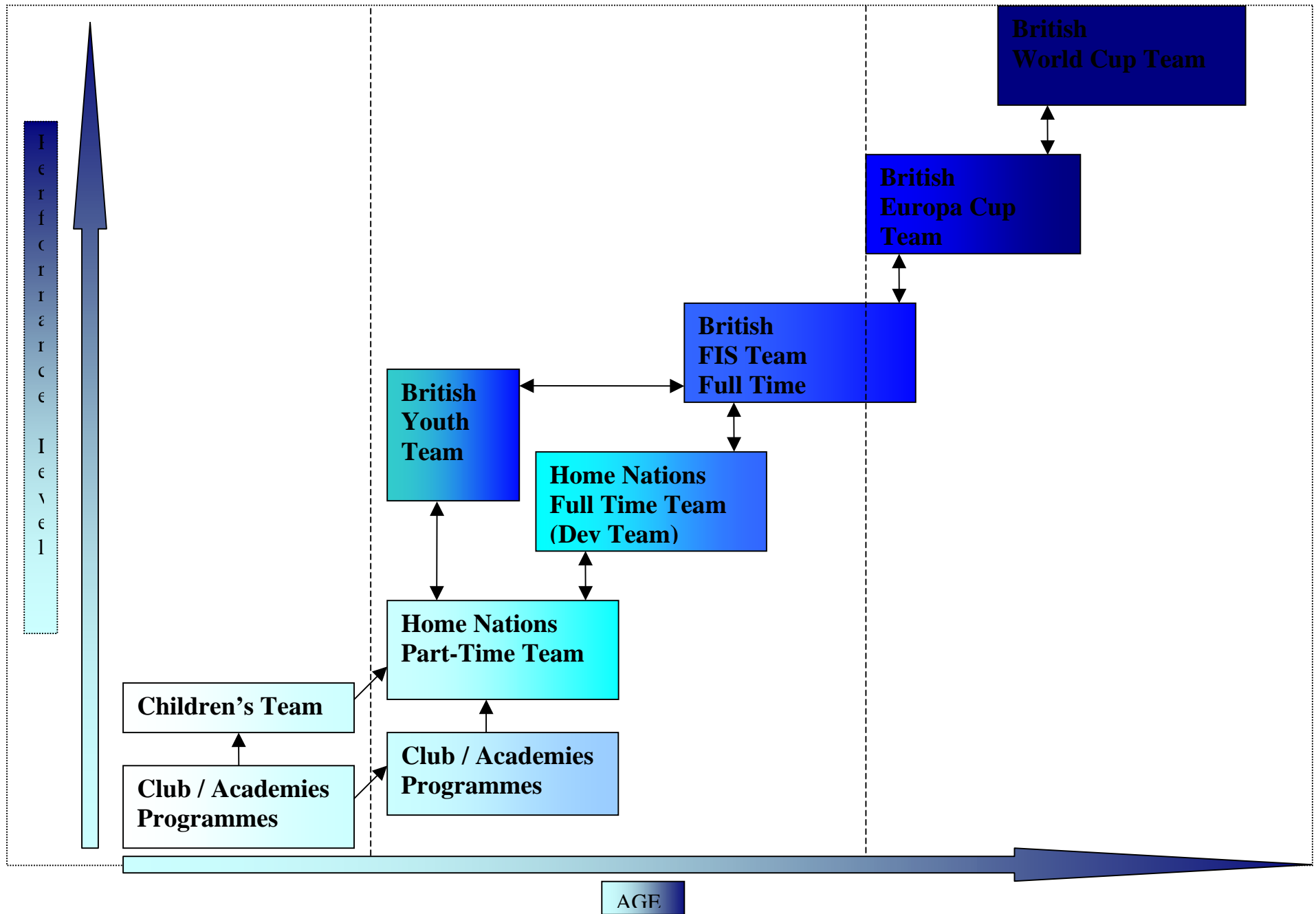


Developmental Pathway Club programmes through to British World Cup Team



Performance Pathways at National Level.

It may be helpful to identify how a talented athlete can take advantages of the pathway from good club performance to the main Great Britain Alpine Ski Team. The provisions have developed over the last thirty years and work effectively but many sometimes appear a little confusing to the newcomer. I have tried to present a simplified form of the main provisions.

However I feel that it is important to state at the outset that there is no government funding supporting any of these provisions.

All selection to the following National Teams is based on the athlete meeting the criteria as set out in the GB Selection Policy Matrix which is reviewed annually.

- **GB Children's Team**

Aims to introduce young athletes, in the Children 1 and Children2 category, to elite training and the opportunity to take part in international competition. Its provisions are made through Snowsport GB. The boys and girls may come from any of the Home Nations via the clubs or coaching opportunities and are under the guidance of Jenny Shute, Children's Coordinator/Manager and Phil Brown, Head Coach.

- **England (Scottish) Alpine Ski Team**

These provisions are made under the auspices of the separate Home Nations, in our case Snowsport England (associate membership is available Welsh and NI athletes) The programme aims to provide a part-time programme of racing and training for Junior 1 and Junior 2 male and female athletes who are entering FIS competitions but who are still in full-time education. The activities are mainly restricted to school holidays and aim to provide 100-110 days of training and racing under FIS regulations and at International level. Under the guidance of Muriel Ryding, Chairman of Alpine Squad Management Committee and Tim Fawke, Head Coach.

- **Home Nations Development Team.**

These provisions are again made under the auspices of the Home Nations but are managed on their behalf by SSGB. The programme is for full time and athletes who have achieved A level Status. Those who have not, at the time of selection, reached the criteria, may be offered " Trial Status" in order to assess their potential. There are separate squads for male and female. SnowsportGB administers this programme and it is currently self funding.

- **The British Youth Ski Team**

The British Youth team is selected by SnowsportGB and up until this year they have not been able to provide a full programme so the athletes have trained with the England or Scotland Part-time team but when the opportunity has become available the athletes take extra training with the Development Team. At athletes in their final year of Children's category racing and entering into Junior FIS category.

The National Team – What can we do for you?

It's often said "the more choices you have the more difficult it is to make a choice"

Those of us involved with the coaching of young athletes at Snowsport England know how confusing the various ways forward can be for a young athlete. On the one hand we are delighted to see an increasing number of provisions being made but sometimes this range of provisions can, in itself, cause confusion.

Simply put it seems that the general range of provisions falls into three types.

Snow Clubs who provide great opportunities for young people who are still in full time education but who race and train during their school holidays.

Race Academies who provide alpine race coaching during term time with varying arrangements for supporting the athlete with their education.

Individual coaches who provide personal coaching for athletes on a one to one basis.

Parents often ask us where does the National Team fit into this provision and how does it work?

Who we are

- A good place to start is to look at "The Athlete Pathways" document which Tim Fawke prepared to show, in simple format, how all the parts of the provisions fit into the picture.
- At SSE we provide a part-time programme for young athletes at Junior 1 and Junior 2 level who want to race but understand the need to continue with full-time education.
- Within Snowsport England, organisation and strategic planning for the Team is done by a small management committee and the coaches. Finances are run on a not-for-profit basis.
- All our camps for racing and training are taken in school/college holidays; with the occasional overlap into term time; which is optional.
- We understand the importance and are supportive of the demands made by education and so we often provide study opportunities on the longer camps if athletes need to bring work with them.
- We often liken the experience of joining the National Junior Team as to the move that young people make from main school to A level work in the Sixth Form or College. The demands on the athletes are greater but the challenges are best met, we believe, within a supportive and developmental environment of the Team.
- Simply put the National Team exists to bring together Junior athletes who have reached a predetermined level of excellence and who it is felt would benefit from training and racing with other elite athletes. This gives good preparation for the demands of the more senior GB teams.

What we do

- It is important to understand right at the beginning that neither Government nor Lottery funding is available to support English elite teams in alpine ski racing. Therefore the National Squad has to be totally self funding. Over the season there is the opportunity for approximately 110 days training and racing; the estimated costs of which could be in the region of £7000. An initial payment towards coaching costs goes some way to allowing us to employ a full-time coach; the rest of the payment comes on a camp by camp basis. We understand the financial demands that this sport makes and so we work very hard to keep the athlete's cost down. We use apartment accommodation with our great team of volunteer House Mums who provide the catering as well as pastoral support..
- Our season starts in March/April. Athletes who feel that they have reached the required standard, can apply to be considered for selection (details in the Snowsport GB Matrix published annually on the GB and SSE web-sites) A range of factors are considered during selection.
 - We want our young athletes to remain injury free and so during the early summer the selected athletes have to work hard on their general fitness in preparation for the winter season ahead. They will have to attend fitness training and testing camps (usually for weekends based in England) and their membership of the Team is only confirmed after reaching the required standards.
 - Camps for racing and training are held in the school holidays. A typical year's programme is:
 1. Summer Weekends - Fitness – settling in to the team
 2. Summer – 24 days -Back to Basics –Saas Fee . Snow and Land training. A chance to correct and improve techniques free from the pressure of racing.
 3. October – 10 days Saas Fee Concentrated race training
 4. Christmas – 30 days available -. Training and racing in Norway. Trials for the Youth Olympics are held every other year.
 5. February – 10 days training and racing at England Alpine Championship
 6. Easter - 21 days or part of, training and racing British Land Championships, Meribel.

What we think athletes gain from the experience of being in the National Team

- All our senior GB athletes train and race as a Team. We believe it is part of our role at Junior level to help our younger athletes gain this experience and to feel comfortable in the environment.
- We are part of the Home Nations and GB structure. As such our coaches work closely with all other HN and GB coaches. In feedback from the GB coaches we have been complimented on the way that our athletes are well prepared to go into the Development and GB Teams. This makes their transition much easier and progress quicker. Coaches from the senior squads are often watching the performance and development of our athletes and so are familiar with them when they come up for selection at the senior level. At Junior 2 level, our more advanced athletes may get the opportunity to train with the senior teams in certain aspects of their training.

- We believe that the greatest progress is made when elite athletes train and race together. This may well be the first time that they have been training with so many other good athletes. Racing is a highly competitive sport and athletes need to be continually challenged. There will be ups and downs; but we aim to create an atmosphere in which athletes are highly competitive on the piste but can benefit from the support and friendship that comes from a well integrated team.
- They need to have the opportunity to develop these social skills and understand the importance of a supportive team environment. We work hard to make this an important element of the team experience.
- Moving from Children to Junior status is a big step. We encourage our athletes to develop a greater degree of independence and responsibility for their own racing and training. They are encouraged to analyse their strengths and weaknesses in a positive way not a negative one and use it as a platform on which they can build future progress.
- As a National Team we believe that there are standards of behaviour that we need to show especially when at National and International events. So we encourage our athletes to be proud that they are a national representative and insist on them wearing the Team uniform when on Team events.
- FIS operates a quota system for the allocation of entry places for athletes of a particular nation. GB has an allocation of 6 male and 6 female places. The entries are made by SnowsportGB with members of the GB and HN Teams having priority. If there are more UK racers than the quota it can mean that non-team racers lose their entry.
- In February every two years we are invited to enter a Junior 1 GB Team for the European Youth Olympics (plans are in hand to upgrade this to a world event). Scottish and English team athletes attend trials for selection to the GB Team. Last year English athletes took 5 of the 6 available places.
- Post 16+ HN athletes in full-time education are eligible to apply for the government's Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) which if successful, is worth £3000. This grant can then be used to offset training costs. This is not available to athletes outside the National Team.
- Most sponsors expect the athlete to be a member of the National Team.

We hope that we have been able to give a better insight into what we are aiming to provide for our elite athletes and hope that you will consider applying for selection next season.

If you have any questions you would like answered or would like us to elaborate any of the points we have presented please do not hesitate to contact me at Snowsport England.
0121 501 2314

Muriel Ryding. 13th November 2007
Chairman
England Alpine Ski Management Team