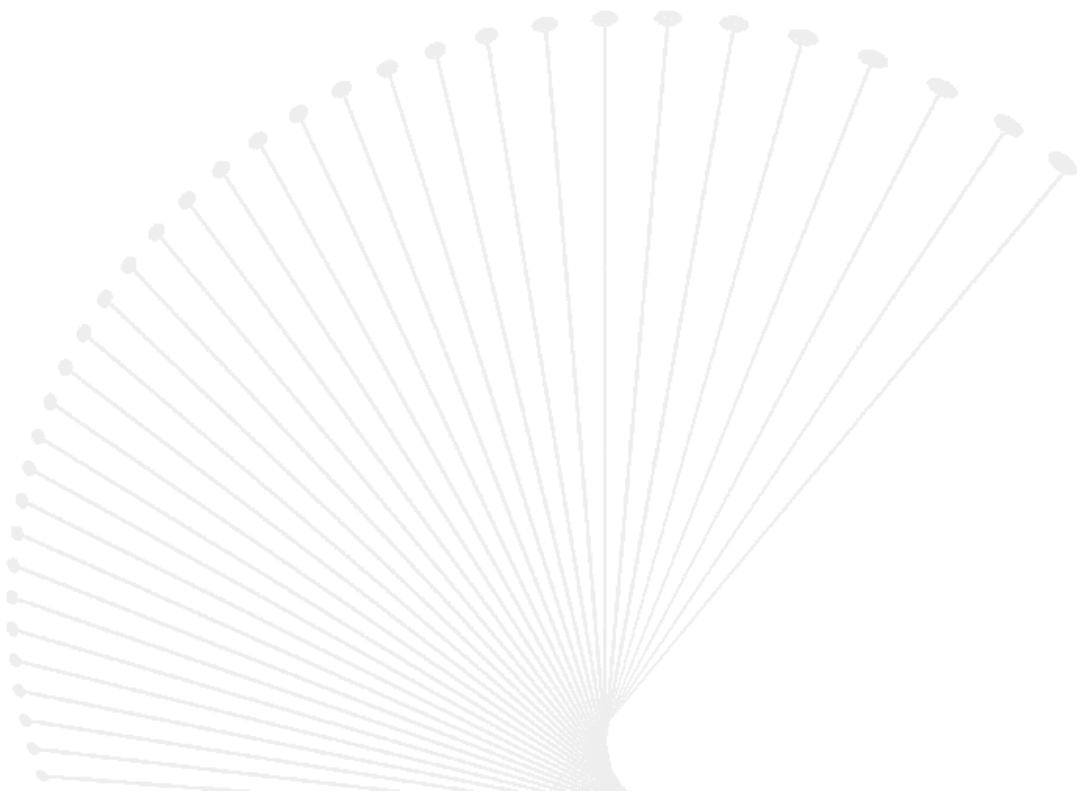




**ENGLAND
HOCKEY**

TALENT DEVELOPMENT
A NEW WAY FORWARD

January 2024



Talent Academy Guidelines for Player Identification & Selection

1. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to raise awareness to coaches and administrators within regulated club, school, and county environments of the process that Talent Academies will follow to identify and select players for current and future annual cycles.

Talent Academies are intended for high potential players from u15 to u18 age groups (School Years 10, 11, 12 & 13) who experience weekly all year-round quality training provision and regular best vs best competition.

Talent Academy Selection Principles

England Hockey aim to develop an open, meritocratic, and evidence-based identification and selection process that becomes a critical corner stone of Talent Academy environments. This aligns to the following principles that sit within the [Talent System Framework](#) that inform the way Talent Academies monitor and assess potential.

- **Recognising talent is about future potential not just current performance**

Current performance plays a part in understanding future potential but in isolation is a poor indicator and should not be relied on by itself. It is important that we continually re-evaluate our view on each player's potential. Constantly re-assessing is critical.

- **Open, inclusive and 'keep the net wide' approach.**

We know that selecting talent is tricky. One of the most important things is that our talent system is 'open' with opportunities to join / re-join over many years.

- **Multiple opportunities, multiple eyes and contexts.**

Multiple opportunities provide us with additional time to work with players over a longer period to fully inform ourselves about the player rather than a one-off snapshot view.

2. Annual Talent Academy Process

The Talent Academy player identification & selection process will serve two purposes.

1. To identify players for the following annual cycle through a range of activities
2. To identify players for the current annual cycle where space allows

Player selection into a Talent Academy will follow a three-stage process:

- 1) Identification
- 2) Observation
- 3) Selection

Each stage will take place within an annual cycle during the following periods:

- Identification - November to May
- Observation - January to May
- Selection - September (For each annual cycle final squad selection will be completed by the end of September).

1. Identification Stage – November – May

Talent Academies will select players from a defined catchment area through a flexible process with primary routes through local clubs, schools and County Hockey. There are multiple ways for a player to be initially identified.

Talent Academy Festivals

The Talent Academy may run festivals for school and club players in its catchment area to provide opportunities for players to be identified. Festivals present a great opportunity to frame events as 'developmental opportunities' rather than be labelled as an 'assessment'. If a player is identified via a festival and of the right age for either the current or next annual cycle the Talent Academy will encourage the player's coach/teacher to complete the nomination process in order that they can attend a future open assessment day.

Open Assessment Events

Players may be nominated to attend an open assessment event at any point. These events will be communicated by Talent Academies to local clubs, schools and County Hockey coaches and administrators via the England Hockey website. Coaches and administrators will use a standardised nomination form to recommend players. Information on the nomination process can be found at the following: <https://www.englishockey.co.uk/play/talent-system/talent-academy/talent-academy-nominations>

Players who are **not** yet ready to progress following an open assessment will be expected to return to their other hockey environments to continue their development for a recommended period before looking to access a subsequent open assessment event. *(There is no set recommended period before reassessment as this will be dependent on each player's context, something which the Talent Academy coaches should discuss with each individual. However, England Hockey would suggest that a period of approximately 6 months is a useful guide to allow the process of development to occur).*

Given the large number of players potentially attending an open assessment event, coach feedback will be structured around broad areas for development.

Talent Academies will ensure open assessment events avoid dates marked in the centralised calendar.

The deadline each year for coaches to nominate players for an open assessment event will be the **1st May**. Talent Academies must deliver all planned open assessment events by the end of the **summer half term window** or no later than the **10th June**. It is important for Talent Academies to run multiple assessment events across the identification stage to

account for the physical, psychological and hockey related maturation that a young person may experience over this period.

Open assessment events will cost players who attend typically between £6-£8 an hour and should be aimed at players in school years 9 to 12.

2. Observation Stage – January – May

After a player has been identified via an open assessment, they are invited to attend a series of observation sessions at their Talent Academy between January and May. In line with the principle of multiple eyes and opportunities and creating an environment to enable young players to thrive we expect, where possible, the number of observation sessions to be **approximately 3-5** to support an informed decision regarding an individual's current performance and future potential.

Observation sessions will involve varied training scenarios where players will be profiled alongside existing Talent Academy players and observed by the Talent Academy coaching staff. To develop a shared view of an individual, a player's nominating coach is welcome to attend to engage with the Talent Academy coaches as part of the feedback process to further support an individual's continued development.

There will be a cost associated to players who are invited to access a series of observation sessions. This is typically between £6 - £8 an hour.

Where players attend observation sessions, and it is agreed that the Talent Academy is not quite the right environment for their development, the player / parent will receive written feedback that is to be shared with their nominating coach to support their on-going development.

During the identification and observation stages Talent Academies are encouraged to continue to use the [TA Selection Guidance](#) to inform their decision making.

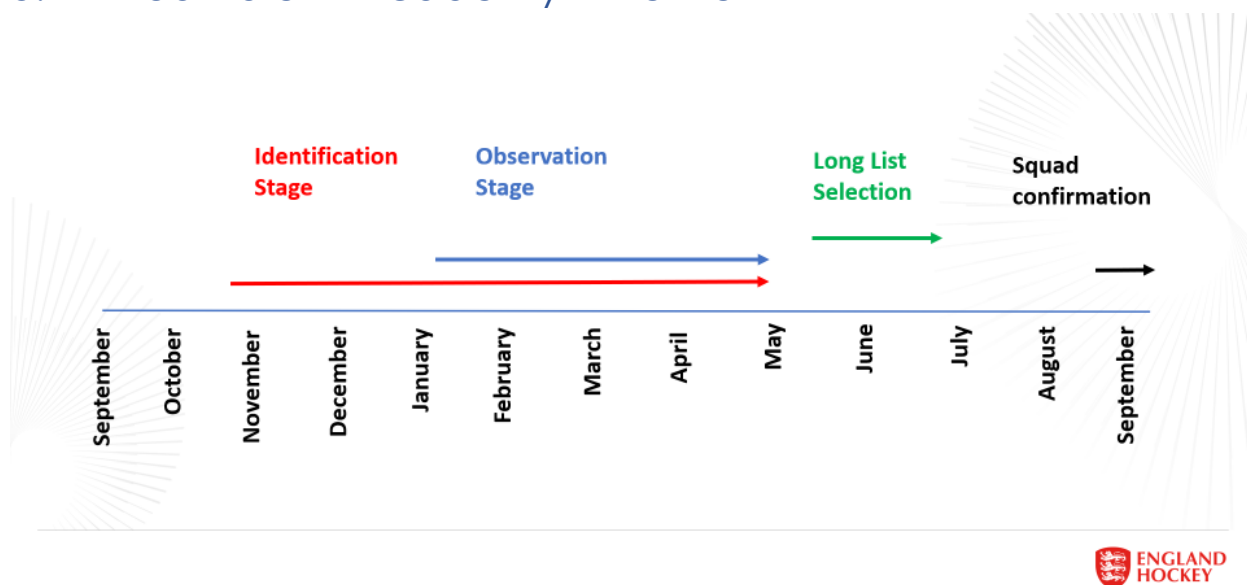
3. Selection Stage – September

Players successfully identified during the identification stage and, where possible, the observation stage, plus existing eligible players within the Talent Academy will form a **long list***. From the long list the Talent Academy coaches will undertake further assessments each year during September with the final squads selected by the end of September.

The Talent Academy programme runs on an annual basis, and players are typically selected for the whole cycle. If spaces become available during the cycle, for example due to withdrawals or injury, then new players may be added via the above process. In exceptional circumstances players with high potential may be enter the programme and indeed players where the programme is clearly no longer appropriate for them may leave.

To provide context regarding the level of player within the Talent Academy environment, squads are made up of England Age Group players who access provision throughout an annual cycle on a reduced timetable as affiliate members.

3. Annual Talent Academy Timeline



Example Identification & Selection Route



Once a player has been selected to join a Talent Academy, they will access a full programme of provision that will form a key part of their hockey diet. To find out more about how Talent Academies support high potential players please visit [Talent Development | Talent Academy \(englandhockey.co.uk\)](http://Talent Development | Talent Academy (englandhockey.co.uk)).



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