

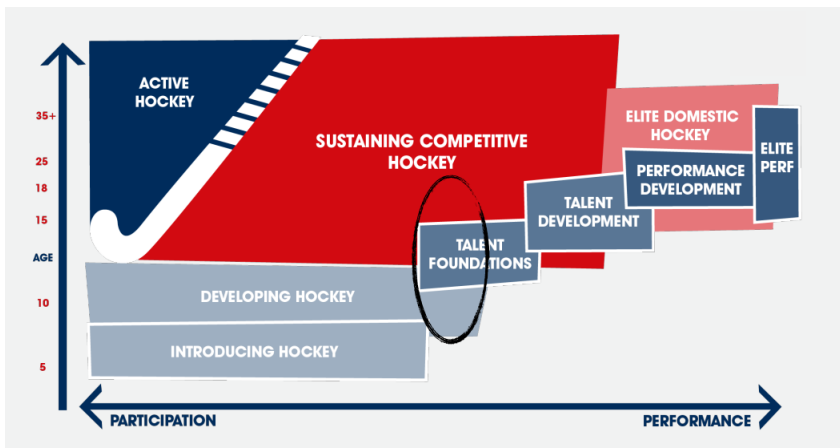
Junior County Hockey & Talent Academy Update (January 2024)

JUNIOR COUNTY HOCKEY

Junior County Hockey (JCH) has two key purposes: (1) representation via junior teams with emphasis on supporting players who are unable to access regular high-quality hockey elsewhere; (2) participation through providing the support for junior club and schools competition as well as supporting hockey development locally.

The black circle on the Player Development Model below illustrates where JCH is positioned and aims to provide fun, developmental and positive environments where players realise, they are good at hockey, love playing and benefit from representative opportunities from U13-U17. There is a significant opportunity for counties to support a wider group of young people by targeting players who are unable to access high-quality hockey elsewhere and contribute to developing a more diverse talent pool.

JCH caters for a wide range of abilities, ages and interests. For some players JCH will be one of several environments they engage in and a stepping stone to adult hockey. For others it will be the pinnacle of their representative hockey and hopefully a stepping stone to life-long enjoyment and involvement in the sport.



TALENT ACADEMIES

Talent Academies (TA) are exceptional **talent development** environments that deliver weekly all year-round provision to the highest potential u15 – u18-year-old players. There are 23 TAs (19 licensed host clubs and 4 overseen by EH) operating across the country for the 2023-24



cycle and we estimate that the current talent pool will yield approximately 600 players per gender requiring the intensity and commitment of a TA.

TAs provide multiple opportunities all year round for players to access approximately 100-130 hours of high-quality coaching, training and wider athlete education through a combination of dedicated sessions and integration with other activity delivered by the host. Every TA has a squad of players selected through a robust process based on the England Hockey Complete Player Profile.

5 Key Takeaways for Junior County Hockey & Talent Academy Administrators:

1. Players **who have been** selected into a TA environment are **not** expected to access JCH provision. The rationale for this is as follows;

- The individual needs and wants of players accessing TA provision will not be aligned to the remit and purpose of JCH.
 - Additionally, access to a further programme increases the risk of athlete over-loading.
 - JCH provides a different route to grow the breadth and depth of the talent pool where the programme can identify players who are unable to access high-quality hockey elsewhere.
2. County coaches alongside club and school coaches can nominate players to access a TA open assessment via the centralised process between the **1st November and 1st May**. (See [link](#) for further details).
 3. Players who have accessed a TA open assessment ([stage 1](#)) or further observation ([stage 2](#)) during a cycle can continue to access Junior County Hockey provision where appropriate. These individuals are not considered TA players.
 4. Once a player has been officially selected into a TA squad (typically at the end of September – stage 3) they are **not** expected to access county provision as per the above. TAs & Counties are encouraged to collaborate with one another regularly to support the transition of players.
 5. If a player is not invited into a TA, they do not automatically go back into the JCH environment. As the talent system is non-linear there are no pre-determined environments that players must return to. Decisions should be made around what is right for each athlete embracing the Right Athlete Right Environment ([RARE](#)) principles.

(If TA is not an appropriate environment for an individual, they should consider which other hockey environments at that time can provide appropriate support. For most junior players this will be finding the right blend and balance of school, club and or junior county hockey. It is important TAs and Counties work together to effectively support the transition of players into the most appropriate environments for their development.)

For further information on Talent Academies please visit [Talent Development | Talent Academy \(englandhockey.co.uk\)](#)