

SPORT PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

ATHLETE SELECTION AND VALIDATION

SEPTEMBER 2024

Athlete Selection and Validation

Eligibility

Athletes must first meet the following eligibility criteria for the sport they are nominating for;

- **Age and/or Gender Specific Criteria** (set by MoU / SSO)
- **Regional Eligibility** ie
 - Live within the LGA's of the Academy Catchment Area,
 - Attend School within the LGA's of the Academy Catchment Area,
 - Compete for a registered club (of the sport nominating for) within the LGA's of the Academy Catchment Area

Whilst the above policy exists and is adopted by all Regional Academies, it should be noted that RASi in principle agrees that **the primary method of eligibility into an Academy program is by an athletes Residential status**, that being the address the athlete spends the "majority" of their calendar year, must be within an LGA of the Academy Catchment Area.

Criteria such as attending school or competing within a registered club within the LGA may only be used as an athletes primary eligibility where an athlete resides in an adjoining LGA, and one where a neighbouring Academy does not operate the same sporting program. In these circumstances, the neighbouring Academy must be consulted to determine the athletes eligibility.

Where a neighbouring Academy does operate a program, the athlete shall be advised that they must nominate and trial for the Academy where they meet the primary form of eligibility.

Athletes may not nominate and trial or be selected into multiple Academies.

Academy Administration Staff will assist in determining the eligibility of an athlete based on the information provided in the nomination form. This information will be provided to coaching staff prior to the selection process.

Selection Panel

The core selection panel will consist of the Head Coach, Assistant Coach, and wherever possible, a representative of the SSO, and an Academy Staff Member. The final approval on selections and squad composition however will be sanctioned by the Academy CEO.



Nominations Process

All athletes, including returning athletes, will be required to nominate for the respective sporting program. Nomination forms will be placed on the Academy website and promoted to local sporting clubs and schools, no less than two weeks prior to any first trial date.

The nomination form will seek information from the athlete based on the sport program they are nominating for, and will include information such as;

- Information on program eligibility and confirmation of eligibility
- Contact Information of the athlete and parent/guardians
- Cultural Diversity information
- Representative club and sporting background, sporting history
- Any sport specific qualification criteria, as determined by the SSO
- Why athlete wants to be a part of the Academy program.
- Medical / Injury declaration
- Privacy, Risk warning and Media consents.

Information about upcoming trials however should be released no less than four weeks prior to the trial date.

The Academy may extend the closing date for trials, or hold additional trials should the number of initial nominations be considered limited; the time between nominations released and the trial be considered unreasonably short; if the quality of trialling athletes be considered limited; or in cases of unresolved selection dispute.

The selection panel may give consideration to athletes who are facing exceptional circumstances. These however must be approved by the CEO.

Preparing for Athlete Selection

Once nominations close, Administration staff will prepare relevant information for the trials process and pass on to coaching staff.

A discussion will take place between the Academy office and the Head Coach to determine the trial process, baseline criteria, and requirements for record keeping and written feedback.

Administration Staff are able to be on hand during the trials process to assist in any administrative matters.

Parent Information Sessions

Ideally these Administration Staff will conduct a Parent Information Session on the Academy, including history, pathways, framework, expectations and requirements to provide as much information as possible, should an athlete be successful.

Occasionally these sessions will be conducted Online post-trials or selection, but prior to the program commencing.

Athlete Selection Process

Athletes can be selected into Academy Programs through two main methods.

- **Sporting Trial**
- **Nomination, performance criteria and/or Interview**

Trial dates, lengths, frequency and formats will be finalised with the Academy and publicised as a part of the nominations process.

Sports with an individual athlete focus are often selected based on nominations. These programs should as a part of their selection process, hold interviews for prospective athlete nominees.

Squad, team or position-based sport programs contain levels of subjectivity and as such, are often selected based on performance at trials.

The Selection process for squad members for Academy Programs should be made within two weeks (14 days) of either the nominations closing date (for nominations based sports), or within one week (7 days) of a final trial held (for trials based programs).

Final selections will be made based on consultation with the Academy, Head Coach and any requirements of the MoU / SSO.

Any alternate methods of selection, such as NSWIS / SSO pre-determined athlete selections as per MoU's must be declared as a part of the advertised nomination and selection process.

The only exception to this is if a program does not have enough athletes to warrant a program and must seek or recruit additional athletes, who may be invited to attend a "trial and join" session; or athletes who have previously been selected into another RASi member Academy, who have moved in to the Academy LGA. (ie Previously talent-identified and Academy selected).

Trials Process

The trial process should include at least two of;

- Fitness testing / Sport Specific 'Combine'
- Sport Specific individual and/or team skills and drills
- Short Sided or Trial games

Each trial should take at least 90-120 minutes in duration, with each athlete provided an equal amount of opportunity to trial.

Where possible, and dependant on the number of coaches available, any skill correction should take place so that the athlete who trials will depart the process with not only a better understanding of the Academy, but of the sport performance pathway.

Therefore the trial process should be used as an education opportunity for the athlete as well as a selection opportunity.

Conducting the Trial

Administration staff can provide copies of check-in lists and any other print outs as required to assist the coaching staff to conduct the trial.

The program coaching staff (Selection Panel) will conduct the trial, ensuring written feedback forms are completed.

Coaching staff should have meet prior to, and post the trial to discuss not just the trial process, but the selection criteria to be applied to, as well as review the performance of the trial.

The Academy will also provide information submitted on the Nomination Form by the athlete pertaining Why they want to be a part of the Academy program, as well as any other sport specific criteria.

This should be considered as part of the selection criteria.

Tips for the Trial

Know What is it that you are looking for?

- **Skill Set**
- **Coachability**
- **Communication / Listening**
- **Potential**
- **Squad composition**



Have Standards (SSO, State, Academy, YOURS) in mind.

Quality or Quantity?

Be prepared to “compromise without compromising”.

Be Proactive in being Reactive.

What can you teach that the athletes will leave the trial having learned.

Feedback, Feedback, Feedback

Interview Process

Where the athlete selection is completed via an interview either online or face to face (*primarily sports of an individual nature, where a squad/sport trial would be negated due to time, number of sports or other genuine factors*). An appropriate selection panel of at least three persons, should provide a process of no less than thirty minutes to allow the athlete to develop a level of comfort in the interview process.

During this process, the athlete should be asked questions to develop the following as a part of the selection criteria;

- Athlete knowledge of the Academy, their sport and their sport's high performance pathway.
- Why the athlete wants to be a part of the Academy and what they hope to achieve by being a member of the Academy.
- The athlete's goals and objectives within their chosen sport.
- The athlete's challenges, successes and failures within their chosen sport.
- Any other sport specific information required by the selection panel to make an informed selection decision.

As with the trial process, appropriate written feedback should be recorded for future reference, even if during a post-interview discussion with the selection panel.

This process can also be utilised for selections of athletes unable to trial due to injury, illness or absence.

Feedback Process

Throughout the selection process, Coach and Support staff should compile an appropriate list of individual and general feedback for all trialling athletes, that would be suitable to be provided to the Academy. A sample feedback form is provided on the next page.

This should include both generalised sport as well as individually specific feedback.

Coaching staff should provide this written feedback as a part of their selections within five days of the selection trial, to allow appropriate processing by the Academy prior to team announcements and squad selections.

Coach and support staff should not enter into discussions related to successful / unsuccessful athletes or parents, nor discuss the progress of athletes at the trials outside of the immediate coaching staff. *(Bearing in mind that some coaching staff may have relationships with trialling athletes within their own club or representative programs)*

Once the Academy has finalised the selection process, the Academy will advise successful and non-successful athletes.

Non-Successful Athlete Feedback

The Academy aims to provide the generalised sport feedback to unsuccessful athletes, as well as provides the opportunity for the athlete to seek additional and personalised feedback, via a written request to the Academy Office.

Should a request be forthcoming for specific detail, Academy staff will clarify the written detail provided with the Head Coach, prior to returning feedback to the athlete.

Rating System : 1 to 5

1 1 - Poor: Significant deficiencies, very basic performance.
2 2 - Below Average: Inconsistent performance, struggles to maintain flow during extended activity.

3 - Average: Meets Basic Standards of performance, lacks the ability to excel consistently.

4 - Above Average: Strong Performance, maintains high intensity in most situations, occasional inconsistencies.

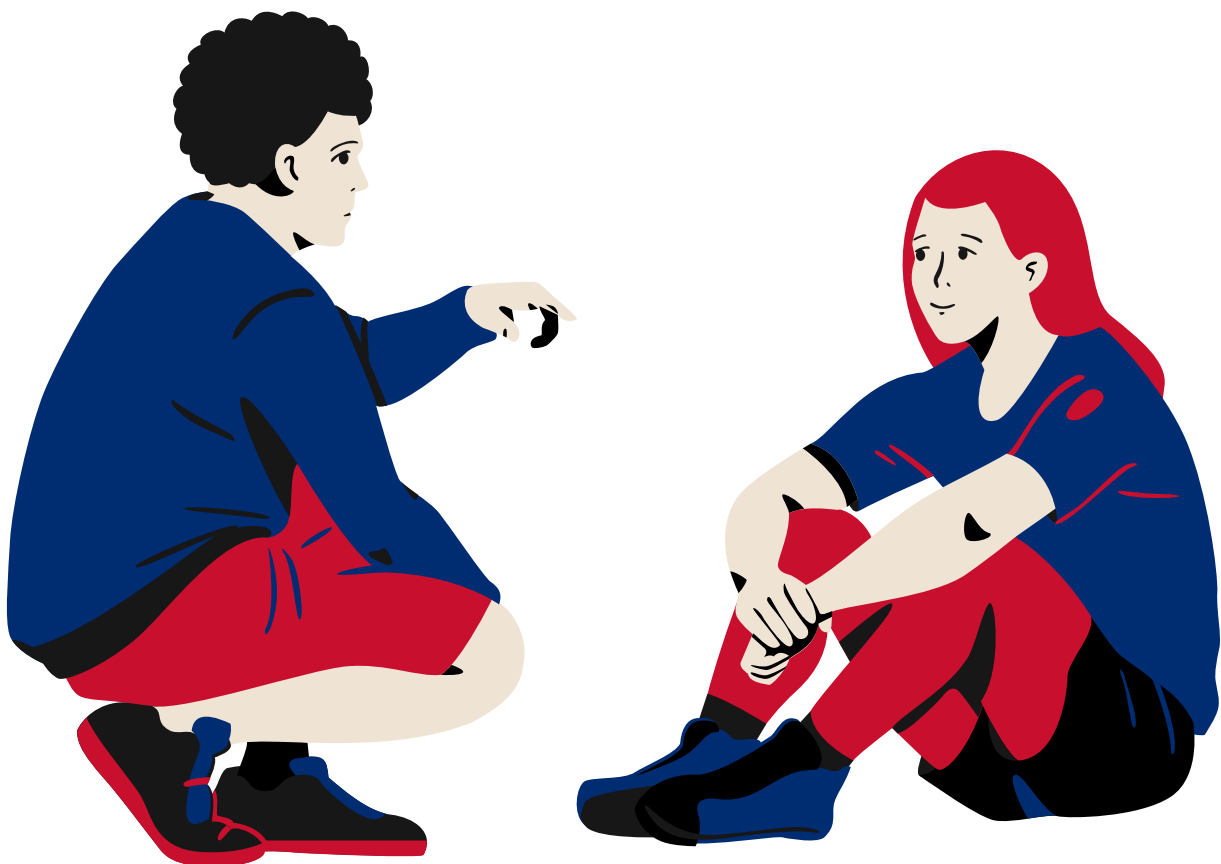
☐ 5 - Excellent: Exceptional Ability, consistently performing at high intensity in all situations with little to no inconsistencies.

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Squad Announcements

Within 7 days of the trial, Administration Staff will announce squad and send letters of offer, including details on next session to attend, set up communication and athlete agreements.

Squad announcement made on Social Media and Website will be delayed by at least 24hours after the Letters of Offer are sent to allow athletes to decline or seek further details.



Who Are We Looking For?

The Academy undertook a survey in 2023 to seek information from both athletes and coaching staff within the Academy to identify a number of key traits and attributes that both athletes and coaches sought out in each other.

This information provided the Academy the ability to form the following outline of Who and what we are looking for in an athlete, in a simple term.

The athletes who participated in the survey were less concerned about where they were from an Athletic Ability and Natural Sporting talent position, and more by their coachability and willingness to learn.

If we therefore shift the focus from judging the athlete simply where they are right now, to the potential the athlete has to develop in the future, and their ability to sustain that long term....

We can define an Academy Athlete As:

An individual who shows the desire to improve and develop themselves within a team environment where they are determined to succeed, be team players, and provided the leadership to grow.

An individual who desire's feedback that will help them progress in their potential and future sporting endeavours, and not necessarily immediate sporting success.

Athlete Attributes

Academy Athlete Attributes

Following the survey in 2023, and recognising the athletes with our region and various sporting program requirements, the Academy has identified the following 'Top Ten' attributes that athletes and coaching staff felt defined an Academy Athlete.

Coach and selectors should consider these when selecting athletes to be a part of our Academy programs;

1. *Team Player and Show Leadership*
2. *Coachable and Willingness to Learn*
3. *Commitment and Dedication*
4. *Determined*
5. *Good Communicator*
6. *Good Person and Character*
7. *Ambition, Aspiration and Desire to be an athlete*
8. *Athletic Ability and natural sporting talent*
9. *Attitude*
10. *Work Ethic*

Coach and selectors are also encouraged to develop their own attributes alongside those of the Academy, relevant to their particular sport, SSO or pathway selection criteria, and include these in their own selection checklist.

The Next Level in the Pathway



With the Tier 1 - NSWIS Talent Radar in mind, the NSW Institute of Sport identifies the above as key values and attributes of athletes they are targeting for inclusion into High Performance Pathways.

There are athletes who,

- Have sampled a range of sports throughout their childhood / youth to a high level.
- Highly motivated, committed and resilient individuals.
- Well supported and backed by family to pursue their sporting dreams.
- Performance and capability is high relative to their peers in their respective age group or category**

**Accounting for biological maturation estimation. Estimation tool – (Abbott & Cobley, USyd & Office of Sport)



