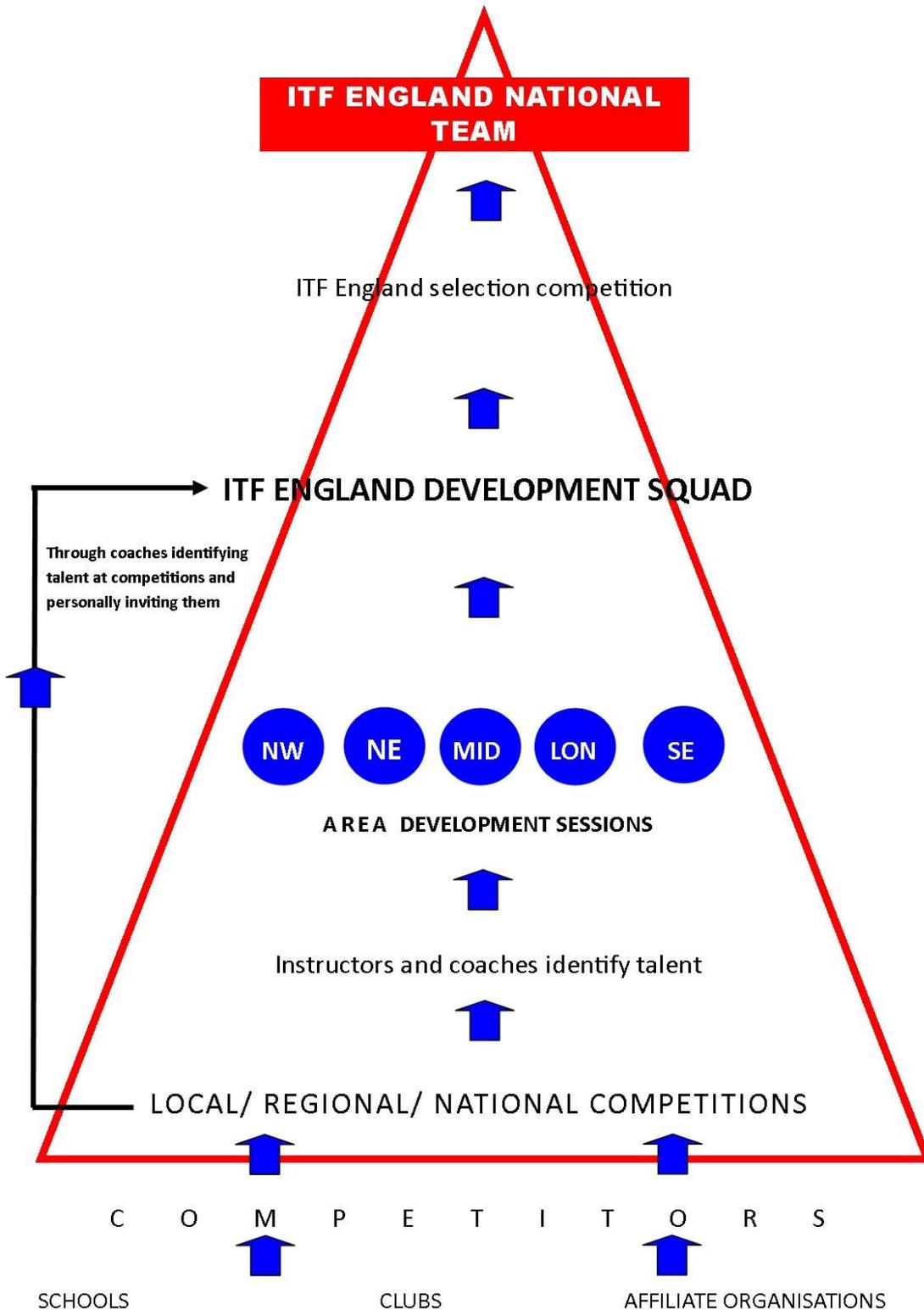




**ITF ENGLAND
PATHWAY TO
EXCELLENCE**

**A proposal in increase
competitive performance**

ITF England pathway to excellence



ITF England pathway to excellence

The proposal is to create a coherent structure to nurture our talent and ensure that we have long term athlete development embedded in our organisation. The goal is more competitive success in the European and World Championships. We should rank in the top ten in the world.

A secondary goal is to create a culture of excellence in ITF England. If we can achieve this with our younger students, the theory is that they will become better coaches and instructors themselves, which in turn should lead to an increase in technical standards throughout England.

The current issues are:

- **We have no well thought through system for identifying and developing talent.** We are using the same processes that we have used for years, the success of which is dependent on occasional exceptional talent being discovered. These students would be successful whatever the coaching system we have in place. We need to have system which supports these athletes but also can convert a good competitor into an excellent one
- **We have no process to proactively identify talent.** We are reliant upon instructors and schools to do this themselves rather than actively seeking out talent and constantly encouraging more talent to come through.
- **We have no well thought through process for both talent development and importantly coach development**
- **We do not have any specific support for nutrition, strength and conditioning, and sports psychology.**
- **The roles of the tournament director, head coach and technical director are not well defined in terms of talent development.**
- **There is no planned budget for the team.** Consequently we do not invest in strength and conditioning, nutrition or sports psychology – or in the development of our coaches.
- **A team manager post is needed**

The performance to excellence pathway

The pathway works as follows

- Schools clubs and affiliate organisations produce competitors, and those that are interested in competitions enter their local regional and national competitions.

- At this stage, instructors can identify those students who can thrive in a competitive environment and have shown some talent and or have had some competitive success.
- Instructors then identify these students and the ITF England coach invites these students to attend **AREA DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS**. This builds upon the recent development sessions and they should make students who are invited feel special. They should be available to blue belts and above. This will enable us to identify and nurture those students who may become outstanding black belt competitors in the foreseeable future.
- As a suggestion we need area development sessions in North West, Midlands, North East, London and South East.
- The only way to get into our “National Development Squad” is to attend these sessions or to be talent spotted by one of our coaches at a local regional or national competition or to perform well at any selection competition we may organise. This process will increase the amount of good quality students who are available to the head coach and his team and it will ensure that they are pre – prepared with the correct sparring drills, footwork etc. It will also allow blue belts to mix with existing elite competitors and inspire them. It will also keep these competitors on their toes as they see the next generation coming through.
- Instructors are to be invited to these sessions so the head coach can brief them on what type of drills they need to use for their students who hope to get into the England team.
- The selection tournament still has a role to play, but to enter the tournament you have to attend area development sessions. The theory is that the area coaches can tell students who are not at the required standard that they need to go back to their schools and work on whatever they need to, and then perhaps come back to the area development sessions in the future. In this way we can minimise the amount of poor quality students who attend the selection tournament.
- The Head coach then selects the National Team to represent ITF England from the ITF England Development Squad and those students who perform well at the selection tournament. This is a subjective decision in its nature, but each selection has to be made on the following criteria

The student’s

- Skill
- Technical knowledge
- Commitment
- Consistency
- Fitness
- Ability to fit in with a team ethos
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Coach and competitor development

Resources are tight. At this stage we do not have enough money to invest in every member of our national team. The proposal is that we invest in our coaches and use them to trickle down advice to individual competitors.

- Our coaches need a level two coaching certificate
- We need a female coach
- The national coach and the their team need to be trained in nutrition, strength and conditioning, and sports psychology. They should also be supported with technical advice from wherever we can get it – so If there is an opportunity to bring a top quality international coach in we should use them to teach our coaches in an intensive way rather than spread themselves over a large amount of competitors at an open session

One of the area development sessions could take the form of a **bootcamp**, where the coaching team get together with the potential students for the national team and undertake individual assessments in

- Cardiovascular fitness
- Strength and conditioning
- Nutrition
- Technical development
- Sports psychology

Each team member should then have an individual development plan, to be shared with their own instructor that they commit to.

Budget

To achieve this, the Tournament Director and head coach need to develop a budget for the process, as well as a budget for attending the competitions, which is already tried and tested.

The budget should assess costs for

- Paying the coaches
- Funding a team manager
- Training in nutrition, strength and conditioning, sports psychology and technical development

The tournament director will then have in income target and can work out how the area coaching sessions, development sessions, and tournaments can finance team development.