

BHC Academy Team Guidance

Overview:

In the 2022/2023 season, Academy teams were introduced to both the Men's and Ladies sections to prepare junior players for the club's performance teams (First and Second Teams). This initiative aims to develop Basingstoke's junior players for higher levels of adult hockey, reducing reliance on external players and providing a pathway for performance-level talent.

The club remains committed to "hockey for all" by creating a sustainable pathway for juniors, based on proven sports and hockey development methods. The [RARE](#) principle (Right Athlete Right Environment) from England Hockey guides the integration of juniors and adults, ensuring players are placed in suitable environments to maximise their potential and enhance their experience.

Please also refer to the current club documents, including the Photography Policy, Social Media Policy, Showering and Changing Policy, and Safeguarding Policies.

Coaching:

There will be a senior established coach allocated to developing the Academy Teams. Ideally the coach would have knowledge of or experienced National League/International playing standard.

The coaching will be aligned with the coaching of the Performance Teams so that the junior players able to progress into these teams will be ready for the required level. The primary objective of the coaching is to stretch the players and prepare them for the next steps in their hockey journey.

Academy Adult Players:

Adult players in the Academy Team are selected for their ability to develop junior talent while maintaining a high playing standard. Key selection criteria include skill, temperament, attitude, and experience in working with juniors, with a preference for those playing below their capability to support development.

These adults will lead and inspire juniors in competitive play. A stable core of adult players is crucial, so players from the 4th team will be prioritised for temporary needs to minimise disruption. Long-term changes will be discussed at PCM (Playing Committee Meetings), but players should communicate their goals with captains and coaches to manage expectations.

Academy Junior Players:

Juniors are selected and invited to train or play with the Academy Team when captains and coaches identify their potential and believe they should have the opportunity. This experience is designed to challenge players physically, mentally, socially, and in terms of intensity. The main focus is on assessing their mental readiness to compete at the required league level, ensuring they can thrive in that environment.

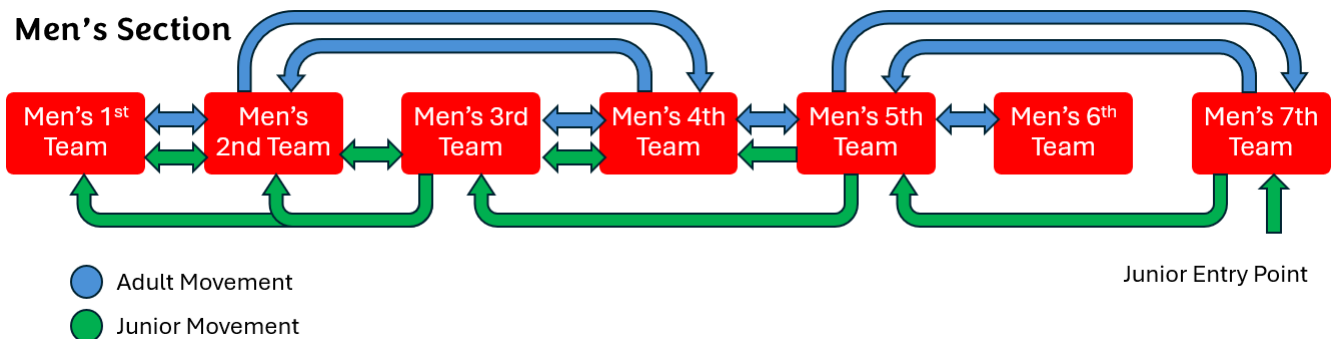
Junior players in the Academy must be committed to their own development, able to accept and provide constructive feedback, and willing to build on their strengths while working hard on areas for improvement.

General Expectations:

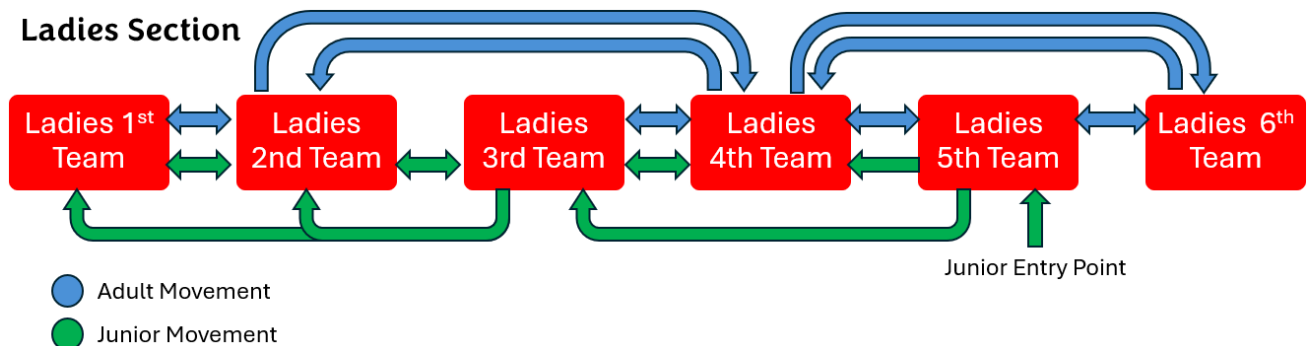
To foster a fun, competitive, and supportive environment, all Academy Team members—adults, juniors, and parents/guardians—are expected to adhere to the following:

- **Commitment** - Players should be dedicated to the team, ensuring maximum availability for matches and training.
- **Team Player** - Be adaptable, reliable, positive, and supportive. Celebrate wins and face losses together.
- **Match Days**
 - **Arrive On Time** - Be punctual to ensure optimal preparation for the game.
 - **Teas** - Participate in post-match teas to engage socially; parents/guardians are encouraged to join when possible.
 - **Phones** - Limit phone use in changing rooms, pitch-side, and at teas to remain engaged with the team.
 - **Positivity** - Offer encouragement and support from the sidelines.
 - **Subbing** - Rotate every 7-10 minutes to maintain high intensity. Complete substitutions quickly and efficiently.
- **Challenge & Ask** - Seek help if unsure about anything; the team is here to build your confidence.
- **Discipline & Respect** - Show respect towards match officials, opponents, and teammates

Men's Section



Ladies Section



Academy Selection Guidelines:

This guidance supplements the existing player selection policies with a specific focus on the Academy Team. The team typically includes junior players aged 13 to 18, with the aim of progressing them into the performance teams (First/Second Teams).

All selection and deselection discussions will be handled by the Hockey Leadership Team and Coaching Team during PCM meetings. Following these discussions, appropriate conversations will be held with players and their parents/guardians regarding decisions.

It's important to recognise that players develop at different rates. Our focus is on placing players in teams that match their ability and potential at the right time. If a player is asked to play in a lower team, it does not exclude them from future selection for the Academy Team, provided they align with the guidance.

Selection and deselection can be challenging and emotional for everyone involved. Our goal is to ensure each player has the best possible hockey experience, aligned with their capacity and potential. Decisions are made with consideration of the entire team, rather than individual preferences.

- Junior progression into the Academy Team should typically come via the 5th (Development) Team, with any exceptions discussed at PCM meetings.
- Juniors selected for the Academy Teams should show the desire and potential to advance to the performance teams within two cycles (seasons).
- Players not meeting the required commitment and focus levels will be reviewed at PCM meetings.
- Juniors who turn 18 or do not progress into a performance team by the end of their second cycle will be reviewed in the pre-season and at PCM meetings, after which they will follow the standard club selection policy.
- Coaches and captains will endeavour to communicate proactively with players and their parents/guardians about selection decisions, ensuring clarity on the players' capacity and potential for moving up to the First and Second Teams.
- Selection criteria include availability, potential, aptitude, attitude, fitness, and skill. For adults, selection is based on their ability to meet or exceed league standards and support junior development on and off the pitch, including all positions, such as Goalkeepers. Goalkeeper positions in the Academy can be filled by either juniors or adults

Academy Player Progression:

Juniors: When juniors are ready for more challenges, they will first be invited to "train up" with a higher squad. This allows the coaching team to assess how they handle the increased intensity, physicality, and pace of the game. Once established in training, the leadership team will discuss intentions and plans with the player and their parents/guardians. Training up does not guarantee

promotion to a higher team but is part of the process, which may occur at different points during the season.

Adults: Adults selected for the Academy Team form a strong, stable unit to support the team's objectives. The goal is to maintain this core group and minimise disruption. Although there may be occasional requests for adult members to play at a higher level, this should be considered an exception.