

## **Senior Academy Programme**

Volleyball is one of the top five participated sports in the world with over 200 federations affiliated to the International Federation. (FIVB) After the spectacle that was London 2012, Volleyball England is in a strong position to build from the increase in public awareness & interest in the sport.

One of the key areas of work over the next four years will be the development of talent pathways at club, regional and national levels. Volleyball England has outlined its ambition to work closely with the higher education sector and is committed to the following outcome:

***To work with a small number of domestic university partners to develop a senior 'performance club' outlet for graduates of Junior Academy programmes.***

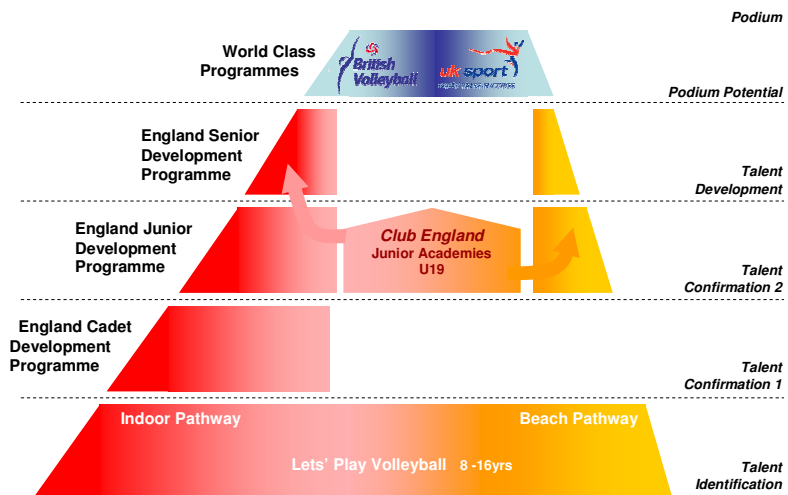
Due to a reduction in Sport England funding for the 2013-17 funding cycle, the senior national programmes for indoor volleyball are currently suspended. Due to this decision Volleyball England are having to be creative in order to provide opportunities for competition for talented athletes within the talent pathway.

The creation of a network of senior academies aims to deliver a formalized link at a key transition stage within the talent pathway. This will also provide a solid foundation for senior programme development in the future. The decision to have a more focused approach as an organisation in the form of investment zones also offers targeted geographical zones, in which we aim to build and develop a 'performance hub' where the Higher Education institution sits as a key deliverer of high quality daily training environments. This will provide a visible local talent pathway as well as allowing geographical movement for athletes in order to continue within the talent pathway at a chosen higher education institutions within England. This project will also be successful in delivering a systematic and transparent communication of information from Volleyball England during the '*junior development*' years of an athlete's pathway, an important stage of a talented athlete's development.

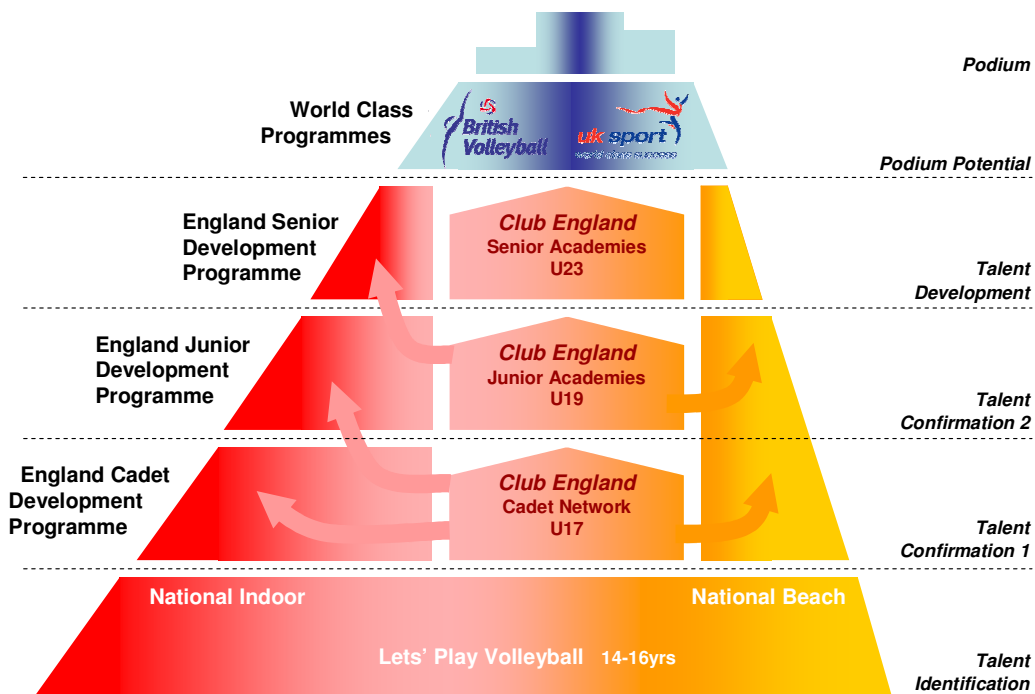
The 'senior academy' Programme reiterates Volleyball England's dedication to establishing a number of daily training environments for senior players based at higher education institutions with professional coaching, appropriate support and ancillary services. Each senior academy will cater for 10 - 15 student volleyball athletes who wish to continue their studies, whilst undertaking a full time training programme accredited by Volleyball England. The aim of Volleyball England is to produce athletes with the potential to progress into the professional game.

The previous talent pathway from the 2009 - 13 cycle is shown in fig.1

The position of the junior academies is crucial to athlete development and is an area in which Volleyball England is aiming to improve its support by creating more formalized outputs into Higher Education



The focus of Sport England funding awarded to Volleyball England is based around Talent ID and has brought about a step change in the 'cadet' level programmes with a view to pool resources and target the focus on delivering an enhanced experience to a smaller number of players with high potential. The creation of the 'Senior Academy' network will provide a clear domestic route within the talent pathway and provide a high end level of competition for players; this will include links to national league clubs based locally to enhance competitive opportunities. The movement away from centralized programmes will create a wider breadth and better set of opportunities for athletes within the pathway as well as those athletes who are exiting the pathway. The programme aims to build on the previous successes and partnerships with Higher Education institutions and allows a local talent pathway within each investment zone.



With the proposed changes each investment zone will have a designated Higher Education institution(s) to act as a 'performance hub.' The aim is also to create a national league outlet, either new or by linking with an existing local community club which will increase competitive opportunities domestically. In some areas two institutions may be selected due to strength of those within the investment zone

The intention is that further investment zones (stage 2) will also be included subject to Sport England funding and will therefore provide additional localised talent pathways.

Volleyball England are in the initial stages of discussions with Higher Education institutions. These are subject to change based on suitability. The proposed time frame is to have formalized agreements with institutions in time for UCAS applications for the academic year 2015 – 16, although we propose to offer as much information in time for the incoming UCAS applications for the next academic year dependent on status and stages of discussions.

Volleyball England plan to distribute the list of universities we are in discussions with very shortly along with promotional materials etc. and will work toward a 'Volleyball prospectus' once confirmed universities are on board.

