

Warwickshire County Hockey Association

Single System Manager – Stephen Tabb

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Warwickshire Hockey



Academy Centre – FAQs

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

Q. What is an Academy Centre (AC)?

ACs are the second 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 allocated per age group, per gender, per County. The ACs offer a guaranteed level of coaching and players should progress to ACs as a higher level of coaching and playing than DCs and club/school coaching. ACs bring the best 25 (ish) players for each age group/ gender together into one training squad, and then play matches against other ACs organised across the Midlands (roughly one per County). Please note that as Warwickshire is the largest and most successful County in the Midlands, at the younger age groups (U13s, and U14s) we have elected to operate TWO squads per age/gender – referred to as East and West.

Q. So is it the same as what people used to call “County” sides?

Pretty much – yes, but the process for selection and development is significantly different, mainly revolving around the focus being more on training and continual assessment than one-off trials.

Q. What is the process for being selected for an AC assessment?

This part of the player pathway has seen changes over the last two months; there are now two main potential ways to be invited for assessment for an AC.

1. For players new to the pathway at U13, U14 & U15 age groups - during the DC period, all players are assessed by their coaches, and then recommendations are made as to which players are strong enough at this stage to be invited for AC assessment.
2. For players who have previously participated at AC level in previous years – these players are automatically welcome to attend AC assessment for the new year / age group. Players in this group (at U13, U14 and U15 level) are still welcome to attend DC training if they want more good coaching, and the chance to play more hockey with other talented/keen players, and if they choose to do this, it will not affect their chance to attend AC assessment in any way.

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At the U16 & U17 level there is no DC phase, so all players, whether new or old, go straight to AC assessment.

For players not nominated for AC assessment, they are encouraged to continue further training with a local DC; the aim is to run DC training programmes (of 5 sessions) at 3 points during the year – though currently, this is only run once. Please note that being unsuccessful at initial assessment is definitely not the end of the road – one player this year has gone on to play in the School Games representing one of the England teams, having not been selected for the U13 Academy Centre.

Q. How does AC Assessment happen?

The AC Assessment phase is significantly different this year for the U13/14/15 Groups.

With the AC phase now running over a longer period (from October – April), this has meant that there are now more match days built into the programme. Therefore, the first match date will be used as part of the initial assessment of the players, giving the AC coaches the chance to see players in both training and match environments. These initial matches will all take place before Christmas, allowing the Coaches to then make any de-selections over the Christmas period, and then have a final training squad for the remaining matches.

Hence, the steps to the assessments are the following:

For U13/14/15:

1. Be invited to attend the initial AC training session/s
2. Play in the first set of matches (if possible)
3. Players may be de-selected over the Christmas break
4. Those not de-selected will continue through the remainder of the training and match programme

For U16/17:

1. Attend training session/s
2. Play in the first set of matches (if possible)
3. Any players not strong enough will be de-selected at this point.

Q. Does the AC phase lead onto anything?

Yes – but only for a very limited number of players. The main purpose of the AC Phase is to provide the opportunity for players to represent their County, and then also to compete for a place to play in the end of season Midlands Finals.

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The progression from the ACs is onto the Regional Performance Centres – though note that there is only one combined squad for U14s and U15s, and then one combined squad for U16s and U17s. Particularly with the older age groups, there will be players who are already training in an RPC that you may not ever see in the AC environment, so it is not right to assume that if you are the best player in your AC squad, that will mean you will automatically progress to the RPC as a) you are competing against players in other age groups, and b) you are competing against players already in the RPCs.

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, Loughborough and Warwick. The Performance Centres will run between September and June, with a combination of mid-week and weekend delivery. Assessment of players for RPCs will be done during the match days for the AC phase. Players do not have to attend every match day, but the Final Tournament is likely to be the most likely place that players will be viewed with regards to inviting them to RPC assessment (though if players cannot make this final tournament, then performances in previous tournaments will be taken into consideration).

Q. Do players attend both AC and RPC?

They can do – though a lot of players do not, so as not to over exert themselves. If RPC players do want to attend AC, it is very much on the basis that they will do the WHOLE programme, and not simply dip in and out whenever they feel like it.

Q. If my child is successful through AC assessment, how do we get information about training/matches etc?

Unfortunately, all administration tasks for the whole county are carried out by 2 or 3 individuals so we simply do not have enough resource to “spoon feed” information to everyone. However, it will ALL be available very easily on the County website www.warwickshirehockey.co.uk and we encourage you to visit there on a frequent basis, and as your first point of call for all matters ranging from session dates/times, to selection information, to details of whether bad weather has caused sessions to be postponed and even post codes for venues for away matches.

You do NOT need to login to the website to access any of this information – any areas that require logging into are NOT for use by players, they all relate to Coaches and Administrators. The only site you need a login for is the EHB Player System website.

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Q. What is the difference between the County Website and the EHB Player System?

Firstly, it is important that you are aware of BOTH sites. They are used for the following reasons:

EHB Player System (www.ehbplayersystem.co.uk)

All player data collection is done via this site. You must have logged in and have an active account for us to be able to communicate with you, provide feedback and include your son within the pathway process. It is also the system used to provide Parental Consent.

It is important that we have both the Consent provided online, but also printed off, signed, and handed in to the Coaches at the AAC sessions. This **MUST** be done for every level irrespective of what you have provided previously e.g. Consent for DC does not work as Consent for AC – you must log in, tick all the relevant boxes on your son's details page (and check details are still accurate) and then print off and bring to a AC session as early as possible.

Please note – this system is just about to be replaced, so this is the last year this will be used, and for future years you will need to re-register on the new system.

Warwickshire Hockey Website (www.warwickshirehockey.co.uk)

This site is used for providing information specific to the Warwickshire AC. News items listing important details around events and general stuff such as postponements of sessions etc. are added to the front page of the site.

Q. Do I have to attend every AC training session?

No, it is fully understood that you may miss some sessions, and not being able to attend every session will not directly impact selection decisions for matches. However, if coaches have not seen players for many hours, then neither the feedback provided at the end of the programme, nor selection decisions, can be as fully informed as they would be if the player has attended every session.

Q. Will it cost anything?

All ACs will cost £40 for the training programme; plus £5 per match date. Cheques should be made payable to WCHA.

For this year, as the initial training session/s are part of the assessment, we will ask people to pay £40 up front, but then will return the money / rip up the cheque for those players that are

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de-selected at Christmas. We will of course NOT return the £5 for any match days played. Every player invited to continue after Christmas will definitely have to pay the full £40, along with fees for the number of match days they attend.

Q. What about Kit?

There is absolutely NO obligation to buy kit for AC, however, we do appreciate that many players will want kit as a form of “badge of honour”.

For matches, we ask, where possible, if a player has not purchased any of the County Kit, that they should try to wear dark socks (navy blue or black) and white shorts (or as light a colour as possible).

Shirts will be provided by the County.

AC clothing Items for sale include the below:

- Warwickshire AC Hooded tops
- Warwickshire AC Socks
- Warwickshire AC Playing Shirts
- Warwickshire AC Ties

All of this kit is supplied by Sportology who are a specialist hockey and cricket supplier based in Boldmere, Sutton Coldfield

If you have any queries at any time, then please contact Paul at Sportology direct on 0121 355 6378 or on email – sportology@gmail.com or visit their website by using the links on the right of the County Hockey website.

Q. What if I have missed the DC phase, and still want to be considered for AC Assessment?

This is generally not allowed, but in exceptional circumstances (for example, a player has just moved to the area, has not been able to play for a period due to being injured etc.) then players can be nominated direct to AC by a combination of two recognised coaches – this could be a club and a school coach for example. By “recognised”, this means that the County Chairman is aware of who the coaches are, and their involvement with hockey in the County.

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In this situation, one of the coaches should email stephentabb@hotmail.com cc'ing the other coach with the player recommendation/s.

Q. For U13s and U14s which AC should I attend?

At these two age groups, the players are split by East and West. For the boys for this current year, both East and West train together, so players should just attend the advertised sessions. For the girls, as the County is so large, it has been necessary to split players roughly geographically. In terms of how players are allocated:

Players from Egbaston, Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield and Solihull are definitely in the WEST squad.

Players from Coventry, Rugby and any parts of Northants/Leics are definitely in the EAST squad.

Players from Warwick, Stratford and Leamington can make a choice as to which session to attend (based on convenience) – though bear in mind that if one squad then ends up with 30 players, and one squad with only 10, then there may be a requirement to re-allocate those players from the “middle” of the County.

Please note that for the Final Tournament date, every County in the Midlands is only allowed to enter ONE squad – therefore, for U13s and U14s, the best players from across both East and West will be combined into the final tournament squad – this does not mean it will always be a 50/50 split as this final squad is not based on geography. It is very likely that there will be an additional training session added in for U13s and U14s for them to train together before the final tournament – this will cost extra, and will only be open to the squad selected for the final tournament.

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 2017 Year Groups:

Year of Birth:	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
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 2005.

Q. Do I need to do anything before attending the AC 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 confirm your personal details and

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then select the following options: Level – JAC; Centre – Warwickshire. 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. Hence, select “W” in the small box, and this will then list in the longer box all the centres nationally that start with the letter W.

If you do nothing else from this FAQ document, please make sure you both register on the system and also, when prompted by email, re-confirm details by ticking the consent boxes and re-saving the user profile as otherwise we cannot contact you!

Q. Can I attend one of the Warwickshire ACs 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 the relevant Warwickshire AC?

This is not a problem – we can easily contact other Counties nearby to Warwickshire and transfer you to that County if their training sessions are more convenient.

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

It may be nice to let your AC 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) Single Day “Trials” are always subject to someone having an off-day or not being able to make the date – ACs 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

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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.

Q. What should I expect at an Academy Centre session?

Academy Centres are very much focussed on providing an enjoyable and stretching training environment. Matches for U13s are all 7-a-side, and all matches except for the final tournament for U14s are 7-a-side (the final tournament is 11-a-side). U15/16/17 are all 11-a-side matches, and the training for ACs will support both individual development, but also working with players within a team to improve their overall team performances. As players are getting to train with most of the best players in the County, this environment should provide a more accelerated learning opportunity than simply playing at club or school level.

Q. Is there anything else I need to be aware of?

Yes, there are two other things to know about:

1. Warwickshire County Hockey Association will run a County Squad “launch” event in early January. This evening will involve Squad Photos, Sportology being on site to sell kit, and the opportunity to ask questions. This is mainly targeted at the U13 and U14 age groups, but all other age groups are welcome to attend. All players (and their parents) who have been selected to complete the full training programme are welcome to attend that evening – details will be published on the County website and facebook page, along with an email being sent with information over the new year period.
2. The Midlands Tournaments will have reduced size squads entered.

A whole load more information can be found about the ACs and in general about the Player Pathway 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.

Q. Interested in getting involved / helping out?

We are always keen to accept any help, particularly with regards to “managing” squads (which essentially means keeping attendance records, collecting money and looking after kit) so that the coaches do not have to do that as well as coach. If you would be happy to help, please contact Steve (using the details below) – we really would be VERY grateful!

Steve Tabb (County Chairman) stephentabb@hotmail.com 07900 884100

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