

Bolton Arena RPDC

Selection Policy & Criteria

1. Programme Overview

The Bolton Arena Regional Player Development Centre (RPDC) aims to provide selected U10–U14 players from the LTA National Pathway Longlist with high-quality daily coaching in a challenging, engaging, fun and professional environment.

Our goal is to equip players with the technical, tactical, physical and mental skills required to progress towards 14+ international tennis & potentially **LTA National Academy selection by the age of 14.**

If a player is not selected for a National Academy at U14, Bolton Arena's **Performance Pathway** continues to support players at all ages and stages. Players aged 14+ may continue their development within our **Full-Time Academy (FTA)**. Many of our players have gone on to compete at Junior Grand Slam Level and achieve scholarships at Top 10 Division 1 American Universities.

2. Eligibility

To be eligible for the Bolton Arena RPDC programme, players must meet the following criteria:

a. Age Eligibility

Players must be born in one of the following years:

- 2016
- 2015
- 2014
- 2013

b. National Pathway Selection

Players must be selected on the **LTA National Pathway Longlist.**

c. Annual Reselection

Players are reviewed annually to ensure they continue to meet the **performance and development requirements** of the Bolton Arena RPDC programme.

The RPDC programme has a **maximum capacity of 12 full-time players**.

Access player places may be offered and are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

3. Performance Level Requirements

The RPDC selection process ensures that players are placed in an environment that will both **challenge and support them to maximise their tennis potential**.

As an RPDC, our objective is to prepare players for the **demands of international junior tennis (ITF Juniors)** as they graduate from the U14 category.

We recognise that players develop at different rates. While the RPDC provides an excellent platform for progression, placing a player in a high-performance environment too early can sometimes lead to a negative experience that may hinder their long-term development. For this reason, we carefully consider all aspects of a player's readiness during the selection process.

For this reason:

- The **selection process takes place annually**.
- Players not selected in the first year may still be considered in future years if they demonstrate readiness if the player still achieve the National Longlist.
- The process also ensures the RPDC programme remains the **right developmental environment for each player**.

Selections are made on a **case-by-case basis**, considering the following areas.

Competitive Profile

Players should demonstrate the ability, or potential, to **compete and win matches at national level and international**

Expected competition progression:

- **Years 1–2:** Grade 1 National Tour events and Tennis Europe competitions
- **Years 3–4:** Increasing participation in international events

- **Final U14 Year:** Players should be competing in Top Category 1/Super Cats Tennis Europe events and in some cases **ITF Junior tournaments**

All players will receive a **12-month tournament schedule** to guide competition planning.

International travel is expected to become a priority, particularly for players in **Years 3 and 4** of the programme. This helps prepare players for the competitive and physical demands of international tennis and National Academy pathways.

Commitment to the RPDC Programme

All players will receive a **bespoke weekly training programme**.

We recognise that balancing tennis, school, and family commitments is important. However, full cooperation from both players and parents is essential to ensure the programme operates successfully.

Training expectations:

- **Year 1:** Minimum of **3 training days per week**
- **Year 2 onwards:** Progression to minimum **4 training days per week**

Participation in a full-time programme may require **training during school hours**, including mornings or afternoons on weekdays.

The coaching team is happy to **work closely with schools** to ensure academic standards are maintained.

Alignment with Bolton Arena Philosophy

Selected players must demonstrate qualities that align with the **Bolton Arena high-performance philosophy**, including:

- Strong work ethic
- Positive attitude
- Coachability
- Commitment to improvement
- Openness to expert guidance in developing their game

Players and parents should be prepared to **embrace the demands of elite performance tennis** and commit to long-term development.

Short-term results and ranking are not the primary focus. Bolton RPDC players should be fully bought into the game development changes guided by the expertise of the coaching team.

Selection Process – How to Express Interest

Step 1 – Eligibility

Players must:

- Be born within the eligible years listed above
- Be selected for the **LTA RPDC Longlist**

Players **from outside the local region are welcome to apply.**

Step 2 – Expression of Interest

Following the National Pathway selection email, players interested in joining the Bolton Arena RPDC should contact:

Head Coach – Sabrina Federici

✉ sabrinafederici@activebolton.com

Due to limited places, we recommend contacting us **as soon as possible.**

Alternatively, enquiries can be submitted through the **RPDC enquiry form on the Bolton Arena website.**

Step 3 – RPDC Open Day

All interested players must attend an **RPDC Open Day.**

During this session:

- Coaches will assess overall level including **technical and tactical ability**
- Players will complete **physical testing** with the Head Strength & Conditioning Coach

- Coaches will observe **personality, attitude and competitiveness**

There is **no charge for the session**, and players' **individual coaches are welcome and encouraged to attend**. The reason for this is so that we can gather as much information as possible on each of the players.

Dates and times will be sent following receipt of the expression of interest.

Step 4 – Review Process

After the session, the **Head Coach and RPDC coaching team** will review each player against the **performance criteria**.

Please note:

The programme has a **maximum of 12 full-time places**.

Step 5 – Selection Outcome

Parents will receive an email confirming:

- **Successful selection and next steps**, or
- **Non-selection feedback**

Reselection Policy

Each May/June, the coaching team conducts a **full annual review of all players** within the programme.

This ensures the RPDC continues to support players who show the potential to progress towards **National Academy standards by the age of 14**.

Players develop physically and emotionally at different rates; however, our goal is to ensure the programme consistently supports players with **clear long-term pathway potential**.

Assessment Areas

The primary areas of the annual review are the below:

Game style - The players have emerging strengths which can be developed into successful weapons at the international junior stage and beyond

Strengths & Weapons - The player has emerging strengths which can be developed into successful weapons at the international junior stage and beyond

Head - The player demonstrates smart decision making, good problem-solving abilities and a level of focus in matches, irrespective of the match situation

Heart - The player consistently shows a positive attitude and strong drive in both training and competition, reflecting the resilience, respect and commitment to development expected of Bolton players, regardless of result or environment.

Athlete - The player has a robust athletic foundation which can be developed into physical attributes that could positively influence the outcome of matches.

Performance - The player has competitive results, ranking and rating (at current year of birth or above). Their results profile shows a future or current capability to become a Nationally relevant player or above (consistently reaching the Last 16 or beyond at domestic G1 level or above) in their current age group and/ or above. The player shows the potential to beat players of a higher level than themselves.

Readiness - The player is ready to engage and meet the demands of the RPDC Programme.

Reselection Outcomes

1. Successful Reselection

If a player is reselected:

- Preparation for the **September training term** will begin
- Communication with schools may be arranged to organise the weekly schedule

2. Unsuccessful Reselection

If a player is not reselected:

- Families will be given time to **identify alternative training environments**
- Where possible, the player may be offered an **Access Position**, allowing participation in selected squads

Players may also explore opportunities at **other RPDC venues**.

Important – National Pathway Eligibility

Players not training within an RPDC must still meet **LTA National Pathway Selection Criteria** to remain on the Longlist. (the National Pathway list is released early May to parents & players)

Reviews take place **each May/June**.

Players who do not meet the required standards may be **removed from the National Pathway List**.

Early Contract Termination

In certain circumstances, it may be in the **best interests of the player** to leave the programme early.

This decision may be made jointly by the coaching team and family if the RPDC environment is no longer the most appropriate developmental setting.

Payment Policy

Refunds are not normally provided.

However, exceptions may be considered in cases where a player misses a **significant period of training due to injury or illness**. Each case will be reviewed individually.

RPDC Exit Strategy

The exit strategy ensures a **professional, respectful, and supportive transition** if a player leaves the programme.

Our priority is always the **long-term wellbeing and development of the player**.

Possible Reasons for Exit

A player's place in the programme may not be renewed or may end early for several reasons, including:

- Player wellbeing (physical, emotional, or mental)
- Training behaviour or commitment
- Ongoing communication or relationship challenges
- Lack of expected performance progression

Communication Process

If a player exits the programme:

- Parents will be informed **privately and clearly**
- The reasoning behind the decision will be explained
- Families will be given **sufficient time to explore alternative options**
- The coaching team will support the transition where possible

Access Player Opportunities

If a player leaves the full-time programme, they may be offered an **Access Player position** (subject to availability), which may include:

- Participation in selected squad sessions
- Ongoing monitoring from RPDC coaches

National Pathway Benchmarks (Spring 2026)

To remain eligible for National Pathway consideration, players must meet **LTA Longlist Criteria**, including the following.

UTR Benchmarks

Players must be ranked within the following **UTR positions in Great Britain**:

- **11U:** Top 24
- **12U:** Top 20
- **13U:** Top 16

Meeting UTR benchmarks alone does **not guarantee selection** and still requires coach nomination.

National Coach Nomination

Players must receive a nomination from an **LTA National Pathway Coach**, such as:

- National Age Group Coach
- National Pathway Coach
- RPDC Network Lead

Nominations are based on professional judgement considering:

- Potential for international success
- Suitability for progression to National Academy level
- Observations made throughout the selection period

Our Commitment

At Bolton Arena, we are committed to supporting every player's development, regardless of whether they remain in the RPDC programme.

Our aim is always to guide players toward the **best environment for their long-term development — both as athletes and as individuals.**