

# England call-up for hard-working ace



## HOCKEY

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A talented teenage hockey player from Norfolk is celebrating after being selected to represent England.

Gabby Stilgoe, from Docking, has been called up to the country's under-16 squad less than a year after she narrowly missed out on the same honour. And staff at Gresham's School feel it's just reward for their pupil's hard work and determination to improve since suffering the heartbreak of being overlooked little more than 12 months ago.

Steve Adams, the sports development director at the Holt-based school, said: "This is a tremendous

achievement for Gabby who has worked very hard with her

coaches for this honour over the last year.

"She has been playing exceptionally well for the school first XI on their very competitive fixture list and progressed through the Junior Regional Performance Centre trials in November which attracted the best 64 under-16 players in the country.

"The school is very proud of her and will be wishing Gabby the very best with the international matches next spring."

Stilgoe, 15, started playing the sport when she was six years old and plays club hockey for the Pelicans' senior ladies' side in King's Lynn. In 2012, she was just

"This is a tremendous achievement - she has worked so hard

Steve Adams of Gresham's School

one of six players in the country to be selected to compete for a place in the same national squad that she is now part of - aged just 14 - but sadly was not selected.

The rising star, who is now in the fifth form at Gresham's senior school, has worked hard and attended many training and selection camps at county and east divisional level since and her determination to improve has paid dividends.

Sam Major, Pelicans' press officer and senior men's player, tipped Stilgoe for a bright future when he appeared on our West Norfolk Sports Podcast last month.

He said: "Gabby came in through Gresham's, plays in midfield, and runs the show - which I think at that age is a brilliant achievement.

"The ladies' first team, in

fact the ladies' section as a whole, is flourishing with the youth in the sides. To be recognised by your country at that age group seems to suggest we're doing the right thing.

"We're very proud of them (first-team keeper Lucy Reed has also been training with the same national age-group squad as Stilgoe)."

■ Gabby Stilgoe, from Docking in Norfolk, displays her obvious talent on the hockey field. Photo: SUPPLIED