

Age ranges

For the single system, the international 1st January age qualification is used where players need to be 16/18 or under in the year of international competition. Simply this means the following:

Activity/Age Group	Athletes born in
Wales U18's	1992
Autumn U17 PDC's and RA's	1993
Wales U16's	1994
Autumn U15 PDC's and RA's	1995
Summer U14 DC's	1996 1997

What about U14s?

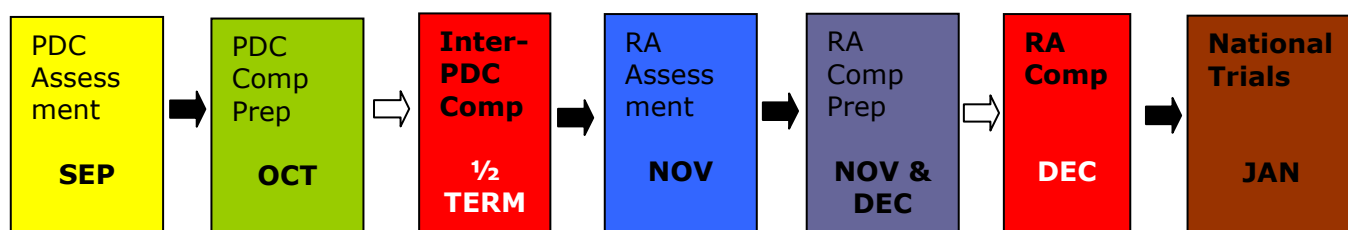
Traditionally, the region has run teams at U14 or U13 level which play their southern counterparts and English counties. As there is no U14 Welsh team, this is not part of the single system but there are Development Centres run in the summer term to cater for these boys. If players are good enough at 13, they will have a chance of being selected at U15. There are also the North Wales Junior Leagues at (currently) U11 and U13 and the national youth competitions that should provide adequate competitive opportunities.

Age Group squads 2009/10

Traditionally, the region has fielded sides at U14, 16 and 18 levels which allow talented players within North Wales to be noticed by national selectors for National Age Group Squads (NAGS). In recent years, the WHU has set up Performance Development Centres and Regional Academies to help develop talented athletes. As a result, there has not been one clear route through to national selection with an increase in the workload on an already small number of core volunteers.

As a result, from 2009/10, North Wales Men's Hockey has agreed with the WHU to operate a "single system" where all players seeking to play for Wales must take part in. This is based on the Performance Development Centres and Regional Academies model which has been established in the past two to three years.

Anyone with the aspiration to play for Wales, must now attend a Performance Development Centre irrespective whether they are already in the system or not. Performance Development Centres will run at U15 and U17 levels as this gives sufficient time for a squad to be developed for the U16 and U18 national teams. The first stage of the Performance Development Centre is in effect the "trial" but this time over four weeks. At this point, a first "cut" is made and the ones selected prepare for competition with the other PDCs in October half term. At this competition between PDCs, another selection is made for the Regional Academies which will start after half term. Again, the first four weeks of this is in effect a "trial" and another cut is made in November with the remaining players preparing for inter-regional academy competition in early December. From this competition, selection will take place for the National Trials to be held in January. The national trials will include both players from the Welsh single system and "anglos" invited to attend from the English single system.



Each black arrow represents a selection point.

What does this mean?

- This means that the traditional age group squads at U16 and U18 will **not** operate as their place is taken by the inter-Academy competitions.
- A clearer and fairer route through to Welsh selection – everyone has to start the PDCs irrespective of inclusion in previous squads. There is no "closed shop" as it allows people to enter at a later stage.
- A better way of organizing the coaching workforce, particularly with people's time commitments. There are no extra sessions for age group squads on top of academies and PDCs.
- Children get adequate opportunity to be selected and given clear feedback on areas they need to improve on.
- It is club-focused. All talented players must come through clubs with schools feeding into clubs.
- It brings Wales into line with England who are introducing a similar system and helps in the development of athletes for GB selection.

How does my child get into the Single System?

The first selection is done at club level, so clubs who believe they have a player with potential should send them to the relevant PDC for assessment. The club will inform you that they will be doing this and will complete the necessary documentation with the WHU.