

# TA Selection Guidelines

Talent Team

March 2024



**ENGLAND  
HOCKEY**

# Contents

- Aim of TA Selection
  - Talent Principles
  - Talent ID Timeline
  - Talent ID Example Player Route
  - Logistical Guidelines and Thoughts
  - Age Profile of a TA Squad
  - Different Contexts – Hockey Specific Content of Selection Process
  - Unconscious/Conscious Bias
  - Experience Outcome
  - Player Insights
  - Profiling Lite Form
  - Decision Making Process
  - Educating the Coach's Eye
  - Greater Diversity & Inclusion Throughout
- 
- Feedback Guidelines
  - Assessment & Reassessment

# Aim of TA Selection

We are selecting players who have the most potential to become SENIOR INTERNATIONALS.

Recognising it is difficult to predict into the future and monitor all the interactions that players have that influence their decision making.

We encourage TAs and those supporting players from other environments to read the full Talent ID & Development Guidance for further information on the process.

# TALENT PRINCIPLES

## TALENT DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The following principles will underpin our approach to talent identification and development

### 1 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. Other Indicators of future potential are:

- **Superstrengths** – current superstrength of a player that sets them apart from others
- **Level of all Player Qualities** (see Chapter 4)  
Ability to learn – players who can respond positively to a learning stimulus. This can be a differentiating factor of potential meaning they progress faster than their peers
- **Physical, psychological, social maturation** – understanding how mature a person is in relation to their peers in all these three domains can indicate how much room for growth exists
- **Relative Hockey and Physical Training age** – determining how much time has been spent in quality environments on a hockey field and performing specific physical training can also indicate how much more room for growth there is.

It is important that we continually re-evaluate our view on a player/s potential. Constantly re-assessing is critical.

### 2 RARE principles - Right Athlete Right Environment

A young person's experience is shaped by the environments they inhabit so matching the environment to their physical, mental and social needs at any point in time is critical to ensuring they can thrive, develop and enjoy their time.

Knowing what is right for an individual, placing the player at the heart of any decision.

### 3 Open, inclusive and 'keep the net wide' approach

We know that talent selecting talent is tricky. With this in mind, one of the most important things is that our talent system is 'open' with opportunities to join / re-join over many years. We have plenty of examples where players have not played age group hockey but have still been a successful senior international.

Inclusivity is about all people (irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability) fitting in and feeling comfortable. We all have a responsibility to support one another feeling welcome and integrated.

'Keeping the net wide' refers to allowing opportunity for more players to develop their gifts over longer periods. Selection and decisions should be at 'this point in time' and not a final decision.

### 4 Multiple opportunities; multiple eyes; multiple contexts

Providing opportunity for players to perform over numerous contexts, such as training and matches in different environments, allow greater opportunity for them to demonstrate their potential

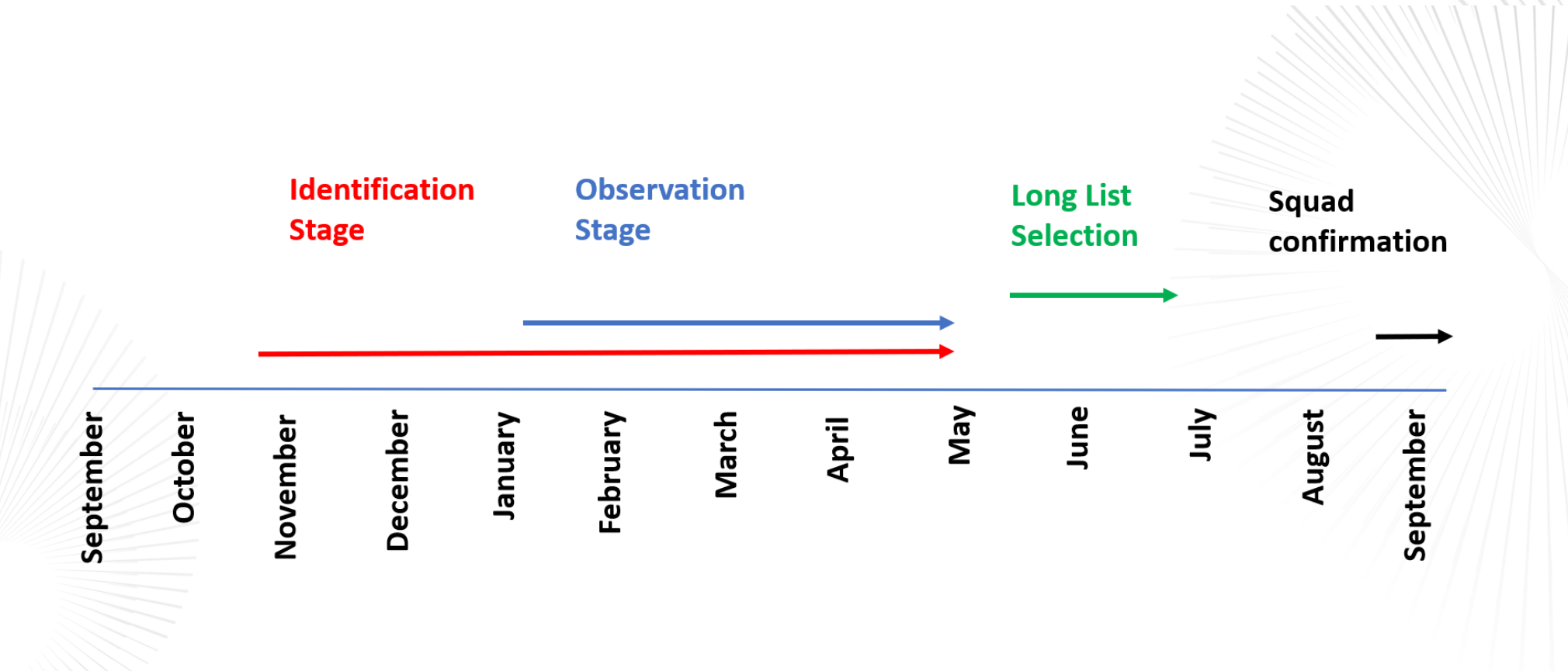
Having multiple eyes on players, whether that be coaches, teachers, managers, or scouts, allows a more comprehensive view. Multiple opportunities allows us to work with players over a longer period of time to fully inform ourselves about the player rather than a one-off snapshot.

### 5 Quality and frequency of training and competition

Providing frequent, high quality, enjoyable training and competition is the bedrock of developing talent.

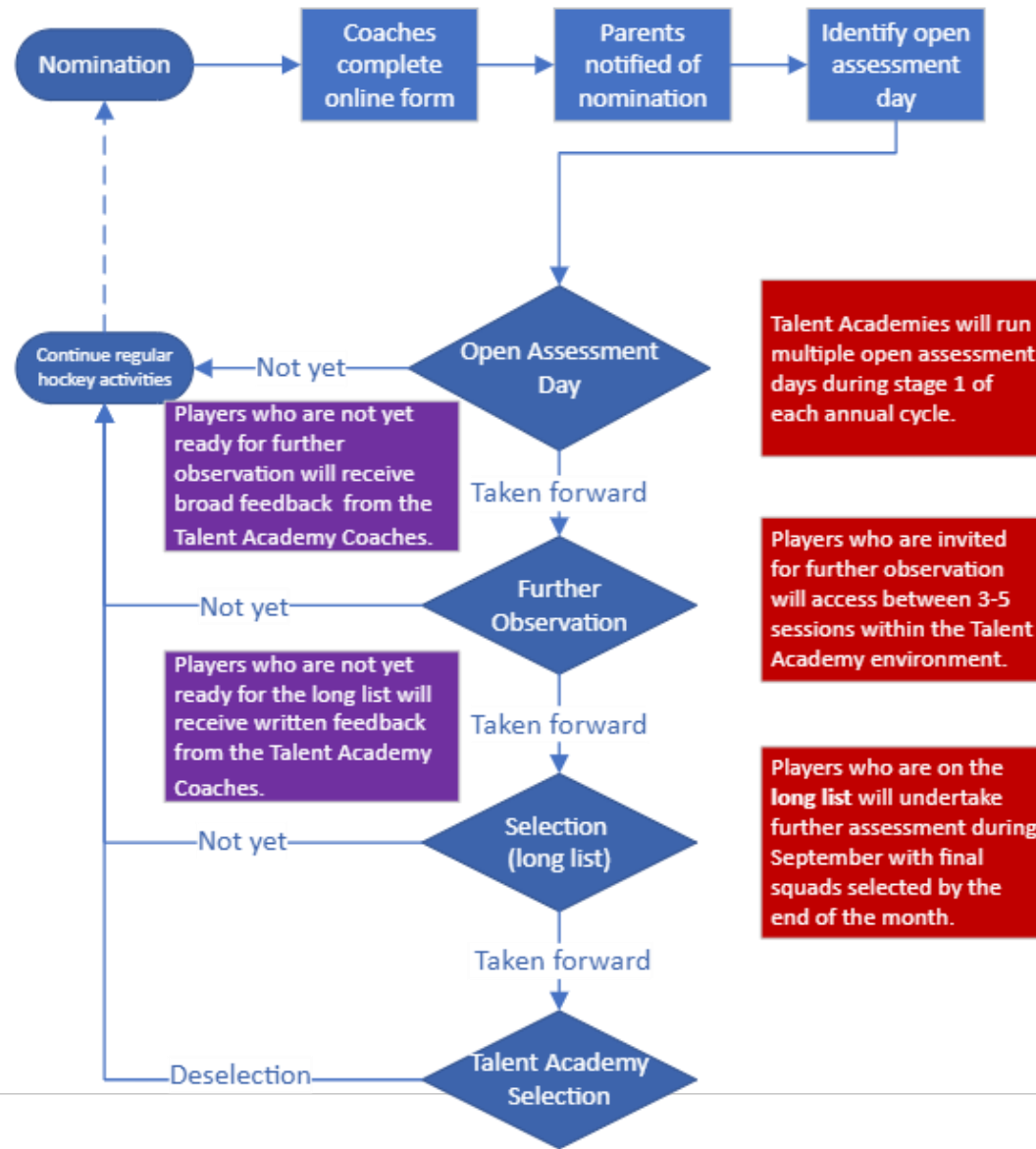
Partnerships between school, club, county and other stakeholders are key in providing more consistent messages to players, whilst keeping the player at the heart.

# Talent ID Process Timeline





# Talent ID Example Player Route



# Logistical Guidelines

## Multiple Eyes – Multiple Times - Multiple Contexts

- Consider 2 to 3 people inputting into decision making & independent of the player in discussion
- Consider 3-5 sessions being best practice for stage 2 and further observations
- Consider the contexts

## 3 Distinct Groups of Players

- Open Trial Nominations into TA
- Existing age eligible TA Players
- Current England Age Group Players

## Consider the different stages of the Talent ID Process

- Timing of open assessment events
- Integration of identified potential into TA for further observation
- Cost to each
- Format for final squad selection (September)

## How will you account for the different age groups and need to select a Bell Curve of Players.

- Numbered bibs/shirts lowest number youngest - eldest (research suggests its the most unbiased view and will reduce maturity bias)
- Split groups according to age with different coloured bibs/shirts

# Age Profile of a TA Squad

Approximate Age Profile of a TA Squad (approx. 25 players) Following a Bell Curve.

U15	6
U16	8
U17	7
U18	4

With regards to the 2023/24 TA end of cycle event TAs will be playing with a squad of 20 players.

The age profile of these squads are in relation to the current school year of the players as well as their age in relation to England Age Group programme age bands at u16, u18 and u21s for the following cycle.



# Different Contexts - Hockey Specific Content:

Must consider the following to ensure you see all areas of the Complete Player Qualities



# Unconscious/Conscious Bias

- What type of bias do you need to be aware of?
  - Attraction Bias – you see them do something that you like in the first few seconds of a session so you are attracted to them and then keep looking for their positive actions. The same can be true to the opposite
  - Confirmation Bias - you already know the player and therefore already have an understanding of their game so you look for the positives to confirm your thoughts about them
  - Relative Age Bias – you don't know their true hockey age so you do not see them as having potential and immediately write them off. This links to the negative attraction bias – instead of finding out their background and looking for their potential
  - Maturity Bias – bias either way to the physically big player who may have current performance but lacks future potential or the small, immature player who has future potential but lacks current performance. Check and challenge on both fronts!
  - Ethnicity Bias – a different ethnicity to you therefore behaves culturally in a different way and whilst you are not racist or malicious, you just decide that you don't like their style of play. Or ethnicity bias because you are looking to improve our diversity and positively discriminate as you are attracted to them because they fit the diversity profile
- How will you mitigate bias?
  - Knowledge that you're being biased – check your inner dialogue
  - Players are coming from catchment into your club environment
    - All wearing non-branded kit, for example
    - How to mitigate for cliques (groups of players that know each other)
  - Coaches either learn all players' names or refer as numbers. Explain the reason and be upfront about this
  - TAs working together
  - Neutral selector/scout outside catchment area

## CONSCIOUS BIAS VERSUS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Visit [www.PEDIAA.com](http://www.PEDIAA.com)

CONSCIOUS BIAS	UNCONSCIOUS BIAS
Conscious bias refers to biased attitudes that you are aware of	Unconscious bias refers to biased attitudes that operate outside your awareness and control
We know we are being biased, and we are doing it intentionally	We may not be aware that we hold biased attitudes towards certain things
There can be malicious intent	There is no malicious intent
Can be easily observed	Can't be easily observed

# Experience Outcome

First thing Talent Academies do – let's make it a great experience!

What experience do you want the players to have of the TA trials?

Experience and stretch – should be better than any other environment they would have experienced.

Parents need to have a good experience and be aware of the process as much as players.

- run a parents' induction (zoom or first day of the assessment) to help them understand the process and what the TA is there to achieve.

Important message: A non-selection does not mean not never it's just not now. Make sure they understand this is a new "system" that allows for more and regular opportunities for those selected and non-selected and is a more fluid system that can adapt quicker.





# PLAYER INSIGHTS



# Profile Lite Form

Team Name: Manchester U17 Boys

Name	Playing Number	EAG Rec	DOB	Relative Hockey Age (out of 6 – combination of club and school)	Relentlessness: Consistently plays at high intensity and works harder than others	HSA: consistently repeated under pressure	Impacts the game consistently	Super Strength
Joe Bloggs	1	Y/N/M	DD/MM/YY	0-6	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Hitting
Dave Smith	2							

- One sheet per team, per game
- Scout to consolidate 4 sheets into one document – online
- Evening Scouts meeting with EAG HC
- Evening PC coaches drop in with EAG HC



# Decision Making

## Current Performance vs Future Potential Matrix

- Easy to spot the Top Right and Bottom Left box. Exceptional players and those that simply don't have the level
- What is the next priority for selection?
  - 6 & 8 (positive selection)
  - 2 (non-selection)
- Number 5 light green box will be 'maybes' and we need to consider the balance between these players and those in box 7 or 3
- What does someone with future potential but no current performance look and behave like?
  - How can we ensure these players are not overlooked yet given the right environment to progress?
  - Orange box number 4 need to remain an interest to a TA
- What does someone with great current performance but low potential look like?

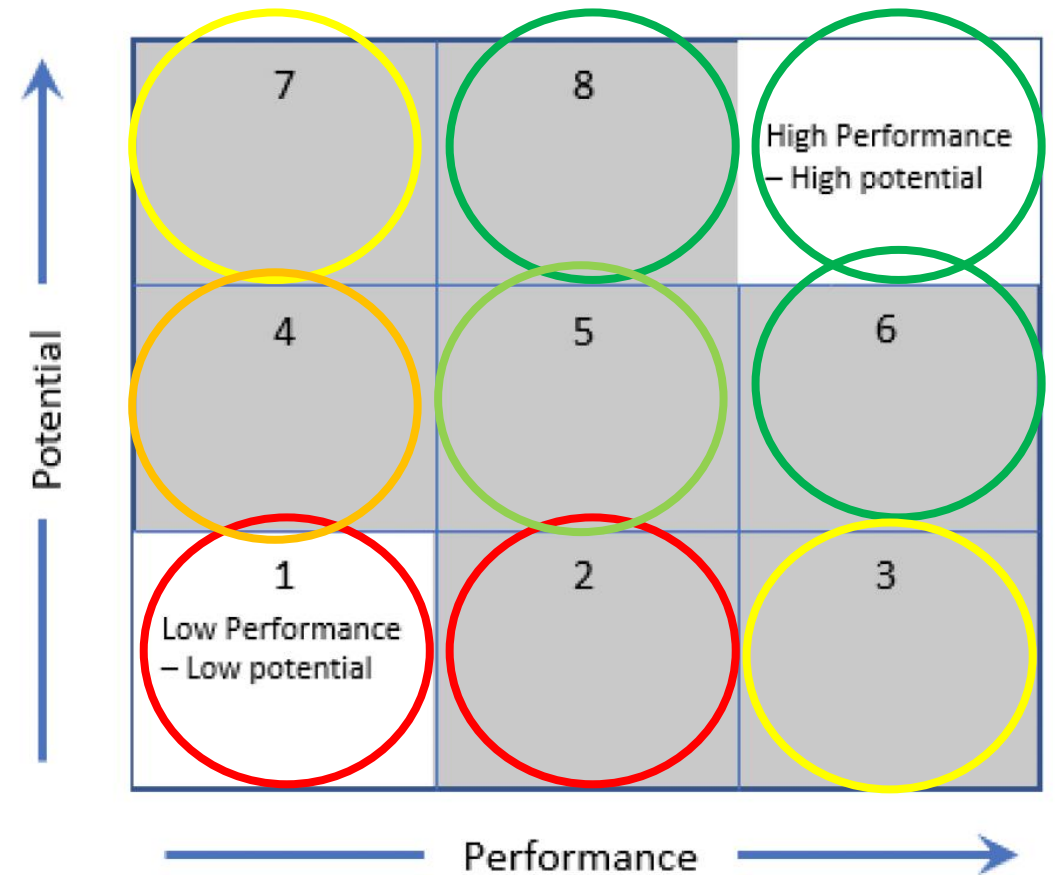
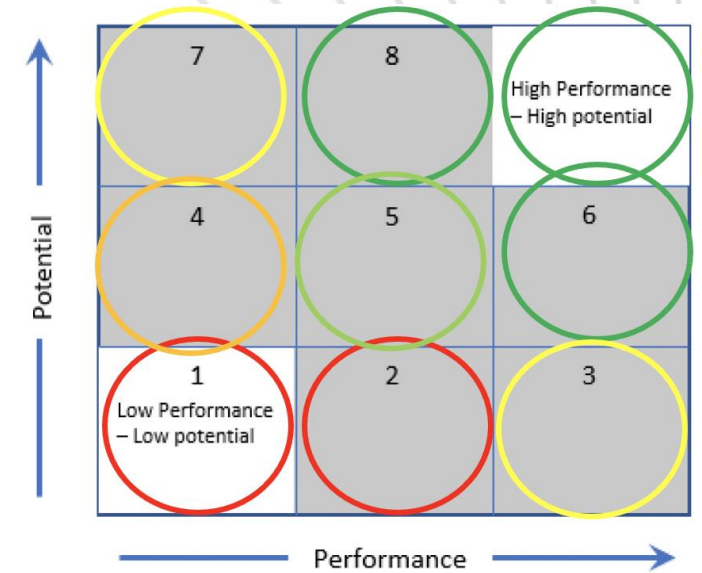


FIGURE 1 | Modified risk matrix from Baker et al. (2018a) highlighting the

# Educating the "Coach's Eye"

- Coach's Eye for a number 9 (High Potential High Performance) are the exceptional talents with great mentality and intent to learn and progress. These are easy to spot for all trained and untrained!
  - Coach's Eye for a number 1 (Low Potential Low Performance) are not capable of doing anything in the environment. Feel and look out of place. Again, easy to spot for all.
  - Coach's Eye for Performance
    - Superstrength or strength in an area of the Complete Player Qualities (including Great British Player Qualities)
  - Coach's Eye for Potential
    - Relative Hockey and Physical Age are lower compared to peers
      - need to find out their background story
    - Physically, socially or emotionally immature compared to peers suggests they still have capacity for growth in these areas
    - Intent to Learn
      - Engagement & Diligence
      - Curiosity – asks questions
      - If not learning as you might expect – seek to understand why not (dyslexic for example)
- 
- Improvement within a session
  - Improvement session to session



# Educating the "Coach's Eye"



## AWARENESS

PRINCIPLES & PHASES

STRUCTURE

TACTICS

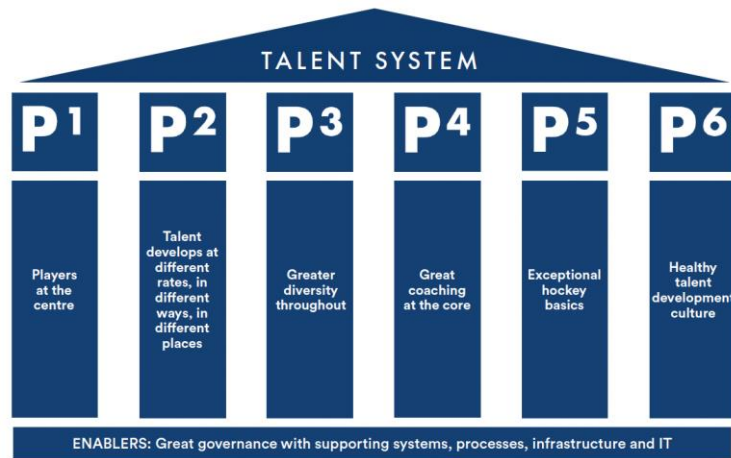
GAME CONTEXT

## DECISION





# Greater Diversity & Inclusion Throughout



- P1** **Players at the centre:** Putting the player at the heart of everything we do. This will require building shared performance and talent ambitions with clubs and schools, simplifying the support system, bringing clarity to the number of stakeholders around a player and enabling players to move more freely into the right environment.
- P2** **Talent develops at different rates, in different ways, in different places:** There is no one size fits all approach. The talent system needs to embrace many routes and opportunities for players to shine, and to be robustly observed and assessed by multiple eyes on multiple occasions.
- P3** **Greater diversity throughout:** Finding and developing more talented players from many ethnic and socio-economic groups. Work is required to remove barriers which inhibit inclusivity and progression.
- P4** **Great coaching at the core:** Supporting and developing coaches to be experts in identifying and developing talent, with the ability to build great relationships with players.
- P5** **Exceptional hockey basics:** Placing greater emphasis on hockey fundamentals and skill development.
- P6** **Healthy talent development culture:** Developing our collective understanding of talent culture; both what it takes to progress and develop and how we all need to behave based on shared values, purpose, goals and expectations. All organisations should demonstrate their belief in and commitment to a culture which considers the person, the player, performance and partnerships.

- Pillar 3
- “If we look where we always look we get what we always get”.
- 2 to 3 Wild Cards
  - MOST LIKELY:
    - Be from the Number 7 box (High Potential Low current Performance)
    - Have a Superstrength from the Holistic and GB Player Qualities
    - Most likely from the U15/16 age group.
  - MIGHT BE ONE OF:
    - Different ethnic background other than White British
    - Low relative age in hockey – usually state school
    - Role Specific **qualities** (Ball winners and long range passing or a goal-scorer in girls’ line)
    - Not an exhaustive list!

# Feedback Guidelines

- Afford time during the sessions to write feedback
- Coaches to do spot checks on what they have been writing
- Using the Profile Tool to feedback for all involved – A generic letter of selection/non-selection which includes an individualised 1-3 bullet points of superstrengths (they should keep working on) and 2-3 super focus areas as a guide
- Feedback to feeder County, Club and School coaches about particular themes that have been identified as common areas that need work in the coming season. (This may be different for boys to girls)
- Celebrate selection



# Assessment & Reassessment

- It is critical that you continue to assess and reassess throughout the season as per the Talent Identification & Development Process Guidance
- TAs provide opportunities to engage and retain relationships with players on the periphery (age or stage related) through Stage 1 open assessment events or festivals
- By providing these opportunities you can use them for assessment and reassessment for selection into and out of the TA. Any transition out of the TA must be considered over time and with strong feedback and guidance as to how they can have the opportunity to come back into the TA
- TA to work with EAG for Talent Identification; this may consist of provision within a TA relating to an individual who is considered for EAG

We encourage TAs and those supporting players from other environments to read the full Talent ID & Development Guidance for further information on the process.