TALENT SELECTION CRITERIA — GRASSROOTS · TALENT · ELITE

Talent Selection Criteria

One pathway, three levels — from club entry to the National Team

SMMAF
الاتحاد السعودي لفنون القتال المختلطة
SAUDI MIXED MARTIAL ARTS FEDERATION

01 The value chain — from grassroots to professional

Grassroots · Foundation | Talent · Progress | Elite · Endurance | National Team · Refine | Professional · PFL MENA

Grassroots 01 — Identify

Gate: Registration · medical clearance · guardian consent

Owner: Affiliated clubs & academies + SMMAF scouting

Talent placement 02 — Assess

Gate: ≥ 70/100 + Technical Committee review

Owner: Technical Sports Department — 2+ assessors

Talent programme 03 — Develop

Gate: Review every 3–6 months

Owner: Regional programmes · camps · development squads

Elite pool 04 — Select

Gate: ≥ 80/100 + medical · weight · anti-doping

Owner: TSD + selection committee

National Team 05 — Represent

Gate: Event ranking + eligibility + approved decision

Owner: Technical recommendation → delegated approval

PFL MENA 06 — Professional

Gate: Outside this policy; results return as evidence

Owner: Amateur cards → development → pro contract

02 Six scouting layers — where we observe the athlete

Sanctioned competition — Layers 1–3 | **Direct observation** — Layers 4–5 | **International** — Layer 6

Layer 1 — Regional qualifiers

Regional events feeding the national calendar; first official record and gateway to the Final.

Evidence: Result · opposition · rank

Feeds: Grassroots, Talent

Layer 2 — Kingdom Final

National championship for qualified athletes; results count toward national rankings.

Evidence: Title · consistency · tactics

Feeds: Talent, Elite, National Team

Layer 3 — Kingdom Open

Open-entry national tournament; reaches athletes outside the qualifiers and other combat sports.

Evidence: Open record · Gold Card

Feeds: Talent, ★ Gold Card

Layer 4 — Tryouts

Open tryouts and talent-identification camps; the published assessment window.

Evidence: 0–100 scorecard · benchmarks

Feeds: Talent, National Team

Layer 5 — Club visits

Technical Department visits to affiliated clubs; training observed, nominations reviewed.

Evidence: Nomination · attendance · learning

Feeds: Grassroots

Layer 6 — International

IMMAF, Asian Games and PFL MENA cards; international performance returns as evidence.

Evidence: International results · camps

Feeds: Elite, National Team

03 Progression logic and the governing gates

Grassroots	Talent	Elite	National Team
No cut score	**≥ 70 / 100**	**≥ 80 / 100**	**Event ranking**
Coach nomination + documented observations	5 weighted domains + Technical Committee review	5 weighted domains + eligibility & readiness	Within age / gender / weight + eligibility + approved decision
Review every 6–12 months	Review every 3–6 months	After each camp or cycle	Per event

★ Gold Card — documented exceptional entry for verified athletes from MMA, BJJ, wrestling, Muay Thai, kickboxing, karate and approved combat sports; reviewed by the TSD, Head Coach and selection committee. All gates apply; no automatic entitlement.

Gates no score can override

- SMMAF or affiliated-club registration
- Guardian consent for minors
- Anti-doping requirements (Elite)
- Conduct and policy compliance
- Medical clearance for training and competition
- Eligibility to represent Saudi Arabia
- Safe weight readiness

A score cannot override medical restrictions, event eligibility or safe weight readiness.

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04 The three criteria frameworks — what we measure at each level

Grassroots — Foundation

Entry to structured MMA through affiliated clubs, schools, academies and regional programmes. Objective: participation, fundamentals, confidence, safe development and retention.

Entry & eligibility

- Registration with SMMAF or an affiliated club
- Regular, age-appropriate structured training
- Willingness to learn — no prior mastery required
- Discipline, respect and coachability
- Medical clearance and guardian consent for minors

Assessment areas — observed and recorded, unweighted

Technical	Stance, movement, striking, takedowns, escapes
Physical	Coordination, mobility, balance, fitness for age
Participation	Attendance, engagement, continuity
Behaviour & potential	Respect, response to feedback, effort, learning rate

Youth scouting tool, ages 10–17 — Youth Selection Manual 2026

20	20	20	15	10	10

Wrestling **20** · Grappling **20** · Striking **20** · Conditioning **15** · Fight IQ **10** · Coachability **10** · Discipline **5**

Ages D 10–11 · C 12–13 · B 14–15 · A 16–17 · separate tool, not merged with Talent / Elite totals

No cut score — Retain in Grassroots or nominate for Talent assessment with a short coach report. Medals are not required for entry.

Review cycle: Every 6–12 months → continue · feedback · nomination

Talent — Progress

Athletes showing the technical, physical, behavioural and competitive potential to progress to national and international competition through regional programmes, central camps and development squads.

Entry & eligibility

- Active registration and consistent training in an approved programme
- Eligibility to represent Saudi Arabia for representative squads
- Medical clearance, safety compliance and guardian consent for minors
- Commitment to the pathway, federation assessments and sanctioned competition

Proposed dimensions & weights

35%	25%	20%	10%	10%

- **Technical ability** **35%** Striking · wrestling · takedown defence · ground control · submissions · cage work · transitions
- **Competition performance** **25%** Regional / national performance · opposition quality · consistency · tactical execution
- **Physical performance** **20%** Aerobic & anaerobic conditioning · strength, power, speed, agility, mobility, recovery
- **Coachability & behaviour** **10%** Attendance · punctuality · discipline · teamwork · respect
- **Development potential** **10%** Learning rate · adaptability · improvement · closing identified gaps

≥ 70 / 100 — For Talent placement, subject to documented Technical Committee review. The competition record alone must not determine selection.

Review cycle: Every 3–6 months → continue · individual plan · Elite assessment

Elite — Endurance

Athletes capable of representing Saudi Arabia at major international competitions and contributing to performance objectives. Elite status is a selection pool, not a guaranteed event place.

Entry & eligibility

- Nationality, age / division, registration and event requirements
- Medical clearance for training and competition
- Anti-doping requirements and conduct standards
- Attendance at mandatory National Team camps and assessments
- Adherence to training, medical and weight-management plans
- Availability for events and international-level readiness

Proposed dimensions & weights

30%	30%	20%	10%	10%

- **International / national competition** **30%** National Championship results · IMMAF & international performances · opposition quality · consistency
- **MMA technical performance** **30%** Advanced striking · wrestling · cage control · ground positions · submissions · defensive awareness
- **Physical performance** **20%** Strength, power, speed, endurance, recovery and current fitness evidence
- **Tactical readiness** **10%** Decision-making · game plan · adaptability · fight management · opponent-specific preparation
- **Professional conduct & commitment** **10%** Camp participation · punctuality and plan compliance · team conduct · responsible representation

≥ 80 / 100 — For Elite Squad status. A score cannot override medical restrictions, event eligibility or safe weight readiness.

Review cycle: After each camp or cycle → retain · revise readiness · medical hold

05 Assessment method — how the score is calculated and recorded

Scoring formula

Total = Σ (domain score × weight)

Each domain scored 0–100 · threshold: 70 Talent · 80 Elite

01 Publish first — Category criteria, assessment window and approved test protocols

02 Collect evidence — From the six layers, recording the evidence behind every score

03 Score — More than one assessor · conflicts disclosed · material differences reviewed

04 Decide — Place, retain or develop; missing evidence is logged as a gap, never invented

05 Record — Scorecard, evidence, recommendation, approval and written feedback to the athlete