

## **UNIQUE TENNIS PLAYER SELECTION PROCESS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Unique Tennis Regional Performance Development Centre aims to support the development of players between the ages of 10-14 years old, who are showing the potential to meet the selection criteria for National Academy selection within 3-4 years.

The Unique Tennis Team will work in collaboration with the player, family and where necessary external coaches to establish a high-quality training programme. Players will also be supported through access to the following opportunities during the contract term:

- Designed and developed Individualised Training Plan (ITP) and tournament schedule.
- High quality training environment with both squad and individual tennis sessions.
- Full time Players will have up to 9 tennis sessions and up to 9 Strength & Conditioning (S&C) sessions throughout the week.
- Individualised S&C programme and biannual fitness testing.
- Biannual player progress review meetings.
- Up to ten tournament visits by Unique Tennis Coaches at either ITF, Tennis Europe or LTA Grade 1-2 events.
- Unique Tennis Programme that operates for 48 weeks of the year
- Significant financial support
- Honest, caring, hardworking, professional and cohesive team that create a tough but enjoyable training environment
- Favourable player to coach ratio which allows us to create a bespoke plan for each player and approach each athletes growth individually.

### **2. ELIGIBILITY**

For a player to be eligible for consideration they must meet 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.1 or 2.3.2. All eligible players will then be considered for selection by the Selection Panel.

2.1 Age eligibility. A player must be in their 11U, 12U, 13U or 14U year on the 1st September 2023 \*

2.2 Eligible to represent Great Britain. Players must hold, or be in the process of obtaining, a British passport and have not represented any other nation in a representative team event . Evidence may be asked for to prove eligibility. Those not meeting this stipulation, but who have lived in Great Britain continuously since 1 April 2021 will be considered on a case-by-

case basis. Such players must contact [info@uniquetennisacademy.co.uk](mailto:info@uniquetennisacademy.co.uk) to confirm they would like to be considered.

2.3 Performance level requirements. In addition to 2.1 and 2.2, a player must fulfil either of the requirements outlined below, either 2.3.1, 2.3.2 or 2.3.3

2.3.1 Selected as a 14U NAGP scholar in 2023,

2.3.2 Named on the RPDC National Pathway List for 2023.

2.3.3 Unique Tennis has the right to put forward a player that has not been identified on the RPDC player list and alongside the LTA this will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

2.4 There is a maximum number of scholarship places available at the Unique Tennis RPDC. This number is limited to a maximum of 12 scholarship players.

2.5 All selected players \*\* must sign the Unique Tennis RPDC Player Agreement/terms and conditions to receive the benefits identified in section 1.

2.6 The contract will typically be a one-year agreement and re-selection will be made in line with the Reselection Process in 4.0 and Performance Level requirements in 2.3.

*\*Players younger will be considered in exceptional circumstances.*

*\*\*All players have the right to decline the offer made by Unique Tennis RPDC.*

### **3. SELECTION PROCESS**

3.1 Selection panel. The Selection Panel (the Panel) will be made up of the Unique Tennis Head coach, assistant coaches, Unique Tennis Consultants and the head of sports science.

The Panel has complete discretion regarding selection decisions and will be guided by the aims, the process, and the ability (within resources) to effectively support each player. The Panel will exercise their discretion fairly and without bias.

3.2 Evaluation of player suitability. When considering which players have the potential to meet the aims of the programme, the Panel will consider the following factors:

- Game style: The player is already showing signs of a well rounded game that can be developed and nurtured into an effective game style for the future.
- Strengths & Weapons: Has clear areas of their game that can be developed into weapons for the tour. Has an ability to look beyond the here and now when it comes to developing a game that can stand up to the demands of the professional game.

- **Head:** The Player demonstrates an appetite to learn and has a growth mindset. Has good problem solving skills and displays clarity in their decision making. Maintains focus throughout matches and training and always competes unconditionally.
- **Heart:** The player has a hunger to improve day in day out and relishes dealing with uncomfortable situations and being tested to their limits. Has a drive to compete and thrives in being challenged in practice and on the match court. Understands that pressure is a privilege and not an enemy.
- **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 players results are competitive and they don't shy away from competition. Most importantly we want players to show an appetite for their development whilst trying to remain competitive.
- **Readiness:** The player has the physical, mental and emotional capacity to meet the rigorous demands of the programme and can fully benefit and commit to the Unique Tennis RPDC.

When evaluating a player against these factors, the Panel will use professional opinion to reflect on observing them in both a training environment and under the stress of a match. We will use relevant information from their trial period, international or domestic tournaments and National Activity throughout the year.

3.3 Considerations relating to limiting factors. When discussing the above factors, the Panel may also consider any of the following matters that influences their opinion on the player's potential:

- The player's age and their stage of physical maturation,
- The player's current training programme and tournament schedule,
- Any injury and/or illnesses that led to a significant interruption (minimum of 3 consecutive months) or impact on tennis,
- Any other significant considerations (e.g. illness in the family).

### 3.4 Allocation of Unique Tennis RPDC financial benefits.

Selected players are eligible for a place on the Unique Tennis RPDC programme. They will financially support the costs associated with enrolling on the programme and provide reduced costs on coach support at selected competitions. The following standards will ordinarily be applied when determining the level of financial award offered to selected players:

- Commitment to an ITP and willingness to work with the Unique Tennis Team.
- Level of funding will be inline with the Unique Tennis tier system.

#### 3.4.1 Funding Allocation

Full time programme.

Tier 2 - 5 tennis and S&C sessions a week.

Tier 1 - 3 tennis and S&C sessions a week.

## 4. UNIQUE TENNIS TRIAL PROCEDURE

4.1 Players that have been long listed on the RPDC pathway will be eligible to contact Unique Tennis via our website [www.uniquetennisacademy.com](http://www.uniquetennisacademy.com), email [UT@hazelwoodsportsclub.co.uk](mailto:UT@hazelwoodsportsclub.co.uk) or via phone 07920044002.

4.2 Once contact has been made one of the Unique RPDC coaching team will be in contact to arrange a suitable day to visit Unique Tennis for a trial day.

4.3 **Trial day:** Will be a full day of on court and off court assessment. During the trial the team will assess the players personal attributes, on court ability and physical capacities. The criteria that players are assessed with differs depending on the players age and maturation.

4.4 **Trial Week:** Players that successfully pass the trial day will be offered a weeklong trial to see if both parties are a good fit. During this time there will be three elements under the microscope; Physical capabilities, tennis ability and all round off court conduct.

4.4.1 **Fitness Testing:** A full battery of fitness tests will also be performed for players that pass the trial day. The performance tests will be carried out on the Friday before the trial week. Testing is performed the week prior so soreness and fatigue do not affect on-court performances.

4.5 **Successful Candidates:** Players that meet the teams criteria will have a players meeting at the end of the trial week. In this meeting we will provide feedback on the players trial period and a formal offer will be made.

**4.6 Player Agreement:** Following the meeting an email will be sent with the Unique Tennis Player agreement and terms and conditions. This is to be printed and signed by all parties.

**4.7 Contract:** The contract term will be one year and continually reviewed. The acceptance and continued inclusion at the unique tennis RPDC is reviewed in line with our player agreement/terms and conditions.

#### **4. RESELECTION**

Players who are currently part of the Unique Tennis RPDC will be automatically shortlisted for reselection, if still eligible according to the eligibility criteria set out in section 2. At the end of each player's agreement period, each player will be formally reviewed by the Selection Panel in the selection meeting. A player will then either have their agreement renewed or not. In making this decision the Panel will be asked to consider:

1. A player's progress against their ITP.
2. A player's competition results, and the likelihood of them achieving the selection criteria for National Academy in the next 1-2 years. As per the player's contract, funding levels will be reviewed as part of this process. All decisions will be recorded and players notified in line with the dates in section 5.

#### **5. KEY DATES**

The LTA Selection Meeting commences the week beginning 22nd April 2024. Players will be informed of the shortlist at the end of April.

Players need to enquire to Unique Tennis via the website link [www.uniquetennisacademy.com](http://www.uniquetennisacademy.com) or email [UT@hazelwoodsportsclub.co.uk](mailto:UT@hazelwoodsportsclub.co.uk) from May 2024 to be eligible for selection.

Players need to have completed the trial process by the end of June 2024

Players will be communicated about the outcome of the trial process verbally and in writing by the end of July 2024.

Selected players need to have signed the Unique Tennis player agreement by the 31st July 2024.

Successful players will commence their training programme at Unique Tennis on the 2nd September 2024.