



Get into Touch

What is Touch?

Touch is one of the fastest growing sports in England, played by people of all ages and skill levels. Introduced from the Southern Hemisphere in the 70's, Touch is a fast, evasive, non-contact form of rugby.

Touch is a sport played on a pitch half the size of a rugby field (70m x 50m). The

game emphasises running, agility, passing, catching and communication. Touch is often referred to as Touch Rugby, but there is NO tackling, lineouts, scrumming or kicking involved. This makes it appealing to a wide range of ages and abilities, from juniors to masters and from slight to heavy builds.

Touch is one of the few team sports where men and women compete on teams together not only socially but at an international level. There are currently about 12,000 people playing Touch in organised leagues around the UK.

The main aim of the game is to score 'touchdowns' and to prevent the opposition



rugby league, netball, athletics, gymnastics, Taekwondo, Ultimate Frisbee, football – you name it they are all there. And some players haven't played much sport at all but were just looking for a social way to keep fit.

If you have been injured, are tired of getting injured or not really interested in contact sports then Touch is a great option. It is a high intensity sport and is great for fitness. While rugby players can transition very well into it you certainly don't have to have held a rugby ball to learn how to play.

Socially, Touch is a fantastic sport. It's really one of the only sports where men and women compete together in the international arena. A mixed team is only as good as its women (and men!) and female players are therefore highly valued! In most clubs the men and women train together, creating a fantastic social environment.

The majority of Touch in England is based around social leagues and is not serious at all. Almost all the clubs and leagues have

fantastic opportunities for absolute beginners to learn and play. England Touch puts on regular tournaments around the country giving the social and competitive teams opportunity to go on tour! There are also a number of fantastic tournaments in Europe such as Paris, Vienna and Valencia. While the opportunities for social Touch are large – the opportunity for great competitive sport is also right there with the National Touch Series, Super Leagues and national selections every year.

Do you want to play a sociable, fun sport? Do you want to get fit without even realising it? Do you want to meet lots of like-minded people? Do you want to play competitive sport and possibly represent your country? Answer 'yes' to any of these and Touch is your sport – get playing!

See the game in action go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWhw7LbQQQc&feature=related>

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from scoring (one touchdown equals one point). Teams are made up of 6 players on the field at any given time, with up to 8 substitute players on the sideline. Teams are categorised into Men's, Women's and Mixed divisions. Players can substitute anytime during the game and as often as they like.

Teams are either attacking (if they have possession of the ball) or defending (if they are trying to prevent the other team from scoring). The ball must be passed backwards at all times. Attacking players must perform a 'roll ball' (between the legs) once they have been touched by a defender. Defenders must retire in a straight line 5 meters from the roll ball mark. After 6 touches, the possession changes to the other team for their turn at attack. Penalties are awarded for a variety of infringements including forward pass, offside, touch-and-pass, roll-ball over the mark and over-vigorous play.

Why Touch?

The combination of skills, fitness and the social aspects makes Touch a great game for men and women. The current national teams have players who participated in rugby union,



FAQs

- * **I've never played Touch is it hard to learn?** Touch is very simple to play. Two to three games will see you master the basic skills and the more you play the better you will become. As long as you are keen to get involved you will develop the skills to enjoy yourself on the field.
- * **How fit do I have to be to play?** People of all shapes, sizes, ages and fitness levels play in social and competitive leagues, you chose the level you wish to play. You will find that over the season your personal fitness levels will increase, Touch is a great way to exercise, improve cardio-vascular fitness and burn excess fat.
- * **What do I need to play?** All you need to get started is a willingness to learn and have some fun. You can start by simply getting a bunch of friends together, a set of the rules and a ball. The sport is renowned for its social appetite.
- * **What does it cost to play?** Playing socially with your friends costs nothing, league costs vary throughout the country, but works out to be around £35-£45pp for 10 weeks.



- * **How long are the games?** The international standard is 40min (2 x 20min). Local leagues differ.
- * **How big is the field?** The international standard is 70m x 50m.
- * **How many people play in a team?** The international standard is 14 players per team, 6 on the field at any one time with up to 8 substitutes. who interchange. 10-12 players is a good number to allow for that much needed rest during games.
- * **What is the male/female ratio in a Mixed Team?** The international standard is a minimum of 3 women and a maximum

of 3 men on the field. This may vary at clubs due to local conditions so please check with the club where you wish to play.

- * **How does the scoring work?** Single points are scored for each touchdown, although local competition rules may differ.
- * **If I haven't played before am I able to come down and just watch?** Of course! Feel free to come down to any of the venues and check out how the game is played. Simply turn up at any of the venues where Touch is being played, you'll find people are really friendly and happy to chat about the game to you. Check out the England Touch website and follow 'where to play'.
- * **How far can I go with Touch?** If you have the skill and determination you can represent your country in national and international competitions, with the Touch World Cup being the ultimate test.
- * **Is there an international governing body?** Yes, the Federation of International Touch. For more information on FIT, please visit their website <http://www.internationaltouch.com.au>

Otherwise for more information email: gregg@englandtouch.org.uk UF

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Touch players

Name: Julie Walker

Age: 33

Represented England W30s in European Championships 2010

Sporting History + Achievements:

Kayaking/canoe polo for years but mainly rugby union at/since Uni. Played scrum half for Vale of Lune, being part of the team that moved from North 2 up to Premiership over 5 years winning a few league titles and cup comps along the way. Represented North West region.

UF: How long have you played Touch?

JW: I started playing socially about 5 years ago when I moved to Manchester as a way of meeting new



people. But I started playing seriously about 3 years ago when we entered a team into local Manchester leagues and then from there we were instrumental in forming the Manchester Chargers Touch team which now enters national comps.

UF: Why Touch?

JW: Initially it was great for fitness and ball handling skills in the rugby 'off season' and it's a very social game. Now I'm older and recently retired from contact rugby, Touch is definitely the way forward for me and it's a fantastic sport with great opportunities to play competitively and reach a high level in.

UF: What are your goals?

JW: To make the England Women's 30s team for World Cup 2011 and to take Manchester Chargers higher in the national standings!

Name: Helen Stapleton

Age: 31



UF: What's your background?

HS: I wouldn't describe myself as particularly sporty, I hated sport at school. I was the typical last one to be picked for the teams because I couldn't catch, throw, hit or kick a ball or run very fast. My Dad kept fit by running once a week and has completed quite a few half marathons and I became interested in that, so I started running with him. I have completed the Great North Run three times and am running the 'Run to the Beat' half marathon at the end of September. Completing the GNR has been my biggest sporting achievement to date.

UF: Why touch?

HS: There are a lot of reasons why I play Touch. Firstly it's outside – I work inside all day and I like knowing that on the days we play, I am going to get a run around outside. Secondly we play in the park and it's free. Thirdly it's the first team game where I have felt at ease and not like I am making up the numbers. Lastly, but the most important – it's the social aspects. Through playing touch I have made some really good friends (we go snowboarding together and have started a spin off running club and pudding club), I meet new people all the time, we don't play in fixed teams, so you get to play with people at all levels who you sometimes have to coach, but who sometimes coach you and we have some brilliant social nights out!

UF: How long have you played Touch and what have you achieved?

HS: I have been playing Touch in Manchester since summer 2003 and was one of the original members of the Manchester social touch group at Longford Park. My achievements in Touch

have been mainly around learning the game and being able to play without panicking!

UF: Any goals?

HS: I play touch to keep fit, socialise with my friends and meet new people. My goals are to keep enjoying the game and learning new skills and still be playing when I am 60! My other sporting goals are to run a marathon and beat my boyfriend at a tennis game!

Name: Beckie Yousefian

Age: 30

Sporting History and Achievements:

Badminton - played for Greater Manchester County at U16 and currently play for clubs in Manchester and Stockport Leagues. Swimming - swam for Stockport Metro until age 17. Netball played at school and Bramhall netball club. Currently still play netball weekly in the winter. Rugby union - played at university and reached BUSA



quarter finals 2 years running. Picked for Scottish Universities team 2002.

UF: Why Touch?

BY: I had an injury playing rugby union that prevented me from playing contact so I started to play Touch socially when I moved back down to Manchester from university. I liked the fitness and skill aspect of touch without any contact.

UF: How long have you played Touch and what are your achievements?

BY: I played socially and in a local 'in2touch' league for four years. I then went to the England trial in 2010 and was selected for the mixed 30's squad. I played in the Europeans in 2010 and am hoping to play in the 2011 World Cup.