

National Soccer Hall of Fame Eligibility and Elections

Changes for 2024

Adopted on August 17, 2023, by the National Soccer Hall of Fame Board of Directors.

- Certain restrictions apply to eligibility: Elected officials and full-time employees of the USSF or the National Soccer Hall of Fame are excluded while holding their respective positions, and individuals listed on the suspended rosters of FIFA, CONCACAF, the USSF, Pro Leagues, the IOC, the NCAA or the USOPC are also ineligible.
- In the case of the builder contributor category, individuals must have retired from their roles within the U.S. Soccer membership for a period of three calendar years or be deceased. Notably, exceptions to this requirement are extended to contributors who have been featured on the NSHOF Builder Semifinal ballot and/or the NSHOF Builder Final ballot since the year 2019. Additional exceptions can be made as determined by the NSHOF Board of Directors.

Eligibility Lists

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 Screening Committee that is responsible for narrowing the eligibility lists to create the Final Ballots.

The Final Ballots will be sent to the Voting Committees. Any individual elected must appear on the minimum standard of 50% of ballots submitted by the voting committee.

Typical Class Composition:

Players: 2 or 3

Veteran: 1 or 2

Builder: 1

- **Player Ballot:** The two Players named on the most ballots AND named on at least 50% of the ballots will be elected. The Player named on the third most ballots AND named on at least 75% of the ballots will be elected.
- **Veteran Ballot:** The Veteran named on the most ballots AND named on at least 50% of the ballots will be elected. The Veteran named on the second most ballots AND named on at least 75% of the ballots will be elected.
- **Builder Ballot:** The Builder named on the most ballots AND named on at least 50% of the ballots will be elected.

Screening Committees

The Screening Committees create the final ballot for consideration for the Voting Committees. There will be separate Screening Committees for each of the Player, Veteran, and Builder categories.

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

Players: 18

Veterans: 9

Builders: 9

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 teams. 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 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 is approximately one-third National Soccer Hall of Famers, one-third members of the media and soccer historians, and one-third coaches and administrators with U.S. Soccer or U.S. first division soccer experience.

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.

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

Players: 48

Veterans: 24

Builders: 24

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 teams. 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 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 is approximately one-third National Soccer Hall of Famers, one-third members of the media and soccer historians, and one-third coaches and administrators with U.S. Soccer or U.S. first division soccer experience.

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:
 - The two Players named on the most ballots AND named on at least 50% of the ballots will be elected each year.
 - The Player named on the third most ballots AND named on at least 75% of the ballots will be elected.

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 on the most ballots AND named on at least 50% of the ballots will be elected.
 - The Veteran named on the second most ballots AND named on at least 75% 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

To qualify for consideration in this category, an individual must have left a distinct mark on soccer in a non-playing capacity and demonstrated a substantial, enduring, and positive influence on the sport within the United States at the national or first-division professional level. Eligible candidates must be at least 50 years old and have demonstrated their significant contribution for a minimum of 10 years.

Certain restrictions apply to eligibility: Elected officials and full-time employees of the USSF or the National Soccer Hall of Fame are excluded while holding their respective positions, and individuals listed on the suspended rosters of FIFA, CONCACAF, the USSF, Pro Leagues, the IOC, the NCAA or the USOPC are also ineligible.

In the case of the contributor category, individuals must have retired from their roles within the U.S. Soccer membership for a period of three calendar years or be deceased. Notably, exceptions to this requirement are extended to contributors who have been featured on the NSHOF Builder Semifinal ballot and/or the NSHOF Builder Final ballot since the year 2019. Additional exceptions can be made as determined by the NSHOF Board of Directors.

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 submits 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 Screening 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 submits 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 and participate in Screening Committee discussion.
- 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 Screening 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 on the most ballots AND named on at least 50% 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.