

National Soccer Hall of Fame Eligibility and Elections

On Thursday, September 24th, the National Soccer Hall of Fame Board of Directors adopted new qualifications and procedures for eligibility and election into the National Soccer Hall of Fame for all Players, Veterans, and Builders beginning with the Class of 2021. The new qualifications and procedures were created to:

- Ensure that those with the greatest contribution to soccer in the United States are receiving the honor which they deserve
- Guarantee an Induction class size of 2-4 new Individuals each year
- Implement a consistent process of both screening and voting for all three categories
- Provide consistency within the voting pool via new qualifications
- Rotate the Builder category annually to focus on Referees, Coaches, Contributors and All Builders depending on the year
- Include eligible individuals from the Extended National Teams (Men's & Women's Beach Soccer National Teams, Futsal National Team, and Men's & Women's Para 7-A-Side National Team)

Each year the NSHOF staff, in consultation with historians, will update, maintain, and create the Eligibility Lists to include all Players, Veterans, and Builders who are eligible for consideration of election and induction into the NSHOF. The Eligibility Lists that include ALL eligible individuals will be sent to the newly adapted and expanded Screening Committees (one committee per category). The Screening Committees are responsible for narrowing the eligibility lists to create the Final Ballots.

The Final Ballots will be sent to the separate Voting Committees which includes all members of the Screening Committees and additional individuals who are experts on soccer in the United States. In order to be considered for election, an eligible individual must be named on 50% of the Voting Committee ballots.

Typical Class Composition:

Player: 2

Veteran: 1

Builder: 1

- **Minimum Standard:** An individual must be named on at least 50% of the respective Voting Committee ballots to be eligible for election. After the 50% threshold, the two players, one veteran, and one builder who receive the highest voting percentages in any cycle will be elected to the NSHOF.
- If **EITHER** a Veteran **OR** a Builder does not receive at least 50% support, the Player that finishes in third place on the Player Final Ballot will be elected if this player receives support from 66.7% of the Player Voting Committee Ballots. For a third player to be elected, all 3 players must be named on 66.7% of the ballots.
- If **NEITHER** a Veteran **NOR** a Builder receives at least 50% support, the Player that finishes in third place on the Player Final Ballot will be elected if this player also receives the minimum standard (50%) from Player Voting Committee Ballots.

Screening Committees

The role of the Screening Committees is to create the final ballot for consideration for the Voting Committees and to put forth a list of Players, Veterans, and Builders that are most deserving of consideration to be elected to the National Soccer Hall of Fame. There will be separate Screening Committees for each of the Player, Veteran, and Builder categories. These Screening Committee members are recommended by the National Soccer Hall of Fame staff and are approved by the National Soccer Hall of Fame Board of Directors.

Screening Committee members will serve 3-year terms. At the conclusion of the 3-year term, the Screening Committee member may renew their term if mutually agreed to by the National Soccer Hall of Fame Board of Directors and the Screening Committee member. The initial Screening Committee members will be assigned 1, 2, or 3-year terms so that one-third of the Screening Committee will be up for renewal each year moving forward.

The Screening Committees will be comprised of soccer experts in the United States. The goal is to have equality, diversity, and inclusion on each Selection Committee. When that is not possible, diversity in experience will be considered. The target breakdown of the Selection Committees are as follows:

- National Soccer Hall of Fame Members (approximately 33%)
- Members of the media and soccer historians (approximately 33%)
- Coaches and Administrators with U.S. Soccer or U.S. first division soccer experience (approximately 33%)

The Screening Committees will have the following number of individuals on each committee:

Players: 18

Veterans: 9

Builders: 9

Voting Committees

The role of the Voting Committees is to vote on the final ballot to determine who will be elected to the National Soccer Hall of Fame in each cycle. There will be separate Voting Committees for each of the Player, Veteran, and Builder categories. These Voting Committee members are recommended by the National Soccer Hall of Fame staff and are approved by the National Soccer Hall of Fame Board of Directors and will include the Screening Committee members for each of the Player, Veteran, and Builder categories.

Voting Committee members will serve 3-year terms. At the conclusion of the 3-year term, the Voting Committee member may renew their term if mutually agreed on by the National Soccer Hall of Fame Board of Directors and the Voting Committee member. The initial Voting Committee members will be assigned 1, 2, or 3-year terms so that one-third of the Voting Committee will be up for renewal each year moving forward.

The Voting Committees will be comprised of soccer experts in the United States. The goal is to have equality, diversity, and inclusion on each Voting Committee. When this is not possible, diversity in experience will be considered. The target breakdown of the Voting Committees are as follows:

- National Soccer Hall of Fame Members (approximately 33%)
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The Voting Committees will have the following number of individuals on each committee:

Players: 48
Veterans: 24
Builders: 24

Public Information Policy

To provide additional transparency of the NSHOF Eligibility and Election process, the following information will be compiled and released by the NSHOF:

- Player, Veteran, and Builder Eligibility Lists
- Player Futures List (Players who are eligible to be elected to the National Soccer Hall of Fame but have not reached 3 years of retirement)
- Veteran and Builder Semifinal and Final ballots
- Player Final Ballots
- Voting percentages from all Final Ballots (Election Results)
- List of Screening and Voting Committee Members
- The NSHOF will not release individual ballots, however, Screening and Voting Committee Members may release their personal ballots publicly

Player Ballot

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the National Soccer Hall of Fame Player Ballot, an individual must have met No. 1 and either No. 2 or No. 3:

- 1) A player must have been retired[^] for at least three full calendar years, but for no more than 10 full calendar years, prior to the year of induction.
- 2) A player must have played at least 20 full international games for the United States Men's National Team, Women's National Team or Extended National Team (Paralympic, Beach & Futsal).
- 3) A player must have played at least five seasons in a United States first division professional league* and been a postseason league all-star at least once. (Best XI)

All players that meet the eligibility requirements above will be named to the Player Eligibility List and remain on this list until:

- 1) Election to the Hall of Fame
- 2) Sunset from the Player Eligibility List
 - a. A player will be removed (sunset) from the Player Eligibility List if they do not receive any Screening Committee support during the Preliminary Ballot (In order to remain on the Player Eligibility List, a player must appear on the ranked list of at least one member of the Screening Committee).

- b. Players who have been moved to the sunset list will move to the Veteran Eligibility List following the 10th year after their retirement.
- 3) Graduation to the Veteran Eligibility List after 10 years of retirement (A player is eligible for the Player Ballot for a maximum of 7 years)

Player Election Steps

- 1) Player Eligibility List released to Screening Committee
- 2) Preliminary Ballot: Player Screening Committee submits a ranked, 20-Player list to create 20-Player Final Ballot
- 3) Final Ballot: Player Voting Committee Votes for up to 10 Players
- 4) Election Results tallied & announced by Hall of Fame

Player Screening Committee

- 18 Members

Player Screening Process

- The Player Screening Committee selects the 20 Players from the Player Eligibility List to appear on the Final Ballot. Each Screening Committee member submits this Preliminary Ballot ranking 20 players ranked from 1 (most deserving) to 20 (least deserving) from the Player Eligibility List.
 - Ranking Points are assigned inverse to rank (a rank of 1 = 20 points, a rank of 20 = 1 point).
- The 20 players with the most Ranking Points (no ties) will appear on the Final Ballot (Finalists)

Player Screening Tiebreakers:

- 1) Most points from only Hall of Fame members on the Screening Committee
- 2) Fewest years of eligibility remaining
- 3) Majority Vote by Hall of Fame members on the Screening Committee.
- 4) Tiebreaking vote by Hall of Fame Board President

Player Voting Committee

- 48 Members
- Voting Committee includes all Player Screening Committee members (18)

Player Voting Process

- Player Voting Committee will vote for up to 10 players from the list of 20 Players on the Final Ballot
- Players named to the most ballots gain election as follows:
 - A Player must be named to at least 50% of the Voting Committee ballots to be eligible for election.
 - When 2 Players are to be elected because BOTH a Veteran and Builder are being elected: Top two vote earners elected
 - When 3 Players are eligible to be elected because either a Veteran OR a Builder are not being elected: Top three vote earners elected if all three players received at least 66.7% of the Voting Committee member votes.

- When 3 Players are eligible to be elected because neither a Veteran OR a Builder are being elected: Top three vote earners elected if all three players received at least 50% of the Voting Committee member votes.

Player Voting Tiebreakers:

- 1) Screening Committee ranking on Preliminary Ballot
- 2) Preliminary Ballot Points from only Hall of Fame members on Screening Committee
- 3) Fewest years of eligibility remaining
- 4) Majority Vote by Hall of Fame Members on the Voting Committee
- 5) Tiebreaking vote by Hall of Fame Board President

Player Sunset Rule

A player will be removed (sunset) from the Player Eligibility List if they do not receive any Screening Committee support during the Preliminary Ballot. In order to remain on the Player Eligibility List, a player must appear on the ranked list of at least one member of the Screening Committee. Players who are sunset regain Hall of Fame eligibility after 10 years of retirement on the Veteran Eligibility List.

Veteran Ballot

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the National Soccer Hall of Fame Veteran Ballot, an individual must have met No. 1 and either No. 2, No. 3 or No. 4:

- 1) A player must have been retired[^] for more than 10 full calendar years prior to the year of induction.
- 2) A player must have played at least 20 full international games for the United States Men's National Team, Women's National Team or Extended National Team (Paralympic, Beach & Futsal). This 20-game requirement is reduced to 10 games if the games were prior to 1990 and 5 games if the games were prior to 1960.
- 3) A player must have played at least five seasons in a United States first-division professional league* and been a postseason league all-star at least once. (Best XI)
- 4) A player must have played at least five seasons in the Major Indoor Soccer League between the end of the NASL in 1984 and the end of the MISL in 1992 and been selected as a first-team postseason all-star in at least one of those seasons.

All individuals that meet the eligibility requirements above will appear on the Veteran Eligibility List and remain on this list until:

- 1) Election to the Hall of Fame
- 2) Sunset from the Veteran Eligibility List

- a. An individual will be removed (sunset) from the Veteran Eligibility List if they do not appear on the 10-person Final Veteran Ballot in eight consecutive years.
- b. An individual can be reinstated to the Veteran Eligibility List when an application is made to the National Soccer Hall of Fame by anyone seeking to have a sunset candidate restored. The application will automatically be accepted and allow the clock to reset the sunset rule for another eight years.

Veteran Election Steps

- 1) Veteran Eligibility List released to Screening Committee
- 2) Preliminary Ballot: Veteran Screening Committee submits a ranked, 10-Veteran list to create a 25-Veteran Semifinal Ballot
- 3) Semifinal Ballot: Veteran Screening Committee Votes for 10 finalists to create the 10-Veteran Final Ballot
- 4) Final Ballot: Veteran Voting Committee votes for up to 5 veterans on the ballot
- 5) Election results tallied and announced by Hall of Fame.

Veteran Screening Committee

- 9 Members

Veteran Screening Process

The Veteran Screening Committee will select the 10 Veterans to appear on the Final Ballot through a two-step process:

- **Preliminary Ballot**
 - Each Veteran Screening Committee Member submits a Preliminary Ballot ranking 10 Veterans, ranked from 1 (most deserving) to 10 (least deserving) from the Veteran Eligibility List.
 - Ranking Points are assigned inverse to rank (a rank of 1 = 10 points, a rank of 10 = 1 point).
 - The 25 Veterans with the most Ranking Points (no ties) will be named to the Semifinal Ballot. If fewer than 25 Veterans receive Ranking Points, the Semifinal Ballot can include fewer than 25 Veterans
- **Semifinal Ballot**
 - Screening Committee votes for 10 finalists (no ties) from the Semifinal Ballot list.

Veteran Screening Tiebreakers

- 1) Preliminary Ballot Screening points
- 2) Preliminary Ballot Screening points from Hall of Fame members only on the Veteran Screening Committee
- 3) Majority vote by Hall of Fame members on the Veteran Screening Committee
- 4) Tiebreaker vote by Hall of Fame Board President

Veteran Voting Committee

- 24 Members
- Voting Committee includes all Screening Committee members (9)

Veteran Voting Process (Final Ballot)

- Veteran Voting Committee can vote for up to 5 Veterans from list of 10 finalists
- The Veteran named to the most ballots AND named to at least 50% of the ballots will be elected.

Veteran Voting Tiebreakers:

- 1) Veteran Screening Committee Semifinal Ballot Vote Total
- 2) Preliminary Ballot Points
- 3) Preliminary Ballot Points from Hall of Fame members on Veteran Screening Committee
- 4) Majority vote by Veteran Screening Committee
- 5) Majority vote of Hall of Fame members on Veteran Screening Committee
- 6) Tiebreaker vote by Hall of Fame Board President

Veteran Sunset Rule

Veterans who have been eligible in the Veterans election for 8 consecutive years without ever reaching the final ballot in any of those years are dropped from the eligibility list for subsequent elections. However, when application is made to the Hall of Fame by anyone seeking to have a dropped candidate restored to the list for an additional 8 years, that application will automatically be accepted.

Builder Ballot

Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible in this category, an individual must have made his/her mark in soccer in a non-playing capacity and had a major, sustained and positive impact on soccer in the United States on a national or first division professional level. Candidates must be at least 50 years of age and deemed to have contributed at the requisite level for a minimum of 10 years.

In the case of referees, a minimum of 7 years on the FIFA list is required. An exception may be made in the case of those who are deemed to have made exceptional contributions beyond their active refereeing career, or who have particularly distinguished themselves without attaining the required 7 years. Referees on the eligibility list as of 2007 were grandfathered in.

In the case of coaches, contributions must come as the head coach of a first division professional team, the head coach the full U.S. National Team, or head coach of a U.S. Youth National Team that competes in FIFA Youth World Cups or the Olympics. Qualified** international head coaching experience by a U.S. coach will also be considered toward the 10-year minimum.

Due to the broad general nature of the criteria, nominations for this category will be considered. Nominations are screened by the Hall of Fame staff and historians to determine the accuracy of the nomination materials. If a nominee is determined to be eligible based on the eligibility requirements, they will be immediately added to the Builder Eligibility List.

If a nominee has not met the eligibility requirements, the Hall of Fame may issue a waiver for the individual to be considered by the Builder Screening Committee.

Acceptable reasons for this waiver include:

- 1) Exceptional and unique contributions to the game on a national level

- 2) Special circumstances including but not limited to death, injury, illness, etc., that limit the length of contribution

A waiver will allow an individual to appear on a Builder Nominee List to be reviewed by the Screening Committee during the next election cycle based on the Builder's category (coach, referee or contributor). If a Builder Nominee is named to a Preliminary Ballot by any Screening Committee Member, the Nominee will be added permanently to the Builder Eligibility List. A nominee who is not added to the eligibility list must wait five years before being nominated again.

Builder Rotation (4-Year Cycle)

The NSHOF Builder category will be broken out into separate groups on an annual rotating basis. Depending on the year, only referees, coaches, or contributors will be considered for induction to the NSHOF. Every 4 years, ALL Builders will be considered for election to the NSHOF.

2021: All Builders

2022: Referee

2023: Coach

2024: Contributor

2025: All Builders

Builder Election Steps

- 1) Eligibility List and the Builder Nominee List, which includes eligible Builders depending on the year, released to the Builder Screening Committee
- 2) Preliminary Ballot: Screening Committee submits a ranked list to create Semifinal Ballot
- 3) Semifinal Ballot: Screening Committee votes to select Builders on Final Ballot
- 4) Final Ballot: Voting Committee votes on those listed on Final Ballot
- 5) Election results tallied and announced by Hall of Fame.

Builder Screening Committee:

- 9 Members, including at least 1 referee and 1 coach

Builder Screening Process

A: All Builder Category Year

The Builder Screening Committee selects the 10 Builders to appear on the Final Ballot in a two-step process.

1) Preliminary Ballot

- Each Builder Screening Committee member and the Hall of Fame Board President submit a Preliminary Ballot ranking 10 Builders, ranked from 1 (most deserving) to 10 (least deserving) from the Builder Eligibility List and the Builder Nomination List.
- Ranking Points are assigned inverse to rank (a rank of 1 = 10 points, a rank of 10 = 1 point).
- The 25 Builders with the most Ranking Points (no ties) will appear on the Builder Semifinal Ballot. If fewer than 25 Builders receive Ranking Points, the Builder Semifinal Ballot can include fewer than 25 Builders

2) Semifinal Ballot

- Builder Selection Committee votes for 10 finalists (no ties) from the Builder Semifinal Ballot list

B: Referee, Coach & Contributor Election Years:

The Builder Screening Committee selects the 4 Builders to appear on the Final Ballot in a two-step process.

1) Preliminary Ballot

- Each Builder Screening Committee member and the Hall of Fame Board President submit a Preliminary Ballot ranking 5 Builders, ranked from 1 (most deserving) to 5 (least deserving) from the Builder Eligibility List and the Builder Nomination List.
- In the years of a referee-only ballot, PRO Referees and the top USSF referee administrator also submit five ranked names for the Preliminary Ballot.
- Ranking Points are assigned inverse to rank (a rank of 1 = 5 points, a rank of 5 = 1 point).
- The 10 Builders with the most Ranking Points (no ties) will be named to the Builder Semifinal Ballot. If fewer than 10 Builders receive Ranking Points, the Builder Semifinal Ballot can include fewer than 10 Builders

2) Semifinal Ballot

- Builder Selection Committee votes for 4 finalists (no ties) from the Builder Semifinal Ballot list

Builder Screening Tiebreakers

- 1) Preliminary Ballot Screening points
- 2) Preliminary Ballot Screening points from Hall of Fame members on Builder Screening Committee
- 3) Majority vote by Hall of Fame members on Builder Screening Committee
- 4) Tiebreaker vote by Hall of Fame Board President

Builder Sunset Rule

None

Builder Voting Committee

- 24 Members
- Includes Screening Committee members (9)

Builder Voting Process (Final Ballot)

- Builder Voting Committee can vote for up to half of the 10 finalists (5 Builders from the list of 10 finalists, or 2 Builders from the list of 4 finalists)
- The Builder named to the most ballots AND named to at least 50 percent of the ballots will be elected.
- Tiebreakers
 - 1) Builder Screening Committee Semifinal Ballot Vote Total
 - 2) Preliminary Ballot Points
 - 3) Preliminary Ballot Points from Hall of Fame members on Builder Screening Committee
 - 4) Majority vote by Builder Screening Committee
 - 5) Majority vote by Hall of Fame members on Builder Screening Committee
 - 6) Tiebreaker vote by Hall of Fame Board President

Definitions:

* Since 1968, the United States' first-division professional leagues are: Major League Soccer (MLS), Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA), Women's Professional Soccer (WPS), National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) and the original North American Soccer League (NASL). Prior to 1968, the leagues recognized at this level are: American Soccer League, the North American Soccer Football League, the German-American Soccer League of New York, the National Soccer League of Chicago, the St. Louis Soccer League, the Keystone League of Western Pennsylvania, the Greater Los Angeles Soccer League, the San Francisco Soccer League and the National Association Foot Ball League.

^ Retirement year is defined as the year in which a player last appeared in a match. For United States National Team eligible players, a match can be with any professional or semiprofessional team in the United States or abroad, including official non-league events such as the U.S. Open Cup and the CONCACAF Champions League. If the player is not eligible to play for the United States, he or she is considered to be retired for purposes of this list on departing from American professional soccer, unless he or she continues playing professional soccer in another country at a level ruled by the Hall of Fame's historians to be equivalent to or better than the top American leagues.

** Qualified international coaching experience is defined as serving as a head coach for any country that has qualified for a World Cup or serving as a head coach in a first division league based in any country that has qualified for a World Cup.