

Warwickshire County Hockey Association

Single System Manager – Stephen Tabb

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Development Centre – FAQs

***Please note that Development Centres are the new name for “Junior Development Centres” – they are not something completely different.**

Q. What is a Development Centre (DC)?

DCs are the first tier organised by the County in the Player Pathway e.g. the route for a player to develop through to their maximum potential. They are Coaching Centres based locally (there are currently 5 in Warwickshire situated in Coventry (Bablake Schools), Rugby, Solihull (split between Knowle and Hampton), South Birmingham (Edgbaston) and Warwick – but there are also DCs based in other neighbouring Counties which “may” be more convenient to attend if you want). The DCs offer a guaranteed level of coaching, which is under the direction of England Hockey, and offer further ways to play hockey in addition to the standard school and club based models. There are also plans to increase this network of Centres within Warwickshire to include further locations.

Q. Why are they different this year?

Historically, DCs were marketed within Warwickshire as the next step progression from Clubs and Schools to play at a higher standard before moving further on within the Player Pathway to Academy Centres (see notes below). However, following the Single System Review, which was completed in 2012, a number of amendments have been made to the Player Pathway which has shifted the focus on DCs. The main change is due to the fact that it is no longer mandatory for players who have previously taken part in the Player Pathway at a more “elite” level e.g. Academy Centres (ACs), to attend a DC again in order to be recommended to the following year Academy Centre – these players, if they choose, can simply go direct to AC assessment. This change has allowed the County to “open up” DCs to focus more on providing good hockey coaching to those not currently catered for by the existing club and school system, without detrimentally affecting the enjoyment and progression of already established players.

Q. Are DCs the same as what people used to call “County” sides?

No – these are simply additional playing/coaching sessions, focussing on delivering to 3 core markets:

1. Players who already play for clubs and schools regularly but just want to get more hockey and will happily play with a mixed ability group
2. Players who play at a club, but whose school does not play, so would like the chance to get additional training in

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3. Players who are not currently attached to a club (for various reasons including playing other sports, clashes with timetables, or simply that they have never tried the sport)

Please note that these sessions will now be used as a fun way of children getting more good hockey coaching, focussing on the “Golden Thread” approach (see here for more information: <https://hockeyhub.englishhockey.co.uk/goldenthread>) – one key output will be to get those children currently not members of a hockey club to join their “local” club, but this is not a mandatory requirement for further progression within the Player Pathway.

Q. So how does the “County” side work now then?

The top players are recommended from each DC to attend assessments for the Academy Centres (ACs) which are pretty much the same as the old County set up – with at least one AC per age group, per County (though Warwickshire, due to the number of talented players in the County, are moving towards more scenarios of TWO Centres at some age groups). In ALL age groups EXCEPT the two youngest age groups (U13 & U14), the AC (County) assessments will have the recommended players from the DCs attending, as well as those that attended ACs previously and BUT ALSO players returning from the next tier above – the Regional Performance Centres (RPCs) – so the players will NOT just be up against those they have seen at the DCs. These sessions (for every age group) ALL take place between October and May each year (DCs will always run between August – October, and RPCs will always run over January – October). N.B. REALLY sorry about all the acronyms!

Q. So what are Regional Performance Centres (RPCs)?

RPCs are kind of the same as the old “Midlands” set-up, however, as the preferred model for delivering excellence within players is to provide more “contact” time for the elite group, and monitor player development over a period of time, there are three centres set up to provide flexibility and minimise travelling times. These centres will (initially, at least) be in Cannock, Nottingham and Warwick. The Performance Centres will run between January and September, with a combination of mid-week and weekend delivery – ***note that this is different to what it has been previously. Do contact Stephen Tabb if you want more information about this – though it is NOT relevant to Development Centres hence why it is not covered in more detail here.***

Q. So what is different about U13s and U14s?

There is no RPC for U13, so at U14, there can be no players “returning” from RPC, and at U13, this is the entry age group to the pathway, so again, there can be no players “returning” from the previous year’s RPC – this means that the ACs (in the vast majority of cases) will be selected from Warwickshire Hockey only players who have been to DCs. Players CANNOT go to AC assessment if they have not either been recommended by the DC coaches OR are

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returning from having done the AC phase the previous phase, other than in exceptional circumstances which will be discussed on an individual basis with School or Club coaches.

Q. So does that mean I have to attend every DC session?

No, it is fully understood that you may miss some sessions, and the whole point is that DCs are simply being used as an opportunity for players to play more, and get an opportunity to be seen by Player Pathway coaches. If you are new to the System, and have not previously been “seen” by coaches, we would expect you to attend a minimum of 4 hours of the sessions to allow coaches to get a reasonable view of your ability in order to provide feedback and for the recommendations to ACs to be meaningful.

Q. Will it cost anything?

All DCs will cost something to attend, and we are looking at finalising the payment options, but these will definitely include a “pay as you play” option, as well as a one-off payment to cover the whole programme.

Please note – for all *Traditional* Centres e.g. those delivered in line with previous years (Solihull, Coventry and Warwick) – the charge will be the same as previous years e.g. it will be £45 to cover 10 hours of training and 3 hours on the match day.

For the club delivered sessions (Rugby) it is likely that these costs will be set at £3/hour, with an additional cost for attending the match day.

Q. So are there trials to “get into” a Development Centre?

Not as such. DCs are not being seen as complete beginner sessions - however, if there are players who are already sporty, and want to give hockey a try having never done it before, they are encouraged to attend. The aim is to get as many players involved in playing hockey as we can – particularly with the focus on the Golden Thread sessions, whether that be via traditional school and club routes, or via the broader offering now provided by DCs.

Q. What if my school or club does not nominate me?

We are aware that in some situations, clubs and schools are not aware of the process for nominating players, and hence we are not against players “self-nominating”. However, if you wish to do this, please ensure you register on the EHB Player System website (as suggested elsewhere) so that we have a means of contacting you and also medical details etc. The aim of DCs is to provide more playing opportunities, so please do not wait for someone to “put you forward” to attend – please just register and then come along.

Q. Which DC should I attend?

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Whichever one you want! You should find that there will be a Centre within 20-30 minutes drive from wherever you live and often this will be the most convenient. However, we have also worked hard within the County to ensure there are several different options of days of the week and times of the sessions so if you cannot attend your local session when it is scheduled for, you could travel just a little further and have an option on a different day/time somewhere else.

Q. Do all age groups get run at all locations?

Unlikely – though this is something we are not certain about at present. Until players have registered their interest in attending the DCs, we cannot really finalise exactly how many centres we have at each age group / gender / location. It is 99% certain that all locations will cater for U13 and U14 Boys and Girls, but how many locations will cover U15-U17 Boys is not known – so PLEASE Register on the system to enable us to determine this, and then we can email you directly with details once they have been confirmed.

Note – there will definitely be NO U16 and U17 Girls Development Centres – and there may only be very limited U15 Girls DCs (which may mean that in fact they are covered within a wider Girls Development Centre grouping).

Q. What age group am I in?

Age groups are run based on Year of Birth and NOT School years. Please consult the table below for 2015 Year Groups:

Year of Birth:	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Age Group	U17	U16	U15	U14	U13	U13

Please note that only exceptionally talented players who are 2 years young should be considered for the U13 Age group e.g. those born in 2006.

Q. Do I need to do anything before attending the DC sessions?

You MUST log on and register with the EHB Player System. A link to this can be found on the right hand menu of the County website. You should complete your personal details and then select the following options: Level – JDC; Centre – [Whichever one you wish to attend from the options of Coventy, Rugby, Solihull, South Birmingham, Warwick] Remember, that for those options where there are two boxes, one small one (initially showing the letter A), and one longer one, you must select the starting letter for the option you wish to select in the small box first. For example, if you wish to select the South Birmingham Centre, select “S” in the small box, and this will then list in the longer box all the centres nationally that start with the letter S (and hence will also list Solihull, which happens to be one of the other

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Warwickshire run centres). You WILL receive a direct invite to attend the DC programme, detailing the arrangements for your specified centre as soon as they have been confirmed.

If you do nothing else from this FAQ document, please make sure you register on the system as otherwise we cannot contact you!

Q. Can I attend one of the Warwickshire DCs even if I don't go to school or live in Warwickshire?

Definitely – one of the benefits of the Single System approach is that you will receive the same coaching syllabus whichever Centres you attend, and also it is focussed on convenience as opposed to any historic affiliation to County borders. Hence, it is even possible to attend the DC in one County, and a AC (the next tier) in another one. If you wish to do this, please contact Steve Tabb (details available at the end) as this requires a transition on the EHB Player System that must be carried out by a Regional Administrator.

Q. What if I discover I cannot attend the training sessions at my local DC?

This is not a problem – the beauty of running at least 5 DCs within one County, is that the next closest DC is probably only another 5-10 miles further away than your local DC. All the DCs are running on different nights / days of the week, so you are more than welcome to attend one of the other DCs if you are happy to travel a bit further. Finally, if the worst comes to the worst, there are always DCs being offered in Worcestershire, Birmingham, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire which may provide another option!

Q. If I miss a session, can I attend another date somewhere else to maximise the coaching I get (if I have paid the one-off coaching fee)?

This is probably fine – but please contact Steve Tabb (details available below) to discuss first.

Q. Do I need to do anything if I cannot attend a session (illness, school commitments etc.)?

It may be nice to let your DC Coach know (details available of Centre Managers in one of the links on the website front page “Committee and Coaches”) – but you will not be marked down etc. if you do not let us know. Each coach will take a register of attendance at each sessions so should be aware of anyone who is missing anyway – and I am sure they can always ask your friends if they have any concerns as to your whereabouts.

Q. So why is this system different to the old “County” system?

Firstly, it is worth noting (if you had not already) that players are assessed by the CALENDAR YEAR they were born in and NOT the School Year. The logic behind this and the other changes is this: a) No matter which area you live within the Country, you should get access to high level coaching (hence why the addition of this extra tier below County) b)

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Single Day “Trials” are always subject to someone having an off-day or not being able to make the date – DCs work on a continual assessment basis and are a much better way of gauging not only the ability of players, but also how quickly they learn and develop c) This pathway works all the way through to National level – because some of these players will eventually compete for England, and the International stage works on Calendar years, it is felt that the age groupings should be brought in as early as possible to avoid later “age-trapping” where someone who has played in a particular age group up to a certain level, suddenly then has to compete against older players at the next tier up. d) There is a Centralised Calendar introduced by England Hockey which eliminates (or at least attempts to – assuming every one sticks to it!) clashes between school / club training and matches, and also provides periods of rest as identified as a key part of Long Term Athletic Development.

Q. What should I expect at a Development Centre session?

Every DC delivers similar content, and the focus provided by England Hockey is centred around game play, so all sessions will be run based around game play with particular rules and restrictions to help teach players to develop their skills and their decision making. The sessions will not be run as you may well have seen many training programmes run previously with lots of drills and repetitive skill execution – however, please do not think that the coaches are simply “playing matches” as they have not planned their sessions properly! We can assure you that a large amount of planning will have gone into each session, but that the format is relaxed and game based as this is the best environment for kids to develop, experiment and most importantly, have fun.

As part of the DC programme, the Player Pathway will be integrated with the existing Warwickshire Festival matches format to ensure players get the chance to “compete” against other Centres and also be coached in a match play environment. The results of these matches are not important and have almost absolutely no bearing on selection and de-selection decisions but do provide the opportunity for people to play matches, and also for those players who actually perform better under competition to excel. ALL DC players will be invited to attend these match days at some point. Keep your eyes on the Warwickshire Hockey website and/or your email for details.

At the end of the programme, every player will receive verbal feedback providing them with areas of strength, and also areas that have scope for improvement. Some players will also be invited to attend Academy Centre assessment which will take place before Christmas.

Q. Finally, why should I attend a DC?

You should attend DCs for many different reasons:

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1. You get the chance to train and play alongside some of the other keen players in the County, thereby stretching your game more than you would get if you train in the relative “comfort” of the same players at your club or school
2. You will be coached by some of the most experienced, qualified and talented coaches in the County in line with the latest direction provided by England Hockey
3. You will have fun with sessions based around playing games!
4. These are sessions that complement your club and school activity NOT conflict with it. Dates are specifically chosen to minimise the impact they will have in terms of clashes with other club events.
5. Irrespective of what your ambitions are to play at “higher” levels, DCs provide the best opportunity to get additional opportunities to train and be coached at the best level during the September – October period; the coaches are often the same for DCs as they are for ACs (the “next” phase) so the coaching will be just as good.
6. For some that do want to go on and play for Warwickshire, this is the entry point to doing so, and everyone must attend a DC for at least one phase (other than in extreme exceptional circumstances).
7. For others that do not necessarily want, or have the ability, to play County, these sessions will represent the best Coaching they may well receive.
8. For many (particularly those in the older age groups) this training will be far better tailored to the needs of players at that age – junior training sessions at clubs often finish at age 14, but adult club sessions then include ALL ages, and hence do not tailor the training to the fast-paced and dynamic game that is played by teenagers

A whole load more information can be found about the DCs and in general about the new system on the England Hockey website at www.EnglandHockey.co.uk. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Steve Tabb – County Chairman – on stephentabb@hotmail.com and/or 07900 884100. Please view the DCs as a great way to enhance your development by being provided with high level coaching in addition to any hockey you currently play.

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