Information on the England Hockey Player Pathway in Somerset

The Player Pathway, formerly the Single System was launched in October 2016.

The Player Pathway provides an environment that helps all junior players realise their potential, whether that means they are the best club player that they can be, seek a lifelong commitment to the game through coaching, or volunteering, or perhaps go on to represent England or Great Britain at junior or senior level.

The Player Pathway is made up of the following tiers:

**Development Centres (run by Somerset Hockey Association)**

Provide a local entry point to the player pathway for U12s - U16s.

These will run over three centres, Taunton, Street and Yeovil. Players must be nominated by their club or school to attend. Schools and clubs can nominate from 1st February each year, with registrations closing on the 31st March each year. The Development Centres will run from April to July.

There will be a combination of training and friendly competitions. At the end of the Development Centres, if a DC coach deems it appropriate, they will nominate a player to attend the Academy Centre trials, which will take place in September. If a player is not nominated, then they should return to play hockey in their school or club environment and keep working on their hockey for the next Development Centre opportunity. Each player will receive feedback from their coach.

**Academy Centres (run by Somerset Hockey Association)**

Delivered in 49 counties, provide a high quality talent programme for identified players in U14 – U17 age groups (U13 can be with the U14 if it is deemed appropriate).

In Somerset there will be just one centre for the 2017/2018 season in Taunton. This will run from October to April each year with a mixture of 8 training sessions and up to 4 competitions. This will run very similarly to the Performance Centres and the standard will be higher than the previous JAC’s, due to the lower numbers at the PC.

To get a place at the Academy Centre, players that are currently in the JAC 2017 will be invited to trial along with any from the Development Centres that have been invited. If a player is selected then they will be part of the Academy Centre and will train and play for the County for that season. The trial date is planned for the 17th September 2017 but further information will follow.

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Players that are at the Academy Centre will be continually assessed by the coaches and will speak with the Performance Centre coaches about any players that may be given an opportunity for a Performance Centre assessment, this will happen in November and February each year. This will also mean that players that are at a Performance Centre may move back down into the Academy Centre at these points, if it is deemed appropriate for their development. Movement between the two will be encouraged to maintain the quality at the PC and for the players to be in the best environment to develop.

At the end of the AC in April each year, the players that have been attending will be invited back for a trial along with any new players from the Development Centres.

If a player is at an Academy Centre, they will not need to return to a Development Centre session although they can if they feel this would benefit their hockey.

Information for those players currently U14 at JAC 2017 – to populate the Performance Centre younger age groups for September 2017. Players that are currently at JAC for U14 will be assessed at the JAC competitions in March/April and potentially invited to a trial day on 25th June 2017. On this trial day, players will be assessed to gain a place at the Performance Centre in September. If a player is not successful then they should return for an Academy Centre trial in September.

Performance Centres (run by the West Hockey Association)

Are based across the country providing frequent, high quality training with the best coaches for U15 and U17 players.

There are 17 England Hockey Performance Centres across the country providing frequent, high quality training with the best coaches and utilising best versus best competition to support the development of young players. This is a prestigious programme of training and competition which is providing an excellent development opportunity for the best 1600 junior players.

Whilst the main focus in Performance Centres is to provide an exceptional learning environment that meets each player’s needs, England Hockey also conduct some talent identification as we select the best players for junior international hockey.

Coaches from the U16 and U18 England Squads attend Performance Centre activity to observe players on the programme, and as part of this talent identification process the highest potential players in each age group and gender participate in the Futures Cup.

The purpose of a Performance Centre is to:

i) Provide frequent, high quality contact time for the ‘right’ players.

For clarity in this context:

- Frequent refers to 1-3 sessions per month
- High quality refers to appropriate coach to player ratios and exceptional coaches delivering to Golden Thread principles and against National Development Themes
- The right players refers to approximately 50% of the current cohort, allowing NAGS and AASE players to be fully integrated
ii) Provide competition exposure for development of all players through multiple competition opportunities within a training cycle (circa 4) using a competition structure that reinforces development and learning in 11 a-side games.

iii) Develop an oversupply of high calibre players for National Age Group Squads.

iv) Provide appropriate high quality education that prepares young players for performance environments

At the end of the Performance Centre cycle players may be selected to take part in the Futures Cup and will be notified in July. Players not selected for Futures Cup will be assessed by their coaches for re-entry into their Performance Centre for the start of the next cycle in September.

**Futures Cup (run by England Hockey)** – supports player development within a high-intensity and pressurised best v best tournament environment

**Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) (run by England Hockey)** - programme provides additional training and sport-related education for U17 players selected from Performance Centres

**National Age Group Squads (NAGS)** – are selected at U16 and U18 age groups for girls and boys. NAGS provides the first taste of international competition for our young players

**U21/Development Programme** – is an elite training environment for players who aim to transition into the senior programme and become world-leading players