

SURBITON HOCKEY PERFORMANCE PATHWAY PLAYING TIME & SELECTION POLICY

Purpose

Our priority within the SHC Performance Pathway is to create the best environment for player development and team success, while teaching the realities of high-level sport.

Scope

This policy applies to all Performance Pathway activity, including Top Hockey fixtures, tournaments and tours*.

*Talent Academy operates under England Hockey's Talent Framework selection policies.

Core principles

- **Whilst we endeavour to provide as much playing time as possible to all players, it is not guaranteed.** Parents/guardians and players must be aware of this before agreeing to take part in the programme and selection process.
- **Playing time is not guaranteed.** Selection (including starting line-ups, squad size, positions and minutes) is at the discretion of the coaching team.
- **Selection decisions are performance-led.** Coaches will consider the needs of the team, opposition, tactics, player welfare, training standards and role requirements.
- **Learning to handle selection is part of the programme.** Selection and non-selection are a normal and important part of high-level sport.

Playing time expectations

- Players and parents/guardians should assume that **minutes may vary significantly** across an event.
- Coaches will aim, where possible, to give **advance warning** if a player is likely to have reduced minutes.
- However, **advance warning cannot be guaranteed** due to changing match demands (injuries, tactics, form, opposition, game state, squad balance, etc.).

During tournaments/tours: communication and feedback

To protect performance, focus and wellbeing during multi-game events:

- **Players can speak to a coach during an event** if they have a question about their role, selection or playing time.
- Players can expect **instant, brief feedback** where appropriate (e.g. clarity on role, what the coach needs next, or what to focus on).
- These conversations should be **brief, respectful and at an appropriate time** (e.g. not during team talks, not in the immediate heat of a substitution and not in front of the group).
- **Parents/guardians should not engage coaches about selection or playing time while a tournament/tour is in progress.** This includes conversations at the venue, messages during the event and discussions immediately before/after matches.

Post-event conversations

- The coaching team is willing to meet to discuss selection and development **at an appropriate time after the event.**
- Requests for a meeting should be made through the usual channel (team manager/programme lead) and will be scheduled once coaches have had time to review the event.

Feedback and support after setbacks

We will operate a robust feedback structure to support players who experience reduced minutes or non-selection:

- **Instant brief feedback during the event:** where appropriate, players can ask for quick clarity on role and priorities.
- **Timely check-in after the event:** a short debrief touchpoint where appropriate.
- **Clear development feedback:** what the decision was based on (role, tactics, performance factors) and what “good” looks like.
- **Action plan:** 2–3 specific focus areas for training and match play.
- **Review point:** an agreed time to revisit progress (e.g. after a set number of sessions or the next selection window).

Shared commitment

By taking part in Performance Pathway hockey, players and parents/guardians acknowledge that:

- Selection and minutes are coaching decisions.
- Reduced minutes/non-selection can happen at any time.
- Players may raise questions with coaches appropriately during events and can expect brief, in-the-moment feedback where appropriate.
- Parents/guardians will keep selection discussions to post-event.