



ENGLAND LACROSSE TALENT PATHWAY FRAMEWORK 2023-24





PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN DELIVERING EXCELLENCE



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The England Lacrosse Talent Pathway Framework 2023-24.

The Talent Pathway is the route for any individual lacrosse player who aspires to play for England in either men's or women's lacrosse.

The Talent Pathway aims to make sure that players at every age and stage of their development have access to the best possible training and playing environments to fulfil their lacrosse goals.

The Talent Pathway provides clarity of expectations to support players, parents, clubs and coaches across England in creating effective learning environments for players.

This Framework focuses on the environment necessary to encourage and develop the player who aspires to play at the very top.

Talent is often thought of as the kind of ability that comes without training—something that you're born with.

It is often contrasted with skill, which is an ability acquired and developed through practice. It can also be used to refer to people who are talented.

We believe that in order to develop talent we need to create an environment of excellence and this is ingrained with our ethos of PRIDE (Personal responsibility in Delivering Excellence).

I trust you will find The Talent Pathway Framework a useful document.

Rebecca Wood
National Talent Pathway Lead

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TALENT PATHWAY EXPLAINED

TALENT PATHWAY EXPLAINED

The England Lacrosse Talent Pathway operates for girls and boys aged 13 – 18 and is a vital part of improving the standard of competitive lacrosse played in England. The ultimate goal of the Pathway is to develop squads capable of becoming World and European champions at senior international level.

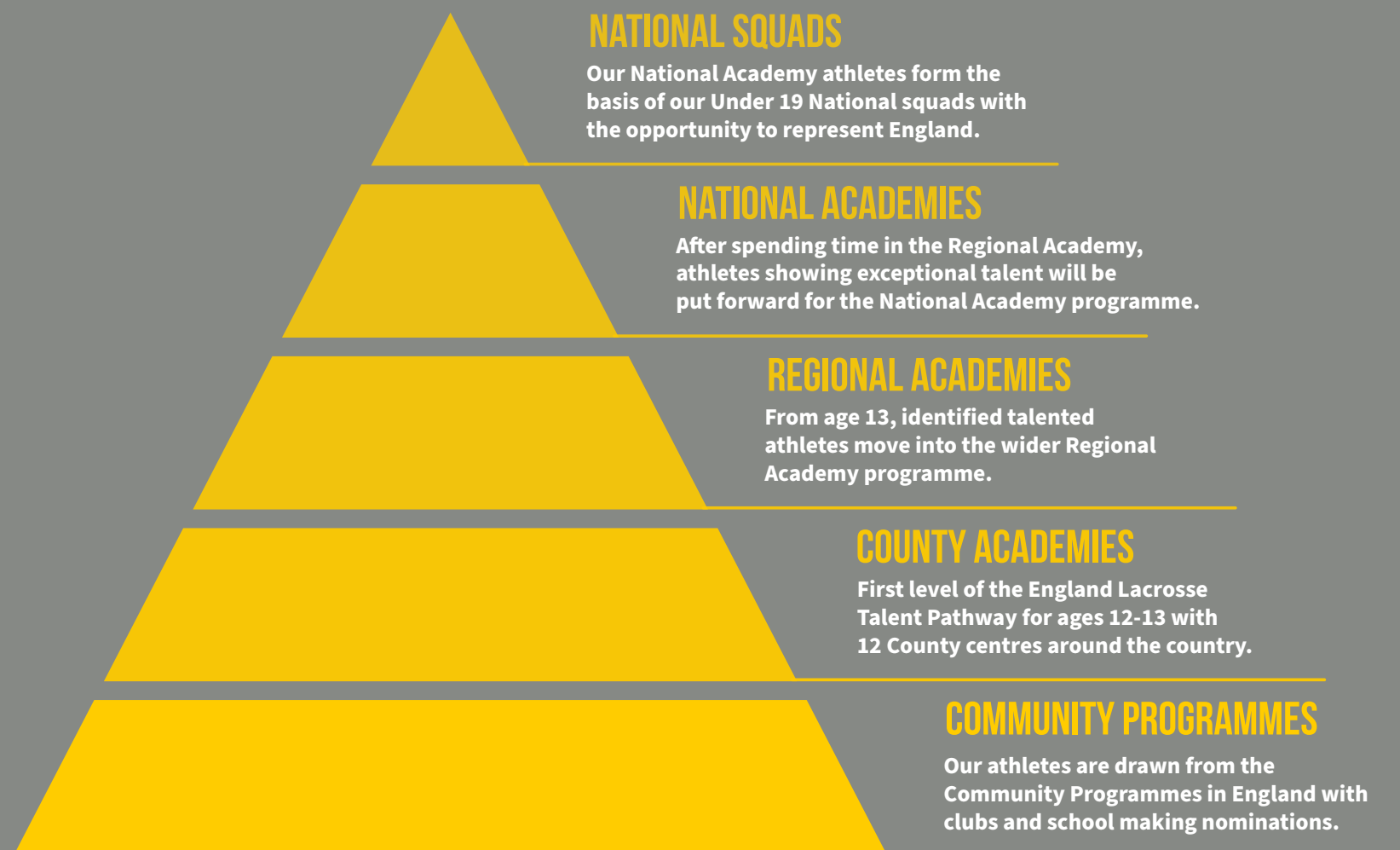
TALENT PATHWAY AIMS

- Enhance and support the holistic development of young people through their enjoyment to learn and play lacrosse
- Produces self-reliant, reflective, decisive athletes who can perform under pressure
- To deliver a system that identifies and develops talented athletes who flourish in a supportive environment
- Create a world class, sustainable system of producing future senior England internationals to deliver success at world and European championships

95% of current England internationals graduated from the Talent Pathway

2 Gold medals for men and women at most recent U20 championships selected from Pathway athletes

TALENT PATHWAY EXPLAINED



The Talent Pathway is progressively structured to optimise the identification of talented athletes with the potential to make informed decisions and perform skills effectively when pressurised in game situations.

The County Academies were introduced in the 2020/21 season replaced the existing Regional Assessment days, becoming the first rung on the ladder for lacrosse players aged 12 & 13 years old.

The change will benefit individuals as assessments take place between 2 - 4 days, enabling athletes to demonstrate their skills over longer periods within game situations.

From the County Academies, each centre will recognise talented athletes to be invited to join the Regional Academy.

The Regional Academy provides the second phase of the Talent Pathway with England Lacrosse operating a number of centres across the country.

The Girls National Academy is the third phase of the England Lacrosse Talent Pathway where the most promising talent at Regional Academy level is invited to form the National Academy.





TALENT PATHWAY EXPLAINED

The National Academy operated four training weekends throughout the year, with additional training days added in preparation for matches against university or touring sides as well as the annual Home Internationals tournament.

The National Academy begins the process whereby the U20 women's squad is formed. This process evolves in preparation for the World Championship cycle and offers a direct route into the National Team.

It also provides players with their first experience of a performance environment. Athletes will begin to explore personal development plans through pre- and post-training planning and review, supported by physiotherapy, strength and conditioning programmes, and educational advice for performance athletes, including lifestyle choices, nutrition and hydration.

The delivery of lacrosse will follow the Regional model and continue to expose athletes to challenging sessions, advancing their decision-making under pressure and aligning skill factors across the 10v10 and 6v6 formats of the game. Where there will be differentiation is that players will begin to develop a greater understanding of position-specific requirements.

Those players who are no longer eligible for the Academy due to their age will be afforded the opportunity to be assessed for the U23 women's squad and thereby transition from the Talent Pathway to the National Performance Squads.

The Boys Academy operates in alignment with the Girls Regional Academy with the programme aiming to take individuals from clubs and schools to the Academy and help them transition through the Talent Pathway and potentially into the National Squad.

TALENT PATHWAY EXPLAINED

Players attend eight Talent Pathway sessions each year to learn, train, and prepare for the next level of the Pathway as well as for a future career as an England player.

The training programme culminates in a national tournament offering opportunities for National Academy coaches to monitor the progress of upcoming athletes.

The Talent Pathway has a long-term objective to provide athletic decision makers who can perform under pressure the opportunity to learn how to maximise their potential in a sportive environment through game-based practices, scenarios and constraints to explore understanding and improvement after reflection.

Practices will encourage all athletes to play attack and defence and work hard through transition; skill components will focus on the refinement when in 1 v 1 situations, 4 v 4 practices and positional workshops. To increase the pressure and add tailor constraints to facilitate the learning and decisive play, the 6 a-side format will feature predominantly.

The tournament provides a competitive end to the Academy season and opportunity to showcase their talents in a competitive environment aligned to the performance components explored in the Academy. As a programme we use the tournament to challenge our own delivery and identify areas for improvement as well as what can be evolved and changed.

We have a bank of tried and tested Talent Pathway Centres all around the country which offer the best facilities that are conducive to helping our young athletes improve.

TALENT PATHWAY CENTRES

- **Boys Academy** - Cheadle Hulme School
- **North Girls Regional Academy** - Armitage Centre
- **London North Girls Regional Academy** - Abbot's Hill School
- **London South Girls Regional Academy** - King's College, Guildford
- **London Central Girls Regional Academy** - King's House, Chiswick
- **South West Girls Regional Academy** - Cheltenham Ladies' College
- **Girls National Academy** - Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre



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NOMINATION & ASSESSMENT

NOMINATION & ASSESSMENT

England Lacrosse operates an assessment rather than a selection process. This is to widen the opportunity for talented athletes, regardless of age, to be recognised. We are aware that players develop at different stages and acknowledge this through the assessment process. Late developers and those new to lacrosse can enter the Talent Pathway at any stage or training session.

The inception of the County Academies rather than Assessment Days encourages young athletes to flourish and demonstrate their own learning and skills rather than focus on a list of requirements.

This principle continues into the Regional Academies: individuals nominated to enter the academy will be afforded time to be assessed at the next available Regional Academy. We're always on the look-out for the next generation of England Lacrosse talent so if you think a player has the attributes described below then get in touch with their school or club.

EXAMPLE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- **Decision - Making** - Individuals who consistently make appropriate and effective technical and tactical choices in high-pressure situations and influence attack and defence when playing 1 v 1.
- **Athleticism** - individuals who are direct, move with pace and control, can stop and change direction with co-ordination and balance to influence games.
- **Determination** - individuals who try and are persistent and perform effectively under pressure. They show effective decision-making consistently when challenged by opponents.

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PERFORMANCE COMPONENTS

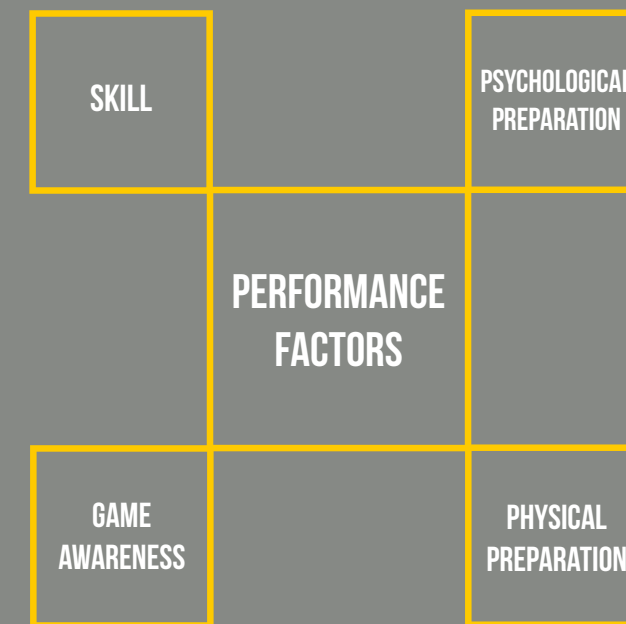


PERFORMANCE FACTORS

The Talent Pathway delivery programme is based on the concept of supporting our young athletes to understand their potential as lacrosse players but also as individuals in society. The outcome of this supportive environment will enable some individuals to perform as England senior players.

The long-term objective to prepare identified athletic and decisive players to perform on the world stage and cope with pressures associated with this has four under-pinning performance factors.

The factors are inter-linked; exposure to the pressures needed to develop life skills and perform as a future England player will be an ever-present throughout the Pathway and form an overriding outcome for each training session.



- **Skill (Technical & Tactical)** - combines technical and tactical that are executed effectively through four main areas: Attack, Transition (Clear), Defence, Transition (Ride).
- **Psychological Preparation** - to develop a culture of self-reliance and resilience through promoting a safe environment to flourish using personal learning & thinking skills (PLTS).
- **Game Awareness** - to perform under pressure in game situations and improve consistence of impact on game.
- **Physical Preparation** - to prepare athletes through injury reduction, nutrition, & hydration.

PERFORMANCE COMPONENTS

The overarching expectations of the Talent Pathway and details of the performance components are detailed in the following table:

PERFORMANCE	CONCEPT	KEY PRINCIPLES & OUTCOMES
Skill (technical & tactical)	Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penetrate defence through 1v1 and 2v1 to exploit player advantage • Exploit width and depth to make or take depth within defence • Maintain team possession or initiate team attack from basic information • Mobility to get free and open in 2v2 and 4v4 situations • Support by getting free or moving to space to maintain possession
	Transition: Clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penetrate by playing forward, run or a pass • Run the ball as much as possible to maintain possession • Support the ball, get free & open, stretch the field to create space • Play backwards to find support and maintain possession • Game knowledge to recognise slow/fast break, settled
	Transition: Ride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deny space and delay break to prevent 2v1 disadvantage • Recover: narrow defence/crash to prevent quick penetration • Support and mobility to recover and even the numerical advantage • Regain possession in appropriate areas or 2v1 advantage
	Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1v1 close down, challenge and pressure the ball carrier • Deny space to protect the goal and prevent penetration • Delay speed of attack to establish even play and challenge for the ball • Pressure on ball, force errors with support (2v1, slide, marking) • Mobility to prevent off-ball penetration

PERFORMANCE COMPONENTS

PERFORMANCE	CONCEPT	KEY PRINCIPLES & OUTCOMES
Psychological Preparation	Develop a culture of self-reliance, resilience through promoting a safe environment to flourish using personal learning & thinking skills (PLTS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reliant athletes who work through a process to learn to perform • Independent Enquirer: evaluate information, plan what to do and how to solve tasks • Creative Thinkers: explore ideas to try to solve problems; ask questions to extend thinking • Reflective: evaluate strengths and limitations, accept feedback from others to set realistic goals • Teamwork: work confidently and effectively with others, adaptive and responsible for own actions • Self-managed: organised, responsible for actions, shows initiative and commitment to improve • Effective Participant: engaged, contributes to discussions and suggests improvements
Game Awareness	Perform under pressure in game situations and improve consistency of impact on game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be resilient and try to explore ideas to decide effective play • Ask coaches for advice and identify actions to improve • Reflect and implement effective improvements and changes in games • Perform effectively and consistently when playing under pressure
Physical Preparation	Prepare athletes through injury reduction, nutrition and hydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow training plans and workouts offered through the Talent Pathway • Demonstrate advice through prepared nutritious meals and maintain hydration throughout training • Manage injuries and do not breakdown during training sessions

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COACHING GAME AWARENESS



COACHING GAME AWARENESS

All Talent Pathway training groups will be working towards a specific end of season objective and overview sheet. The digram below is an example that demonstrates the expectations of the different age categories within the Talent Pathway.

OBJECTIVES	1. To begin to learn and explore attributes to become a performance athlete 2. To reflect and understand game principles and develop how to perform effectively under pressure 3. To take ownership of own improvement to perform under pressure		
CONCEPT	Game Principles and Outcomes	Psychological Preparation	Delivery Method
Attack Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Penetrate defence through 1v1 and 2v1 Make or take space in defence Maintain team possession when appropriate Mobility to get free and open in 2v2 Penetrate by playing forward, run or a pass Run the ball as much as possible for possession 	Independent Enquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates session objectives and performance Plans actions and tactics to improve performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 attack focus 2v1 to 2v2 progression Positional Workshop 3v2 build into 4v4 Team Attack (4v4) 1v1 to 4v4 (me into we attack)
Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 close down, challenge and pressure the ball carrier Deny space to protect the goal and prevent penetration Delay attack's speed to establish even play and challenge for the ball Deny space and delay break to prevent 2v1 disadvantage Recover; narrow defence/crash to prevent quick penetration 	Adaptable to change how they are performing Creative Thinker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curious, explores technical and tactical ideas to solve session challenges Asks questions within the group and to the coach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 defence focus 2v1 to 2v2 Positional Workshop 3v2 build into 4v4 Team Defence (4v4) 1v1 to 4v4 (me into we defend)
Defence Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement skills developed in 6v6 games Try different ideas to improve impact within the game Demonstrate confidence to seek advice and guidance Identify improvements to perform under pressure Implement improved game-play and execute under pressure 	Teamwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works confidently and effectively with others Adaptive and responsible for own actions and performance Effective Participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively engaged, contributes to discussions and play, confident to suggest improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6v6 - blue sky rules 6v6 World Lacrosse rules Build-up practices Scenarios
Game Sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the demands of the training session Maintain hydration levels to perform effectively Demonstrate understanding of nutrition during training 	Self-management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised, responsible for actions and behaviour, shows initiative and commitment to learn and improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm-up Screening Lunch and snack Regular drinking
Physical Preparation			

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GOAL SETTING & FEEDBACK



GOAL SETTING & FEEDBACK

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting, by the individual athletes, will set out their own targets and expectations and will focus their minds on what can be achieved within the training sessions.

On our online portal, players will be asked to set clear but challenging goals they want to achieve. By outlining the themes and topics of each session, players should be curious and can begin to self-reflect and identify areas of improvement that can be worked on during the sessions.

Individuals will be asked to reflect throughout the sessions, understand what improvements can be made, and summarise to create an action plan to work on away from the Talent Pathway environment.

FEEDBACK

To empower and improve, individuals will receive personalised, accurate, and timely advice and guidance.

Feedback is one of the most effective tools for athletes to achieve improvements in their performance and for coaches to pass on their knowledge and observations.

Simplistically, coaches can see athletes playing and identify improvements that are not immediately apparent to the athletes.

GOAL SETTING & FEEDBACK

Feedback informs the athlete how they are performing against the Talent Pathway expectations and criteria and therefore must instruct on what the athlete is achieving and where improvements can be made.

Successful coaching depends on feedback to motivate, challenge, direct, and support players to improve their skills and performance.

The feedback should be used by athletes to shape their own reflection eg. why and how was I effective when attacking 1 v 1? What can I do to improve my defensive play?

EXPECTATIONS

- Formative feedback (written) will be issued 14 days after an Academy session.
- Coaches produce individualised statements that are relevant to the topic areas on the feedback form. The statements will focus on an aspect of good performance and an aspect for improvement.
- Athletes complete their own initial reflections during and immediately after training. It is advised that athletes take notes/audio messages of any verbal feedback issued during the training weekend.
- Athletes are advised to share feedback with their school or club coach. The frequency of school/club training will offer opportunity to develop aspects of the player's action plan, which will be agreed by the coach and added to. England Lacrosse will notify school teachers or club coaches that feedback and action plans have been shared with the individual.





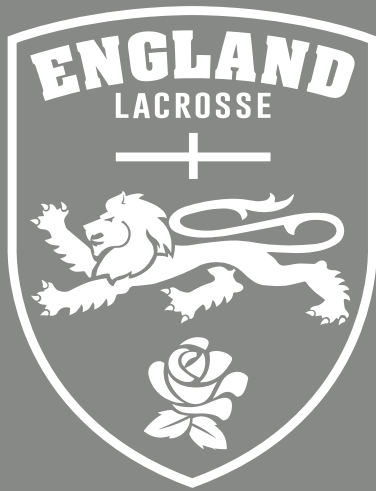
Individuals who are not meeting the Talent Pathway standards or expectations will be ‘released’ with an individualised action plan to share with their school or club coach. Athletes are encouraged to work hard and can be reassessed to re-join the Talent Pathway programme in the future.

The Talent Pathway criteria and scores represent a quantifiable perception of performance attributes. Coaches use the scores to identify areas of improvement and targeted objective feedback; the subjective feedback is provided as added value. The scores will offer a comparison between athletes and coaches and should be used to help the reflections and action plans developed by the athlete.

The scores will also offer the head coaches the opportunity to review individual’s progression and demonstrate who should be referred to be assessed on the next phase of the pathway.

GOAL SETTING & FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK	1	2	3	4
General Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning is limited to play within their perceived strengths and struggles to execute skills and cope when playing under pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective in performing to their own strengths in pressured situations. Shows understanding of how to improve but may have limitations to implement change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates a good level of understanding and willing to try and explore ideas and concepts to perform with more consistency and proficient when exposed to pressure, quick to adopt changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently demonstrates a high level of understanding and self-aware of skill. Is curious, engaged, and demonstrates an all-round desire to learn and improve their wide-ranging attributes.
Psychological Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has awareness of skills but is limited in curiosity and in response to suggestions or thoughts on how to improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates effectiveness of skills, works with others to improve own performance and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative in adapting performance through enquiry, effective participant to make improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is prepared to perform and improve. Reflects through creativity, enquiry and team work.
Skill - Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows reliance on preferred moves, technique, or simple tactics when in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 situation 2v1 situations Transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows effectiveness in using a variety of in-moves, technique, and layered tactics when in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 situations 2v1 situations Supportive off-ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate decisive proficiency in selection of multiple moves, technical variations, and advanced tactics under pressure and for specific situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 situations 2v1 situations Transition to settled Off-ball work to be free, or make space for ball carrier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisive in the proficiency of selecting appropriate, advanced movements, technical variations, and advanced tactics for specific situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 situations 2v1 situations Transition to settled Off-ball work to be free, or make space for ball carrier
Skill - Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows reliance on preferred moves, technique, or simple tactics when in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 situations 2v1 situations Transition support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows effectiveness in using a variety of in-moves, technique, and layered tactics when in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 situations 2v1 situations Supportive off-ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate decisive proficiency in selection of multiple moves, technical variations, and advanced tactics under pressure and for specific situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 situations 2v1 situations Transition to settled Off-ball work to mark or cover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisive in the proficiency of selecting appropriate, advanced movements, technical variations, and advanced tactics for specific situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1v1 situations 2v1 situations Transition to settled Off-ball work to be mark and cover, moving to slide Organise team mates
Game Sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is able to display functional under minimal pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform functional skills with errors while under pressure. Identifies ideas for improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform and adapts functional skills in highly pressured environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform, takes ownership, and adapts functional skills in highly pressured situations.
Value Added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds value with desire and supportive in nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capable of adding value when on the ball. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds value in attack and defence while in game situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds value throughout training sessions and in game situations.



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