

U21 Future Black Sticks Women's & Men's Coaches Announced

It's an exciting new phase for our U21 Future Black Sticks programme as the teams begin to prepare for the 2025 Junior World Cup Qualifiers early next year and the FIH Junior World Cup tournaments in December later that year. We are pleased to announce the appointment of two outstanding coaches who will lead our U21 Future Black Sticks (FBS) Men's and Women's squads.

U21 Women's Lead Coach

We are thrilled to welcome Verity Sharland as the Women's head coach. With comprehensive playing and coaching experience, Sharland is eager to guide the team through this next crucial phase, beginning with a trip to Japan in October. During this trip, the team will compete in a series of matches against a Canadian Senior A Team, offering high-quality training sessions and competitive play during their preparations.

"I am excited for the opportunity and am looking forward to leading the squad through the Junior World Cup cycle. Japan provides an excellent chance for our Future Black Sticks to gain international experience before the Junior World Cup Qualifier."

U21 Men's Lead Coach

We are equally excited to announce Mike Delaney, currently the Assistant Coach for the Vantage Black Sticks Men, as the head coach for the Future Black Sticks U21 Men's team. His experience with the Vantage Black Sticks Men's team makes him an ideal choice to guide the team through the next stages of their journey.

"I'm privileged to have the opportunity to lead the Future Black Sticks. This is a programme that provides great opportunities to talented and committed players. Being able to replicate learnings from the Seniors and share with the Juniors is critical to help develop players. I'm looking forward to grow the programme following Aaron Ford who has rebuilt the FBS over the last 2 years. The upcoming tour shows we are getting some consistency of competition and will give us another good marker moving forward."

The U21 Men's team will participate in the Sultan of Johor Cup (SOJC) in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, this October. This tournament will provide our athletes with invaluable experience against some of the best U21 teams globally, helping to prepare them for the crucial qualification matches, which will be held in Auckland from January 30th to February 2nd.

The official FIH Men's Junior World Cup is scheduled to take place in India in December 2025, while details for the FIH Women's Junior World Cup are forthcoming.