

# SPENCER JUNIOR HOCKEY CLUB

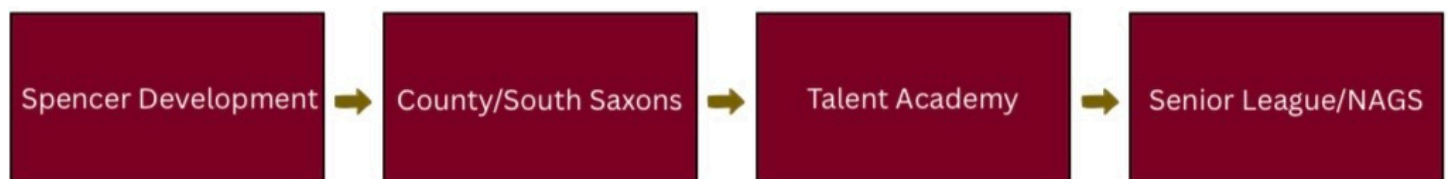
## The Start of the Pathway – What's Next for Your Child?



## DEVELOPING POTENTIAL, SUPPORTING EVERY PLAYER.

At U11 and U12, players enter an important stage of their hockey journey – where enjoyment meets ambition and potential begins to convert into performance.

At Spencer, this marks the formal start of our performance pathway – giving every player the opportunity to develop at the level that is right for them, delivered within a close-knit, family-focused club that develops ambitious players with care, clarity and high standards. More opportunities can begin to open up, from secondary school hockey to county level, Talent Academy and even beyond. Every player's journey is different – this pathway illustrates some of the opportunities that may open up as players develop within Spencer.



### 1. A Clear Performance Pathway

From U11 upwards, players follow a structured, progressive programme preparing them for teenage performance hockey and beyond. Each year builds technical excellence, tactical awareness, athletic development and competitive confidence. At Spencer we provide an environment that helps all junior players reach their potential, whether that means they're the best club player they can be or perhaps go on to represent England or Great Britain at junior or senior level.

Selected players are invited to attend midweek performance training sessions. These invite-only sessions bring our players with the highest potential together to train at higher intensity and accelerate development within a focused environment. The sessions are run by professional coaches including current Spencer Seniors, led by our Director of Hockey Oli Bell.

## 2. Individual, Personalised Development

As a smaller, family-centred club, we know our players well. Development is tailored – and regularly reviewed – to ensure challenge, training load and match exposure remain appropriate as each child grows.

For those players who have an ambition to play higher-level hockey, our overall objective is to support them both inside and outside Spencer. We aim to produce competitive teams capable of reaching later stages in regional and national competitions. Where appropriate, players may be invited to train or compete with older age groups to further stretch them, based on readiness and long-term progression.

## 3. Representative Pathway Foundations

We prioritise core skills, game intelligence, decision-making under pressure and athletic literacy – the foundations required for representative and senior performance hockey.

Towards the end of the U11 season and onwards, we nominate our strongest players for Development Camps, from which some players are selected for County trials (with squads beginning at U13 level). We typically have more than 40 county players each season – a key step in the pathway and often preceding Talent Academy selection.

We also nominate leading U12 and U13 players to South Saxons, an elite representative group providing additional regional performance exposure and high-level challenge.



- Joined Spencer: U12
- County pathway: Nominated by Spencer for London County trials and selected for London U13 and U14
- Regional performance: Selected for South Saxons U13
- International development: Chosen for UK Lions, representing them during the 2022-23 season and again at a reunion tournament in Summer 2024
- Talent Academy: Nominated to Wimbledon Talent Academy and selected in 2024, remaining part of the programme since
- National recognition: Twice selected for National Age Group Squad trials
- Senior progression: Began in the W9s (now Jaguars) → progressed to the W4s → now a regular W1s player competing in National League

Phoebe's journey shows how players can progress through representative hockey, Talent Academy selection and senior National League competition while continuing their development within Spencer.

*Phoebe Clayton – Spencer U18 / Women's 1s*

## **4. Access to Talent Academies – Without Leaving Spencer**

Spencer is not a Talent Academy – and it does not need to be.

Our role is to prepare, nominate and support our highest potential players to access local Talent Academies. Currently we have Spencer Juniors playing with the Talent Academies at Wimbledon, Surbiton, and Hampstead & Westminster, and have previously had players at the Guildford Talent Academy.

If selected, players attend Academy sessions while remaining fully committed Spencer players. We actively support this dual pathway to ensure it remains balanced and sustainable.

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## **5. Balanced Ambition and Wellbeing**

Ambition must be matched with care. We closely monitor playing and training volumes – particularly for those involved in external programmes – to reduce the risk of burnout and overuse injury.

Performance is built on wellbeing. We actively nurture resilience, confidence and a healthy relationship with competition so players feel secure, valued and appropriately challenged.

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## **6. A Visible Route to Senior Performance Hockey**

Players must be at least 13 years old to play senior hockey. From this age, eligible juniors can access meaningful senior opportunities within our structure.

We run boys' and girls' Development Teams competing in Senior league hockey on Saturdays, giving our strongest juniors the opportunity to compete against bigger, stronger and more experienced opponents, within a well-managed environment guided by senior coaches and experienced players.

Our leading young players are invited to train and play within senior squads, creating a seamless transition into adult performance hockey. The ultimate progression is selection for our Men's 1s (M1s) or Women's 1s (W1s) competing at National League level. As well as current Junior member Phoebe Clayton playing at this level, there are several former Spencer Juniors playing who have recently returned to London following graduation.

To support this pathway, specialist Junior/Senior Liaison Coaches work closely with senior captains and coaches to ensure juniors are integrated into the right squads at the right time.

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- **Joined Spencer:** Age 5 (MU6s)
- **Regional performance:** Selected for South Saxons (U13)
- **County pathway:** First selected for London County at U14
- **Talent Academy:** Nominated to Wimbledon Talent Academy and selected, participating from U15-U17
- **Senior progression:** Began playing senior hockey at age 15
- **Current level:** Regularly training and playing with the Spencer Men's 2s.

James's journey highlights how long term development within Spencer - from early junior hockey through county selection, Talent Academy involvement and senior competition - allows players to progress steadily while remaining part of the same club environment.



*James Turner – Spencer U18 / Men's 2s*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF HOCKEY

*“Our responsibility is to develop confident, capable young players who are ready for the next level – wherever that may be. We are ambitious for our athletes, but we never lose sight of balance, wellbeing and long-term development. At Spencer, players can pursue representative and Talent Academy opportunities while remaining part of a club that knows them as an individual and develops them properly, based on what's best for them.”*

The U11–U12 stage is not about pressure – it is about preparation, direction and strong foundations within a club that combines ambition with care.

While we are proud to support players who aspire to performance pathways, participation, enjoyment and hockey for all remain central to the Spencer ethos. We are equally committed to providing a positive, inclusive environment for members who simply want to play, improve and enjoy the game with their friends.

We look forward to supporting your child as they take this next step in their hockey journey.

Spencer Junior Hockey Club

<https://www.spencerhockeyclub.com>