Basketball Ireland U14 Regional Academy Player Selection Policy

Season 2025–2026

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, transparent, and consistent criteria for the identification and selection of players to Basketball Ireland’s U14 Academy Programme. The Academy is a foundational element of Basketball Ireland’s High-Performance Pathway, designed to identify and develop the most promising young players across the country.

**2. Objectives**

* Identify players with long-term potential to represent Ireland at international level.
* Provide structured early-stage development for athletes with the physical, technical, tactical, and psychological attributes to succeed in high-performance basketball.
* Promote a nationwide and inclusive approach to talent identification and development.

**3. Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for selection, a player must:

* Be born in **2012** or later (U14 age group for the 2025–26 season).
* Be an Irish citizen or eligible to represent Ireland under FIBA nationality rules.
* Be registered with a Basketball Ireland-affiliated club.
* Commit to full participation in the Academy Programme, including regional sessions, national camps, and digital learning content.

**4. Selection Process**

Players will be selected through a **nationwide Talent Identification process**, coordinated by Basketball Ireland’s High Performance and Regional Academy staff.

**4.1 Talent Identification Days (TIDs)**

* **TIDs** will be hosted in each region (North, Northwest, Southeast, South, East – North (Dublin North), East – South (Dublin South) Southwest, West, Midlands.
  + *Full breakdown of regions available on the Basketball Ireland website on the academy page.*
* Each province will host two (2) Talent Identification Day (TID) sessions as part of the selection process.
* Players should attend both TID sessions where possible to give coaches a more complete opportunity to assess their abilities.
* Attending only one TID session does not exclude a player from selection, but it reduces the number of opportunities for coaches to evaluate the player and may impact their chances of selection.
* TIDs are open to all eligible players who pre-register and will be delivered by each regional/provincial/Provincial Academy’s coaching staff. Please note there is a fee for attending a TID Session.
* Coaches will assess players using a standardised national evaluation framework focusing on skill level, athletic profile, basketball IQ, coachability, and long-term potential.

**4.2 Ongoing Monitoring and Opportunity**

* While initial selections will be made following TIDs, **the door remains open** for players not selected at that time.
* Players who demonstrate **exceptional talent or significant development** throughout the season may be invited to join the Academy at a later stage.
* Continuous observation by Academy staff, regional coaches, and performance analysts ensures a dynamic and flexible pathway but the main point of entry remains through the TID sessions.
* Late additions to the academy programs would be expected to be of such a level that they would be in the top half of the academy region/province.

**5. Selection Criteria**

Selections are based on a **holistic evaluation** of the following attributes:

**A. Physical Attributes**

* Height and wingspan relative to position and potential.
* Athleticism including speed, strength, balance, and agility.
* Physical maturity (considering growth stage and biological development).
* Endurance, work rate, and ability to recover in high-intensity settings.

**B. Technical Skills**

* Ball handling: consistency, control, ambidextrous use.
* Shooting: form, footwork, range, and shot selection.
* Passing: decision speed, vision, and accuracy.
* Finishing: ability to finish through contact and under pressure.
* Defensive fundamentals: stance, positioning, and commitment.

**C. Tactical Understanding**

* Game awareness and understanding of space and timing.
* Decision-making under pressure.
* Understanding of defensive and offensive concepts, including team roles and rotations.
* Ability to apply instructions and adapt in live-play situations.

**D. Psychological & Behavioral Attributes**

* Coachability and response to feedback.
* Competitive character and mental toughness.
* Leadership qualities and communication.
* Consistency of effort and attitude.
* Team-first mindset and emotional control.

**E. Commitment & Availability**

* Willingness to commit fully to the programme.
* Ability to attend regular weekly sessions and additional regional or national events.
* Support from parents/guardians for attendance and commitment.

Note – Head coaches still have the flexibility to operate outside this framework from time to time and add players to the academy pathway if they feel have potential to play International basketball in the future.

**6. Academy Commitment & National Team Eligibility**

Players selected to the Academy are expected to:

* **Attend at least 60% of all Academy training sessions and camps** throughout the programme year.
* Full attendance is encouraged, but a **minimum 60% participation rate is required** to be **eligible for selection to the U14 Academy Teams** representing the Basketball Ireland Academy in the **Four Nations Tournament** and any other international activity.
  + This also applies to players living outside of Ireland that have chosen to be part of the Academy pathway.
* Players who fall below this threshold without valid medical or personal reasons may not be considered for international selection.
* All academy sessions are considered calendared events and should take precedents on any other basketball activity on these dates. Players should not have any games at their own age group clashing with academy sessions but players should give advanced warning to their club and school coaches of academy training dates so they can plan training sessions around them.

**6.1 Four Nations Selection Process**

Selection for the U14 Academy Teams to represent Ireland at the **Four Nations Tournament** will be based on:

* **Ongoing assessment** by Basketball Ireland’s **Regional Academy Coaches and Academy staff** throughout the programme.
* **Performance at Academy Tournaments**, including internal academy games and development fixtures.
* **Performance at Inter-Regional Tournaments** and other competitive events where Academy players are evaluated in live game situations.
* Where required, **Basketball Ireland may host a separate selection/trials session** for **invited players**, to finalise the squads or assess players returning from injury or late inclusion into the programme.

**6.2 Eligibility of U14 Players in U15 Provincial Academy**

* Players born in 2012 who are participating in the **U15 Provincial Academy** are also **eligible for selection to the U14 Four Nations teams**, provided they meet the same attendance and performance requirements outlined above.
* Selection will be based purely on **the level of play, positional needs, and overall team composition**.
* **No preferential treatment** will be given to players based on whether they are in the U14 or U15 Academy; all eligible players are evaluated **equally** using the same selection criteria.

All selection decisions will be made in line with the principles of fairness, transparency, and alignment with long-term athlete development.

**7. Diversity & Inclusion**

Basketball Ireland is committed to ensuring equal access and opportunity across all regions. The selection process actively seeks to engage players from all communities and backgrounds, recognising that talent can emerge from diverse environments.

**8. Talent is a journey**

* Selection for the U14 Academy is not a final verdict on a player’s future in basketball.
* Players not selected initially may return to the pathway later through continued development.
* At a minimum there is the opportunity to attend open TID’s at the u15 age group the following September.
* The selection process acknowledges the variability in growth and performance at this age and remains **open and adaptive** throughout the season.

**9. Appeals**

Appeals are permitted **only in cases of procedural error** during the selection process. Personal disagreement with a selection decision is not grounds for appeal. Where possible coaches are encouraged to provide feedback upon request but this is not possible in a lot of cases with high numbers at Talent ID days.

**10. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Basketball Ireland’s High Performance Committee to ensure alignment with national goals and international best practices.