

Section 3.7 – Developing Talent

Within reason any player who shows talent, really enjoys tennis and wants to play and learn more, should have the chance to do so. Coaches can identify these players and invite them (through parents) to join a performance team or engage in a more tailored programme.

Simple indicators of talent include:

- natural athleticism and ball sense
- willingness and commitment to compete and play as often as possible
- willingness to learn
- supportive parents

It is important to point out that talented players are not there by right, and should continue to commit to the necessary programme and show the required level of improvement in order to maintain their place in the higher level squad or team. Those players who do not do so will be removed and may be replaced by other talented players.

The proportion of players accessing these higher level squads/teams will be small, and emphasis should be on quality rather than quantity. Every player identified would usually have at least 2 squad sessions, an individual lesson and a separate physical training/ABCS session per week. The hours and level of commitment should increase as they progress – see Long Term Player Development Guidelines.

The search for talented players starts immediately and is the responsibility of all coaches. It is best done by continuous assessment in group lessons and in competitions. Additional talent identification may take place through activity within schools, outreach programmes, fun days and holiday camps.

The head coach ensures that coaches are aware of the criteria for identifying talented players - enthusiasm, agility, coordination, balance, speed, sending and receiving skills, ability to learn, thinking skills, desire, commitment and supportive parents. Coaches also understand that children change and those who may not appear to be talented at a very young age might be so later.

The head coach and/or coaching team are also responsible for regular communication with the LTA County Talent Performance Coordinator in your area, and for recommending players to attend County talent identification sessions – see a guide to the process below:

