



Scotland National Squad

"Off-Pathway" 2024 Selection - Q&A

Why are we trialling an "Off-Pathway" selection process?

Since the development of our selection policies in 2023 we have as a team and with the wider community had conversations about an "Off-Pathway" route into our squad system - one that considers the wider context of climbing performance.

After working on our 2024 programme document in the Autumn it became clear to us that to uphold our values around delivering a holistic system we should follow through on this idea and begin to formulate a process that would accommodate it.

How did we arrive at the criteria?

The criteria has been determined in close collaboration with the whole team at ClimbScotland, including our current National Coaches.

In organising this, we have looked at our current squad cohort, and taken account of successes of this cohort, and others in our community, outside of a competition environment. We have also considered the GB Climbing Annual Performance Strategy and competition landscape to help add further context. We have also considered the different nature of how routes/boulders will be climbed (e.g. the opportunity to self-select routes/boulders, and project).

The margins between the different age categories are fine, and some we have put at the same standard. We have aimed to reflect a level that is fair to where our current squad is at and acknowledges the scope of choice the climbers will have in completing the list of routes/boulders (a choice not naturally afforded to those coming in through the "competitive" pathway).

We have established a top performance standard to give a clear point to aim for, but we also wanted to encourage a demonstration of consistency across a high standard.

Hence, we have created a points-based system that will require climbers to show they are operating at a certain level, rather than just making initial moves into that level.

This is probably a good point at which to stress again that this is a trial, and we will be reflecting on and reviewing this process throughout the year to try and build on it for the years ahead.

What opportunities will be open to those coming in on this pathway?

Climbers coming in on this pathway, for 2024, will have the same opportunities open to them as the rest of the Scotland National Squad. Except for eligibility to go to the GB Climbing National Trials. For access to these, the criteria for the "competitive" pathway must be satisfied.

It is true that much of our programme for the National Squad has a focus on the competitive elements of climbing, but much of it also aims to give broader experiences to our young climbers that those not on a strictly competitive track will hopefully find valuable. The opportunity to work with our National Coaches, who are themselves versed in more than just competitive climbing, the academies programme, and to work alongside peers operating at a similar level (all-be-it in a potentially different style) are all hopefully going to be great value for a climber coming in via this pathway.

What developments can we expect in the future?

With a selection mechanism now in place to build on we will be looking to develop the programme in the years ahead to help accommodate this exciting new dimension we are bringing to our squad system.

The National Squad space, and the programme we are offering, has huge scope for development and we are constantly learning around this. With this in mind, we would like to say thank you to our community for helping to feed into this process, and for bearing with us as we try to push things forward.