ENGLAND HOCKEY

Talent Development

A New Way Forward

November **2020**

Hello again

Following the strategic intent we published in August, this document provides more detail about the direction we would like to take with the hockey community to transform the talent system. This document is intended primarily for stakeholders involved in the delivery of junior talent development including clubs, coaches, schools, county and regional administrators. It is not a final strategy, rather a mechanism to share more information ahead of a series of forums and focus groups.

At the 2020 AGM, members took the decision to support the proposals set out in the resolution 'A Structure Fit for the Future'. This will bring significant improvements to the way the sport is administered with a governance structure that is easier to understand, more consistent and accountable, and ultimately easier for clubs and participants to work with. **Our performance and supporting talent system must also be fit for the future.**

'Talent Development – A New Way Forward' encompasses our ambitions for the talent system.

We aspire to create exciting and engaging times on the pitch for all young people and a more effective and vibrant talent development system. Creating those magic moments that we can all be proud of, where potential is transformed into performance and clubs and teams excel on the domestic and international stage.

Alongside this (but not detailed in this document), we have significant aspirations to work more closely than ever before with the elite domestic game. As plans and clarity evolves for the Paris and Los Angeles Olympic cycles, we will continue progressing these plans with clubs, UK Sport and Sport England.

Regardless of what the future senior landscape looks like, sustained success for our elite domestic and national teams requires a strong system which produces a much greater number of players ready to excel at senior level.

Now is the moment to take steps towards a new future, to set ambitious goals and work together to reach new heights.



Ed Barney & The Performance Team

THE FUTURE TALENT SYSTEM

The purpose of the future talent system is to produce greater breadth and depth in the talent pool.

Our aspiration is for the talent system **to create**:

- **A phenomenal 'talent pipeline'** which the hockey community in England and Great Britain is proud of.
- **Exceptional talent development environments** which breed competition for places at every level and leads to a vibrant elite game in England, English clubs excelling in European club hockey and role models inspiring through consistent international success.
- **A talent identification and development system** which attracts and excites young people irrespective of their background and inspires them to be the best they can be, and which values both current performance and future potential.

WHY DO WE NEED TO CHANGE?

- **We aspire to be consistently top three in the world in both genders.** To achieve this, we need to change - we see real opportunity in domestic hockey and a new talent system to bridge the gap to the best in the world.
- **To develop a broader and more diverse talent pool.** There is a huge opportunity to address and increase the diversity of the talent pool (and workforce).
- **We see exceptional European club performance as a critical component of a shared club and England Hockey vision.** Supporting a vibrant elite domestic game and competing and winning in Europe, requires a change in approach.
- Some players will progress in our system to be senior elite players, some will reach their potential before then. **Regardless of the progression a player makes, it should be a positive enriching experience.** The player experience falls short in too many instances. (Evidenced by the Talent System Survey).
- **Our future system must be built to mitigate for bias in how we identify, select and develop talented players.** Bias has been cited too frequently about the decisions that are made in the current pathway. (Evidenced by the Talent System Survey and Player Pathway Committee reviews).
- **Greater emphasis and value must be placed on future potential (alongside current performance) in the identification and selection of talented players.** Current performances are at times overemphasised in selection decisions and a greater focus on and understanding of future potential is required.

OUR PRIORITIES

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PLAYERS

Put 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 to reduce the number of stakeholders around a player and enabling players to move more freely into the right environment.

TALENT DEVELOPS AT DIFFERENT RATES, IN DIFFERENT WAYS IN DIFFERENT PLACES THROUGH DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES

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.

A MORE DIVERSE TALENT SYSTEM

Find and develop more talented players from many ethnic and socio-economic groups. Targeted work is required to remove barriers which restrict inclusivity and progression.

COACHING AT THE CORE

Support and develop coaches at clubs and schools to be expert in identifying and developing talent, with the ability to build great relationships with players.

FOCUS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS - WHAT MATTERS MOST

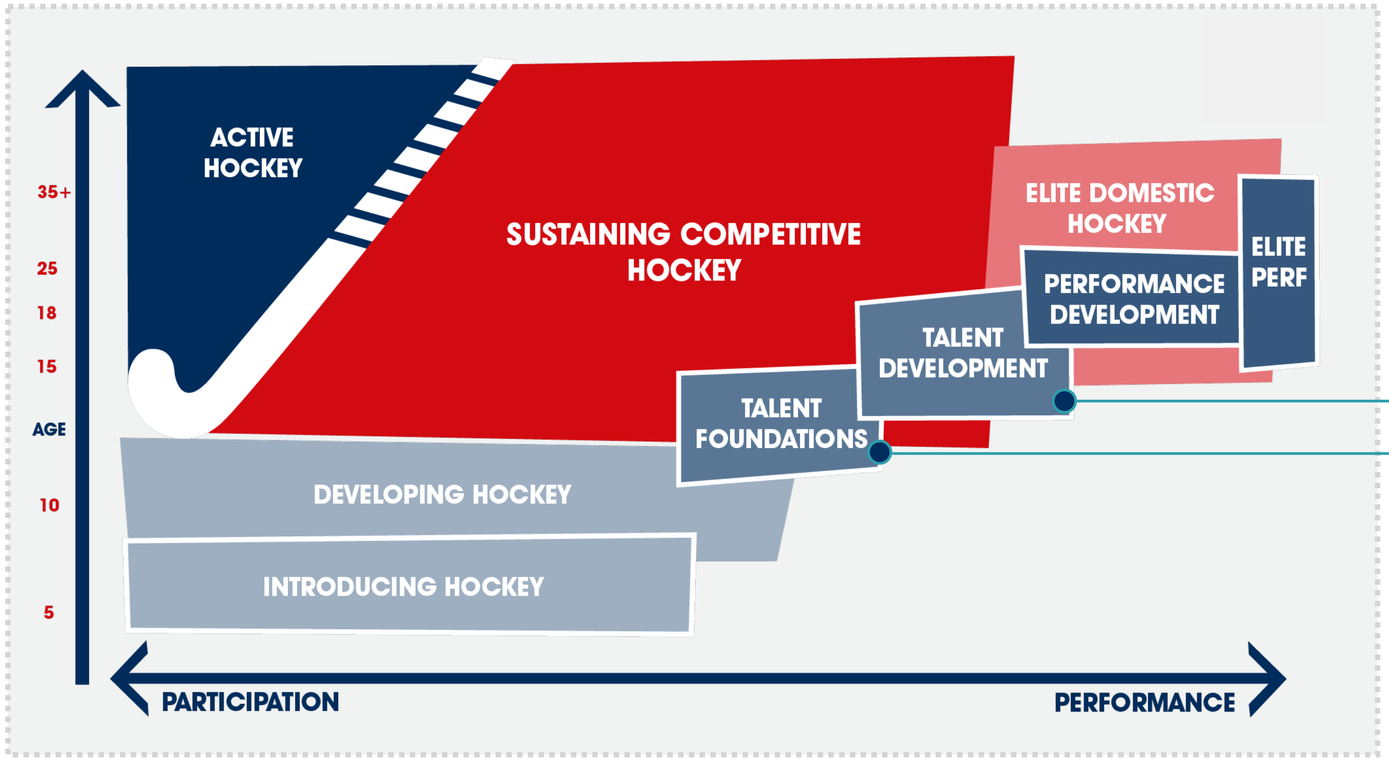
Place greater emphasis on hockey fundamentals and skill development.

BUILD A HEALTHY AND PROGRESSIVE TALENT CULTURE

Develop our collective understanding of talent culture; both what it takes to progress and develop and how we need to behave based on shared values, purpose, goals and expectations.

PERFORMANCE & TALENT SYSTEM

The Player Development model identifies nine participant segments and shows how participants develop within and through the sport. It is age and stage related, not age and stage dependent, acknowledging participants develop at different rates and have different needs.



TALENT DEVELOPMENT STAGE

Players at this level will identify as hockey players and be ready for a more intense and focused approach to their hockey development. At the top end of this stage players will have their first sight of international hockey at U16 or U18 level and be making lifestyle choices to support their hockey aspirations.

TALENT FOUNDATION STAGE

Young people involved in 'competitive' sport on a regular and progressive basis during their teenage years. These young people may be involved in several sporting activities and may not yet have made a commitment to hockey. The focus at this stage is to provide multiple environments and high-quality experiences and opportunities.

The performance system refers to elite hockey.
This is comprised of both the elite domestic game (the top tiers of the England Hockey League (EHL)) and international teams. It includes the UK Sport funded programmes that exist to prepare and deliver national teams i.e. the Senior Central Programme and the Great Britain Elite Development Programme (GB EDP).

The performance system is underpinned by the talent system, where our highest potential junior players develop.
This 'talent pool' (**Talent Foundations** and **Talent Development** stages) is vital for the success of elite senior hockey.

PERFORMANCE & TALENT SYSTEM

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

STAGE	TALENT FOUNDATIONS	TALENT DEVELOPMENT	PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT	ELITE PERFORMANCE
DOMESTIC COMPETITION	JUNIOR	JUNIOR & ADULT	ELITE DOMESTIC GAME	ELITE DOMESTIC GAME
PROGRAMMES & ENVIRONMENTS	TS TALENT **SCHOOL**	TA TALENT **ACADEMY**	EDP GB ELITE **DEVELOPMENT**	GB GB **SENIOR**
	TC TALENT **CENTRE**	E16 ENGLAND **U16**	E21 ENGLAND **U21**	ENG ENGLAND **SENIOR**
	CH COUNTY **HOCKEY**	E18 ENGLAND **U18**		

BUILDING TALENT FOUNDATIONS

- **We want to discover more talent from many different backgrounds and locations by supporting a comprehensive network of local inspirational environments throughout England.** Talent will come through many routes if there are lots of opportunities to build good fundamentals and an understanding of hockey through enjoyable experiences.

- **Between the age of 11 and 14 most players who progress to international level require around 200 hours or 120 sessions a year of high-quality coached hockey in different playing positions, alongside regular informal and less structured hockey and other sports.** Players need to experience being in both the top and bottom of the ability group and stretched some, but not all of the time, so they experience success and challenge. Off season breaks are crucial at this age and they will be built into the England Hockey junior calendar.

- **Talent Centres embedded in clubs, Talent Schools and County (Sub-Area) Hockey will all provide early talent development opportunities.** They will build important foundations to help players progress, but they will not be prerequisites to be selected to a Talent Academy.

BUILDING TALENT FOUNDATIONS

TC

TALENT CENTRE

Talent Centres will be embedded in clubs as part of a comprehensive junior (11-18 yrs.) programme which is open to all, has clear and supported pathways for talented players including entry and exit routes from other parts of the club or other clubs, schools or community environments.

Talent Centre accreditation will recognise clubs which excel in providing high quality coaching, environments and experiences. It is intended to set and recognise high standards of delivery without being an onerous process. The detailed framework will be developed through consultation and piloted with a selection of clubs in 2021.

There will be no limit to the number of clubs which could become Talent Centres. However, they will be clubs which are proactively prioritising and investing in their junior pathway. It is anticipated that by 2024 there will be in the region of 10-15 in each of the new Areas around the country.

In the short to medium term (next four years) there are no plans to create a closed competition programme for Talent Centres. Clubs with England Hockey accredited Talent Centres will be expected to enter their U16 teams into Tier 1 competitions but these will also be open to other clubs.

Talent Centre accreditation will require clubs to demonstrate they have a robust and transparent process to select players to their squads and teams which is inclusive and provides opportunities for players from different backgrounds to progress. However, clubs will be responsible for setting and administering the criteria.

In all but exceptional cases Talent Centre accreditation will be a pre-requisite to hosting a Talent Academy.

CH

COUNTY HOCKEY

County (Sub-Area) Hockey will continue to provide an exciting and aspirational representative opportunity for the U13-U15 age groups which is different to regular club or school hockey.

However, it will become a standalone development experience that is one of the routes, rather than the only route, to the next stage of the pathway.

There will continue to be identified dates in the England Hockey calendar for county activity. The competition structure from September 2021 has not been finalised and will be agreed in consultation with the Player Pathway Committee.

County Hockey will continue to have an important role in providing development opportunities for coaches, administrators and umpires from different backgrounds.

In future, there is a huge opportunity for counties to access a wider group of young people by targeting more players who are unable to access regular high-quality hockey elsewhere and contribute to developing a more diverse talent pool.

Note: U16 and U17 activity may continue but this will be targeted at players in the ‘Sustaining Competitive Hockey’ segment of the Player Development model and not considered to be part of the talent system.

TS

TALENT SCHOOL

Talent School Accreditation will be part of a new England Hockey membership offer to schools. Similar to Talent Centre accreditation, Talent School accreditation will recognise those schools who prioritise their hockey programme and offer a comprehensive programme for talented 11-15 year olds. Accredited Talent Schools will be committed to a player centred approach and working in partnership with England Hockey and local clubs.

Accredited Talent Schools will receive a comprehensive package of benefits including bespoke coach development opportunities. The detailed criteria will be developed in consultation with schools.

Accredited status will provide recognition and a means to attract talented hockey players to the school. Equally it will come with an expectation to contribute to improving diversity in hockey and access to talent development opportunities.

It is anticipated that Talent School accreditation will be available from 2022 onwards.

DEVELOPING TALENT IN TALENT ACADEMIES

TALENT ACADEMY

What is a Talent Academy?

Over time, the aspiration is for a nationwide network of approximately 20-24 Talent Academies which take talent development to a new level.

We would like these to become the priority* environments for the best 500 players aged 15 -18 per gender with each Talent Academy providing 350-500 hours per year of exceptional coaching and training with a critical mass of 15 to 25 players (per gender) from September to July.

The England Hockey Talent Academy league and cup competitions will become the most prestigious junior competition, superseding the current under U18 Tier 1 club competition from 2023-4.

*This doesn't mean they will be right for every player or the exclusive environment for everyone. Talent Academies will not be a pre-requisite to progress to England Age Group squads, which will operate an open nomination process.

Why become a Talent Academy?

Hosting a Talent Academy will be an opportunity to contribute to a transformational step change in elite domestic hockey and international success for our clubs and national teams.

England Hockey will promote Talent Academies as the priority environments for players aged 15-18 with aspirations and potential to progress to international level.

We want Talent Academies to become the beacons of best practise in talent development in their locality which will carry kudos and recognition, providing a shop window to attract talented players and high-quality coaches. Talent Academies will be required to uphold the highest ethical standards and work co-operatively with other local hockey providers such as club and schools. Secondarily, academy status will provide a mechanism to generate income through other avenues such as talent festivals, coaching and services to other local clubs.

England Hockey will provide a support package to talent academy hosts. This will include financial support to set up the academy, coach and club development support and brand association.

Talent Academy Culture

There will be a shared identity and purpose for Talent Academies and alongside that we would like each Talent Academy to harness its own unique look and feel with a culture which promotes a healthy and positive environment for all young people to thrive and excel. Each academy will need to demonstrate its belief in and commitment to a culture which considers **the person, the player, performance and partnerships.**

Behaviours coherent with this will need to be evident in all junior and adult elements of the host club in which Talent Academy players are associated with; on and off the pitch, hockey and non-hockey related and in relationships with feeder clubs and schools.

DEVELOPING TALENT IN TALENT ACADEMIES

TALENT ACADEMY

Selection to a Talent Academy

We envisage Talent Academies recruiting players from a defined catchment area through an open nomination via clubs, schools and County (Sub-Area) Hockey. Talent Academies will run a series of festivals each year which will include teams nominated from Talent Centres and Talent Schools. Each academy will have one squad per gender with a minimum number of players in each year band, all profiled against the England Hockey player profile which will value current performance and future potential. England Hockey and hosts will develop a robust and transparent selection framework which mitigates against bias.

Hosting Talent Academy?

Talent Academy hosts must be affiliated to England Hockey. The preferred route and expectation is that aspiring Talent Academy hosts will already be accredited Talent Centres or have a formal partnership with one or more local Talent Centres. Hosts clubs will need to be able to cater for both genders equally and provide a minimum of two dedicated Talent Academy coached session per week which can be supplemented with senior hockey. (To give a typical weekly training exposure of 3-4 sessions.)

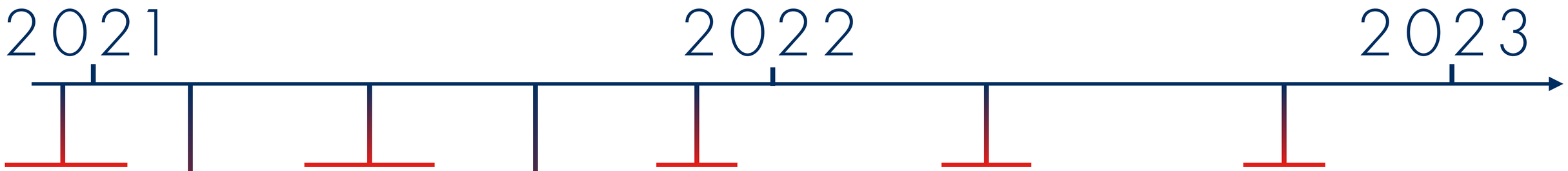
You've told us and we place huge value on the quality of coaching and the coach-player relationship. With this in mind, hosts must be able to provide the highest quality coaching which deepens and accelerates individual player development and is closely linked to the demands, intensity and requirements of elite hockey.

We would like you to help us shape the Talent Academy framework we are developing, consisting of seven elements: governance, culture, coaching, talent development environment, athlete development and wellbeing, stakeholder & community and access & diversity. Once it is complete, clubs will be asked to tender against a set of criteria linked to this framework.

We plan to award licenses for three years beginning in September 2022 with a break clause after each year. We don't expect every club to be able to meet all of the criteria in year one, but we will want to see a clear and credible plan to get there. Each host will have its own individual Talent Academy development plan with the target of all hosts meeting the full Talent Academy specification within three years.

To safeguard the integrity of the talent system, there will be a contractual relationship between England Hockey and the host to define the services and set out the minimum standards of delivery and expectations from both the host clubs and England Hockey.

INDICATIVE TIMELINE



NOV/DEC ’20
Online forums and focus groups

JAN ’21
Talent Development – A New Way Forward strategy confirmed and launched

FEB - AUG ’21
Co-creation and piloting of the future talent system with the hockey community

JULY - SEPT ’21
England Age Group observation and assessment incorporating the 2021 Futures Cup

SEPT ’21
Talent Centre accreditation live and available to clubs

SEPT ’21
Areas and Sub-Area governance structures live

SEPT ’21 - AUG ’22
Performance Centre to Talent Academy transition programme for high potential U15-U17 aged players

APRIL ’22
Talent School accreditation live and available to schools

SEPT ’22
Nationwide network of Talent Academies live

FORUM DATES & TIMES

The forums will include an introduction and full group presentation before breaking into smaller groups for facilitated discussion on local, relevant topics and experiences. There are two options for each geographical area and a final session offered for those who can't attend earlier forums. Please use the survey link below to sign up if you are interested in hearing more and participating in the discussions.

- **Tuesday 24th November** 12.30 - 14.00
- **Tuesday 24th November** 19.30 - 21.00
- **Sunday 29th November** 19.30 - 21.00
- **Monday 30th November** 14.00 - 15.30
- **Wednesday 2nd December** 19.30 - 21.00

Click here to register for an online forum... **REGISTER**

Deadline to register for an online forum is **Thursday 19th November 2020**

If you require further information please contact talent@englandhockey.co.uk

You can find full versions of our strategic intent documents here 'Talent Development - A New Way Forward'

ENGLAND HOCKEY

Talent Development

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