

National Academy Player Selection Policy

1. Introduction

The National Academies provide inspiring, pro-style training environments for players normally aged 14-18. There are two National Academies, the GB National Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling and Loughborough University National Tennis Academy.

This document outlines the criteria and process for players who wish to attend a National Academy in the autumn term of 2020. Should you have a query regarding the National Academy Player Selection Policy, please email Playerpathway@lta.org.uk.

The LTA may amend this policy periodically. Any amended policy shall be published on the LTA website.

2. Number of places

In 2020/21 there will be a maximum of 12 places available at each National Academy. The number of players selected in 2020/21 will be influenced by the number of players currently attending a National Academy. Based on current attendance it is therefore expected that a maximum of 8 players, (4 into each academy) may be selected for a National Academy for 2020/21. There is no obligation to fill every available place.

3. Eligibility

To be considered for a place at a National Academy players must be of an eligible age (3.1), be eligible to represent Great Britain (3.2) and have met the requisite performance level requirements (3.3), as follows:

3.1 Age eligibility.

For a player to be considered eligible they must be born between the dates outlined below. This will normally mean players entering Years 9-12 (or S2-S5 in Scotland) on 1 September 2020 will be considered eligible.

Differences in age eligibility between the academies exist due to the differences in academic school years between England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Player age eligibility by academy is as follows with specific information displayed in Table 1:

- For Loughborough University National Tennis Academy – born between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2007 inclusive.
- For GB National Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling – born between 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2007 inclusive.

	Eligible for Loughborough University National Tennis Academy only
	Eligible for both academies
	Eligible for GB national Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling only

Year of Birth	Month of Birth											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2002												
2003									Going into year 12 on 1/9/20			
2004	Going into year 12 / S5 on 1/9/20								Going into year 11 / S5 on 1/9/20			
2005	Going into year 11 / S4 on 1/9/20								Going into year 10 / S4 on 1/9/20			
2006	Going into year 10 / S3 on 1/9/20								Going into year 9 / S3 on 1/9/20			
2007	Going into year 9 / S2 on 1/9/20								Going into S2 on 1/9/20			
2008												

Table 1 shows age eligibility for each National Academy dependent on the player's month and year of birth. The school year that the player will be entering (including Scottish school years) on 1 September 2020 is indicated for information.

In exceptional circumstances, players who are younger than the age range outlined above (but not younger than 11 years on 1 September 2020) may be considered. These players must fulfil the requirements set out in sections 3.2 and 3.3 and be able to have the appropriate educational requirements, pastoral care and / or parental supervision facilitated dependent on the player's age.

In addition, players who are born between 1 September and 31 December 2003 and are educated in England, Wales or Northern Ireland may still be considered for a place at GB National Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling provided they fulfil the requirements set out in sections 3.2 and 3.3.

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 October 2018, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such players must contact PlayerPathway@lta.org.uk by 1 January 2020 to confirm they would like to be considered.

3.3 Performance level requirements

In addition to 3.1 and 3.2, to be eligible for a place at a National Academy a player must fulfil either of the requirements outlined in 3.3.1 or 3.3.2.

3.3.1 National Age-Group Programme Player Scholarship recipients

All eligible players who are in receipt of a National Age-Group Programme (NAGP) or Men's & Women's Programme (M&WP) Scholarship from 1 January 2020 will automatically be considered by the selection panel for a place at the National Academy unless the player (and parents/legal guardian) has expressed that they do not want to be considered for a place at a National Academy.

3.3.2 Players not in receipt of a NAGP Player Scholarship

All eligible players who have been selected for at least one NAGP U14 or M&WP (referred to as NAGP 14+ in 2019) National camp or official trip (not including team friendlies) between 1 April 2019 and 7 February 2020 will be considered by the selection panel for a place at the National Academy if they receive a minimum of 2 nominations from different coaches from at least two of the following (together known as the 'Nominating Coaches')

1. An LTA National Age Group Coach; and / or
2. An LTA National Coach from the Men's and Women's team; and / or
3. A coach at the GB National Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling; and / or
4. A coach at the Loughborough University National Tennis Academy.

The Nominating Coaches will put forward players who they believe have the potential to be selected for a National Academy, with nominations based on observations at the following events and/or activity between 1 October 2019 and 3 February 2020 (the nominating window):

- Tennis Europe and ITF junior or pro circuit events;
- LTA grade 1 and 2 domestic events;
- National Age-Group Programme camps and trips;
- Regional Training;
- National Academy visits¹.

After the nomination window has closed, the selection panel (as outlined in section 7.1) will convene to confirm those players shortlisted for selection. Only shortlisted players will be notified. It is possible that more players will be considered for selection than there are places available at the National Academies.

¹ At the discretion of a National Academy, eligible players (see 3.1 and 3.2) may be invited to undertake a single visit of up to three days to either programme. Visits are by invitation only and for those who have attended the activity identified in 3.3.2.

5. Communication of shortlist

Shortlisted players will receive a National Academy application pack by 7 February 2020. If a player does not receive an application pack by 10 February 2020 then they have not been shortlisted for a place at a National Academy.

This pack will include information on each National Academy and an invitation to visit each for an open day (see Section 8 for provisional dates). It is recommended that all shortlisted players (along with their parents/legal guardian) that have an interest in attending a National Academy visit both programmes. In the interests of ensuring availability to attend the National Academy open days we recommend that players hold the dates outlined in section 8 in their diaries.

6. Player application

Following the open days the shortlisted players must then apply for a place at a National Academy by 13 March 2020. Within this, they will be asked to specify if:

1. They are applying to both the GB National Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling and the Loughborough University National Tennis Academy (with an order of preference);
2. They are only applying to the Loughborough University National Tennis Academy; or
3. They are only applying to the GB National Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling.

If a player only applies for one National Academy and there are more applications than there are places available, the player **may not** be offered a place. If a player applies to both National Academies, they may not be successful in achieving a place at their first choice but they **will be** eligible for a place at their second choice if there are still places available.

7. Selection process

All shortlisted players who submit an application for a National Academy will be evaluated by the selection panel ("The Panel").

7.1 Selection panel

The Panel will consist of the following (or their nominees):

- LTA Performance Director
- LTA Head of Men's Tennis
- LTA Head of Women's Tennis
- An independent Tennis Expert (typically a leading coach or former player)
- Loughborough University National Tennis Academy Head Coach
- Loughborough University National Tennis Academy Manager
- GB National Tennis Academy Head Coach
- GB National Tennis Academy Manager

The Head of National Performance Pathway will chair the Panel – the chair will not have a vote. 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. If a member of the LTA Performance Team is invited by the Chair to attend the selection meeting then they will not have a vote. In addition, a member of the LTA's legal team may attend the meeting to advise on procedural issues and adherence to the policy but shall not have voting rights.

7.2 Evaluation of player suitability

The selection panel will use its professional opinion to consider which players have the greatest potential to meet the Pro Scholarship Programme (PSP) selection criteria between the ages of 16-18 (see PSP policy for more details [click here](#)).

All players that fulfil the eligibility criteria set out in section 3 of this policy and who have applied for a place at a National Academy will be considered. The panel will consider the factors listed below:

- **Game style:** The player has an all-round game which can be developed into a clearly defined game style that could be successful at the next stage of the pathway.
- **Strengths & Weapons:** The player has emerging strengths and weapons which can be developed and could be successful at the next stage of the pathway.
- **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 influence the outcome of matches at the next stage of the pathway.
- **Performance:** The player has a competitive results profile (within international events in current year of birth or above) and a capability to beat players of a higher level than themselves.

When evaluating a player against these areas, the Panel will reflect on the events and/or activity listed in 3.3.2 for the period between October 2019 and the selection meeting².

At this point, whilst a decision may be made on the player's suitability for a place at a National Academy, player selection is not confirmed until they have been allocated a place at one of the National Academies.

7.2.1 Considerations relating to limiting factors

When discussing the areas identified in 7.2, the Panel may also take into account any of the following factors that may influence their opinion on the player's potential to meet the PSP selection criteria between the ages of 16-18:

- the player's age and physical maturation;
- the player's training programme and tournament schedule;
- an injury and/or illnesses that led to a significant impact on tennis;
- a life event that led to a significant interruption on tennis.

7.3 Allocation of places

The Panel will allocate suitable players to each of the National Academy programmes. In allocating places, the following will be taken into consideration (in no particular order):

- The places available at each National Academy for 2020/21;
- The preferences of each player applying;
- The panel discussion during the selection meeting; and
- The expert judgement and preferences of the National Academy Head Coaches.

8. Key Dates

Shortlisted player will receive a National Academy application pack by 7 February 2020 and open days are currently scheduled to take place on the following dates:

- 27 February 2020: Open day 1 at Loughborough University National Tennis Academy.
- 29 February 2020: Open day 1 at GB National Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling.
- 1 March 2020: Open day 2 at Loughborough University National Tennis Academy open.
- 5 March 2020: Open day 2 at GB National Tennis Academy at the University of Stirling.

The application deadline for shortlisted players is 13 March 2020.

² Where a Shortlisted player has moved out of the U14 age-category the Panel may also reflect on activity between July 2019 and October 2019 as well.

The Panel will meet the week commencing 23 March 2020 with all selected players advised by 30 March if they will be offered a place at National Academy.

Dates may be subject to change and any changes will be communicated as required.

9. Appeals

Applicants who have been considered for selection but have not then been offered a place at a National Academy are entitled to appeal against the selection panel's decision. Such an appeal is to be made in writing (with full reasons) within 72 hours 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, Loughborough University and Tennis Scotland 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.

10. Late applicants

For the year 2020/21, if less than 8 places have been filled; players will be able to apply one month before the National Academy programmes start (a "Late Application"). Only (i) players who were originally shortlisted but did not apply; or (ii) players who were selected but only applied to one of the National Academies and were not awarded a place due to more players applying to that programme than there were places available will be eligible to make a Late Application. A Late Application place will only be offered if the school can accommodate the player, both from a timetabling and a housing perspective, at the last minute. If more players submit a Late Application than there are places available then the selection panel will consider all Late Applicants and use their expert judgement of those most suitable for a place at a National Academy.