

National Talent Orientation Camp

Programme information sheet

WHAT IS IT?

The National Talent Orientation Camp (NTOC) is a four-day camp for talented young athletes (aged 14-17 yrs) who are seeking to be part of their sport's World Class talent confirmation phase of the Paralympic and Olympic pathways.

The camp is funded through the Gifted and Talented strand of the government's PE and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP).

The NTOC brings together the combined experience and expertise of the Department for Children, Schools and Families Gifted and Talented Education Unit, the Youth Sport Trust, practitioners from the education sector, UK Sport, English Institute of Sport and the World Class performance staff of the attending national governing bodies (NGBs).

Aim of the camp

The NTOC aims to prepare talented young sports people for the personal, sporting, academic and vocational challenges past compulsory education and beyond 2012.

There are four strands to the camp through which the young athletes begin to answer key questions underpinning future sport/life choices and influencing their approach to performance in the future.

1. **Talent and Ability** – Does my ability match my ambition? Do I have the mental resolve to be successful? Can I perform when it counts?
2. **Attitude and Ambition** – Do I aspire to be the best in the world? Do I love to compete? Am I being truly honest with myself?
3. **Knowledge and Understanding** – Do I know what an Olympic Champion looks like? Do I know what is expected of me? Am I a student of my profession?
4. **Education and Lifestyle Support** – Will my training environment allow me to reach the top? Do I have family support? What educational choices do I have?

What happens at the camp?

Young athletes are nominated by their NGB; at the 2009 camp the sports invited included canoeing, cycling, sailing, hockey, wheelchair basketball and rowing.

The NTOC provides a focused and intense period of education and reflection. The camp combines high quality training sessions with workshops on the four strands. These workshops are delivered in a range of interactive styles by former Olympic athletes trained in facilitation. The sessions encouraged the young athletes to learn about themselves, their sport, their contemporaries and the system they are supported by.

The camp also includes keynote speeches on education and lifestyle planning, advice on drugs-free sport, a Higher Education Marketplace and the opportunity to ask a panel of elite performer's questions around what it takes to become the best.

In both the 2008 and 2009 camp sessions were included for parents/carers and teachers to access a snapshot of the

NTOC and learn ways in which they can support the young athletes sporting and educational careers.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

“ The National Talent Orientation Camp has been absolutely brilliant because we've got to meet other young people from different sports and worked with elite athletes who have inspired us and made us even more determined to get to an Olympics and hopefully win a medal. ”

2008 National Talent Orientation Camp attendee

An evaluation of the 2008 NTOC shows that over nine out of ten respondents agree that as a result of their experiences at NTOC they have:

- improved their understanding of what it takes to be a successful athlete;
- increased their determination to succeed in their chosen sport;
- improved their understanding of the need to plan their sport and education activities;
- improved the long-term planning of their sports career.

Attitudes of athletes have also been positively affected by NTOC experiences:

- 92% of athletes state they have a more positive attitude to their primary sport.
- 90% have a more positive attitude to training.

Parents spoken to as part of the case study process also noted the following impacts of the NTOC on themselves:

- They listen more to their children, particularly ideas for their training and sports activities.
- They feel more able to take a step back and allow their child to be more independent, but more confident to step in when needed.
- They explain things more.
- They feel more comfortable in their own parenting as they see they are getting things right in comparison with other parents in a similar situation.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Young athletes are nominated by their NGB in October and attend the NTOC in the following January.

For further information about the National Talent Orientation Camp please email francesca.ruffoni@youthsporttrust.org or visit our dedicated gifted and talented website www.talntladder.org. To view the NTOC 2009 film, please visit <http://www.youthsporttrust.org/page/ntoc-09/index.html>

