

Talent Pathways & the UK School Games

Programme information sheet

WHAT IS IT?

The Youth Sport Trust is working with all of the UK School Games sports to assess the talent pathways that are available for young people in their chosen sports; with the UK School Games providing both a pinnacle to competition and an experience within which a unique performance environment can be created.

Both competition and talent pathways are influenced by the UK School Games

Athletics, badminton, fencing, judo and table tennis have all used the UK School Games to stimulate the initiation of Competition Reviews, looking at the role competition plays throughout the sporting career of any participant. For example:

Judo has now implemented five levels of competition which refer to developmental stage appropriate competitions to facilitate the development of all players through competition.

Badminton is working to introduce a "Super Series" of competitions across the UK allowing the most talented young players increased access to appropriate opportunities to compete at the right level and in the best environment. This will also create a readymade qualification route to the UK School Games.

Volleyball England has implemented adaptations to their Inter Regional Championships to improve the athlete experience at this level which serves as the qualifier to the UK School Games. This includes use of Athlete Mentors during the event, educational workshops on topics including anti-doping, and improved levels of event presentation. Volleyball have also identified a specific competition format at school level which will feed this system; the age group, game format and pathway of competition for young people in schools has been oriented to provide all young people with the chance to step on the pathway towards the UK School Games and beyond.

Swimming has introduced the "Aquasplash" resource for young people in schools, promoting competition across the four Aquatic disciplines of swimming, diving, water polo and synchro to develop rounded young swimmers. This is an example of competency based competition, aiming to ensure that young people are able to identify which aquatic discipline suits their personal preferences and to allow teachers and coaches to help identify the route through which they may experience the most success.

UK SCHOOL GAMES 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

19% of the 2008 Paralympic Games Swimming team competed at the UK School Games.

68% of the FINA World Junior Championships 2008 team for swimming attended at least one UK School Games.

49% of the 2008 IAAF World Junior Championship team for athletics attended at least one UK School Games.

66% of the 2008 European Junior Championships swimming team attended at least one UK School Games.

63% of the 2008 European Cadet Championship's team for fencing attended at least one UK School Games.



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

Six key themes have been identified and created to ensure the UK School Games bring about systematic change in the way in which competitive opportunities are developed for young people and that a lasting legacy is created.

1. Ongoing planning and delivery of a UK level sports event showcasing talented young sports people.
2. To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people.
3. Use the event itself, and themed branding of local and regional competitions, to raise the profile of school age competitions and the young people taking part, to promote the work undertaken in each nation to improve PE and school sport.
4. Integrate Olympic and Paralympic themes into the UK School Games by ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic values are promoted through volunteer training, opening and closing ceremonies and an athlete village.
5. Create opportunities for young people to become engaged in volunteering at major sports events both as technical officials and event volunteers.
6. Ensure the event advocates and demonstrates the highest level of child protection and welfare systems.

The responsibility for the development and organisation of the UK School Games lies with the Youth Sport Trust whose mission is to use the power of sport to improve the lives of young people.

The Youth Sport Trust works closely with the national governing bodies of sport of the UK School Games events across the UK, and each of the home country sports councils.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

For further information on the work of the UK School Games please contact will.roberts@youthsporttrust.org