



Blog: How are England squads selected?

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: June 12, 2018

The recent announcement of the England squad for the European Youth Championships has led to something of a social media debate among the table tennis family.

Some have raised the fact that there is no England representation in certain events, such as the Junior Boys' Team event, and asked whether England should always select a full squad. Some have also questioned the non-selection of particular athletes.

While it would not be right to comment on the selection or otherwise of any particular athletes, we recognise that there is a healthy debate around selection and that opinions differ.

Below we aim to answer some of the questions that people are asking on social media.

How are England squads selected?

Ahead of international events including the World and European Championships and ITTF World Tour events, at both Senior and Junior level, selection policies are published on the Table Tennis England website.

These set out the process and criteria which the selection panel will discuss when selecting an England team for the event and also set the qualification period.

Which players are eligible for selection?

Each document clearly spells out what players need to do to be eligible, this always includes being English registered and a British citizen as well as other specific conditions, such as being on the ITTF ranking list. It also includes the requirement to agree to the terms of the policy by reading the policy, signing it and returning by the deadline.

Automatic selections – what are these?

For some events, eligible athletes will qualify automatically if they meet certain criteria, normally based on their results at certain events and/or their world rankings. These criteria may be set by the International Table Tennis Federation, the European Table Tennis Union or other organisations including Table Tennis England. In this case they are determined by Table Tennis England.

What about players who don't meet the automatic selections?

After automatic selections have been made, it is up to the selection panel to determine whether any more selections will be made, if the event permits it.

In deciding this, they take into account the criteria set out in the selection policy for that event, including:

- The credible performance level for each event, set out at the beginning of each policy. In this case a top 16 in team or last 16 in singles
- An athlete's results at certain ITTF-sanctioned events
- An athlete's world ranking and how it has changed within the qualification period
- Team dynamics (this includes player behaviour at previous competitions and in training, their demonstrated commitment to the values of the sport and Table Tennis England and their engagement with National Coaches)
- The athlete's potential to perform at this and other events in the future
- The athlete's physical readiness
- The strategic priorities of Table Tennis England and an athlete's developmental needs in terms of peaking for particular events.

Only athletes who have signed and returned the entry form that accompanies the selection policy for each event – within the deadline set out in the policy – will come under consideration, having fulfilled all the eligibility criteria.

Results after the qualifying period has ended are not taken into account but the selection panel has discretion to consider national rankings and performance at certain national events before the deadline if an athlete has not yet competed at ITTF-sanctioned events or does not have a current world ranking.

The selection panel is not obliged to select any athletes – other than those who have qualified automatically – if it believes there are none of a suitable quality to perform in line with the selection policy.

Who is on the selection panel?

It varies according to the event and whether selection comprises senior or junior athletes, or both. It will be made up of a number of members of the Performance staff and may include the Director of Sport, Performance Director and England Pathway and Talent Development coaches.

Is priority given to athletes who are part of the National Talent Academy and/or England Youth Squad?

No. Any athlete who has returned the entry form will be considered if they meet the criteria. As one would expect, National Talent Academy and EYS athletes form the majority of applicants for youth events but are not the only applicants who have been considered – or in some cases selected.

Can athletes appeal if they are not selected?

Yes, there is always a right of appeal and the process is set out in all event selection policies. The Selection Review Policy is also published on our website.

What happens to those not selected?

Naturally, athletes who are not selected for a particular event are entitled to be disappointed – and we hope that provides extra motivation to continue to work on all aspects of their game. We continue to work with non-selected athletes and, where relevant, their parents and club coaches and to listen to feedback from them. We

remain committed to providing the opportunity for all athletes to reach their full potential, while accepting that athletes develop and adapt to different levels of competition at different rates.

Who pays for England teams to compete at international events?

Table Tennis England does not receive any UK Sport funding and a very limited amount of our Sport England funding is earmarked for the talent pathway and coaching to support it.

From within our limited other resources, we fund athletes to represent England at competitions including the World and European Championships (senior and junior) and other events, including selected ITTF World Tour and Junior Tour events. This programme is worked out every year and is constantly reviewed.

Can athletes fund themselves to play in international competitions?

Yes, at certain competitions, notably the ITTF World Tour and Junior Tour events. This has always been the case and Table Tennis England – and before that the ETTA – has offered logistical and other support where appropriate.

Do you review your selection policies and procedures?

Yes, they are under constant review and we always listen to feedback. In fact, the policy this year was revised from previous years, trying to establish a more effective way of communicating the standard required for selection. Anyone who wishes to share feedback about a policy, or to better understand what it requires, please contact us.

To further illustrate our learning, from next season onwards we will be sharing our policies when they are in their draft form with a recently retired English international player who has been around the top of the English game for much of the last few years – asking them to provide feedback and share the content with the athlete cohorts up for consideration.

The squad for the European Youth Championships does not include a full representation of players in all categories. Shouldn't England always be fully represented at such events?

We recognise that is an opinion which others put forward and we respect their right to hold that opinion and to share it publicly. As things stand, we respectfully disagree. Our Performance staff, who make up the selection panels, between them have many decades of experience in table tennis and a track record of developing players. They always strive to ensure the squad selected for any given event gives England the best chance of success and also for certain events provides the athletes with the best chance to develop their experience and skills.

Other countries will choose to define their own selection processes and criteria differently and several also require players to meet their own cost of attending all events, including the major ones. Table Tennis England chooses to allocate its resources differently, but also wants to ensure that major championship events have players capable of delivering credible performances. Therefore, we fund all selected players for these events and do not differentiate between the ones who can afford it and the ones who can't.

The ETTU and ITTF have recently revised their major championships and currently require teams and individuals to qualify for what have traditionally been the major championships and are now frequently referred to as the finals. This requires our teams to be even more prepared and capable of higher performance levels in order to qualify for future events. This will mean that we have to ensure a fine balance between developmental needs and performance levels required to be selected for each event.

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/blog-how-are-england-squads-selected/>