



Senior NBL Player & Coach Eligibility 2021/22

The area of eligibility is ever-changing and requires constant evaluation as part of a landscape that is affected by a wide range of factors. Brexit has caused a number of changes to be considered and this will be felt over the coming season.

Below are the main factors to consider during the 2021/22 season.

Player eligibility

Through feedback from clubs and the current Government changes due to Brexit, we have assessed the current Player Eligibility within the NBL Regulations for the 2021/22 season.

Both time and consideration has been spent on the key factors when looking at these regulation changes. We are planning a phased approach to ensure we minimise the impact on teams and the league as a whole in 2021/22.

As such, we have phased in some Brexit changes from 1 January 2021, without altering the regulations as current EU citizens still have until 30 June 2021 to gain their settled or pre-settled status.

With the confirmation of Brexit, we have had no option but to adopt certain changes regarding eligibility and registration. The two points below will have an impact on clubs for 2021/22, but we have amended regulations and phased elements where possible to reduce their impact:

- COVID-19 – The ongoing effects on clubs and the financial impact this could have.
- Brexit – Further understanding the full impact on teams, clubs and the leagues.

We will assess the two points above during the 2021/22 season, gain a further understanding of the practical impact before making any further changes for 2022/23 and beyond.

Non-Nationals

The cost of registering a Non-National (formerly Non-EEA) player has remained constant from 2020/21, but the enforced re-categorisation of EU players means more players will now fall into the Non-National category.

Any Non-Nationals (formerly EEA or Non-EEA) requiring a visa will see an increase in registration cost for teams, especially those in Division One Men who employ Non-Nationals as professional players.

We are working on this area to see if the number of Non-National spots needs to be adjusted in future seasons.

Quotas for 2021/22

There are two levels of the game within the leagues than impact Non-National quotas:

- **Professional Leagues:** NBL 1
- **Amateur leagues:** WNBL 1 & 2, NBL 2 & 3

2020/21 rules allowed for a limited number of Non-EEA players to play during a fixture (two for NBL 1 and one for WNB 1 & 2, NBL 2 & 3, plus unlimited British/EU/EEA players)

However, given that there can now only be two categories for 2021/22 (National and Non-National) and after taking legal advice, the following will be applicable:

- Limited spots will remain for Non-Nationals requiring a VISA to be in the UK & NI.
- Unlimited spots are available for Non-Nationals that have EU settlement/pre-settled, Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) and those that are Irish Citizen.

Checks are required on these permits after the 1 July 2021.

The proposed player eligibility based on the above is as follows:

National Basketball League			MEN			
Licence Type	Nationality	Category	NBL Division 1		NBL Division 2 & 3	
			Play	Register	Play	Register
Senior Player	National	Senior Player (18+)	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
	Non-National	Type 1 - Visa or work permitted required	2	4	1	3
		Type 2 - Settled Status/Pre-settled Status/ILR	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited

National Basketball League			WOMEN			
Licence Type	Nationality	Category	WNBL Division 1		WNBL Division 2	
			Play	Register	Play	Register
Senior Player	National	Senior Player (18+)	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
	Non-National	Type 1 - Visa or work permitted required	1	3	1	3
		Type 2 - Settled Status/Pre-settled Status/ILR	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited

There are three main points to raise based on the tables and information above:

- We are unable at this point to discriminate by nationality and limit places for those that hold EU settlement and pre-settlement status and those that hold ILR. Also, checks on who holds pre-settlement and settlement criteria cannot begin until 1 July.
- We need to assess the impact of these quotas in 2021/22 and undertake further analysis, specifically on GB senior players playing in domestic leagues. This will allow for the creation of robust documentation to show how Non-National quotas affect the development opportunities for GB players.
- The biggest impact from this area will be felt in senior leagues for teams that currently rely on EU/EEA players. New players (without settlement/IRL) will need to pass through the visa process and at the amateur level, will need to meet the amateur rules applied by the Home Office.

Migrants in amateur leagues

The definitions of a migrant playing in amateur leagues (WNBL 1 & 2, NBL 2 & 3) under the visa that enables them to be in the UK has been updated as follows:

Government innovation rules and guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-introduction>

Important definitions and considerations are as follows:

“**Amateur**” means a person who engages in a sport or creative activity solely for personal enjoyment and who is not seeking to derive a living from the activity.

“**Professional Sports person**” means a person who is one or more of the following:

(a) currently providing services as a sports person, or is playing or coaching in any capacity, at a professional or semi-professional level of sport (whether paid or unpaid); or

(b) currently receiving payment, including payment in kind, for playing or coaching, and that payment covers all, or the majority of, their costs for travelling to, and living in, the UK, or has received such payment within the previous 4 years; or

(c) currently registered to a professional or semi-professional sports team or has been so registered within the previous four years (this includes all academy and development team age groups); or

(d) has represented their nation or national team within the previous two years, including all youth and development age groups from under-17s upwards; or

(e) has represented their state or regional team within the previous two years, including all youth and development age groups from under-17s upwards; or

(f) has an established international reputation in their chosen field of sport; or

(g) engages an agent or representative, with the aim of finding opportunities as a sports person, and/or developing a current or future career as a sports person, or has engaged such an agent in the last 12 months; or

(h) is providing services as a sportsperson or coach, unless they are doing so as an "Amateur" in a charity event; or

(i) is providing services as a sportsperson or coach, unless they are doing so as a student who is studying a course.

Should a player meet any of the criteria above as a "**Professional Sportsperson**", they will be unable to register for any league considered as amateur.