



USA RUGBY
HIGH PERFORMANCE PATHWAYS
VERIFICATION PROGRAM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OUTLINE | **2**

BENCHMARKS OVERVIEW | **4**

BENCHMARK 1 | **5**
ORGANIZATION & PLANNING

BENCHMARK 2 | **7**
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

BENCHMARK 3 | **9**
COACH DEVELOPMENT

BENCHMARK 4 | **10**
INFORMATION, REFLECTION, GROWTH

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE | **11**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | **22**



PROGRAM OUTLINE

PURPOSE

USA Rugby's High Performance Pathways Verification Program is designed to foster a more integrated development ecosystem for men and women/boys and girls in the United States. The program offers guidance, support and a best practice framework while increasing meaningful connections with organizations who provide HP development to aspiring players.

Verification is also designed to help players, coaches and parents identify the High-Performance organizations which will best offer avenues into the USA Rugby Pathway.

DEFINITION

For the purposes of USAR, a verified National Development Program (NDP) is defined as follows:

'An ongoing sports performance development program administered for athletes between the ages of 12 and 25, which seeks to improve players and coaches' ability to compete in rugby, as well as prepares participants to vie for places in college, elite club rugby, professional rugby and/or the USA Rugby Player Pathway.'

An NDP is distinct from a team or club in that it provides supplementary support to the regular school or club teams of the participants it serves.

PROCESS

Aspiring NDPs will provide evidence of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across four benchmarks and be rated on the evidence which shows the program's performance in each area.

Ratings are based on the following scale:

- 0 - Not Evident
- 1 - Developing Proficiency
- 2 - Meets Minimum Benchmark
- 3 - Well-developed and exceeds minimum practice
- 4 - Consistent evidence of best practice- Exceptional.

Across all standards, programs with an average score below 2 will not be verified while those whose average score is between 2 and 3 will be verified as NDPs. Those with an average score above 3 will be verified as Gold NDPs. In some instances through Year 1, organizations may be given provisional NDP status pending the completion of specific action items.



PROGRAM OUTLINE (CONT.)

NDPs will be re-evaluated after 1 year and Gold Medal NDPs after two years. The re-evaluation process may include observation of NDP operations, interviews with NDP personnel and/or players and other stakeholders, as well as a follow-up on submitted items, as necessary. After NDPs receive their verification status report, improvement plans should be implemented to prioritize and address areas for growth.

Progress in areas for improvement will be evaluated and factor heavily into the renewal process. NDPs found to be regressing or stagnating upon re-evaluation may be required to implement specific, timed action plans to maintain their status. **NDPs who have offended the values of USA Rugby, World Rugby, USOPC and/or the game at large may be immediately stripped of their status. Likewise, statements or representations made by the NDP or aspiring NDP and found to be false during or after the verification process are grounds for loss/denial of status.**

TIMELINE

Each Year the USA Rugby High Performance Pathways Department will review new submissions for verification, review of status and Gold NDPs up for review. Submissions for verification will be accepted from July 1-31. Applicants will receive notice of their status by September 1.

COST

Verified NDPs are to register as such with USA Rugby for an annual cost of \$500.

WHY BECOME A VERIFIED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM?

- Recognition as a verified development program within the USA Rugby Development Pathway
- Direct access to help and support as you seek to improve outcomes for players and coaches
- Access to pathway officials and coaches for consultation, planning, and language/systems integration
- USA Rugby may direct players to verified NDPs in their area for supplemental and ongoing development opportunities
- Increased opportunities to shadow USA Rugby Pathway assemblies
- Reserved player recommendations to USA Rugby Pathway assemblies
- Ability to use USA Rugby HP Verified Logo for promotional purposes and on team gear
- Monthly calls with USA Rugby Pathway officials



BENCHMARKS

BENCHMARK 1

ORGANIZATION & PLANNING

The NDP has qualified leaders who facilitate the growth of athletes and coaches and ensure the organization operates according to a mission, vision, values, and policies focused on serving the development of American rugby players and coaches as well as safeguarding and improving the game of rugby in the United States.

BENCHMARK 2

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

The NDP has generated programming, a development process and suitable resources to serve athletes, as well as drive and monitor their growth. There are formal and informal avenues for feedback to and from athletes on their development as rugby players and people.

BENCHMARK 3

COACH DEVELOPMENT

The NDP has a well-defined and consistently administered program to ensure coaches are regularly working to improve their practice.

BENCHMARK 4

INFORMATION, REFLECTION, GROWTH

The NDP collects and uses qualitative and quantitative information to assess the efficacy of the organization in achieving its mission. The information is used to inform ongoing efforts to ensure growth and development of NDP programs, athletes, coaches, and leaders.



ORGANIZATION & PLANNING

The NDP has qualified leaders who facilitate the growth of athletes and coaches and ensure the organization operates according to a mission, vision, values, and policies focused on serving the development of American rugby players and coaches as well as safeguarding and improving the game of rugby in the United States.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPI 1.1

The NDP leadership has generated a system of shared values and dispositions about rugby, coaching, talent identification, and player development which drive it's operations. These values and beliefs support the growth of all participants.

KPI 1.2

The mission, vision, and values of the NDP are consistently communicated to participants and the community at large and reflected in the actions and behaviors of all players, staff, and leaders.

KPI 1.3

The NDP leadership has the relevant experience and skills to operate a rugby development program.

KPI 1.4

The NDP leadership establishes guidelines and protocols to provide for and protect all participants while maintaining a clear direction for operation of the NDP.

KPI 1.5

The NDP leadership and staff foster programming and development opportunities in support of the mission, vision, and values of the NDP itself, USA Rugby, World Rugby, and the USPOC.

KPI 1.6

The NDP leadership meets regularly, communicates openly with staff and participants, and provides appropriate oversight of all operations.



ORGANIZATION & PLANNING (CONT.)

KPI 1.7

The NDP leadership consistently engages participants in the evaluation and pursuit of its objectives.

KPI 1.8

The NDP leadership and staff have reflection and growth processes in place which focus on individual and collective improvement while supporting participants and keeping them informed as they pursue their aspirations in rugby and life.

KPI 1.9

Qualified staff are consistently available and engaged in programming to support the NDP's mission, vision, and values.

KPI 1.10

The NDP prioritizes the safety and well-being of athletes by ensuring proper emergency action planning is done and qualified and appropriate medical staff and resources are available at all training sessions, matches, and on tours (if applicable).

KPI 1.11

NDP leaders oversee coaches, their delivery of camps, clinics, and teams; as well as their interaction with athletes to ensure development, safety, and adherence to purpose and values. This includes ensuring that all staff are certified in their respective area (coaching, medical, S&C) and current on SafeSport and other training as required by USA Rugby, World Rugby, and the USOPC.

KPI 1.12

CPR Certified Staff are present at all training and certified athletic trainers or medical officers are present at all games

KPI 1.13

The NDP, its leaders and staff, ensure all players and staff have appropriate primary medical insurance coverage and travel insurance as necessary when moving internationally



ORGANIZATION & PLANNING (CONT.)

KPI 1.14

Leadership ensures all players and staff are registered and in good standing with their local/state/regional governing bodies and USA Rugby prior to being involved in any NDP training or events.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

The NDP has generated programming, a development process and suitable resources to serve athletes, as well as drive and monitor their growth. *There are formal and informal avenues for feedback between athletes and staff on their development as a rugby player and person.*

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPI 2.1

The NDP's programming provides development activities that ensure all athletes have opportunities to develop skills, improve tactical and technical knowledge, as well as experience a game-based learning approach.

KPI 2.2

Programming and available resources provide appropriate contact time (online and/or in-person), facilities, and materials to support all NDP operations.

KPI 2.3

In addition to rugby skills and tactics, the NDP focuses on holistic human development including, but not limited to: leadership, personal responsibility, strength and conditioning, diet and healthy living, and social/emotional health.

KPI 2.4

The NDP provides support to athletes in planning their futures in rugby and, where applicable and appropriate, college and life.



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

KPI 2.5

Programming, delivery, and growth/evaluation processes are adjusted as necessary based on a range of information on and assessments of player performance and growth.

KPI 2.6

Players are at the center of the coaching process and consistently engaged through a variety of activities to ensure both an understanding of performance indicators and strategies to achieve their desired outcomes.

KPI 2.7

Athletes use technology and information resources to support analysis and help drive understanding, improvement, and performance.

KPI 2.8

Youth NDPs engage parents or other primary caregivers in their player's development. They keep parents or caregivers informed of progress through formal evaluations or other similar tools which measure performance and advise strategies for improvement.

KPI 2.9

NDPs do not schedule sessions, assemblies, etc... that conflict with players primary club/team commitments or endanger the well being of players through overloading/overtraining.

KPI 2.10

NDPs do not schedule events that conflict with USA Rugby Pathway Development or Performance events (specifically in June, July, and December) without prior coordination with USA Rugby pathway development officers. If said events are agreed upon and go forward, first priority for invited players is to participate in USA Pathway events above all else - this is overtly stated by NDP leadership and obvious to players, coaches, and families.



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

KPI 2.11

Each of the following is completed and available to USA Rugby Pathway officials in a shared online resource:

- Player weights and measures are reported and shared at least once per month
- Approved player strength and speed tests are conducted and reported once every two months S&C programming and tracking
- Player nutrition plans and reporting

COACH DEVELOPMENT

The NDP has a well-defined and consistently administered program to ensure coaches are regularly working to improve their practice.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPI 3.1

Coaches participate in assessment, review, and development activities to improve programming, delivery, athlete engagement, and outcomes.

KPI 3.2

All staff members participate in an ongoing development program and remain on top of evolving trends in coaching and the game at large.

KPI 3.3

The NDP leadership provides onboarding programs for coaches to ensure they understand and employ the NDP's coaching process and programming in support of athlete development.

KPI 3.4

Coaches use technology and information resources to support analysis and learning that drives understanding, improvement, and performance.



COACH DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

KPI 3.5

All Staff are appropriately certified in their respective area and regularly work toward additional or improved certifications

KPI 3.6

All head/lead coaches are USA L300/WR L2 certified

INFORMATION, REFLECTION, GROWTH

The NDP collects and uses qualitative and quantitative information to assess the efficacy of the organization in achieving its mission. The information is used to inform ongoing efforts to ensure growth and development of NDP programs, athletes, coaches, and leaders.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPI 4.1

The NDP establishes, maintains and communicates a clear process for evaluation and growth for NDP operation and for individual participants that incorporates data collection and analysis.

KPI 4.2

NDP staff analyze information from a range of sources and apply it to improve programming and outcomes.

KPI 4.3

The NDP consistently assesses athletes, coaches and leaders, to create informed individual development plans, set goals and create recommendations for future opportunities in rugby where appropriate.

KPI 4.4

All stakeholders are regularly given a voice to help inform assessment and planning processes.

KPI 4.5

Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about athlete development and the conditions that support it, as well as the assessment and achievement of NDP goals.



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 1

1.1

- Mission Statement
- Purpose Statement
- Vision Statement
- Value Statement
- Organization Chart
- Role & Responsibilities Rubric
- LTAD Model
- Annual Periodization Plan
- Open & Shared Communication(emails, website pages, social media posts, etc...)
- Strategic plan
- Continuous improvement process/planning documents

1.2

- Communications to parents
- Communications to players
- Communications to the public
- Social Media posts of participants that reflect mission, vision, and values
- Surveys or other communication from stakeholders that reflect mission, vision, and values and the execution of such by the NDP
- Communications from other organizations or media about the NDP

1.3

- Resumes/CVs of NDP leaders
- Degrees
- References
- BOD bio statements or similar



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 1 (CONT.)

1.4

- Policies and procedures manuals
- Standards and practices manuals
- NDP communications
- Board meeting minutes
- Budgets
- Organizational chart
- Job descriptions
- Employee/Volunteer evaluations

1.5

- Stakeholder surveys
- Mission, Vision, and Value Statements
- Board Meeting Minutes
- Strategic Plans
- Social Media posts
- NDP webpage
- NDP Communications
- News articles

1.6

- Board meeting minutes
- Stakeholder surveys
- Budgets
- Planning documents

1.7

- Organizational charts
- Stakeholder surveys
- Social Media Posts
- Volunteer lists and job descriptions



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 1 (CONT.)

1.8

- Staff development plan
- Individual development plans
- Strategic plans
- LTAD model
- Evaluation forms for staff and athletes
- Individual short and long term individual improvement tracking data

1.9

- Organizational Chart
- Roles and Responsibilities Rubric
- Job Descriptions
- Budgets
- Strategic Plans

1.10

- Emergency Action Plans
- Training and Match Day Preparedness Checklists
- Staff directories/lists from sessions/teams
- Operations plans detailing medical/emergency personnel and planning

1.11

- Staff Development processes
- Staff certification requirements and/or records
- Individual coach evaluations
- Individual Development Plans
- Coach observation and feedback forms
- Coach development program curriculum
- Coach standards
- Roles and Responsibilities Rubric
- Examples of Coach Development/Improvement activities



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 1 (CONT.)

1.12

- Policies and Procedures Manual
- Duty Charts
- Staff Schedules
- CPR Certification Documentation

1.13

- Policies and procedures manual
- Player and Staff Registration/Application forms
- Copies of Insurance Certificates

1.14

- Policies and procedures manual excerpts
- Registration Records
- Disciplinary Records
- Records of communications regarding ability to play
- Tour in/tour out forms from USA Rugby

BENCHMARK 2

2.1

- NDP Curriculum
- Session plans
- Player performance standards
- LTAD plan
- Individual athlete development plans
- Videos of training sessions
- Descriptions of individual learning and development activities
- Stakeholder surveys
- Coach and player learning models
- Codes of behavior



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 2 (CONT.)

2.2

- Strategic Plan
- NDP Calendar
- Lists of material resources, capital, etc...
- Budgets
- Curriculum
- Session Plans
- LTAD Plan

2.3

- NDP Curriculum
- Nutrition Programs
- Strength and Conditioning Programs
- LTAD plan
- Codes of behavior
- Athlete and Staff development processes
- Evaluations
- Individual Development Plans
- Examples of completed individual development plans/evaluations
- Data collected on players, staff, and team performance
- Letters, interviews, etc... from stakeholders reflecting on the value of the NDP to the development of individuals

2.4

- LTAD Process
- Individual Development Plans
- Electronic communications connecting athletes or parents to appropriate resources
- Examples of resources used by stakeholders
- Communications from athletes and/or parents reflecting the impact of the program on their life
- Data to support athlete success in support of NDP mission and vision



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 2 (CONT.)

2.5

- Athlete and development processes
- Evaluations/Feedback forms
- Individual Development Plans
- Examples of completed individual development plans/evaluations
- Data collected on player performance
- Descriptions of relationships between data and improvement processes

2.6

- Session plans
- LTAD Process
- Individual Development Plans
- Player feedback forms
- NDP Curriculum
- Individual session plans
- Video of training sessions, coach/player interactions, activities, etc.... w/ explanation
- Coach observation and feedback forms
- Coaching standards
- LTAD process

2.7

- Examples of Athlete Development process
- Individual evaluations
- Individual Development Plans
- Observation and feedback forms
- Coach standards
- Roles and Responsibilities Rubric
- Examples of specific player development/improvement activities



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 2 (CONT.)

2.8

- Examples of feedback communication, recommendations, etc...
- Examples of resources used by participants/parents in development programs
- Links to resources
- Videos of resources in use during or outside of NDP sessions
- Participant Surveys
- Individual Development Plans
- Player Evaluations
- Electronic communications
- LTAD Process

2.9

- Schedule of training sessions, assemblies, etc...
- Examples of communications with club or school coaches
- Individual player schedules
- Periodization plans
- Participant surveys of availability
- Participation records

2.10

- Schedules of training sessions, tours, assemblies, etc...
- Examples of communications with pathway officials regarding event scheduling
- Examples of communications with pathway officials concerning player availability
- Player recommendations for national team honors

2.11

- Link to reports/resources
- Nutrition, S&C, periodization plans
- Testing schedules/plans
- Excerpts from nutrition and/or S&C diaries
- Communications with pathway officials



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 3

3.1

- Coach development curriculum
- Coach development process outline
- Coach observations/assessments
- Participant surveys on coach performance
- Individual coach development plans
- Session review outlines
- Coach improvement action plans
- Examples of development activities with attendance record

3.2

- Coach development curriculum
- Coach development process outline
- Individual coach development plans
- Examples of development activities with attendance record
- Examples of resources deployed to support coach development/improvement

3.3

- Coach development curriculum
- Coach/Staff Handbook
- Coach development process outline
- Copies of onboarding materials/program
- Mentor program outline
- Policies and procedures manual
- Standards and Practices manual

3.4

- Video analysis breakdowns
- Statistical analysis of trainings or matches
- GPS reports
- Periodization plans



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 3 (CONT.)

3.5

- Policies and procedures manual
- Standards and Practices manual
- Certification records/certificates
- Organizational chart in combination with certification records/certificates
- Individual development plans
- Specific examples of individual coaches who have moved through various certifications

3.6

- Policies and procedures manual
- Standards and Practices manual
- Certification records/certificates
- Organizational chart in combination with certification records/certificates
- Roles and responsibilities rubric

BENCHMARK 4

4.1

- LTAD Plan
- Strategic Plan
- Individual Development Plans
- Individual evaluations
- Individual and team statistics reports
- Video Analysis reports or examples
- GPS reports or examples



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 4 (CONT.)

4.2

- LTAD Plan
- Strategic Plan
- Individual Development Plans
- Individual evaluations
- Individual and team statistics reports
- Video Analysis reports or examples
- Stakeholder surveys
- Staff observations and evaluations
- Board meeting minutes
- Examples of data collected on staff, athletes, and NDP performance
- Specific descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, or prescriptive analytics breakdowns

4.3

- LTAD Process
- Staff development and improvement process
- Individual observations and evaluations
- Individual development plans
- Data collected to support NDP impact/analysis
- Curriculum

4.4

- Stakeholder Surveys
- Electronic communications
- Board meeting minutes
- LTAD Process
- Staff development and improvement process
- Strategic Plan



APPENDIX A - EVIDENCE

To be provided via online submission process; list is not all-inclusive and other forms of evidence may be provided in addition to or in place of items herein.

BENCHMARK 4 (CONT.)

4.5

- Communications to stakeholders and/or the public
- Stakeholder Surveys
- Electronic communications
- Board meeting minutes
- LTAD Process
- Staff development and improvement process
- Strategic Plan
- Data collected to support NDP impact/analysis



APPENDIX B - FAQ

Frequently asked questions.

What kinds of organizations should pursue USA Rugby High Performance Verification?

USA Rugby HP Verification is designed for programs who provide regular, high-performance development programs to players between 12 and 25 as a supplement to their regular school or club programs.

Our program currently only operates intermittently or for specific events, should we apply for verification?

These types of programs would not meet the requirements for verification as they do not offer a regular high performance development environment. Such programs who may be planning an expansion of operations that would meet the verification criteria can - and are encouraged - to seek help and guidance from the HP Pathways Department as they build out their program.

What should we do if we're unsure if we meet the requirements for verification?

As part of the process pathway officers reviewing your materials may ask for more information, documentation, or clarification if they feel what you have submitted does not meet the requirements and offer you an opportunity to redevelop and resubmit them or submit additional evidence.

We are a school, college, university, or club may we apply for verification?

This program is designed for organizations that act as support mechanisms for player and coach development outside of primary clubs, school, and university teams, such as: local, national, and regional academies; independent rugby development programs, ongoing state or regional development programs or similar.

We have a player or players that are over the age of 25 involved in our program, can we still apply?

Yes, if the core of the program is predominantly under 25.



APPENDIX B - FAQ (CONT.)

Frequently asked questions.

What happens if our organization applies and is not verified?

Every organization which completes the application process (expressing interest, providing initial and follow-up evidence) will receive a report that includes feedback on each benchmark and key performance indicator. If an organization is not verified this year but takes their report and improves in areas in which they were deficient, they may re-apply for verification the following year.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

CONTACT

BRENDAN KEANE | BKEANE@USA.RUGBY

JD STEPHENSON | JSTEPHENSON@USA.RUGBY

