

Selection Policy: National Academy for 2026/2027

1. Introduction

This policy describes how players will be selected for a place at the National Academy for the 2026/2027 academic year. Places at the National Academy are subject to the terms of the player agreement provided by the National Academy.

The policy may be updated periodically; for example, changes may be made to the selection process and timeline, and dates and processes may be subject to change. Any amendments shall be published on the LTA website so please check for changes on a regular basis.

2. Programme Purpose

The National Academy aims to support the development of those junior players considered to have the highest potential for international success and to achieve the following outcomes:

- A. Meet selection standards for the LTA's Pro Scholarship Programme (PSP) by the end of their National Academy term (i.e. by age 16-18)
- B. Meet selection standards for the PSP within 1-3 years of the end of their National Academy term (i.e. by age 19-21).

Since September 2024 there has been one National Academy - Loughborough University National Tennis Academy (LUNTA). LUNTA provides an inspiring training environment and excellent tournament schedule, with full-board residential accommodation and an integrated academic programme at a mainstream school also included.

3. Eligibility

Players are only eligible for selection provided they satisfy the criteria in 3.1 to 3.4 below:

3.1 Age eligibility

For a player to be considered eligible they must be born between the dates outlined below:

- 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2013 inclusive.

In exceptional circumstances, players outside these age ranges outlined above (but not younger than 11 years on 1 September 2026) may be considered. These players must fulfil the requirements set out in sections 3.2 and 3.4 and any such selection is subject to the National Academy's assessment that the appropriate educational requirements, pastoral care and / or parental supervision can be facilitated for the individual player.

3.2 Eligible to represent Great Britain

Players must hold, or be eligible for, a British passport, be a British citizen and have not represented any other nation in a representative team event. Those not meeting this stipulation, but who have lived in Great Britain continuously since 1 January 2024, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such players must contact PlayerPathway@lta.org.uk by 21 February 2026 to confirm they would like to be considered.

3.3 Subject of any disciplinary process

A player will not be eligible if they are the subject of an investigation or subject to a provisional sanction or a sanction (or other investigation outcome) accepted or imposed under the LTA Disciplinary Code or by any other tennis or sporting national or international body (including but limited to in relation to any anti-doping and/or anti-corruption offence).

3.4. Minimum performance criteria for consideration - MPCC

A player must fulfil one of the below performance criteria (3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3 or 3.4.4) to be longlisted for consideration for nomination to the shortlist. For the avoidance of doubt, a longlisted player must then be nominated by a minimum of two LTA Performance National Coaches (for this policy this includes the National Performance Pathway (NPP) team's National Age Group Coaches or the RPDC Network Lead and/or National Coaches from the Men's & Women's Tennis teams) or meet the Automatic Shortlisting Criteria set out in section 4.1 in order to be shortlisted for National Academy consideration.

3.4.1 The player was selected for the Pro Transition Programme (PTP) /or NAGP 16U in 2025;

3.4.2 The player achieved one of the following results between 1 March 2025 and 20 March 2026:

- a) Main draw singles final at an LTA National 14U G1 tournament;
- b) Main draw singles final at a 12U TE category 1 tournament;
- c) 13U: Main draw singles semi-final or better at an 14U TE category 2 or above;
- d) 14U: Main draw semi-final or better of a 14U TE category 1, or a singles quarter final or better at a 14U TE Super Cat tournament;
- e) 14U: Main draw singles semi-final or better in an ITF junior event in Europe (including UK).
- f) 14U: Main draw singles semi-finals of the Lexus Junior National Championships;
- g) 14U: Represented Great Britain at Tennis Europe Winter and/or Summer Cup
- h) 16U: Main draw finalists of the Lexus Junior National Championships;
- i) 16U Girls: Represented Great Britain at Tennis Europe Summer Cup;
- j) 16U Boys: Represented Great Britain at Tennis Europe Winter Cup

3.4.3 The player met the following ITF Junior World ranking criteria at any point between 1 January 2026 and 20 March 2026:

Boys

15 th year (2011s)	16 th year (2010s)	17 th year (2009s)
ITF Juniors Top 1500	ITF Juniors Top 750	ITF Juniors Top 350

Girls

15 th year (2011s)	16 th year (2010s)	17 th year (2009s)
ITF Juniors Top 1000	ITF Juniors Top 500	ITF Juniors Top 250

3.4.4 A Player receives a minimum of two LTA Performance National Coaches nominations (as outlined above) based on observations from relevant international and/or domestic tournaments and National Activity for the period between 1 March 2025 and the start of the nominating window.

Meeting minimum performance criteria for consideration does not mean players will be automatically nominated and therefore shortlisted. The minimum performance criteria outlined in 3.4 are deliberately inclusive.

3.5 Programme visits

All longlisted players will be able to arrange a visit to LUNTA, dates are TBC.

This visit provides an opportunity for players (and parents / guardians) to gain insight into the programme on offer at the National Academy. It also provides LUNTA an opportunity to learn more about those who are interested in attending the National Academy.

It is recommended that those with an interest in applying, if shortlisted, to the National Academy visit the programme.

If a shortlisted player chooses not to apply or accept a place to the National Academy, it is expected that they will at least visit the National Academy in order to be considered for the PTP or an International Junior Grant (formerly NAGP 16U) in line with the criteria in the PTP Selection Policy.

3.6 Number of places

The number of places available in 2026 will be based on the following considerations:

- i. The LTA financial resource available.
- ii. The number of 'open' spaces within each academy coaches training group to ensure all prospective and existing NA players experience an appropriate training environment of the right level on a daily basis.

4. Application

4.1 Player shortlisting

The LTA Performance National Coaches or the NPP team (as outlined above) will then collectively nominate players from the longlist between 20 - 27 March (the "Nominating Window"). They will nominate eligible players who they believe have the potential to fulfil the programme purposes. In making a nomination, the nominators must use match observations from relevant international and/or domestic events between 1 March 2025 and 20 March 2026. This nomination must be supported by evidence and include why they believe the player should be considered for the National Academy taking into consideration the programme purposes (see section 2) and an evaluation of player suitability (see section 5.2). All nominated players will then be shortlisted for consideration and informed by 31 March 2026.

Once the Nominating Window has closed, players meeting the criteria set out in section 3 will form the shortlist, i.e. the list of players invited to apply for a place at a National Academy. Shortlisted players will be notified by 31 March 2026. It is possible that more players will be considered for selection than there are places available at the National Academy.

Players who have not been shortlisted to apply for a place at the National Academy will not be notified.

4.2 Application process

All shortlisted players who wish to apply for a place at the National Academy must do so by 23:59 on 14 April 2026.

4.3 Non applicants

In some circumstances a shortlisted player may choose not to apply for a place at the National Academy. In this situation:

- Those born in 2012 and 2013 who are already receiving support will continue to receive support through the National Performance Pathway Team until they graduate out of the National Performance stage of the pathway;
- Those born in 2010 and 2011, or in exceptional cases younger, may be considered for an International Junior Grant (formerly NAGP 16U). Selection for a grant will follow the process described in 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.5.

5. Selection

5.1 Selection Panel

All shortlisted players who submit an application for the National Academy by 14 April 2026 will be evaluated by the Selection Panel (the Panel).

The Panel will meet the week commencing 21 April 2026. The Performance Director will chair the Panel. The Panel will consist of the following voting members (or their nominees):

- Performance Director (Chair)
- LTA Head of Men's Tennis;
- LTA Head of Women's Tennis;
- Head Coach at LUNTA (the relevant gender coaching lead);
- Academy Director at LUNTA

The Chair may ask additional members of the LTA Performance Team to attend the selection meeting to provide insight on the players being considered or to assist with facilitating the meeting; these individuals will not have a vote.

5.2 Evaluation of player suitability

When considering which players have the potential to meet the purpose of the programme (section 2) and therefore be selected, the Panel will be asked to vote as to whether they believe the player can meet Purpose A or B or neither. To do this they will consider the following factors:

- **Strengths & Weapons:** The player has emerging strengths which can be developed into successful weapons consistent with their game style.
- **Head:** The player demonstrates smart decision making, good problem-solving abilities and a level of focus in matches, irrespective of the match situation.
- **Heart:** The player's drive and attitude in training and competition shows a willingness to learn and a desire to win matches.
- **Athlete:** The player has a robust athletic foundation which can be developed into physical attributes that could positively influence the outcome of matches.
- **Performance:** The player has competitive international results, ranking and rating (at current year of birth or above) and a capability to beat players of a higher level than themselves.
- **Readiness:** The player is ready to engage and meet the demands of the programme, to fully benefit from the aims of the National Academy.

When evaluating a player against these factors, the Panel will use professional opinion to reflect on match and training observations from relevant international and/or domestic events and activity, as well as player and programme visits, for the period between 1 March 2025 and the selection meeting. In making their selection the Panel may also take into consideration the behaviour and conduct of a player including any that has resulted in them being the subject of an investigation or subject to a provisional sanction or a sanction (or other investigation outcome) accepted or imposed under the LTA Disciplinary Code or by any other tennis or sporting national or international body (including but limited to in relation to any anti-doping and/or anti-corruption offence).

5.3 Considerations relating to limiting factors

When discussing the factors described in 5.2 the Panel may also take into account any of the following matters that influences their opinion on the player's potential:

- The player's age and physical maturation;
- The player's historic training programme and tournament schedule;
- Any other considerations that have led to a significant interruption or impact on tennis (e.g. illness, injury).

5.4 Allocation of National Academy places

At this point, whilst a decision may be made by the Panel in relation to the player's suitability for a place at the National Academy, player selection is not confirmed until they have been allocated a place at the National Academy. This will be done following the below process.

For those it is deemed meet Purpose A or Purpose B, the Panel will provisionally rank these players. The suitable players will be ranked based on the below order and the Panel's relative views on the player's future potential, and the capability of the NA to meet the player's needs (in relation to how they fit into the 'open' spaces of the LUNTA player base):

- 1) Players who meet purpose A as outlined in section 2
- 2) Players who meet purpose B as outlined in section 2

At this stage if there are more players who have been deemed suitable for a National Academy, by meeting Purpose A or B, than there are spaces, the Panel will select them based on the above ranking order established for the 'open' spaces.

Final selection will also be dependent upon meeting the minimum requirements for entry into the school.

5.5 Re-selection or non-renewal of current players

Prior to the end of each player's agreement period (normally at the end of academic year 11), each player will be formally reviewed by the Selection Panel in/or near to the Selection Meeting. A player will then either have their agreement renewed (in line with the maximum length of support) or not. In making this decision the Panel will be asked to consider:

1. An assessment of a player's trajectory to continue to meet the programme purpose and outcomes, outlined in Section 2.
2. A player's ranking trajectory against their age and stage.
3. A player's progress against both their IDP and conditions for reselection as outlined by LUNTA in the final year of each player's agreement period.
4. Achievement of academic progress and examination results to allow for successful admission into the following year group at Loughborough Schools Foundation.
5. Continued adherence of the LUNTA Code of Conduct and the LUNTA Player Standards and Expectations.

All decisions will be recorded, and players notified.

5.6 Alternative Support Available for longlisted players

In addition, we will be using this selection process to offer support to eligible players via International Junior Grants (formerly NAGP 16U) and National Junior Grants.

Decisions on International Junior and National Junior Grants will be taken by a LTA Panel of selectors only comprising: Performance Director, Head of Women's Tennis, Head of Men's Tennis or their nominees.

5.7 International Junior Grant

The best and encouraged option for players who are offered a NA space is for them to accept it. However, in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the Head of Men's or Women's Tennis, a player, deemed to be selectable against Purpose A, may not accept the space. In these instances, the player will be considered for an International Junior Grant as long as the player has visited the National Academy to make an informed decision about not accepting the place offered. In addition to a grant, support for this group of players may include:

- National camps
- International Trips

A grant will only be awarded in this instance subject to available budget (up to £20,000) and an appropriate programme being agreed. Players awarded an International Junior Grant from the National Academy Selection Meeting will be given a player agreement of between 12 – 24 months, and only up to the end of their 16th year.

Readiness

In addition, an assessment of a player's readiness and willingness to engage in a higher-level daily development environment will be made to be confident the player is ready to fully benefit from an International Junior Grant. Assessment of readiness will include:

- The player's age and physical maturation;
- The player's historic training programme and tournament schedule;
- The players (and families stated commitment to change current training circumstances in order to benefit from a suitable daily training programme (if necessary).

When evaluating a player against these factors, the LTA Panel of selectors will use professional opinion to reflect on match observations from relevant international and/or domestic events and activity, as well as player and programme visits, for the period between 1 March 2025 and the selection meeting. In making their selection the LTA Panel may also take into consideration the behaviour and conduct of a player including any that has resulted in them being the subject of an investigation or subject to a provisional sanction or a sanction (or other investigation outcome) accepted or imposed under the LTA Disciplinary Code or by any other tennis or sporting national or international body (including but limited to in relation to any anti-doping and/or anti-corruption offence).

5.8 National Junior Grant

National Junior Grants are designed to support those players showing the talent characteristics to play a minimum of Grand Slam qualification level tennis in the future to remain in high quality daily training environments such that they can achieve the National Academy and/or PTP selection standards by their 16th year.

The following players will be considered for National Junior Grants:

1. Shortlisted players who are not selected for a National Academy place
2. Longlisted players who are not shortlisted for National Academy Selection but receive 2 x National Coach nominations for consideration for a National Junior Grant
3. Any player who achieves the following performance criteria between 30/03/2025 and 28/02/2026, during their 15th year or younger

<u>Automatic Shortlist Criteria</u>	
<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>
14U Tennis Europe Summer or Winter Cup participant 16U Tennis Europe Summer Cup participant	14U Tennis Europe Summer or Winter Cup participant 16U Tennis Europe Summer or Winter Cup participant
14U Junior National Championships Semi-Finalist 16U Junior National Championships Winner	14U Junior National Championships Semi-Finalist 16U Finalist

The support

- A financial grant up to £5,000 to contribute towards the cost of attending an agreed 14+ performance tennis programme
- National coach support, including but not limited to, IDP creation, mid-year and end-of-year reviews

- Invites to any National Junior Support which may include camps and trips

5.8.2 Evaluation of player suitability for National Junior Grants

When considering whether a player will be awarded a National Junior Grant, the LTA Panel will be asked to vote as to whether they believe the player displays super strengths and room for development in alignment with this goal and should thus be awarded a National Junior Grant. To do this they will consider the following areas from the NA selection discussion and determine in which, if any, the player displays super strengths relevant to future grand slam level tennis:

- **Strengths & Weapons:** The player has current strengths which can be developed into successful weapons at GSQ level consistent with their game style.
- **Athlete:** The player has standout athletic qualities which can be developed into grand slam level physical attributes by gender that would positively influence the outcome of matches.
- **Performance:** The player has a handful of highly competitive international results against players of a higher level than themselves, which indicate the capability to compete at a higher level as an international junior.

Grants will only be awarded subject to the player securing and maintaining a place on the agreed 14+ programme and subject to an IDP being completed between all three parties.

6. Key Dates – all relate to 2026

- 20 March – deadline for MPCC to be met for longlisting
- 20 March- 27 March – Nominating Window
- By 31 March – Shortlisted players will be communicated to.
- Visits to LUNTA arranged
- By 14 April – Shortlisted players to apply to the National Academy
- Week commencing 21 April – Selection Meeting to take place

To arrange your visit to LUNTA, please contact Nadia Rawson the Programme Coordinator on N.Rawson@lboro.ac.uk.

7. Appeals

Applicants who have been shortlisted but have not then been offered a place at a National Academy are entitled to appeal against the decision.

Such an appeal is to be made in writing (with full reasons) within 7 days of receiving the written decision and sent to mary.joyner@lta.org.uk This appeal will then be reviewed by a panel that will be chaired by a member of the LTA's Executive Team and will be made up of one representative from the LTA and one representative from Loughborough University National Tennis Academy who have not been part of the player selection process.

An appeal can only be made on one or both of the following grounds:

- a. There has been a failure by the selection panel to follow this selection policy (i.e. there has been a procedural defect); and / or
- b. The decision has been reached on the basis of an error of fact.

The Appeals Panel can decide either:

1. To set aside the selection panel's decision as it was based on an error of fact or procedurally flawed and remit the matter to the selection panel for reconsideration; or
2. To uphold the selection panel's decision.

Should a decision be set aside and be re-considered by the selection panel which has an effect on a selection decision taken in relation to another player, that decision in relation to the other player may also be re-considered and changed if necessary.

For the avoidance of doubt, players who are not shortlisted for any reason, including not receiving a nomination as outlined in 3.4.4 are not eligible to appeal.