

Case study: Developing talented young archers

Yorkshire Archery Association



Kath Fitzpatrick is the County Coaching Organiser for Yorkshire and a Senior Coach. Kath shares how information about how Yorkshire develops their talented young archers.

Squad history

In the late 80's early 90s I was coaching Jason Wright, a young lad with precocious talent who ought to have been on national squad – but no-one had any idea how. That had to change – and it has! In 1991 we put on our first winter training programme with six teenage archers, extending it the following year to younger archers, first being Nick Everitt aged 9. All coaches did mock squads at Lilleshall with national squad coaches, organized by Felicity Wright. Of that original group, three went to national squad very quickly, with others to follow. 2010 saw our 14th archer move onto a national squad. Of those 14, several went on to become international medalists, and one is the current world and Paralympic compound champion and Commonwealth Team Gold medalist, Dani Brown.



How do they do it?

Coaching juniors is a strong feature in our coach training and education programmes, and all our trainees work with juniors as part of their course. We have had several junior complete the L1 course which provides a good role model for young beginners. Currently, all County candidates work with our county squads to gain experience. Coaching of juniors at grass roots level is good across the county, and there is now an easy referral system in place for our Development squad. Two of the coaching groups take on the role of school liaison and two of our coaches now run archery businesses working full time with schools.



We encourage clubs to cater for junior archers, and there are many junior clubs around the county. My own club, Barnsley Archery Club, has a number of good junior archers with 7 on the county squads. We run beginners courses throughout the year, and among our 11 coaches had two junior assistant coaches who are now full L1 coaches, and often work with the juniors on the course.

Squads and developing elite performance

The county has three squads, two of which are for juniors and archers just crossing into senior, to offer transitional support.

The Development Squad is open to any junior who has been shooting a little while and is keen to progress and develop their skills. All who apply are invited to the first session where we do diagnostic coaching and sometimes they are advanced enough to move straight onto the Performance. Two of our new recruits this year, brother and sister Adam and Isabelle Carpenter (from Barnsley AC) are already making their mark. At the county championships weekend, their third shoot, Adam, not yet 8, shot a 1295 M5 and a 1246 B5; Isabelle shot a 1321 M5 and a 1234 B5. Last week in a match against Lincoln they shot 1305 and 1327 respectively. Izzy now has her JMB badge and Adam put in one JMB score shortly after his 8th birthday. Adam is also the current regional boy compound champion. Two to watch for the future!

The Performance Squad consists of archers in any bowstyle shooting at county level shoots and above whose experience and performance levels are beyond the Development programme. There is a progression from Development to

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Performance for many archers, though some do come into the squad system at this level. This squad has contributed 5 to GB squads since it was developed as a separate squad from 2002.

How do we do it – the squad programmes



The Development squad is largely about getting the basics right, understanding how the body functions in shooting the shot, and in ensuring junior archers are thoroughly familiar with their kit. There is also a big emphasis on fun! The programme includes elements such as nutrition and hydration, the importance of good behaviour and how to accept awards properly and be an ambassador for the county and the sport. This is really important us. Junior squad members have often been complimented for their sportsmanship and manners.

The Performance squad has a programme around developing members' understanding of the key elements of good technique, managing their equipment set up and tuning, basic anatomy and physiology, nutrition for competing archers, developing their technique and form and of course – fun. We also feed in fitness, using one of our archers who is a qualified trainer, and sport psychology, so that they develop coping strategies for different situations. Goal setting is important too.

Does it work?

Yes! The list below shows that it does for those who have the commitment to do the work. YAA Juniors going through the county system who have made it to GB Squads:

Jason Wright	Recurve	GB squad and team
Marcus Firmin	Recurve	GB squad and team
Sarah Jane Wright	Recurve	GB squad
Andrew Stones	Recurve	GB squad
Peter Hunt (field)	Compound	GB field squad
Salli Warnes	Recurve	GB squad
Lisa Norfolk	Recurve	GB squad
Eddie Humphrey	Recurve	GB squad
Nick Everitt	Recurve	GB squad and team
Nicole Allan	Recurve	GB 2012 squad and team
Matt Arnold	Compound	GB squad and team
Dani Brown	Compound	GB Paralympic squad and team
George Brown	Compound	GB squad and team
Rachael Smith	Compound	GB squad



Seniors who have featured at National level squads and teams

Linda Garner	England compound team, GB squad and team
Grant Womack	England recurve team, GB team
Tom Duncan	GB Field squad
Steve Dixon	England compound team
Sarah Beamish	GB Paralympic squad and team
Dani Brown	GB Paralympic squad and team