

Selection Policy: National Academy for 2024/2025

1. Introduction

This policy describes how players will be selected for a place at the National Academy for the 2024/2025 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 the National Academy term (i.e. by age 19-21).

From September 2024 there will be 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 3.1-3.4 below:

3.1 Age eligibility

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

- born between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2011 inclusive.

In exceptional circumstances, players outside these age ranges outlined above (but not younger than 11 years on 1 September 2024) 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. Those not meeting this stipulation, but who have lived in Great Britain continuously since 1 January 2022, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such players must contact PlayerPathway@lta.org.uk by 19 February 2024 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 in order to be longlisted for consideration for National Coach nominations. A player must then receive a minimum of two nominations from LTA National Coaches in order to be shortlisted:

3.4.1 The player was selected for the Men's & Women's Programme (MWP)/16U NAGP or the 14U NAGP as a Scholar in 2023 or 2024;

3.4.2 The player achieved one of the following results between 1 March 2023 and 31 March 2024:

- a) Main draw singles final at an LTA National 12U and/or 14U G1 or G2 tournament;
- b) Main draw singles semi final at an 12U TE category 1 tournament;
- c) Main draw singles semi final at an 14U TE category 2 or above;
- d) Main draw semi final of an ITF junior event in Europe;

3.4.3 The player met the following ITF Junior World ranking criteria at any point between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2024:

Boys

15 th year (2009s)	16 th year (2008s)	17 th year (2007s)
ITF Juniors Top 2000	ITF Juniors Top 1000	ITF Juniors Top 400

Girls

15 th year (2009s)	16 th year (2008s)	17 th year (2007s)
ITF Juniors Top 1000	ITF Juniors Top 500	ITF Juniors Top 250

3.4.4 A player who reaches the singles final at the U16 National Championships (in 2024) will automatically be shortlisted for selection and would not require LTA National Coach nominations.

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.

The National Coaches (this could include National Age Group Coaches or RPDC Network Lead from the Pathway team or Coaches from the Men's & Women's teams) will nominate players between 1 April and 5 April (the "Nominating Window"). They will nominate eligible players who they believe have the potential to fulfil the programme purposes. In making a nomination, the nominator must use match observations from relevant international and/or domestic events between 1 March 2023 and 31 March 2024. 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).

3.5 Programme visits

All longlisted players (or those likely to meet longlisting requirements) will be able to arrange a visit to LUNTA on Saturday 16th March. Please contact Andjelka Grubisic, LUNTA administrator, directly to arrange this via A.Grubisic@lboro.ac.uk or to ask about an alternative date if you are unable to attend the above or are not longlisted until after this date.

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 take at least a visit to the National Academy in order to be considered for an MWP or NAGP U16 scholarship (in line with the criteria in the MWP Selection Policy).

3.6 Number of places

The number of places available in 2024 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

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 8 April 2024. 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 15 April 2024.

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 2011 and 2012 who are already receiving support will continue to receive their current level of support through the 14U NAGP until the next selection point for this programme;
- Those born in 2009 and 2010 may be considered for an NAGP 16U Scholarship. Selection for a Scholarship 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 15 April 2024 will be evaluated by the Selection Panel (the Panel).

The Panel will meet the week commencing 22 April 2024. 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 Manager at LUNTA

The Chair may ask additional members of the LTA Performance Team to attend the selection meeting in order 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 Academies.

When evaluating a player against these factors, the Panel 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 2023 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 the fit into the 'open' spaces of the LUNTA player base):

- Players who meet purpose A as outlined in section 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 for 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 Alternative Support Available for shortlisted players

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 may not accept the space or there may be more players than spaces available therefore in these instances, there may be alternative support available.

NAGP U16 List

Any shortlisted player who does not get selected or does not accept their space will be included on the NAGP U16 support list. Support for this group of players may include:

- National camps
- International Trips

Allocation of NAGP U16 Scholarship :

Players will only be considered for NAGP U16 support if they meet The National Academy selection criteria and are deemed to be on track to meet purpose A as outlined above.

A scholarship will only be awarded in this instance if the player chooses not to attend the National Academy as agreed with the Head of Men's/Women's Tennis or their nominee and subject to available budget and an appropriate programme being agreed.

Players selected onto the NAGP U16 from the National Academy Selection Meeting will be given contracts of between 12 – 24 months, and only up to the end of their 15th year.

5.6 Next stages following National Academy

For existing NA players at the end of their National Academy term who graduate or in agreement with the NA and HOMT/HOWT leave the National Academy may be considered for a MWP scholarship (if 16+) and met the shortlisting criteria for the MWP in November 2023 at the time of the MWP selection meeting and meet the selection criteria either at the time of the MWP selection meeting or at the NA selection meeting.

6. Key Dates – all relate to 2024

16 March – visits to LUNTA can be arranged for this date

31 March – deadline for MPCC to be met for longlisting

1 April - 5 April – Nominating Window

By 8 April – Short listed players will be communicated to.

By 15 April – Short listed players to apply to the National Academy

Week commencing 22 April – Selection Meeting to take place

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 sophie.disley@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 each of the LTA and Loughborough University 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 are not eligible to appeal.