

NATIONAL LEAGUE – DIVISION 2 OR DIVISION 3?

Deciding which competition will be best for your club can be a difficult decision to reach. Below are the differences, which may be useful to know.

COMPETITION ENTRY FEES & CLUB INSURANCE

Division 2	Clubs entering teams in Division 2 must be Full Members of Volleyball Ireland and owing to the volume of activity taking place at the club, must pay an insurance premium (through VI) based on the number of active members. Team entry fees are higher too. Currently, to enter a team in Division 2, the club affiliation fee is €75 per year, and each team entered in Division 2 or higher costs €70 per team. Insurance fees start at €200 per year and increase incrementally based on the number of active members of the club. In addition, all Full Members must lodge a €300 bond, to guard against unpaid fines or invoices, which is refundable if the club leaves VI competitions.
Division 3	Clubs entering teams in Division 3 (and none higher) need only be Associated Clubs. Currently, to enter a team in Division 3, the club affiliation fee is €25 per year, and each team entered into Division 3 or below costs €25 per team. Insurance fees for associate clubs are €75 per year.

ARRANGING FIXTURES

Division 2	Clubs in Division 2 commit to playing matches on 14 set weekends within the calendar – matches are confirmed at a day and time over that weekend by the home team, and the away team is expected to honour that arrangement. A set process has to be followed to move a fixture, although player availability is not generally considered a sufficient reason to move a fixture. Financial penalties and/or deductions of league points can be issued to clubs failing to fulfil a fixture.
Division 3	Clubs have significant freedom to arrange matches with their opposing clubs for dates/times that are mutually convenient, subject to all being played by a cut-off date. Changes of fixtures are generally permitted, with sufficient notice.

SCORING & REPORTING OF RESULTS

Division 2	E-Scoring is mandatory in Division 2 and above. All clubs must have a laptop available to e-score a match and have a scorekeeper who is comfortable with the system to score each match. Fines are levied for non-compliance
Division 3	Matches are scored with paper and pen, on official scoresheets. Winning team reports the result by taking a photo of the finished scoresheet and sending that photo either by email or WhatsApp to the office for uploading.

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PLAYER LICENCES

Division 2	Players playing in Division 2 and above need to obtain a National League player licence, the cost of which is: Adult - €40 Student - €25 U18 - €20
Division 3	Players playing in Division 3 and below only need to obtain a Non-League player licence, the cost of which is: Adult / Student - €20 U18 - €10

Please note that if a player with a Non-League player licence is required to play up in a Division 2 team or above at their club, they will need to purchase a National League player licence, and the cost of the Non-League licence will then be refunded.

REFEREE APPOINTMENTS

Division 2	For matches in Division 2, both referees must be a minimum of Level 2. In order for a Level 1 referee to progress to Level 2, they must be assessed by a qualified assessor at a match.
Division 3	For matches in Division 3, the first referee must be a minimum of Level 1. From the 2026/27 season, two Level 1 referees will be required in Division 3 matches.

Please note that in both Divisions 2 and 3, the home team is responsible for appointing the two referees for each match.

PROMOTION & RELEGATION BETWEEN DIVISIONS 2 AND 3

There is currently no formal promotion and relegation mechanism between Division 2 and Division 3. The latter, in its current guise, was only introduced in the 2024-25 season, so the National League Management Committee, who oversee the National League, were keen to monitor the take up of places, and then the playing standard in Division 3, before considering how promotion and relegation might work. The only exception to this would be if a team dominated a Division 3 competition over a few seasons, in which case a discussion would ensue as to that team moving up a level. We are always open to teams joining the league in Division 2 and, if this is the case for you, we would encourage club reps to reach out to the NLMC to discuss their situation further.

For new teams entering the National League structure, the recommendation would always be to start at the lowest level and, ultimately, teams will find their level. Clubs just starting out may find it beneficial to start in Division 3, allow the growing pains to be addressed, and then consider joining Division 2 at a later date.

Correct as of 1st July 2025

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