

National Age Group Programme Scholarships Selection Policy for 14+

1. Introduction

The National Age Group Programme (NAGP) 14+ is a key stepping stone for junior players as they progress through the LTA Player Pathway. It is designed to provide exceptional training, learning and international competition opportunities for high potential players aged 14-21 who do not attend National Academies, or for players aged 18-21 who may fulfil the selection criteria for the Pro Scholarship Programme (PSP) in the next 1-2 years.

The NAGP 14+ has 3 core parts:

1. National Camps;
2. LTA Official Trips and junior representation for Great Britain; and
3. NAGP Annual Player Scholarships

This document outlines the selection criteria and process for the NAGP Annual Player Scholarships only (referred to in this document as “the NAGP”). Further information on National Camp and Official Trip selections is published on the LTA website, together with a quarterly schedule of events for each age group.

2. Benefits

The LTA Men’s and Women’s coaching teams will work in collaboration with the player and their team to establish and support the delivery of a world class individual development plan (IDP) to help optimise player progression. In addition, players selected for the NAGP will be eligible to:

- Receive a funding grant up to £25,000 to support their coaching programme;
- Receive frequent visits from their designated National Coach;
- Receive Sports Science/Sports Medicine screenings and programme support; and
- Attend National Camps (both at the NTC and overseas).

3. Number of places

There are no minimum or maximum number of places available on the NAGP. There is however a fixed budget which will determine the number of players who are selected. The Selection Panel are not obliged to allocate in full the budget available.

Acceptance of a place on the NAGP is encouraged but optional. If a player chooses to decline the offer for any reason they will not be restricted from selection to represent Great Britain or selection to attend National Camps, but there will be no formal programme support available.

4. Eligibility

The following players are eligible to apply:

- Players aged between 14 and 20 (inclusive) on 31/12/18; and
- Eligible to represent Great Britain

4.1 Non British passport holders

Those players who do not currently hold a British passport, but who are eligible for one, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such players who are interested in a place on the NAGP must email playerpathway@lta.org.uk by 2 November 2018 and provide: 1) evidence on how they are eligible for a British passport, 2) where they are in the process of obtaining a British passport, and 3) details of

their tennis background.

5. Consideration for selection

5.1 Existing player selection

All players who were awarded an NAGP Annual Player Scholarships in 2018 will be automatically considered for selection if they are aged 14 or 15 (on 31/12/18). Players aged 16-20 inclusive (on 31/12/18) who were awarded an NAGP agreement in 2018 will also be considered for selection as long as they have met the minimum physical standard (as outlined in section 5.4).

5.2 New player selection

5.2.1 Players aged 14 on 31/12/18

The Selection Panel will consider up to 4 additional players, nominated by the National Performance Pathway Team, providing they 1) satisfy the eligibility criteria outlined in point 4 and, 2) they attended a National Camp or an Official Trip between January 2018 and the date of selection.

In making such nominations, the Lead National Age-Group Coach will outline, with reference to the criteria in section 6, why they believe a player should be considered taking into account the following:

- Performance at National Camps and on official LTA trips between 1 January 2018 and the selection date;
- Performance at Regional Training between March 2018 and the selection date;

5.2.2 Players aged 15 on 31/12/18

All players who meet the ranking criteria outlined below (section 5.3) will be automatically considered for selection. In addition, the National Coach for Men's Tennis and the National Coach for Women's Tennis can nominate up to 2 players to the Head of Pro Tour Pathway for consideration by 2 November 2018. In making such nominations, the National Coaches must outline, with reference to the selection criteria (section 6.2) why they believe a player should be considered taking into account the following:

- Performance at National Camps and on official LTA trips between 1 January 2018 and the selection date;
- Existing scouting data based on matches observed in 2018; and
- Results in ITF junior events and Tennis Europe sanctioned team competitions

All players who receive a national coach nomination will be notified in writing by 5 November 2018.

5.2.3 Players aged 16-20 inclusive on 31/12/18

All players who meet the ranking criteria outlined below (section 5.3) will be considered for selection if they also meet the minimum physical requirements outlined in 5.4. The National Coach for Men's Tennis and the National Coach for Women's Tennis may also nominate up to 2 players to the Head of Pro Tour Pathway for consideration by 2 November 2018. In making such nominations, the National Coaches must outline, with reference to the selection criteria (section 6.2) why they believe a player should be considered taking into account the following:

- Performance at National Camps and on official LTA trips between January 1st 2018 and the selection date;
- Existing scouting data based on matches observed in 2018; and

- Results in ITF grade A, 1 and 2, ITF Pro Circuit and ATP events.

All players who receive a national coach nomination will be notified in writing by 5 November 2018.

5.3 Ranking criteria

Players aged 15-20 inclusive who have met the following ranking criteria at any point between 31 July and 30 October 2018 (inclusive) will be considered for selection. Players aged 16-20 inclusive must also have met the minimum physical standards at 5.4. The ages referred to in the tables below are the age of the player on 31 December 2018. There are no ranking targets for players aged 14 on 31 December 2018. Should any players aged 14 meet the ranking target for players aged 15 (or older) then they will have met the criteria and will be considered for selection. Otherwise they will need to be nominated in accordance with 5.2.1 in order to be considered for selection.

Women

15	16	17	18	19	20
ITF 500	ITF 150 or WTA 900	ITF 75 or WTA 750	ITF 25 or WTA 600	WTA 450	WTA 375

Men

15	16	17	18	19	20
ITF 1000	ITF 250	ITF 100 or ATP 1500	ITF 75 or ATP 1200	ATP 700	ATP 550

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 ITF junior ranking (based on the ranking at the 17 September 2018) broken down by age and ranking bracket; and
- A ranking prediction tool which establishes a level of probability that a player will reach a certain ranking in the future based on their current age and ranking. This takes into account all weekly ATP / WTA ranking data from January 2000 to July 2018.

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 on the ITF Junior, ATP and WTA rankings.

5.4 Physical requirements to be considered for selection

All players aged 16-20 inclusive (on 31/12/18) who have met the shortlisting ranking targets (5.3) or who have received a national coach nomination in accordance with 5.2.3 must then also meet the minimum physical standard (data collated on the screening day on the 23 September 2018 will be used). This has been included in the process to demonstrate the value the LTA place on athleticism and movement and to provide confidence in the player's capacity to tolerate the expected demands of the NAGP. If a player does not meet the minimum standard outlined below they will not be considered for selection even if they have met the ranking targets or received a discretionary nomination.

The minimum physical standard is linked to the LTA shuttle test (as described in appendix 1). Whilst this test is not meant to represent 'tennis specific fitness' it is used for this purpose as it gives the player

the opportunity to display the three key physical attributes of acceleration, change of direction and endurance which players need to display in both training and matches.

The minimum standards on the LTA shuttle test are:

Women: less than 175 seconds to complete the test; and

Men: less than 165 seconds to complete the test

Any players who have met the ranking targets but did not attend the NAGP screening day should contact Sam Kirk (Samantha.kirk@lta.org.uk) to arrange a date for testing to take place. Any player who receives a national coach nomination but did not attend the NAGP screening day (and has not attended another camp) will also need to arrange a date for testing between being informed of their National coach nomination and the selection meeting (between 5 and 16 November 2018). If a player receiving a National coach nomination can't arrange to be tested before the selection meeting, then any offer of support will be conditional and subject to the successful completion of the required physical test within three months of notification of selection.

Players must have been tested at the National Tennis Centre (NTC) within the 16 weeks prior to the selection date for the test result to be valid. Players can only be tested once.

5.5 Exceptional circumstances

If a player has had a long term injury / illness (minimum of 3 months) during 2018, or has missed a minimum of 3 months of the 2018 season for a non-performance reason (e.g. academic reasons) then they must supply in writing to the Head of Pro Tour Pathway and the Head of Science and Medicine (by 5pm on 1 November 2018 via e-mail to sophie.disley@lta.org.uk):

- Details of the injury / issue including the full period missed; and
- Medical / physio or other reports confirming the injury and / or reason for absence.

The Head of Pro Tour Pathway and the Head of Science and Medicine will then consider the evidence and impact of the injury or issue and decide whether this factor alone prevented the player from meeting the shortlisting targets. 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. For the avoidance of doubt, players with exceptional circumstances do not need to have met either the ranking targets in 5.3 or the minimum physical standards in 5.4.

All shortlisted players will then be considered for selection by the Selection Panel.

6. Selection process

6.1 Selection Panel

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

- Head of Pro Tour Pathway;
- Senior National Coach (Men's Tennis); and
- National Coach (Women's Tennis).

At the discretion of the Head of Pro Tour Pathway, the Selection Panel may also have an independent professional 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. If invited by the Head of Pro Tour Pathway to formally sit on the panel then they will have a vote.

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.

6.2 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):

1. **Game style:** The player has consistently demonstrated an evolving game style which has the potential to be successful at the next stage of the pathway.
2. **Weapons:** The player has emerging weapons (strengths) (consistent with their game style) which can be successful now and at the next stage of the pathway.
3. **Heart:** The player consistently shows the drive to succeed in competitive (and, where relevant) training situations.
4. **Head:** The player consistently demonstrates emotional regulation, smart decision making and a high level of focus at key moments in matches.
5. **Legs:** The player:
 - a) consistently displays physical attributes that positively affect the outcome of matches; or
 - b) demonstrates physical potential by meeting the B standard in all functional areas (as defined in appendix 2 and 3) * (based on physical testing completed within 16 weeks of the selection date); or
 - c) after physical testing (completed within 16 weeks of the selection date) there is robust data which indicates that, with a coherent plan, clause 5 (b) is likely to be achieved and there is a clear and evidence based reason (e.g. maturation / injury / illness) as to why this has not yet been achieved
6. **Programme:** 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.

* Paragraph 5(b) above will not be considered for players aged 14 or 15 on 31/12/18.

In order to formulate a decision on whether a player has achieved the criteria, the Panel will reflect on the following sources of information:

- Performance at National Camps or on LTA Official Trips between January 2018 and the selection date;
 - Existing scouting data, match and training reports from observations in 2018;
 - Results in ITF junior, ITF Pro Circuit, ATP / WTA or Tennis Europe team competitions; and LTA physical testing data
- Players who successfully achieve five or more of the criteria will be deemed to have met the selection criteria.
 - Players who have met the criteria will then be placed in a rank order.
 - Where players have met the same number of criteria, players will be placed in rank order taking into consideration the evidence presented during the selection panel meeting.
 - Should it be required, the Chair will have the casting vote to determine the rank order taking into consideration which players he believes are most likely to meet the selection criteria for the PSP in the next 1-2 years.

The Selection Panel will meet on or around 19 November 2018 to consider all shortlisted players for selection.

6.3 Calculating the level of support

Once the rank order list has been agreed, the Selection Panel will consider the level of financial

grant that will be offered to each player in turn until the maximum budget available has been reached. Once the maximum budget has been allocated, no more players will be offered an NAGP scholarship, even if they have met the criteria.

The level of the financial grant (up to a maximum of £25,000 per annum) will take into account the age of the player as well as consideration of the proposed training and competition plan and the overall NAGP budget.

A summary of the selection process in visual form is at appendix 4.

7. Communication of selection / non-selection

All shortlisted players will be notified of a decision within a week of the Selection Panel meeting. Players who have been considered 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.

For the avoidance of doubt, players who apply for but are not discretionarily shortlisted (as outlined in 5.2) are not eligible to appeal.

9. Agreement and Programme Induction

All selected players must sign the LTA's NAGP Annual Player Agreement in order to receive any benefits selected players are eligible to receive. All selected players will be expected to attend a programme induction at the NTC during from 5 – 9 January 2019. This will be a multi-disciplinary process and will be led by the Head of Pro Tour Pathway and the LTA Senior Performance Lifestyle Advisor. 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 Disley (Sophie.disley@lta.org.uk).

10. Key dates

- Players with exceptional circumstances to submit their applications by 1 November 2018 at 5pm.

- The National coach nominations and exceptional circumstances will be considered on or around 2 November 2018.
- Non British passport holders to email information by 2 November 2018.
- All physical testing to be completed by 16 November 2018.
- The Selection Panel will meet on or around 19 November to consider all shortlisted players for selection.
- All shortlisted players will be notified of a decision within 7 days of the selection panel meeting.

Appendix 1 – Description and protocol for the LTA Shuttle test

The LTA Shuttle test is described and completed as follows:

- The athlete begins the test stood behind the baseline
- When ready they complete 10 court lengths as quickly as possible.
- They must always turn towards the centre of the court and the outside leg must go past each baseline
- After completing 10 lengths the athlete takes 90 seconds rest
- This is completed 3 times
- Each repetition time is recorded and added together to give a total shuttle time

Appendix 2 – Explanation of physical tests

Using the LTA's physical testing protocol, all players who are being considered for selection will be evaluated against their testing results in three functional areas. These are as follows:

1. Repeated power control
2. Speed / court coverage and efficiency
3. Endurance

The tests that are part of the LTA's testing protocol are described in the table below. The table links each test to the functional area, how the test will be measured, the rationale for it and the reliability of the measure / test:

Tennis description	Physical area	Test	Measure	Rationale	Reliability
Repeated power control	Potential to generate force	Counter movement jump	Peak power / BW (W/kg)	The counter movement jump profiles the athlete's maximal leg extension power. This physical quality underpins explosive activities such as acceleration, deceleration and change of direction	ICC ≥ 0.98 and CV ≤ 9.4%, 2.3, (Hori et al,2009)
		Drop jump	RSI (Flight time / contact time)	The drop jump shows the ability of the athlete to develop maximal amount of force in the minimal amount of time. Given the nature of tennis movement this is crucial in underpinning acceleration and deceleration performance (Lockie et al, 2011, Young et al, 2015)	ICC ≥ 0.967, (Flanagan, 2008) and CV = 3.0%, 9Markwick et al, 2015 *)
Speed / Court coverage and efficiency	Potential for speed and change of direction	10m speed	10m speed (secs)	The ability to accelerate is a fundamental element of tennis performance. Data suggests that elite male tennis players may approach speeds of 7 m/s when running to a drop shot (Male, Hawkeye data) which means that would need to have a 10m score of approx. 1.7 – 1.8	0.02 s SEM and ~1% CV (Earp and Newton, 2012)
		Modified 5-0-5 change of direction	5-0-5 time (secs)	The ability to change direction is key element in tennis performance. The 5-0-5 test will assess the athlete's ability to perform a maximal 180° turn. While not 'tennis specific movement', research has been done which validates the 180° performance as a valid predictor of any change of direction >90° (Jess 2014, Final year theses). Data suggests that elite male players reach speeds of 6–7 m/s before they change direction by as much as 180° (Hawkeye data, Dunn, unpublished data, Whiteside et al, 2012). These speeds are consistent with data during the 5-0-5 (unpublished EIS data) and further validate the use of this test within tennis.	ICC = 0.951. Smallest detectable difference 3.97% (Barber et al, 2016)
Endurance	Ability to repeat speed and change of direction	LTA shuttle test	Total time (secs)	Research suggest that during and after a match there are reductions in running speed, maximal force production and leg stiffness (Reid and Duffield, 20140) due to repeated change of directions. The purpose of the test is not to replicate match play but to assess a players ability to repeat high intensity change of directions at speeds relative to match play.	ICC = 0.83. CV% = 3.2 (90% confidence limits), White et al, 2015 (Taken from 300yd shuttle test)

* Note - caution must be taken when comparing DJ results between individuals and squads due to large discrepancies between actual drop height and platform height, Costley, 2017

Appendix 3 – A and B standards for physical testing

Based on the testing described in appendix 3, the table below shows by gender the level / score that the player needs to achieve to reach the A or B standard in each of the 3 functional areas:

		Repeated power control		Speed / Court coverage and efficiency			Endurance
		Potential to generate force		Potential for speed and change of direction			Ability to repeat speed and change of direction
		CMJ (PP/BW)	RSI	10m Speed	5-0-5 (Left)	5-0-5(Right)	Total Shuttle time
Female	A Standard	50	3	1.97	2.5	2.5	< 163 seconds
	B Standard	43	2.7	2.05	2.6	2.6	< 170 seconds
Male	A Standard	52	3	1.87	2.4	2.4	< 148 seconds
	B Standard	45	2.7	1.98	2.5	2.5	< 160 seconds

Appendix 4: NAGP Selection Policy Flowchart:

The flow diagram below is designed to show the stages in the selection process visually. This does not replace the written policy which would always override any discrepancy between the two documents.

