



## Development Centre – FAQs

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## What is a Development Centre (DC)?

DCs are the first tier organised by the County in the England Hockey Player Pathway i.e., the route for a player to develop through to their maximum potential.

DCs are Coaching Centres based locally. Warwickshire has 5 DC's:

- Warwick (Warwick School)
- Coventry (Caludon Castle School)
- Solihull (Old Silhillians HC)
- Birmingham (King Edward's School, Edgbaston)
- Rugby (Rugby School)

There are also DCs based in other neighbouring Counties which may be more convenient. DCs offer a guaranteed level of coaching, which is under the direction of England Hockey, and offer further ways to play hockey in addition to the standard school and club-based models.

## What Age Groups are the Development Centres (DCs) For?

From the 2021/22 season, age groups are based on school year instead of birth year. DCs are only for U13's, U14's and U15's.

- U13 - school years 7 & 8 (year 6 in exceptional circumstances only)
- U14 - school year 9
- U15 - school year 10

U16 (school year 11) & U17 (school year 12) – go straight to Academy Centre (AC) Assessment

## Why are they Different Now?

Historically, DCs were marketed within Warwickshire as the next step progression from Clubs and Schools to play at a higher standard before moving further on within the Player Pathway to Academy Centres (ACs). However, following the Single System Review in 2012, several amendments have been made to the Player Pathway which has shifted the focus on DCs.

It is no longer mandatory for players who have previously taken part in the Player Pathway at a more *elite* level e.g., ACs, to attend a DC again. These players if they choose, can simply go direct to AC assessment. This change has allowed the County to *open up* DCs to focus more on providing good hockey coaching to those not currently catered for by the existing club and school system, without detrimentally affecting the enjoyment and progression of already established players.

## Are DCs the Same as the Old County Sides?

No - DCs are additional playing/coaching sessions, focussing on delivering to 3 core groups:

1. Players who already play for clubs and schools regularly but want to play more hockey and will happily play with a mixed ability group.
2. Players who play at a club, but whose school does not play, so would like the chance to have additional training.

3. Players who are not currently attached to a club (for various reasons including playing other sports, timetable clashes, or being new to the sport).

NB: These sessions will be used as a fun way of children receiving more quality hockey coaching, focussing on the *Golden Thread*. One key output will be to encourage those children currently not members of a hockey club to join their local club, but this is not a mandatory requirement for further progression within the Player Pathway.

## How does the County Side Work?

The top players from each DC are recommended to attend assessments for the Academy Centres (ACs). There is at least one AC per age group, per County (Warwickshire are moving towards more scenarios of TWO Centres at some age groups due to the number of talented players in the County).

## Who will Attend the Academy Centres?

There are separate Academy Centres for boys and girls in U13, U14, U15, U16 & U17.

For U13/U14, AC Assessments will have the following

1. Recommended players from DC's, plus
2. Those who attended ACs previously.

For U15/U16/U17, AC Assessments will have the following

1. Recommended players from DC's, plus
2. Those who attended ACs previously, plus
3. Players returning from the next tier above - the Performance Centres (PCs)

Therefore, players will NOT just be up against those they have seen at the DCs.

Players CANNOT go to AC assessment unless they have either been recommended by the DC coaches OR are returning from the previous year's AC phase. The only exception for players is following discussion on an individual basis with School or Club coaches.

## When do DCs & ACs Run?

- DCs - sessions take place between September and October
- ACs - sessions take place between October and May

## How Much Does It Cost to Attend DC?

Traditional Centres - Warwick, Solihull & Birmingham - costs £45 for 10 hours of training  
Club delivered sessions - Rugby & Coventry - costs £3 per session

Warwickshire Hockey offers financial assistance for those children who need extra support to participate in this program. Please contact the Warwickshire County Hockey Treasurer, Ian Stott, in the first instance on [ian\\_stott@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ian_stott@yahoo.co.uk)

## **Do I need to Attend every DC session?**

No, it is fully understood that you may miss some sessions due to other commitments. DCs are simply being used as an opportunity for players to play more and get an opportunity to be seen by Player Pathway coaches.

If you are new to the Player Pathway and have not previously been *seen* by coaches, we would expect you to attend a minimum of 4 hours of the sessions to allow coaches to get a reasonable view of your ability to provide feedback and for the recommendations to ACs to be meaningful.

## **What Do I Do if I Cannot Attend a Session (illness, school commitments etc.)?**

It may be nice to let your DC Coach know. Coaches contact details are available on the *Player Pathway & Development Centre Dates* PowerPoint in the downloads section on the Warwickshire Hockey front page <http://www.warwickshirehockey.co.uk>

You will not be marked down if you do not let us know. Each coach will take a register of attendance at each session so should be aware of anyone who is missing anyway – and I am sure they can always ask your friends if they have any concerns as to your whereabouts.

## **Are there Trials to Get into a Development Centre?**

Not as such. DCs are not being seen as complete beginner sessions - however, if there are players who are already sporty, and want to give hockey a try having never done it before, they are encouraged to attend. The aim is to get as many players involved in playing hockey as we can – particularly with the focus on the *Golden Thread* sessions, whether that be via traditional school and club routes, or via the broader offering now provided by DCs.

## **What if My School or Club Does Not Nominate Me?**

We understand that sometimes clubs and schools are not aware of the process to nominate players, and hence we are not against players *self-nominating*. However, please ensure you register on the Player Pathway System on the England Hockey website (see link below).

The aim of DCs is to provide more playing opportunities, so please do not wait for someone to *put you forward* to attend – please just register and come along.

## **Which DC Should I Attend?**

Whichever one you want! There should be a Development Centre within 20-30 minutes' drive from wherever you live and often this will be the most convenient. However, we have also worked hard within the County to ensure there are several different options of days of the week and times of the sessions so if you cannot attend your local session when it is scheduled for, you could travel just a little further and have an option on a different day/time somewhere else.

## **Do I Need to do Anything Before Attending the DC Sessions?**

Register on the Player Pathway System, completing the player's personal and medical details and your contact details so that we have a means of contacting you. A link to this can be found on the righthand menu of the County website and below:

[https://www.playerpathway.englishockey.co.uk/members/sign\\_up](https://www.playerpathway.englishockey.co.uk/members/sign_up)

Select one of the following DC Centres: Warwick, Coventry, Solihull, Birmingham, or Rugby - **you are not looking for Warwickshire.**

Pay for the DC programme (not for Coventry/Rugby as they have a different payment model).

***If you do nothing else from this FAQ document, please make sure you register on the system as otherwise we cannot contact you!***

## **Can I Attend Warwickshire DCs if I Don't Go to School or Live in Warwickshire?**

Definitely – one of the benefits of the Single System approach is that you will receive the same coaching syllabus whichever centre you attend. DCs are focused on convenience as opposed to any historic affiliation to County borders.

It is even possible to attend the DC in one County, and an AC (the next tier) in another one. If you wish to do this, please contact Steve Tabb (contact details available on Page 7) as this requires a transition on the Player Pathway System that must be carried out by a Regional Administrator.

## **What if I Cannot Attend the Training Sessions at my Local DC?**

This is not a problem – the beauty of running at least 5 DCs within one County, is that the next closest DC is probably only another 5-10 miles further away than your local DC. Most of the DCs are on different nights / days of the week, so you are more than welcome to attend one of the other DCs if you are happy to travel a bit further.

Finally, there are always DCs being offered in Worcestershire, Birmingham, Northamptonshire, and Leicestershire which may provide another option!

## **Can I attend Another Date if I Miss a Session (if I paid the one-off coaching fee)?**

This is probably fine – but please contact Steve Tabb (details available on Page 6) to discuss first.

## **Why is this System Different to the Old County System?**

1. No matter which area you live within the Country, you should get access to high level coaching (hence why the addition of this extra tier below County)

2. Single Day *Trials* are always subject to someone having an off-day or being unavailable – DCs work on a continual assessment basis and are a better way of gauging the ability of players and how quickly they learn and develop
3. A Centralised Calendar introduced by England Hockey eliminates clashes between school/club training and matches and provides periods of rest as identified as a key part of Long-Term Athletic Development.

## What Should I Expect at a Development Centre Session?

Every DC delivers similar content. The focus provided by England Hockey is centred around game play with rules and restrictions to help teach players to develop their skills and their decision making.

The sessions will not be run like many training programmes with lots of drills and repetitive skill execution. A large amount of planning goes into each session, but a relaxed game-based format is the best environment for children to develop, experiment and most importantly, have fun.

At the end of the programme, every player can request verbal feedback providing them with areas of strength, and areas that have scope for improvement. Some players will also be invited to attend Academy Centre Assessment which will take place before Christmas.

## Why Should I attend a DC?

You should attend DCs for many different reasons:

- You can train and play alongside some of the other keen players in the County, thereby stretching your game more than if you train in the relative comfort of the same players at your club or school.
- You will be coached by some of the most experienced, qualified, and talented coaches in the County in line with the latest direction provided by England Hockey.
- You will have fun with sessions based around playing games!
- These sessions complement your club and school activity NOT conflict with it. Dates are chosen to minimise clashes with other club events.
- Irrespective of what your ambitions are to play at *higher* levels, DCs provide the best opportunity to get additional opportunities to train and be coached at the best level during the September – October period; the coaches are often the same for DCs as they are for ACs (the *next* phase) so the coaching will be just as good.
- DCs provide the entry point to play for Warwickshire. Everyone must attend a DC for at least one phase (other than in extremely exceptional circumstances).
- For others that do not necessarily want, or have the ability, to play County, these sessions will represent the best Coaching they may well receive.
- For many (particularly those in the older age groups) this training will be better tailored to their needs. Junior training sessions at club level often finish at age 14, with adult club sessions not tailored to the fast-paced, dynamic game played by teenagers.

- More information can be found about the DCs and in general about the Player Pathway on the England Hockey website at <https://www.englishockey.co.uk/play/talent-system>

## Contact Details

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Vanessa Pellow – Player Pathway – [warwickshirehockey@yahoo.com](mailto:warwickshirehockey@yahoo.com) or 07969 698490  
Steve Tabb – County Chairman - [stephentabb@hotmail.com](mailto:stephentabb@hotmail.com) or 07900 884100.

Please view the DCs as a great way to enhance your development by being provided with high level coaching in addition to any hockey you currently play.