

FAQ concerning National Squads & Zonal Clinics

Why is there a National Squad?

TeamGym has become a victim of its own success. We now have more high performance gymnasts than we have opportunities and we cannot accommodate the full talent pool within zonal clinics. Therefore, national squads were introduced to relieve the pressure on zonal clinics and offer a further development for our international performance gymnasts. It should be noted that National Squad and GB Team are not the same thing. GB Team refers to the selected gymnasts for the European Championships (which will happen in March 2020).

Why has the price increased for Zonal Clinics to £28 per day?

In 2015-2016, BG launched the first Zonal system for selecting and preparing GBR teams for the ECH Slovenia 2016. Expenditure for this was isolated to venue hire and just expenses for the Technical Experts. In 2017-2018 the Zonal Clinics expanded to introduce zones for Northern Ireland and Scotland. Another necessary expenditure introduced for that half cycle was a modest payment per day for the Technical Experts. Now in 2019, we have introduced a new Zone for Wales and have also had to bring our payments in line with other disciplines for Technical Experts. Expenses also rise where there is a need to bring Technical Experts in from other zones. These rising costs have led to the price increasing to £28 per gymnast per day. This equates to approximately £4 per hour for cost of venue, equipment and access to technical experts.

Does the Zonal Programme make a profit?

Ever since it was first conceived, the zonal system was designed to make a surplus to contribute towards the training of the selected gymnasts for the European Championships. This made it possible to have national teams for the last two ECHs and at present remains the most viable performance opportunity for the top gymnasts in TeamGym to represent their country.

Why is National Squad so expensive?

£660 is a considerable sum of money, especially when compared to the zonal clinics, which are much cheaper. However, National Squads involve lower gymnast to coach ratios, input from external specialists, as well as half board accommodation. This also includes a half week long training camp in Denmark under the same terms. The actual costs if this were to be divided up between the squad gymnasts would be £877. However, investment from British Gymnastics has made this possible at the cost of £660 per person.

Can you opt out of the squad hotels for the National Squad programme?

This was considered but ultimately rejected. All national squads take time, effort and investment to bring people together from far and wide. Staying together maximizes coach contact time for feedback, analysis and discussion and also works to establish a strong peer group for maintaining the development of high performance gymnasts. Cutting the experience down to a 9am to 4pm would have been an opportunity wasted.

We appreciate that some gymnasts live close to venues and others live hundreds of miles away. Nevertheless, standardizing the experience and expectations is part of leveling egos and building squad gymnasts.

However, if anyone does not see value in this there is also an exciting and comprehensive choice of Zonal Clinics to attend in preparation for the GB Selection Event in 2020.

Why has there not been any zonal clinics advertised for Scotland?

Initially we are awaiting confirmation of venues for Scotland from their Zonal Administrator. However, since then Scotland had opted to use their own Performance Pathway in place of zonal clinics. Terms have been discussed between British Gymnastics and Scottish Gymnastics to make this possible. Having a viable pathway to selection for the Scottish gymnasts has been the shared vision in these discussions.

Have the teams for Copenhagen 2020 already been selected?

No. The Team for Copenhagen 2020 will be decided at the GB Selection Event in Bracknell on Saturday the 21st March 2020.

How were gymnasts selected for National Squads?

Since 2017, BG has been operating what is called an 'Athlete Pipeline'. Within TeamGym, this is very detailed spreadsheet that monitors and ultimately ranks the country's high performance gymnasts. Data includes DV on the various apparatus, dynamic movement on floor (including amplitude and extension), training load, training intensity, attitude to training and behavior whilst away with BG. Floor is given an equal weighting to the combined value of both tumble and trampet due to its significance in competition. In order to be even handed, only data gathered from the ECH preparation last year was used and inputted by the 2018 Unit Leaders. It would have been very difficult in the time available to include data from club training that could not be validated or standardized across the whole country.

National Squad invites were based on the top 15 senior men and senior women by the Pipeline's ranking. Furthermore, the Pipeline also identified the top junior gymnasts (who would still be junior by 2020). With a talent pool of 68 gymnasts, and most of the juniors aging up to senior, it was inevitable that not all of the senior gymnasts from the GB Team of 2018 would be first call for the GB Squad. This also left more spaces for juniors than could be fill

from the data available. Therefore, the initial zonal clinics would be used to identify potential gymnasts to fill the remaining spaces, whether they are juniors or seniors. Furthermore, Zonal Clinics would extend to Youth gymnasts so that in the future, the next generation of junior gymnasts would be known and part of the Pipeline.

What routes are available to be eligible for the GBR Selection Event in 2020?

Last time there were two routes. Now we present four:

1. Attend at least 10 Zonal clinics at £28 per day.
2. Accept an invite for National Squad (£660 / £560) for the whole programme.
3. Attend Scottish Performance Pathway (only for Scottish gymnasts and subject Gymnastics Scotland and British Gymnastics agreeing the terms).
4. By pass all other routes and pay £380 to enter the GB Selection Event. However, anyone taking this option will not benefit from having any supplementary data gathered from the other routes.

How has feedback from previous years been incorporated?

1. Cost for gymnasts in the North (particularly Scotland). A full zone was planned for Scotland to minimise gymnast travel out of zone. Furthermore, competitive prices for accommodation were researched and planned into the National Squad programme to make them more accessible.
2. Having to do National Squad / 10 days of Zonal Clinics for GB Selection. This contact time before selection is important for both the coaches and the gymnasts. This is where techniques will be refined and trust built. There will be limited time post selection for this necessary work. Nevertheless, we have endeavored to present more options to suit individual circumstances.
3. More support for GB Gymnasts from BG. TeamGym represents only 1% of BG's membership. Nevertheless, BG invests approximately £23,000 every two years for the European Championships, plus ongoing support of the Performance Pathway. At the point of selection a GB gymnast has a fee of approximately £1100 to pay towards the Europeans. However, the actual cost is closer to £2200, where BG invest over £1000 in each gymnast for that event. This year, with the introduction of National Squads, the investment from BG has risen.

If there are other questions related to the Zonal Clinics or National Squads please email Chris Bennett in the first instance at Chris@bracknellgymnasticsclub.co.uk