



Sheffield Hallam partnership takes performance from strength to strength

Themes: partnership working

Since 2024 Table Tennis England have partnered with Sheffield Hallam University to deliver a strength and conditioning programme to the Senior and GB Training squads. The partnership has helped bring expertise to the squads and a focus on the importance of strength and conditioning, with the goal of improving performance for years to come.

Background

Prior to the partnership with Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), there was no core delivery of strength and conditioning (S&C) in performance programmes. Instead, ad hoc support was brought in on occasion, which wasn't fit for purpose and didn't allow relationships with players to be established.

After the launch of our Elite Training Centre in Sheffield, the performance team at Table Tennis England decided to tap into local expertise at SHU and build the S&C abilities of our squads. After working with Dave Hembrough, lead S&C coach and Senior Sport Science Officer at SHU, during the build up to the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the team at Table Tennis England were delighted to establish a partnership with Dave and SHU to deliver a thorough and tailored S&C programme.

The Partnership

The partnership has several elements which has created a holistic approach to S&C for the performance team at Table Tennis England;

- Delivering S&C to GB Training and Senior squads during training camps, as well as check ins with athletes in between camps
- Conducting testing days for athletes, with SHU developing specific testing protocols for players
- SHU Table Tennis Research Group established, to explore research opportunities for S&C and physical elements of table tennis and grow the research base
- Relationship with SHU Sport Scholarship Programme to encourage young table tennis athletes to study at SHU and provide application support
- Designed the physical section of Table Tennis England's *Player Development Framework*
- Delivered a CPD session at World HOPES Week, hosted in Sheffield in October 2025, exploring *The physical determinants of success of the youth table tennis athlete*
- Attend monthly athlete support multi-disciplinary team, to discuss athletes progress, any challenges and action plans for upcoming camps

The Impact

One of the biggest impacts of the partnership has been the stronger relationships between players and S&C coaches. This has allowed S&C coaches to understand individual players, as well as building the players' trust in the coaches.

The creation of tailored S&C programmes has enhanced the importance of S&C within training, with S&C being embedded into training practices, and players growing their understanding of the importance of S&C in achieving sporting excellence.

Furthermore, the SHU TT Research Group has already resulted in two research pieces being conducted by SHU Masters students, including the development of a fundamental skills movement programme in table tennis and a table tennis injury review. This research will inform what needs to happen within S&C and physiotherapy for athletes.



SHU supporting World HOPES Week in Sheffield, October 2025

The Future

As the partnership continues more data will be collected to understand the impact of the partnership from a physical perspective.

In addition, the research that will be completed within table tennis will add to the knowledge and understanding of S&C within the sport – an area which is currently lacking.

"The collaboration between Sheffield Hallam University and Table Tennis England demonstrates what's possible when progressive organisations work together. From elite athlete sport science support to research case studies and student learning experiences this partnership is really effective in building future players and practitioners in sport".

*Dave Hembrough
S&C Lead*

"Our partnership with Sheffield Hallam University has significantly improved our strength and conditioning practices, from tailored programmes and benchmarking, to supporting other areas of our performance programmes. We are excited to see the results of the hard work to date come to fruition over the coming years".

*Emma Vickers
Head of Pathway Development, TTE*