

Elite Pathway Program of Saudi Arabia Rugby Federation (Talent)

1. Introduction

1.1. SARF Goals and Objectives:

- The primary goal of the "SARF Elite Pathway" document is to establish a clear, phased structure for identifying, developing, and promoting talented Saudi players boys and girls at all levels, from U16 to high performance. The program aims to maximize Saudi potential players and prepare them for high-level performances, including participation in international competitions and national teams.

1.2. SARF Principles and Approaches:

- **Inclusivity:** The program provides equal opportunities for all Saudi players, regardless of their social status, gender, or ethnicity. This includes supporting beginners as well as those showing high potential.
- **Individual Approach:** Developing personalized development plans for each Saudi player, taking into account their unique physical, technical, and psychological characteristics, as well as their career goals.
- **Continuous Development:** Supporting the constant improvement and growth of Saudi players at the Specialization stages and after on their sports career, focusing on long-term development and integration into performance teams.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Clear procedures and criteria for each stage of development, with regular reporting and monitoring of the program's effectiveness.

2. SARF Elite Identification

2.1. SARF Selection Criteria:

The following criteria are used to identify promising players:

- **Physical Parameters:** Evaluation of speed, strength, endurance, coordination, flexibility, and overall physical fitness. Includes testing parameters such as maximum speed, acceleration, endurance, and strength.
- **Technical Skills:** Evaluation of ball handling, passing accuracy, tackling, and both defensive and offensive play. Includes analysis of the player's ability to perform technical elements **under pressure and at high speed**.
- **Tactical Thinking:** Ability to make decisions on the field, game understanding, tactical flexibility, and adaptability to different game situations. Includes tests on tactical understanding and gameplay in changing tactical scenarios.
- **Psychological Resilience:** Assessment of self-control, stress resistance, motivation, leadership qualities, and readiness for competition. Includes psychological tests and observations in stressful situations, such as important matches or selection tournaments.



Appendix 1 – Selection Rubric (Standard policy for Elite Players, * 7's & 15's will differ)

Stage			Criteria	Descriptors
1	2	3	Technical	The athlete will be evaluated on her ability to perform the following: - Primary - 5 core skills (catch-pass, evasive running, tackle, ruck/maul, kicking) - Secondary - specialist skills required for her primary and auxiliary position (restart kicks, restart aerial skills, scrum engage, conversion kicks, lineout throws, lineout aerial skills)
			Tactical/ Game Sense	The athlete will be evaluated on her decision making which reflects tactical awareness and/or game sense in a match situations. She should possesses the ability to translate her technical skills to the Game and demonstrate a sound knowledge of the laws.
			Physical	The sport of rugby is not a measured or timed event. However, an athlete's ability to perform at an elite level will be influenced significantly by her physical condition. Testing may be conducted before or between the various stages of selection. The athlete will be assess on the following during testing, games and trainings on her Speed, Aerobic & Anaerobic Fitness, Agility, Strength, Power.
			Character	RESPECT The athlete shows respect for her teammates, opponents and the rules of the Game - she plays and trains with desire, a positive attitude and a competitive spirit. She demonstrates a high regard for the team's values, processes & protocols and is respectful of staff and match officials. INTEGRITY The athlete does what is right even if the choice is unpopular or personally costly. She is consistent in her words and actions and is honest to others and herself. TEAM PLAYER & LEADERSHIP The athlete is a positive influence on her teammates, making her and people around her better and more productive. The athlete is mindful of remarks made to others that may affect the team and does not engage in behavior that is divisive amongst team members or staff. She places the team's needs above her own and is committed to the cause - the team comes first. COACHABILITY The athlete is open and embracing of new ideas as well as criticism. The athlete has a growth-mindset - she sees herself as fluid, a work in progress. GRIT The athlete performs under pressure and demonstrates mental toughness in training and games. She possesses a work ethic that reflects her determination to be the best version of herself every day and go the distance.
			Commitment	The athlete is committed to team trainings, meetings, fitness and gym sessions (team or individual) and makes herself available for identified events.

2.2. SARF Evaluation Processes and Methods (for scouting):

The following evaluation methods are used within the program:

- **Testing:** Regular physical, technical, and tactical tests, including comprehensive assessments based on international standards.
- **Game Observation:** Evaluation of players during competitions and training to identify their potential and level of play, including video recordings of matches and subsequent analysis.
- **Participation in Tournaments and Camps:** Organization of specialized tournaments and training camps where talented players are identified and evaluated. Camps include intensive training, master classes from leading coaches, and assessment of game potential.
- **Feedback Assessment:** Regular collection of feedback from coaches, players, and clubs about player development and potential, allowing for more accurate adjustment of individual programs.

Appendix 2 – Standard Selection Template)

RED - 40 & Below	Below Target		
AMBER - 41 to 55	Meets Target		
GREEN 55 & Above	Above target		
PLAYER DETAILS			
Name	Player 1	Player 2	Player 3
Weight	104	100kg	102kg
Age			
Club			
Position	1.3	2	1-Mar
Psychological	Score	Score	Score
Character & Attitude	3	3	2
Team Player/Leadership qualities	3	3	1
Integrity	3	2	1
Coachability	3	2	2
Grit	3	2	1
BASIC RUGBY SKILLS	Score	Score	Score
Passing	1	2	1
Catching	2	2	2
Tackling	2	1	1
Kicking	2	2	2
Running	2	3	1
Micro Unit Skills (Ruck/Maul)	2	2	2
FUNCTIONAL/POSITIONAL SKILLS	Score	Score	Score
Unit Skills	3	3	2
Team Skills	3	3	2
Positional Role/Skills	3	3	2
Functional Roles	3	2	3
TACTICAL AWARENESS AND LAWS	Score	Score	Score
Game Sense X 2 of Grading point due to weightage (Includes decision making skills)	4	4	4
Understandig and application of laws	2	2	2
AEROBIC			
Speed - based on current test, YoYo?	3	2	1
Speed Eundrance- for 7's only - MSA?	2	1	1
1km time X 4-6 (XV) MSA?	2	1	2
STRENGTH			
Bench Press 1 RM, 1.5 X BW	3	2	1
Squat 1 RM, 2 X BW	3	2	1
Chin Up - Max 1min (Min 6)	3	1	1
Deadlift - 1 RM 1.2 X BW	3	1	1
Total Score	63	51	39

2.3. Collaboration with Coaches and Clubs:

The following procedures are established for cooperation:

- **Selection Coordination:** Cooperation with coaches and clubs to conduct selection events and evaluate players at U16 levels. Includes joint selections, training sessions, and tournaments where players' skills are evaluated in real competitive conditions.
- **Joint Training and Events:** Conducting joint training sessions, tours, and competitions to exchange experience and evaluate players. Includes regular competitions between clubs, academies, and training camps.
- **Regular Communication:** Establishing regular meetings and conferences with coaches and club representatives to discuss progress and talent development. Includes monthly reports on player development and recommendations for further steps.

3. SARF Elite Player Development

3.1. Individual Development Programs:

An individual program is developed for each player, which includes:

- **Training Plan:** Personalized training aimed at developing physical, technical, and tactical skills. Includes a training schedule focused on improving weaknesses and maintaining strengths.
- **Goals and Objectives:** Setting short-term and long-term goals that help the player focus on development. Includes specific target indicators such as improving sprint time or increasing passing accuracy.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Regular monitoring and assessment of program implementation with possible plan adjustments. Includes the use of technologies such as GPS trackers and video recording for progress analysis.

3.2. SARF Training Camps:

Goals of Training Camps:

- Camps are organized for in-depth player development, providing access to the best coaches, equipment, and methodologies. Includes intensive training in physical preparation, tactics, and technical skills, as well as master classes from leading specialists.
- Camps serve as platforms for testing and practicing new skills, as well as preparing for competitions. Includes competitions between camp participants to assess their level and identify the most promising talent players.

3.3. SARF Mentorship and Support program:

Mentorship Programs:

- Each Elite player is assigned a mentor who supports them at all stages of development, helps with career and personal growth. Mentorship includes regular meetings, goal setting, and progress discussion, as well as assistance in overcoming difficulties.
- Mentors provide psychological support, help manage stress, and prepare players for high-level performances. Includes training in stress management methods, leadership development, and self-confidence.

Psychological Support:

- Organization of regular psychological training and consultations for players to ensure their emotional and mental well-being. Includes working with professional psychologists to improve concentration, motivation, and mental resilience.
- Supporting players in issues of motivation, goal-setting, and overcoming challenges. Includes psychological preparation programs before important competitions and tests.

4. SARF Elite Player Promotion

4.1. Promotion Stages:

Transition Between Levels:

- Transition from one development stage to another is based on the player's achievements, readiness, and coaching staff evaluation. Includes assessment of test results, analysis of competition performances, and progress in the individual program.
- Players go through several stages: specialization level to performance level, each stage includes a set of specific tasks and requirements that the player must fulfill to transition to the next level.

Support Programs for Transition:

- Organization of programs to prepare for transition to a higher level, including training, psychological support, and competitive practice. Includes intensive training programs before transitioning to a new level and support during adaptation to new requirements.

4.2. Participation in Competitions:

Regional and National Competitions:

- Organization and participation of elite players in regional and national tournaments, allowing them to gain competitive experience and develop. Includes holding competitions between clubs, schools, and academies, as well as participating in national championships.

International Competitions:

- Preparation and participation of elite players in international tournaments, contributing to raising their level of play and integrating into the international rugby community. Includes participation in international tournaments, championships, and friendly matches, as well as preparing players for the conditions of international competitions.

4.3. Interaction with Saudi National Teams:

Integration into Saudi National Teams:

- Creating pathways for integrating the best talented players into national teams, including their preparation and participation in international competitions. Includes selection programs, training camps, and special sessions to prepare players for national team performances.

Support for Saudi National Teams:

- Organization of training camps and preparation programs for players preparing to represent national teams. Includes the use of advanced training methods, game analysis, and preparation for specific opponents.

4.4. SARF Internship and Exchange Programs:

International Players Exchange Programs:

- Creating international exchange programs for elite players to gain experience and intern in foreign international clubs and academies.
- Interaction with international rugby federations to includes participation of elite players in international training camps and educational programs.

Internships for Coaches:

- Providing opportunities for SARF coaches to intern at leading clubs and academies worldwide, contributing to their professional development. Includes internship programs that allow coaches to gain experience working in leading sports organizations.

5. SARF Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1. Progress Monitoring System:

Regular Assessment:

- Introduction of a regular assessment system for elite player progress, including physical tests, competition performance analysis, and psychological condition monitoring. Includes monthly testing, match video analysis, and psychological assessments.

Progress Reports:

- Preparation of progress reports, analyzed by SARF/regional/club coaches and used to adjust individual development programs. Includes detailed reports on plan implementation, progress analysis, and recommendations for further development.

5.2. SARF Adjustment of Individual Programs:

Results Analysis:

- Regular analysis of test and competition results, identifying the elite player's strengths and weaknesses. Includes comparing results with set goals and developing new strategies to achieve them.

Plan Adjustment:

- Based on analysis results, individual programs are adjusted, allowing training processes to be tailored to the elite player's needs and current level. Includes adjusting the training plan, diet, psychological preparation, and game tactics.

5.3. SARF Program Effectiveness Evaluation:

Results and Conclusions:

- Regular evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the Elite Pathway program, taking into account player results and progress. Includes analyzing the success of transitions between levels, competition results, and feedback from coaches and players.

Making Changes:

- Based on program evaluations, changes are made to improve the development system and increase elite player competitiveness. Includes regular program reviews, adjustments to methods, and the introduction of new technologies and approaches.

6.1. Financial Support and Scholarships (professional Talent- Elite player):

Financial Assistance:

- Creating funds and programs aimed at supporting Elite players, including scholarships, grants, and funding for participation in international competitions. Includes developing support programs for players in need of financial assistance and organizing fundraising events.

Elite Player Incentives:

- Organization of reward and incentive systems for elite players who achieve significant success within the program. Includes scholarships, grants, material and non-material rewards, as well as special prizes and scholarships from sponsors.

6.2. Use of Technology and Analytics:

Modern Technologies:

- Introduction of advanced technologies into the training process for elite players, such as GPS trackers, match video analysis, and player health data. Includes the use of software for analyzing players' physical condition, monitoring their progress, and adjusting the training plan.

Analytical Tools:

- Application of analytical tools for data analysis and evaluation of training and performance effectiveness, optimizing the development process. Includes developing and using software for data collection and analysis, as well as implementing artificial intelligence systems to predict outcomes and improve strategy.

7.SARF Interaction with Parents

Role of Parents in Player Development:

- **Support and Participation:** Organizing programs aimed at involving parents in the elite player development process, including information sessions, parent meetings, and participation in team events. Includes regular meetings with coaching staff to discuss their children's progress.
- **Parent Education:** Conducting educational programs for parents to help them understand the principles and goals of the talent development program EPP, as well as their role in supporting their children at all stages of their careers. Includes seminars on healthy eating, psychological support, and stress management.

8.SARF Long-Term Planning and Strategic Development

8.1. Long-Term Program Goals:

- **Setting Long-Term Goals and Success Indicators:** Establishing clear long-term goals for the "SARF Elite Pathway" program, including success indicators at national and international competition levels. Includes developing a strategic development plan for 4, 8, and 12 years, which will be regularly reviewed and adjusted.
- **Strategic Infrastructure Development:** Planning and developing sports infrastructure to support the program, including building new training centers, modernizing existing facilities, and improving conditions for training and competitions.

8.2. SARF Training and Development of Coaches:

- **Coach Professional Development:** Developing long-term professional development programs for coaches, including participation in international seminars, conferences, and exchange programs. Includes creating internal courses and training sessions on new methods and technologies in rugby.



- **Creating a Succession System:** Forming a system for preparing new coaches and transferring knowledge, ensuring the program's sustainable development and maintaining a high level of SARF coaching staff.



Skill Requirements	Saudi Women's Sevens Elite Player	Saudi Men's Sevens Elite Player
Individual Skills		
Passing	10m left and right	15m left and right
Tackle	Turnover tackle	Turnover tackle
Kicking	25m, master foot	35m, master foot
Functional Roles (FR's)	Perform at least 4 FR's	Perform at least 5 FR's
Positional Role	Perform at least 2 positional roles	Perform at least 3 positional roles
Game Sense (Decision Making Skills)	50% correct decisions made	75% correct decisions made
Basic Moves	Understands and can execute basic moves under pressure	Understands and can execute basic moves under pressure
Patterns of play	Understands and can perform basic patterns of play	Understands and can perform basic patterns of play
Team Skills (Kick Off, Receive Kick Off, Set Pieces)	Understands and can perform Team Skills under pressure	Understands and can perform Team Skills under pressure

Saudi Elite (Talent U16) Players Competition Plan 2024-2032

Target Year	Talent Age	Gender	Number Talent Players Selected	Number of National 7's tournaments	Number of National camps in KSA	Number of International Camps in KSA	Number of International 7's Tournaments	Number of staff/team (coach, Assis, Medic, S&C...)
2024	U16	Boys	30	3	0	1	1	2
2025		Girls	30	3	0	1	1	2
2025	U17	Boys	30	3	1	1	1	4
2026		Girls	30	3	1	1	1	4
2026	U18	Boys	30	4	2	1	1	5
2027		Girls	30	4	1	1	1	5
2027	U19	Boys	25	5	2	2	2	5
2028		Girls	25	5	1	1	1	5
2028	U20	Men's	20	6	2	2	2	5
2029		Wome's	20	6	2	2	2	5
2029	Senior	Men's	20	6	2	3	3	5
2030		Wome's	20	6	2	2	2	5
2030	Senior	Men's	20	6	2	3	3	5
2031		Wome's	20	6	2	3	3	5
2032	Senior	Men's	15	7+ Asia 7's Games	3	3	3	5
2032		Wome's	15	7+ Asia 7's Games	3	3	3	5