



REGULATORY

A New Era for Indian Sports: The National Sports Governance Act, 2025

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Introduction

In a landmark legislative move, the Government of India has enacted The National Sports Governance Act, 2025 ushering in a new era of reform for the nation's sports administration. The comprehensive Act is designed to provide for the development and promotion of sports, ensure welfare measures for sportspersons, and establish ethical practices based on the universal principles of good governance, ethics, and fair play. This legislation aligns the national sports governing bodies with the standards outlined in the Olympic and Paralympic Charters and international best practices. It also provides a unified, equitable, and effective system for the resolution of sports-related grievances and disputes. This Act marks a decisive shift toward a professional, transparent, and athlete-centric sports ecosystem.

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Key Objectives of the Act

The National Sports Governance Act, 2025, has several core objectives designed to overhaul the sports landscape in the country:

- **Promote Development and Welfare:** The Act's primary purpose is to provide for the overall development and promotion of sports and to ensure the welfare of all sportspersons.
- **Ensure Transparency and Accountability:** It aims to ensure that national sports governing bodies, which perform crucial public functions, operate with openness, fairness, and transparency.
- **Establish a Unified Framework:** The legislation seeks to create a unified system for the governance of sports, bringing national sports organizations under a single, cohesive framework.
- **Resolve Disputes Effectively:** The Act recognizes the need for accessible and effective measures for the resolution of grievances and disputes, leading to the creation of the National Sports Tribunal.
- **Align with Global Standards:** A key objective is to align India's sports governance with international standards and best practices, as outlined in the Olympic and Paralympic Charters.

Establishment of National Sports Bodies (Section 3)

The National Sports Governance Act, 2025, mandates a structured framework for the recognition and operation of national sports governing bodies. The Act stipulates the establishment of the following for each designated sport:

- The National Olympic Committee.
- The National Paralympic Committee.
- A National Sports Federation.
- A Regional Sports Federation.

A key provision is that there shall be only one National Olympic Committee and one National Paralympic Committee. The Act also requires that every National Sports Body must have international recognition and be affiliated with its respective international sports governing body. The power to grant, suspend, or cancel the recognition of these sports organizations rests with the newly created National Sports Board. This recognition is a critical aspect of the Act, as it makes an organization eligible for grants and financial assistance from the Central Government.

Governance and Compliance Requirements

The National Sports Governance Act, 2025, establishes a strict set of governance and compliance requirements for all recognized National Sports Bodies to ensure ethical and transparent operations. Key provisions include:

- **Executive Committee (Section 4):** The Executive Committee is limited to a maximum of fifteen members.
- **Mandatory Representation (Section 5):** The Executive Committee must include at least two sportspersons of outstanding merit and two members from the Athletes Committee. Additionally, it must have a minimum of four women members.
- **Leadership Roles:** The Act outlines specific roles and responsibilities for the President, Secretary General, and Treasurer.
- **Eligibility and Term Limits (Sections 7, 8, and 9):** To be eligible for an Executive Committee position, a person must be a citizen of India and at least twenty-five years old, with a maximum age limit of seventy years (with some exceptions for individuals up to seventy-five). A person can be President, Secretary General, or Treasurer for a maximum of three consecutive terms, followed by a mandatory cooling-off period of one term. The maximum term for the Executive Committee is four years.
- **Ad Hoc Administrative Bodies (Section 11):** In cases of loss of recognition or governance failure, the Board may appoint an ad hoc body of eminent administrators to restore compliance.

Key Policies and Committees

The Act, introduces several key policies and establishes new bodies to ensure ethical conduct, athlete welfare, and effective oversight. These measures are designed to promote integrity and fairness within the sports ecosystem:

- **Code of Ethics:** Every National Sports Body must formulate a Code of Ethics for its members, staff, coaches, and athletes to ensure minimum standards of conduct. The code must also include measures to protect vulnerable persons from abuse.
- **Safe Sports Policy:** The National Sports Board is mandated to frame a comprehensive Safe Sports Policy to protect women and minor athletes.
- **Grievance Redressal (Section 13):** Every National Sports Body must establish an internal grievance redressal mechanism to address complaints from athletes, coaches, and others in a fair and timely manner.

The National Sports Board and Tribunal

The Act establishes two key bodies to oversee sports governance in the country:

- **The National Sports Board:** This body is established as a corporate entity with the power to grant, suspend, or cancel the recognition of sports organizations. The Board can also conduct inquiries into matters affecting the welfare of sportspersons or the misuse of public funds. It also collaborates with international sports bodies to ensure compliance with global standards.
- **The National Sports Tribunal:** This independent body, consisting of a chairperson and two members, is constituted to provide a speedy and effective way to resolve sports related disputes. It is chaired by a person who is or has been a Supreme Court judge or a High Court Chief Justice. The Tribunal's jurisdiction is limited and does not extend to disputes within international events or those falling under the exclusive jurisdiction of other international bodies. Tribunal decisions are appealable to the **Supreme Court**, unless otherwise directed by international charters.

Conclusion

The enactment of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025, represents a far-reaching milestone for Indian sports. By providing a clear and comprehensive legal framework, the Act is poised to bring much-needed reform to the country's sports administration. Its emphasis on good governance, transparency, accountability, and the welfare of athletes is a significant step towards creating a more transparent and fair sports environment. The establishment of bodies like the National Sports Board and the National Sports Tribunal demonstrates a commitment to resolving disputes efficiently and promoting ethical practices. This legislation, grounded in both national needs and international standards, lays the foundation for a strong and vibrant sports culture in India, ultimately benefiting athletes and encouraging a stronger reputation for the country in the global sporting arena.

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