency, accountability, and athlete welfare at the national level.

1. National Sports Board Rules, 2026

Institutional Composition and Authority

1. The National Sports Board consists of a chairperson and two Members appointed by the Central Government from a panel of names recommended by the Search-cum-Selection Committee.
2. The Search-cum-Selection Committee ensures merit-based appointments free from political patronage and favoritism.
3. The NSB functions as the central authority for granting recognition to National Sports Bodies, determining which organizations receive official status and government funding.

Core Functions and Regulatory Powers

1. The NSB ensures compliance with governance standards across all recognized sports bodies, conducting audits and reviews of administrative practices.
2. Financial compliance oversight prevents misappropriation of government funds and ensures transparent financial management across sports federations.
3. Ethical standards enforcement creates accountability mechanisms preventing corruption, match-fixing, and misconduct within sports organizations.
4. Only recognized bodies are eligible to receive funds from the central government, creating incentive for compliance with NSB requirements.

2. National Sports Tribunal Rules, 2026

Specialized Adjudicatory Structure

1. The National Sports Tribunal consists of a chairperson who is a sitting or former Judge of the Supreme Court or the Chief Justice of a High Court.
2. Two tribunal members possess experience in sports, public administration, and law, bringing diverse expertise to dispute resolution.
3. The tribunal's composition ensures legal rigor and sports-specific understanding necessary for fair adjudication of complex sporting disputes.

Dispute Resolution Mechanism

1. The NST serves as a dedicated adjudicatory body for sports-related disputes in the country, including selection grievances, governance conflicts, and disciplinary matters.
2. The tribunal provides a dedicated portal for submission of disputes, notices, responses, documents, and clarifications, enabling seamless digital engagement.
3. Independent, speedy, effective, and cost-efficient disposal of disputes reduces reliance on civil courts and ensures expedited resolution during critical competitive seasons.
4. NST members have fixed five-year terms, ensuring stability and continuity in judicial proceedings.

5. The tribunal possesses powers of a civil court, enabling it to summon witnesses, examine evidence, and issue binding orders.
6. Appeals against tribunal decisions lie before the Supreme Court unless international rules require appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland.

3.National Sports Governance Act, 2025

Institutional Framework for Sports Bodies

1. The Act provides for establishing the National Olympic Committee, National Paralympic Committee, and National and Regional Sports Federations for each designated sport.
2. National sports bodies establish internal committees for governance, adopt codes of ethics governing conduct of all persons, and implement grievance redressal mechanisms for complaints.

Administrative Structure and Governance Standards

1. Every national sports body maintains a general body and an executive committee consisting of up to 15 members, including at least two outstanding sportspersons and four women.
2. This composition ensures athlete representation and gender diversity in decision-making processes.
3. Every national body has a President, Secretary General, and Treasurer with specific eligibility criteria and term limitations.
4. Appointment requirements mandate that persons must be sportspersons of outstanding merit or must have served as executive committee members for at least two full terms.
5. Term limitations restrict any person in these positions to serve no more than three consecutive terms, preventing concentration of power.

Electoral Oversight and Democratic Processes

1. The central government establishes a national panel of electoral officers to oversee elections of national sports bodies, ensuring transparent and fair electoral processes.
2. Every national sports body constitutes an electoral panel to oversee elections of its affiliates, cascading democratic governance throughout sports hierarchies.

4.Significance and Impact

Statutory Framework Replacement

1. The Act establishes a legally enforceable framework for regulating sports bodies, replacing earlier systems based on non-binding executive guidelines and sports codes lacking enforcement mechanisms.
2. Legal backing ensures compliance through court-enforceable orders rather than voluntary adherence.

Enhanced Transparency and Accountability

1. Transparent elections prevent selection of unqualified office-bearers through opaque processes.
2. Financial audits ensure proper accounting of funds and prevent embezzlement or misappropriation.
3. Ethical standards and accountability mechanisms reduce corruption and misconduct in sports federations.

Professional and Democratic Administration

1. Tenure limits and cooling-off periods prevent concentration of power in individual hands, reducing autocratic governance.
2. Inclusion of professionals, women, and sportspersons diversifies perspectives and improves decision-making quality.
3. Democratic processes ensure legitimate governance with broader stakeholder participation.

Athlete Representation and Welfare

1. The Act ensures greater participation of athletes in decision-making bodies, giving voice to those most affected by sports policies.
2. Improved grievance redressal mechanisms address athlete complaints regarding selection, governance, and disciplinary matters.
3. Athlete welfare provisions ensure protection from abuse, harassment, and exploitation in training environments.

Efficient Dispute Resolution

1. The National Sports Tribunal provides specialized forums for sports disputes, reducing delays inherent in civil court proceedings.
2. Faster resolution protects athlete careers by preventing prolonged uncertainties during crucial competitive seasons.
3. Cost-efficient disposal reduces legal expenses for athletes and federations, improving access to justice.

5.Way Forward

1. **Transparent Implementation and Stakeholder Engagement** – The NSB and NST should conduct comprehensive awareness programs explaining new rules to athletes, coaches, federation officials, and the public to ensure smooth implementation and legitimacy.
2. **Build Institutional Capacity** – Invest in training personnel for the NSB and NST, developing digital infrastructure for dispute resolution portals, and establishing efficient administrative systems.
3. **Regular Review and Refinement** – Establish periodic review cycles assessing effectiveness of rules, collecting stakeholder feedback, and amending provisions to address emerging challenges.

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