

National Age Group Programme Annual Player Agreements Selection Criteria and Process

1. Introduction

The National Age Group Programme (NAGP) is focused on providing exceptional training, learning and competition opportunities for Britain's best juniors. The objective of the programme is to support the development of players so that they fulfil the selection criteria for the Pro-Scholarship Programme; for players U12 and U14 in the next 2-4 years and for 14-20 in the next 1-2 years.

The NAGP has 3 core parts:

1. National Camps;
2. LTA Official Trips and junior representation for Great Britain; and
3. NAGP Annual Player Agreements subject to selection.

This document outlines the selection criteria and process for the NAGP Annual Player Agreements. Further information on National Camp and Official Trip selection will be published on the LTA website, together with a quarterly schedule of events for each age group on an ongoing basis from December 2017.

2. Outline

The NAGP Annual Player Agreements are an intensive programme of player support targeted at GB's most promising young players. It is targeted at those players who, using multiple sources of evidence, are demonstrating the head, heart, legs and weapons to transition onto the Pro-Scholarship Programme.

We will work in collaboration with the player and their team to establish and support the delivery of a world class individual development plan through a financial grant, visits from a National Coach and Sports Science/Sports Medicine support.

In 2018 there will be places on the programme for up to 8 boys and 8 girls aged 11-13 on 31/12/17 (further referred to as U12 and U14); and up to 6 boys and 6 girls aged 14-20 on 31/12/17 (further referred to as 14+). The selection process for these places outlined later in this document will be transparent and rigorous. Those players selected for a NAGP Annual Player Agreement will be eligible to:

- receive a funding grant to support their coaching programme;
- receive a minimum of 6 site visits per year from their designated National Coach;
- receive Sports Science/Sports Medicine screenings and programme support; and
- attend National Camps (both at NTC and overseas).

Further headline details of the NAGP are given in table 1.

Table 1: The NAGP Annual Player Agreement

Stage of pathway	National Performance Pathway (U14), Pro Tour Pathway (14+).
Objective	Enable more players to meet the selection criteria for the Pro Scholarship Programme (in the next 1-2 years for players 14+ and in the next 2-4 years for players U12 and U14).
Player selection	Centrally selected by LTA selection panel.
Number of players	Up to 8 boys and 8 girls in U12 and U14. Up to 6 boys and 6 girls 14+.

Age of players	11 to 20 on 31/12/17.
LTA case management	Each player will be case managed by an LTA National Junior Coach (U12 and U14) or LTA National Coach from the Men's and Women's Tennis Teams (14+).
Player review	Formally twice per year.
Funding support	Player grants will be up to a maximum of £10K per annum for players U12 and U14; and normally up to £10K (but up to a maximum of £15K*) for players 14+. *This higher upper limit reflects the increasing programme demands as players get older.
Programme activity	All selected players will be automatically selected for National Camps in their age group, attendance of which is a requirement of ongoing support from this programme.

3. Eligibility

The following players are eligible to apply:

- Players aged between 11 and 20 (inclusive) on 31/12/17.

Players must be eligible to represent Great Britain.

4. Application and shortlisting process

Automatic shortlisting

In order to objectively short list players in accordance with the purpose of the NAGP, the following criteria will be applied to each of the different age categories to determine which players will be automatically shortlisted and then considered for selection:

1. Players aged 11-13 (on 31/12/17) who have been selected for one of the following NAGP activities at U12 or U14:
 - A National Junior Camp held between September and December 2017;
 - LTA official trip in 2017 (see Appendix 1); and/or
 - GB team at the Winter Cup, Summer Cup and/or European Championships in 2017.
2. Players aged 14-15 (on 31/12/17) who have been selected for two or more of the following NAGP activities at U14, U16 or U18:
 - A National Junior Camp held between September and December 2017;
 - LTA official trip in 2017 (see Appendix 1); and/or
 - GB team at the Winter Cup, Summer Cup and/or European Championships in 2017.
3. Players aged 16-20 (on 31/12/17) who fulfil the following ranking criteria* (at any time between the 31st July 2017 and the selection meeting (inclusive)). The ages referred to in the table below are the age of the player on 31st December 2017.

Women

Age	16	17	18	19	20
Shortlisting Target	ITF 120 or WTA 1200	ITF 75 or WTA 800	ITF 50 or WTA 700	WTA 600	WTA 450

Men

Age	16	17	18	19	20
Shortlisting Target	ITF 180	ITF 100 or ATP 1500	ITF 75 or ATP 1200	ATP 800	ATP 600

*Ranking criteria are being applied for players aged 16+ to mirror the shortlisting process for the Pro Scholarship Programme and to reflect the increasing importance of results against international benchmarks at this age and as the player progresses along the pathway.

The shortlisting ranking targets have been created using a combination of the following evidence sources:

- The expert opinions of the National Junior and Men's and Women's Coaching Teams;
- An analysis of current players on the ATP / WTA / ITF ranking (based on the ranking at the 3rd October 2017) broken down by age and ranking bracket; and
- Unpublished LTA research from 2013 which tracks the annual ranking progression of players who have reached and then consolidated their year-end ranking for 4 years or more in either the ATP / WTA top 300.

Based on the evidence, these targets also reflect the difference between men's and women's tennis and the current distribution of players of each age and gender within each of the ranking brackets on the ITF, ATP and WTA rankings.

Players who meet these shortlisting criteria (from any of the age categories) must confirm via e-mail (stating their full name and date of birth) to Sophie Thomas (Sophie.thomas@lta.org.uk) that they would like to be considered for selection by 5pm on Friday 1st December.

Discretionary shortlisting

It is also recognised that there could be some outliers to the automatic shortlisting criteria. To ensure our system reflects this, each junior National Age Group Captain (U12 and U14) and Senior National Coach for Men's Tennis and National Coach for Women's Tennis (14+) will be able to make the following discretionary nominations:

- 2 boys and 2 girls for players in U12 and U14 to the U14 Regional and National Junior Programme Manager.
- 2 males and 2 females for players aged 14+ to the Head of Pro Tour Pathway.

Any players not meeting the shortlisting criteria who would like to be considered for such a nomination must e-mail (stating their full name and date of birth) Sophie Thomas (Sophie.thomas@lta.org.uk) by 5pm on Friday 1st December.

In their nominations, the National Age Group Captain (U12 and U14) and Senior National Coach for Men's Tennis and National Coach for Women's Tennis (14+) must present using the relevant evidence sources:

- a) Why the player has not achieved the shortlisting criteria; and
- b) Why they believe the player has the potential to meet the NAGP selection criteria for 2018.

For b) the supporting evidence may include:

- A recommendation from the Talent Performance Manager for U12 players;
- A recommendation from the 14&U National Junior Coach or Head Coach of Men's or Women's Tennis for players 14+;

- A minimum of 3 match / scouting reports which demonstrate a likelihood of the player meeting the selection criteria; and
- Significant results in grade 1 or 2 domestic competition or TE / ITF international junior events.

These nominations will be considered by the U14 Regional and National Age Group Programme Manager (U12 and U14) and the Head of Pro Tour Pathway (14+) who will meet on or around 3rd December to make a decision on which if any, discretionary nominees will be shortlisted based on the information supplied to them. Only players who receive a discretionary nomination will be notified of the outcome.

Exceptional circumstances

If a player has had a long term injury / illness (minimum of 3 months) during 2017 and they do not meet the shortlisting criteria, then they must email Sophie Thomas by 5pm on 1st December:

- details of the injury including the full period missed; and
- medical / physio reports confirming the injury.

The U14 Regional and National Age Group Programme Manager, Head of Pro Tour Pathway and the Head of Science and Medicine will then consider the evidence and impact of the injury and decide whether in the absence of this factor they believe that the player would likely have met the automatic shortlisting criteria. If that is deemed to be the case then the player will be shortlisted due to exceptional circumstances. If not, then they will be notified accordingly.

4. Selection process

- *Selection panel*

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

- U14 Regional & National Age Group Programme Manager.
- Senior National Coach (Men's Tennis).
- National Coach (Women's Tennis).
- Head of Pro Tour Pathway.

At the discretion of the Head of Pro Tour Pathway, the selection panel may also have an independent Pro Tennis expert (typically a leading coach, senior administrator or former player). The Head of Pro Tour Pathway will chair the selection panel. The chair may nominate additional members of the LTA Performance Team to the selection panel to provide further relevant experience from time to time.

The Head of Men's Tennis and the Head of Women's Tennis will be consulted prior to the selection meeting on selections of players aged 14+.

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. A member of the LTA Performance Team may also be invited by the chair to attend and record selection decisions.

- *Selection criteria*

The selection criteria below will be applied with consideration to the overall objective of the NAGP (specifically the likelihood of a player achieving the selection criteria for the PSP in the next 1-2 years (for players 14+) and in the next 2-4 years (for players U12 and U14). This is as follows:

- All shortlisted players will be evaluated against the criteria outlined below.

- Players who successfully achieve four or more of the criteria will be deemed to have met the selection criteria.
- One of the four criteria must be number 2 in the case of U12 and U14 and number 3 in the case of 14+.
- Where there are more players who meet the criteria than there are places available, players will be placed in rank order based on the number of the criteria that they meet.
- If there is a still a tie, then the chair of the selection panel will have the casting vote taking into consideration the evidence presented and the likelihood of the player achieving the selection criteria for the PSP in the next 1-2 years for players 14+ and in the next 2-4 years for players U12 and U14.

Age: U12 and U14

1. The player has emerging strengths which can be developed into a game style that has the potential for success at future stages of the pathway.
2. The player fights and competes unconditionally in competitive and training situations.
3. The player consistently applies a highly professional attitude and has the ability to cope with the level, volume and intensity of training for their age and stage.
4. The player has physical attributes that either:
 - a) overall positively influence performance and the outcome of matches; or
 - b) demonstrate excellent physical qualities (based on physical testing) for their age and stage.
5. The player consistently on-court makes good decisions, finds solutions (and ways to win) and retains focus in all match situations in order to progress to the next stage of the pathway.
6. The player is committed to a training plan that has the appropriate volume and intensity for elite performance and that targets any limitations identified during observations.

Age: 14+

1. The player has consistently demonstrated an evolving game style which has the potential to be successful at the next stage of the pathway.
2. The player has emerging weapons (consistent with their game style) which can be successful now and at the next stage of the pathway.
3. The player fights and competes unconditionally in competitive and training situations.
4. The player consistently applies a highly professional attitude and has the ability to cope with the level, volume and intensity of training for their age and stage.
5. The player has physical attributes that either:
 - a) overall positively influence performance and the outcome of matches; or
 - b) demonstrate excellent physical qualities (based on physical testing) for their age and stage.
6. The player consistently on-court makes good decisions, finds solutions (and ways to win) and retains focus in all match situations.
7. The player is committed to a training plan that has the appropriate volume and intensity for elite performance and that targets any limitations identified during observations.

The Selection Panel will meet on or around Tuesday 19th December to consider all shortlisted players for selection.

Calculating the level of support

Once selection decisions have been reached, the selection panel will consider the level of financial grant that will be offered to each successful player. This will be determined by the age category of the player (and the maximum grant level available for that age band), the current and potential performance level of the player, consideration of the proposed training and competition plan and the overall NAGP budget.

7. Communication of selection / non-selection

All shortlisted players will be notified of a decision on or around Thursday 21st December. Players who are shortlisted but not selected will be given reasons why they have not been selected.

8. Appeals

Applicants who have not been selected by the panel are entitled to appeal against the selection panel's decision. Such an appeal is to be made within 14 days of the player being notified of the decision in writing to the Performance Director (the Appeal Chair) (or their nominee) of the LTA but only on one 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); or
- b. the decision has been reached on the basis of an error of fact.

The Appeal Chair shall consider the player's appeal and may have a member of the LTA Legal Team in attendance to advise on this policy and its application. The Appeal Chair 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 of the player's contractual status to the selection panel; 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.

9. Agreement and Programme induction

All selected players must sign the LTA's NAGP player agreement in order to receive any benefits selected players are eligible to receive. All selected players will be expected to attend a profiling session and a programme induction at the NTC during January 2018. This will be a multi-disciplinary process and will be led by the U14 Regional and National Programme Manager and the LTA Senior Performance Lifestyle Advisor for U12 and U14 and the Head of Pro Tour Pathway and the LTA Senior Performance Lifestyle Advisor for 14+. This will clearly explain the relationship between the LTA and the player for the duration of the NAGP Annual Player Agreement as well as highlighting what players should expect from LTA support team as a NAGP player. If players would like to know more about this prior to entering the selection process then please contact Sophie Thomas (Sophie.thomas@lta.org.uk).

10. Key dates

- Player opt in and submissions for exceptional circumstances close on Friday 1st December at 5pm.
- The shortlisting process will be completed on or around 8th December.
- The Selection Panel will meet on or around 19th December to consider all shortlisted players for selection.
- All shortlisted players will be notified of a decision on or around 21st December.

Appendix 1

List of eligible 2017 LTA Official Trips

U12	
Tennis Europe Winter Cup	January
Open Super 12 Auray	February
Les Pitchouns	March
Tennis Europe Summer Cup	July/August

U14	
Les Petits As, Tarbes	January
Tennis Europe Winter Cup	February
Zaba Cup & Salona Open, Croatia TE x 2 (Boys)	April
XXIX Trofeo 'Carlo Stagno D'Alcontres' , Italy TE	June
Tennis Europe Summer Cup	July
Tennis Europe European Champs	August
Eddie Herr and Orange Bowl International Tennis Championship	December

U16	
Tennis Europe Winter Cup	February
IV ITF Junior GRIP2 Tennis Academy Vinaros and XI ITF Junior GRIP2 Tennis Academy Benicarlo, Spain ITF's	March
Tennis Europe European Champs	July
Tennis Europe Summer Cup	August
6º Torneo Internacional Junior de Pontevedra and 16º Torneo Internacional Junior de Sanxenxo - Fuente Liviana, Spain ITF's	October
Delhi November ITF Juniors and MSLTA-Gadre Seafoods ITF Junior Championship, India ITF's	December