

Junior Athlete Education programme

Supporting gifted and talented pupils in physical education and sport

Mentor training - pre-course information



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Junior Athlete Education programme

Background

The Junior Athlete Education (JAE) programme is part of the Youth Sport Trust's work to support gifted and talented (G&T) young sports people.

It aims to help young sports people, and those who influence them, to plan ahead to ensure that their sport, schoolwork, social and family lives remain in balance.

The programme is comprised of:

- a series of workshops for young athletes and their parents (and coaches)
- the Young Athlete's Handbook that supports the workshops
- the support of a JAE mentor, who might work with individuals or groups of young athletes
- development work with schools that wish to be part of the programme, usually with their G&T co-ordinator
- development work with national governing bodies of sport (NGBs)
- training and ongoing support for JAE mentors who may be teachers, adults other than teachers (AOTTs), coaches, talent identification coaches, etc.

The programme is very closely linked to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) support of G&T pupils in schools, please see the website www.nc.uk.net/gt.

Relevant information on JAE can be found on the website www.talentradder.org.uk

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YST-JAE-14



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The JAE mentor course - pre-course information

Introduction

Congratulations on having been selected to attend a two-day national training programme for JAE mentors.

This information aims to help to set the scene for the two days and to support you in developing some background information about the programme and your role as a mentor.

Overview of the training programme

The training programme comprises:

- school-based briefing and attendance at a series of workshops that are offered to JAE students and their parents
- a two-day course, preceded by some pre-course reading and preparation
- work placed support from the G&T co-ordinator or JAE co-ordinator at your school
- regionally based, half-day development sessions (to be advised).

The two-day course aims to help you to:

- put the JAE programme into the context of your school G&T programme or national governing body of sport (NGB) programmes for young talented athletes
- develop your mentoring skills
- build links between support for talented youngsters in and out of school
- develop the action plan to implement your role as a mentor within the school or governing body programme.

The course is organised through a series of interactive sessions as follows:

Day one	
Session 1	Setting the scene
Session 2	Why do we need mentors?
Session 3	Building the big picture
Session 4	Mentoring skills activity circuit
Session 5	How does it all happen?
Session 6	Summary session

Day two	
Session 1	Wake up session
Session 2	What would you do if...?
Session 3	Mentoring in action – the 'rehearsal'
Session 4	Action planning
Session 5	Summary session

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Who can be a mentor?

The course will include:

- people with no previous experience of mentoring,
- those who mentor, but don't realise it
- very experienced learning mentors.

Mentors can be teachers from a wide range of subject areas other than physical education (PE), adults other than teachers AOTTs), e.g. administrative or technical staff at a school, learning mentors, or external mentors who work closely with the school or governing body.

Most governing body mentors work within the sports' talent identification or performance programmes at regional and sub regional level.

The main requirement is an interest in young people and in helping them to develop into independent individuals who can balance sport with other aspects of their lives.

If I'm not a PE teacher, do I need to know about sport?

Not at all. It will certainly help if you can learn a little about the sports that the young people you are mentor to are involved in – but they will be able to tell you all you need to know.

The course will signpost you to sources of information on the NGBs and other sport organisations.

Your PE colleagues at school will be able to help you with any general information you need about most sports.

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If I come from a NGB...

If I come from a NGB, do I need to know about school life and the education system?

No. The opportunity to speak to school-based mentors during the course should provide you with a good 'starter for ten' to:

- develop contacts
- appreciate the flexibility that schools can offer to talented performers
- understand also to the constraints that schools sometimes need to impose on young people to ensure that they keep education and sport in balance.

What sort of skills, knowledge or experience do I need?

You will need strong interpersonal skills for a role that involves:

- *empowering and enabling...*
young people to make the right decisions for themselves
- *brokering...*
between parents, coaches, school, friends
- *negotiating...*
on behalf of the students
- *counselling...*
students when they need support through tough times or difficult decisions
- *planning...*
helping students to balance their life-style
- *monitoring, evaluating and reviewing...*
individual's progress through their plan, helping students to self evaluate through constructive feedback

Take a few minutes to self-review your existing skills and qualities against this list.

Identify the areas that you need to develop and make these a particular focus during the course.

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What do I need to find out before I attend the course?

1. Find out about your school's policy and practice on G&T pupils (in particular, your schools G&T policy for PE, if you have one).

Some helpful questions might include:

- what other programmes is the school running, e.g. for gifted musicians, artists, mathematicians?
- how are talented pupils identified?
- how does the school determine the level of support or mentoring that each young person requires?
- what other mentor programmes operate within school?
- who does the mentoring?
- how does it take place?
- when?
- how often?
- how is time allocated for this?
- how can you work with these programmes – maybe to standardise procedures, or to develop a mentor network?

And for governing body mentors

- what life-style support programmes does the governing body offer to young talented performers?
- how is your governing body integrating the principles of the long-term athlete development programme into its performance or talent identification plans?
- how does our coach education programme encourage coaches to consider the broader life-style needs of young athletes?
- how do coaches support the need for athletes in their mid to late teens to balance attainments in education and sport?

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What do I need to find out before I attend the course? (continued)

2. Find out as much as you can about the JAE programme.

The JAE programme offers a series of workshops to students entering the programme, including workshops for their parents, and ideally, their coaches.

If you can find a workshop that's taking place near to you, it would be very worthwhile going along to find out more about the programme from the athlete and family perspective.

The G&T co-ordinator or Director of Sport at your school should be able to tell you if any workshops are taking place.

They should also provide a school based briefing to explain the role out of the JAE programme and the key roles that colleagues will play.

The Performance Director/ Manager of your governing body should be able to provide an overview of the programme within your sport.

Visit the Talent Ladder website and look at the section on the JAE programme at www.talentladder.org.uk

Look through a copy of the ~Young Athletes Handbook (ISBN 0-7360-3712-8), available from Human Kinetics telephone 0113 2555665 or e-mail orders and customer service inquiries at custserv@hkeurope.com

If time is short, concentrate on chapters one and four in your pre-course reading of the Young Athletes Handbook.