



TRIATHLON
ENGLAND

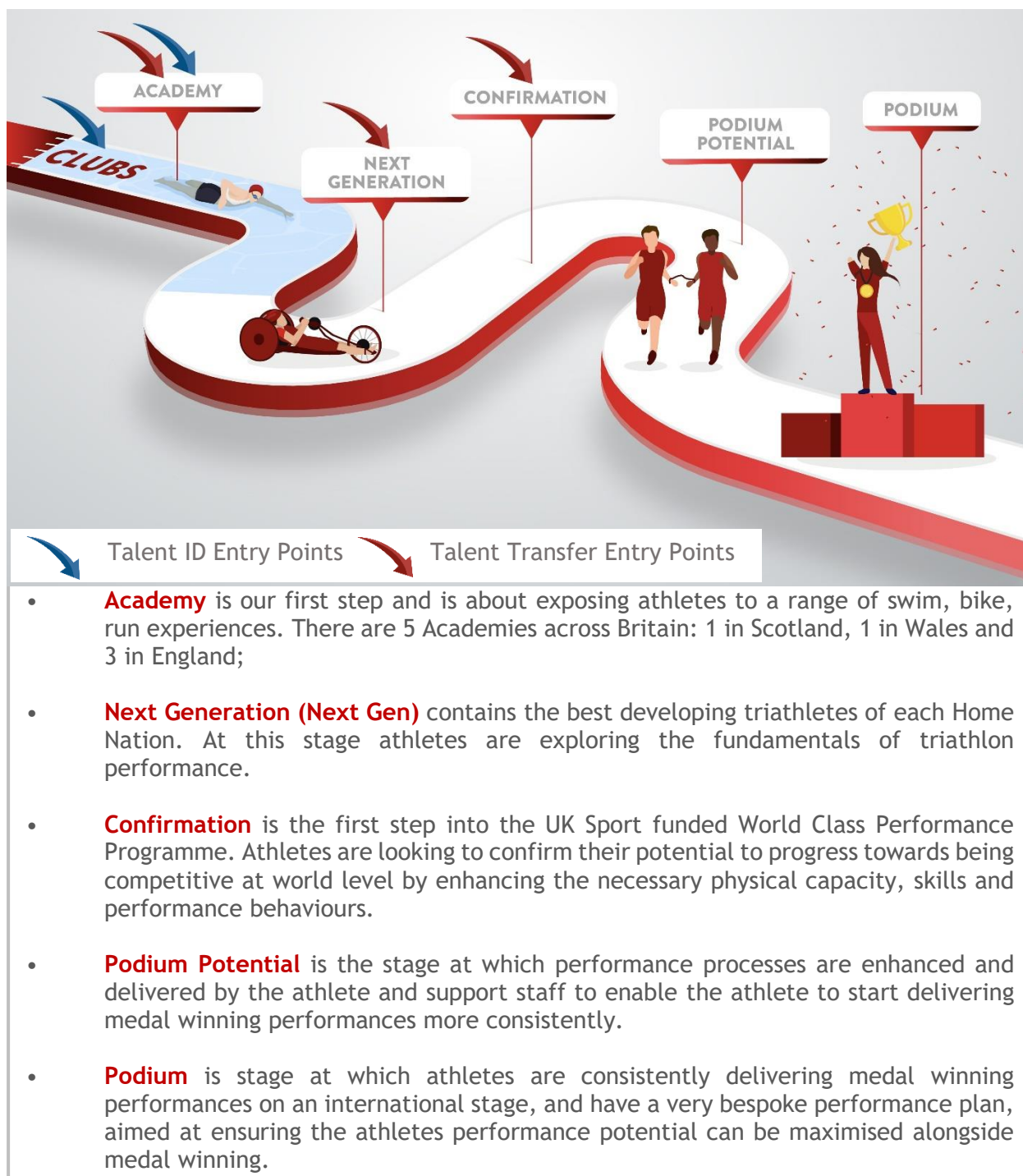
NEXT GENERATION HANDBOOK



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1. Purpose & Aims

The purpose of the Next Generation Programme is to identify and develop athletes who have demonstrated that they could have the long-term potential to step up the Performance Pathway and achieve at world level. We aim to support an athlete's development by:

- Developing well-rounded athletes who have the physical capacities for the sport and also have the performance behaviours required to make the right decisions to support both their progression in sport and life,
- Aiding the exploration and understanding of aspects of triathlon performance, eg Athlete Planning, Strength + Conditioning, nutrition, technical elements

- Exploring the boundaries around the impact of their impairment on swim, bike & run eg training & equipment adaptations & prosthetic needs,
- Providing challenging environments which encourage independent learning and decision making,
- Preparing athletes for & supporting them through life transitions, eg moving from home, transferring into work & further education
- Engaging & educating parents & partners,
- Assisting them to transfer single discipline expertise into the triathlon context,
- Proving athletes with learning opportunities through domestic (British Super Series) and, if relevant, international events,
- Where and when it is relevant, exposing athletes to elements of the next stage of the Performance Pathway.

2. What is Next Generation?

The Next Gen Programme will identify, support and develop those athletes in the Academy programme who are showing the greatest progress and are beginning to demonstrate the potential to be competitive at World level. The programme brings together athletes from the Academy squads across Scotland, England and Wales in a joint approach across the Home Nations.

HNs links & Info

To do this we strive to create positive and challenging environments, at home, in camps and in competition, aligned to our values. We aim to add value to athlete development by giving space, time and opportunity for athletes to explore the skills, abilities and behaviours necessary for success in high performance triathlon. It is also crucial at this stage that we help guide athletes through the exploration of how their impairment impacts their ability to compete in each discipline of the sport and start looking at a plan that will help them make the right choices as they progress up the pathway.

Athletes in the Next Gen programme remain in their Regional Academy and are supported by the same Academy coach to provide continuity; this is where much of their day-to-day support will be provided alongside their existing club coaches. The Academy Coach will help the athlete to further refine their Daily Training Environment (DTE) to ensure it meets their needs as an athlete progressing on the Performance Pathway.

Athletes will be supported to ensure they have a suitable individual training and development plan designed to maximise their progression as an athlete. In addition, they will benefit from the following experiences:

- Approximately four camps delivered annually in collaboration with all three Home Nations and the athletes and coaches from the WCPP Confirmation programme,
- Competition delivery support at Super Series races,
- Exposure to leading national Training Centres, their coaches, athletes and training environments,
- Exposure to Sports Science and Sports Medicine support aligned to the WCPP and in particular Performance Lifestyle support,
- Potential international racing opportunities in line with British Triathlon selection policies.

For athletes working with additional triathlon or single discipline coaches the Programme will work collaboratively to support both the athletes and coaches and will seek opportunities, where relevant, to expose them to the Next Gen camps. We have an

experienced group of coaches working in the Home Nations and within our WCPP. We believe that our coaches and environments can add value to personal coaches and their development, as well as athletes. If a personal coach has a particular area of development in relation to Paratriathlon that they would like to invest in then we would encourage them to discuss this with our programme staff and we will look to facilitate this where possible. We also know that bringing other coaches into our environment can really help the development of the coaches already working in our programmes through the cross fertilisation of ideas and experiences.

Where and when possible the cost of training camps, competitions, associated activities or training/racing kit will be subsidised by the Home Nations. However, athletes are very likely to be required to make a full or partial financial contribution to some activities. If this becomes an issue which stops athletes from being able to continue to progress then we ask that athletes/parents/partners speak to the relevant Academy Coach and make them aware of this. The Home Nations will work together to see if there is additional support which can be put in place so that development can continue.

LEARNING TO BE A PERFORMANCE TRIATHLETE

At Next Gen level athletes receive exposure to Sports Science and Sports Medicine support aligned to the WCPP and in particular Performance Lifestyle support. As athletes progress through the pathway we will continue to build on this education and they will begin to receive support which is more bespoke to them and their individual needs. A key part of the exposure athletes receive at Next Gen is to prepare for a potential future transition onto the WCPP where they will then receive specific individualised input from identified practitioners.

For all athletes, our coaches and wider support team will also work with them to look at any specific adaptations and differing requirements they may need in relation to their impairment. This may mean starting to develop prosthetics or equipment to enable them to further their progress in racing and training.

Depending on the background of the athlete, due to a number of factors such as single sport history or impairment type, an individualised support programme in one or two support services may be provided at this level in association with the relevant Academy coach.

3. Selection to Next Generation

The Next Gen squad is aimed at athletes over 16 years of age through until approximately 35 years of age; those younger than this in the Academy will need to wait until they turn 16 to make the transition. Athletes can be part of the Next Gen squad for up to two years, except in exceptional circumstances where this may be extended due to injury etc. In some cases, athletes will move through quicker than this, but we believe that two years gives athletes time to learn and develop through the sport before moving on towards the World Class Performance Programme (WCPP).

Selections to Next Gen will be made collaboratively by each of the Home Nations in accordance with the following selection principles:

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Athletes at this stage can step forward very quickly and in recognition of this there is the opportunity to invite athletes from each Academy who are performing well inside of selection standards, but are not currently members of the Next Gen squad, to Programme activity on a camp by camp basis.

Athletes who “Talent Transfer” into Triathlon may move straight into the Next Gen programme, without first spending time in an Academy where they are deemed to already possess sufficient knowledge, skills, fitness and performance behaviours to align with athletes moving through the pathway from an Academy. These athletes will also be inducted into an Academy at the same time so that they receive the DTE and associated support relative to their individual needs.

4. Classification

The Next Gen programme will support and develop eligible athletes from every Paratriathlon category, regardless of the category’s inclusion in the Paralympic Games programme.

At this stage of the pathway athletes may have the opportunity to progress from a National to an International classification if they are going to be competing internationally, or if there is an opportunity for them to attend international classification before they get an international race start. The classification system and processes used by British Triathlon mirror that of the system used by World Triathlon and as such it is extremely unusual for an athlete’s class to change as they move to international level. British Triathlon will support all athletes through the international classification process and will ensure that they have all the information they require in advance of being put forward for International Classification.

5. Expectations

Next Gen experiences are key milestones in an athlete’s pathway journey and full attendance camps and competitions is an expectation. For those athletes who are still in education we can ensure that the space and time to study is made available on all camps and competitions and athletes should proactively discuss their study needs with staff prior to any Next Gen activity, equally the Programme aims to help in supporting time off around work commitments too for those athletes in full or part-time employment. Pre-authorised absence can be granted for serious clashes and athletes are always encouraged to discuss this with staff the earliest possible opportunity.

The environment created on camp or in competition is critical to success and it is the responsibility of all attendees, staff and athletes, to contribute positively in this regard. A key principle we operate by throughout the Performance Pathway is that athletes actively contribute and give more to an environment or group activity than they take out. This might look like positively encouraging others, positively contributing to all group tasks, not always relying on others to speak up, operating with control and at the right intensities in sessions, arriving on time and with the proper equipment for all sessions, etc.

Athletes are expected to focus their domestic triathlon racing commitments on the British Triathlon Paratri Super Series. We also look to expose some athletes at this stage to international racing, normally through Paratriathlon World Cups.

6. Balancing Life as an Athlete

We believe that taking a long-term view to developing each athlete is the best way to help them achieve their potential and go on to be athletes who can enjoy a long successful career in sport. We know that every athlete will exit the pathway at some stage, be that at the end of the Academy stage or as a multiple Paralympic medal winning athlete retiring after a successful triathlon career. In each case it is our goal to help prepare athletes to thrive both in and out of competitive sport.

Work & Education

Our athletes are always going to need to successfully manage the dual career balance, that being balancing triathlon with school or university, or balancing triathlon with full or part-time work. This challenge is not just experienced at one stage either but almost without exception and especially for those choosing to study at University it is evident across three stages of the Pathway - Next Generation, Confirmation and Podium Potential. Simply put athletes who reach the higher levels of the Pathway learn to become experts in managing this balance through these three stages on a consistent basis year on year.

Successfully managing this balance at Next Gen will mean achieving both sporting and academic/employment goals consistently year on year. This will mean training properly and attending the key camps and competitions while also doing well in exams or delivering in a job. This is not easy and is a balancing act throughout each year, it does not mean dropping one or other of an athlete's objectives in favour of a singular focus for a period each year, this is not sustainable in the long term and will lead to underachievement. What it will mean is planning ahead, having high levels of organisation and communication often between the athlete, programme and school/university or employer and support through Programme staff and Performance Lifestyle is available to help too. We also endeavour, wherever possible, to schedule camps and competition experiences during school/university holidays.

Athlete Support Network

We know that the athletes we are lucky enough to have the opportunity to work with have a rich and varied background and as such the sport of triathlon may be a whole new journey, not only for the athlete, but for those who provide the support they need on a daily basis. Parents, partners and personal coaches play a vital role for developing athletes. They can perform many roles as taxi drivers, coaches and emotional supports or someone an athlete turns to when they want to switch off from sporting commitments. We will seek to engage, educate and support each athlete's support network in order to enable the athlete to do all that they can to reach their potential as an athlete, and as a person. We encourage parents, partners and personal coaches to engage with our programme staff if they feel they need additional support and information about the sport.

7. Competition and Selection Policies

Athletes in the Next Gen squads will have started to build their experience of racing across a range of forms. Single discipline racing will still play a part in an athlete's development all the way through the pathway, but as they progress triathlon racing will become more and more of a focus for competition. Each race should be seen as a learning opportunity as the athlete progresses towards being the best athlete they can be by the time they reach the WCPP Podium programme. Athletes throughout the pathway should still be identifying areas where they can be better and make improvements, while also taking time to acknowledge where their hard work has had a positive impact on their progress. Racing should also still be a fun, enjoyable and often social experience.

British Paratri Super Series

The [Paratri Super Series](#) is designed to give athletes the chance to race at a high (national) level on multiple occasions each season. It provides excellent opportunities and is a key part of the suite of experiences we feel are necessary to support athlete development through the Next Gen years. Where possible races are spread out across the country and evenly through the season and course design and venues are also looked at to support athletes in experiencing a broad range of racing styles and types.

International Racing

International racing plays an important part in the development journey of future world leading athletes. Most athletes will have the opportunity to gain their first international experience at a Paratriathlon World Cup, but there are also a number of other competition types which some fast-developing athletes may experience during their time in the Next Gen programme:

- European Paratriathlon Championships
- World Paratriathlon Series
- World Paratriathlon Championships

Due to the structure of international competitions we know that we cannot offer every athlete as many international opportunities as we might like to do so. We will therefore look to provide opportunities within the Paratri Super Series which replicate the conditions and experiences which athletes will face when racing at a higher level. Where athletes are selected to access international opportunities, these experiences will give them a better level of preparation and make the transition smoother. As such athletes are expected to fully engage in this process so that they can gain the greatest experience and learning from each race experience they have.

Selection policies for these events can be found [here](#)

World Triathlon Health Check (PPE)

All Paratriathletes competing internationally in World Triathlon events are required to complete a Pre-Participation Evaluation (PPE). Without this athletes will not be able to be selected and entered for any World Triathlon events. Such evaluations operate across many different sports to better identify athletes at risk from electrical or structural heart abnormalities that may have serious repercussions when the heart is under stress during training and racing. Details of how to complete the PPE can be found [here](#). A PPE lasts for two years, at which point a re-test is required.

The PPE is basically split into two parts, part one being the cardiac screen and part two is the medical sign off. CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) conduct cardiac screening nationwide and for most athletes this is the easiest, most accessible and cost effective screening option. To complete part two athletes will need an appropriately qualified Doctor to read their screening results and sign it off. There are significant medico-legal responsibilities at sign off and some GP's have the necessary training/experience and some do not. Sign off therefore can be difficult and expensive to complete if an athlete's GP is not qualified as a private consultation is often the only option. To support this process and reduce the expense British Triathlon will look to offer opportunities where it can to facilitate athletes going through this process, however this cannot be guaranteed.

8. Safeguarding, Welfare & Clean Sport *(requires to be fully directed towards the diverse group we work with)*

SAFEGAURDING

We work hard to create environments for all Pathway athletes that are fun, engaging and support athletes effectively. To achieve this, athletes should always feel safe and be treated with respect whilst taking part in Academy programme activity, while similarly showing respect to others.

If athletes/parents or partners are at all worried about that way they, or any other athletes in the environment are being treated by others please speak to a trusted adult involved in the programme. For athletes this could be a parent, their coach or the Academy Welfare Officer, who will be identified when you join the academy, or for a parent or partner it

might be the coach or welfare officer. If a situation is more serious, the relevant Home Nation Welfare Officer or the BTF Safeguarding Manager may also be contacted.

If there is not an adult that a young athlete feels comfortable talking to or trusts in the environment, they can call Childline on 0800 11 11 or visit [Childline's Website](#). If any athlete or parent/partner believes they or someone else is in immediate danger from an adult or other young person, please contact the Police on 999.

BFT have created a resource for young triathletes to refer to in order to help you identify what behaviours are not appropriate, how to treat others and who to contact if they feel unsafe in any way. The resource can be found here:

<https://www.britishtriathlon.org/britain/documents/about/child-protection/help-and-advice/young-persons-guide-2018>

BTF have also created a young person's resource to help them stay safe online. It can be found here:

<https://www.britishtriathlon.org/britain/images/safeguarding/online-guide.jpg>

MENTAL HEALTH REFERRAL PATHWAY

It is very normal (and healthy) for humans to experience a whole range of emotions in daily life. It is important to be aware of how anyone might spot the difference between normal, functional emotions and a mental health problem.

Mental health problems are characterised by symptoms (including but not limited to things such as low mood; feelings of anxiety; dampened emotions) that last longer than two weeks and that have a significant impact on daily life (including but not limited to things such as significant change in sleep patterns; change in eating behaviours; withdrawal from social situations).

If athletes have concerns about their mental health, we would recommend they speak to trusted adults such as parents, partners, coaches, or the Welfare Officer. If they need further support, then we suggest that visiting their GP to explore further help.

Young Minds website is a useful resource to help young people to identify their feelings, give tips on how to cope and to reach out for further support if needed.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/>

Mind website is a similarly useful resource

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/>

If athletes find themselves in an emergency struggling with mental health, dial 999.

CLEAN SPORT

British Triathlon works with UKAD and World Triathlon to promote clean sport and the values of the UKAD's 100% Me programme. All athletes at Next Generation level will be provided with regular anti-doping education appropriate to their age and stage of performance development via either their Academy or Next Generation Programme.

Everything you need to know on anti-doping including prohibited lists, the use of and how to check medications along with testing procedures along with a lot of other useful information can be found [here](#) on the British Triathlon Clean Sport pages.

and/or

You can download UKAD's Clean Sport app for [apple](#) or [android](#)

We'd also recommend getting the Global DRO [app](#) to check any medication you are required to take.

Athletes under 18 will not be tested without parental approval and testing will always be conducted with a chaperone present.

Reporting any concerns about antidoping in triathlon can be done via our website [here](#) or you can go directly to UKAD's site [here](#). Or alternatively you can get in touch with us through this email address cleansport@britishtriathlon.org

If you would like to speak to someone about anti-doping at British Triathlon please contact your Academy Coach in the first instance.

9. Equipment and Kit

As athletes develop their understanding of the sport they may want to make upgrades and improvements to equipment, such as a more specific time trial bike or racing wheels. Whilst this is encouraged, it is important for athletes to remember that there are still large physical improvements to be made at the Next Generation stage, and so the majority of time and effort should still be spent there. Focusing on long-term athlete development is certainly our preference from a programme perspective.

This may be the time when athletes start investigating prosthetics or race chairs which better enable them to produce their best performances in racing or to maximise their training delivery. Athletes are always advised to seek support in making these decisions as the programme coaches have extensive experience in supporting athletes across all categories as they progress. There are often grants which can be accessed to buy new pieces of equipment, so while kit can be expensive we will work with athletes to minimise these costs so they have the greatest opportunity to develop their physical potential.

[Link to list of grant funders.](#)

10. Principles behind training

Working with their coach(es) athletes should begin to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses and work to develop a more specific weekly training structure to develop these. Building a consistent weekly training volume is key and training time should be increasing, with an emphasis on easy (aerobic) volume making up over 50% of weekly hours. It is important as athletes progressively build their training that their love of training and the process of training continues if they aspire to the sort of volumes which will be required later to achieve international success.

When athletes progress to the Next Gen stage the key should be to develop their weekly training volume, with at least two sessions in each discipline per week as a starting point, and building to three and more as they develop conditioning and become more robust. At this stage athletes may still seek a greater volume from one discipline due to their background and the nature of their impairment. They should also work with their coach to incorporate more elements of Strength and Conditioning (S&C) and injury prevention work, to support this increase in volume.

As relationships between athletes and coaches develop there becomes an ability to provide more specific, individualised support and guidance. Coaches at the Next Gen Stage should work to adapt athletes training plans to ensure specific areas for development are

supported. They should also have a good understanding of the DTE and where necessary help athletes to find the right groups to train with that can support their development, whether that be by providing challenge, specific technical expertise, or social support for example.

Training should still have a regular focus on technical improvement across the disciplines, but athletes should have developed their ability to maintain good technical form during easy (aerobic) training, with little effort. Work should now be focussed on maintaining these technical improvements when under fatigue, both in single discipline sessions and within a sprint distance triathlon.

By now athletes should have a consistent weekly training routine, and if it does not already this should develop to include intensity within each discipline each week (ie. one swim, bike and run session with non-aerobic components each week). The athlete's ability to pace efforts should be improving and being able to do this over both longer efforts and a full sprint distance triathlon should now be a key focus of training.

Athletes should be using technology such as GPS watches and heart rate monitors regularly and can now start to manage and monitor their training more reliably by using an online platform such as Training Peaks. This will help to sustainably build training volume, and support athletes in developing their ability to understand how their body responds to sessions, learning to amend plans before, during and after sessions based on feel.

Benchmarking through time trials and test sets should continue, and athletes and coaches will develop a more detailed understanding of an athlete's strengths and weaknesses. Goals and targets should also therefore become more detailed, and a SMART approach should be taken to ensure that goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time based. These should be shared and discussed with coach, athlete, and any other relevant support staff at least three times a year, to aid clarity and help ensure athletes are being supported in the most effective way.

11. What's Next

The next step in our Pathway is the Confirmation stage of the World Class Performance Programme (WCPP).

Find out all about the WCPP in the relevant booklet [here](#).

As an athlete progresses to the Confirmation stage the Academy Coach will work closely with the coaches and support personnel on the WCPP to ensure that there is a smooth transition onto program for the athlete.

If an athlete has not progressed sufficiently to progress onto the WCPP Confirmation programme by the end of two years then the Academy Coach will support the athlete with their transition off the programme. Leaving the pathway does not mean that an athlete cannot continue to enjoy the sport; they are able to continue their development in their home environment and keep progressing and then be selected onto the Confirmation squad at a later date through demonstration of progress through their race performances.