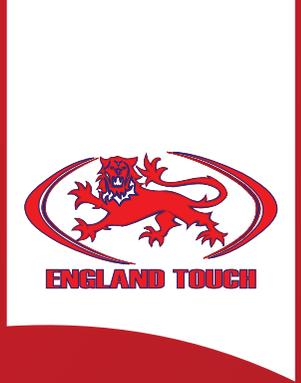


englandtouch.org.uk



England Touch Annual Review 2019

THIS IS TOUCH

A SPORT FOR
ALL

A SPORT FOR
ALL AGES

A SPORT FOR
ALL GENDERS

A SPORT FOR
ALL SEASONS



ANNUAL REVIEW 2019

AN OVERVIEW



Junior Touch Championships / Paris 2019
England B18 v Wales B18



Touch World Cup / Malaysia 2019
England W27s Bronze Medal Winners!



Touch World Cup / Malaysia 2019
England X30 v New Zealand X30



Elite NTS / R1 Banbury 2019
BBR v CSSC London Eagles



Development NTS 2019 –
5 Rounds all over subscribed!



Uni National Touch Series 2018/19
bigger and better than ever



Touch World Cup / Malaysia 2019
England – Opening Ceremony



Promoting Touch with
sessions in schools



ANNUAL REVIEW 2019

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England Touch Board 2019/20

Chair

Mark Croston

Non-Executive Directors

Dave Christophi

Jason Harborow

Dan Parkinson

Geraint Thomason

(left March 2020)

Andrew Wilding

Executive Directors

Ian Boyd

(left November 2019)

David Cope

Gregg Cropper

Geoff Howes

Ben Powell

Chris Simon

(joined September 2019)



CHAIR'S REPORT

MARK CROSTON



2019 was another good year for England Touch. From growth at grass roots to World Cup success in Malaysia, we have continued to make big strides forward, both on and off the field of play

A huge thank you to everyone involved in our sport – players, coaches, officials, supporters, volunteers, administrators, sponsors and all others who make the England Touch community what it is today. It is a significant honour and privilege to serve the sport from which I get a lot of enjoyment and satisfaction.

2019 was another good year for England Touch. From growth at grass roots to World Cup success in Malaysia, we have continued to make big strides forward, both on and off the field of play.

The World Cup back in May was the highlight of the year for many. An overall third place was the result of an enormous amount of work from all those involved and the fact that those not in Malaysia could watch live coverage on the BBC Sport website back home was a real success for our sport. On behalf of the Board I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who contributed – the players, coaches, team managers, medical team, operations, marketing and High Performance team – and

everyone who supported them throughout their training and playing over the winter.

Our other major international success came in August in Paris, with the Junior Touch Championships. Not only did we take Europe by storm with gold medals in all junior categories, but our young England stars went unbeaten across all four teams. This demonstrated another exceptionally well planned and executed campaign, but also how much potential we have for the future. I'd like to extend our thanks to everyone involved in the Junior Touch Championships in 2019, especially the parents who drove their children many miles to training camps and turned out in Paris in big numbers.

The Chief Executive's report reviews the wide variety of projects and activities we have undertaken and supported in 2019. During the year, we continued to invest in the sport with further live streaming and broadcast of our summer events, increased exposure through the media, the introduction of the HIVE learning platform for our elite athletes and a number of new clubs coming on board

as we continued to see growth in participation and our own membership, both at individual and club level.

We also continued to develop and invest in our #OneEngland workforce. We introduced additional volunteer roles and we made the appointment in August of our first paid CEO, Chris Simon, demonstrating our desire to further develop and take our sport forwards. We also filled important roles in finance (Geoff Howes) and governance (David Cope), strengthening the board even further.

We have continued work around our governance framework and furthering our recognition from Sport England and the wider sporting community, as the national governing body of Touch in England. We are continuing to develop how we govern the sport and regularly review how we meet the Sport England code. We are proud of how we connect as a sport, from volunteer, to player, to board.

As we finished 2019 and moved into 2020, we had two directors step down from England Touch due to their own time constraints. I would

CHAIR'S REPORT MARK CROSTON

I would like to thank both Geraint Thomason, Ian Boyd and Dave Christophi for their time and commitment to the sport of Touch in England.

As we entered 2020, we had plans to revitalise our domestic events season, review our membership and plan (and deliver) a successful Euros. This would have been a fantastic way to celebrate our 25th year as the governing body for Touch in England.

Much is on hold due to the current circumstances we find ourselves in, but we are using the period to further our Business Plan and develop our strategies across all areas of the organisation as we strive to take participation in touch in England to a new level.

I would like to thank everyone for their support during 2019, helping steer me and the sport through some significant challenges. On behalf of England Touch, wishing you all a healthy and successful remainder of 2020.



We are using the period [affected by COVID-19] to further our business plan and develop our strategies across all areas of the organisation as we strive to take participation in Touch in England to a new level



CEO REPORT CHRIS SIMON



We have extremely ambitious targets, and at the core of our business plan is the desire to grow participation to 500,000 players and 50,000 members by 2024

Having last been involved with England Touch as Development Director in 2017, the opportunity arose to re-join the board during the summer of 2019. My drive to do so was very much around trying to help Touch in England develop as a frontline sport, one that could aspire towards the participation levels seen in Australia of over a million players.

As I joined towards the end of the 2019 season I am going to use this opportunity to look forwards to the remainder of 2020 and beyond. Before I do, I would just like to echo the comments of our Chair and congratulate all those involved in such a fantastic season on the field for all our England teams. Well done and congratulations to all of you.

As Chief Executive, I am responsible for leading the development and implementation of our five-year business plan and strategy to grow the sport of Touch in England and in turn the subsequent reach and scope of England Touch as the national governing body of the sport. We have extremely ambitious targets focused on getting more people involved in our sport and engaging more effectively with those

that already play, and at the core of our business plan is the desire to grow participation to 500,000 players and 50,000 members by 2024.

Some might say these are lofty ambitions for such a small governing body with limited resources. However, in the next 18 months we have two significant events – the Youth Touch World Cup in Manchester and the postponed Euros in Nottingham – which represent a unique opportunity to springboard our sport into a wider consciousness.

To do so we will need a robust framework and clearly defined plans and accountabilities, both internally within the England Touch management, but also across the broader Touch community.

Through 2019, the work done by Ian Boyd and the development team has been excellent and I am keen to continue to see this move forwards as we take Touch into more playing environments across the country.

In order to increase the focus of this area across the organisation, we changed the Development Director role title to Head of Participation, and I am delighted that Tom

Hewson-Haworth has joined the team. This is a huge opportunity for the sport and England Touch with it. Tom has made a great start and we are about to embark on a series of regional meetings to further explore how we can 'Grow the Game of Touch'.

My second priority is about our membership. We need to continue to develop and deliver a membership package that everyone who plays Touch wants to be part of and can realise the value. What benefits, products and services can we offer? How do we communicate better to our membership? We need to better understand why people participate – in playing, refereeing, coaching and spectating. How do we engage with more of them and ensure that they are aware of, and enjoy the benefits that England Touch can offer?

Thirdly, we need to focus on our workforce. We need to better engage, communicate and recognise those that give up so much time for our sport – both for England Touch directly, but also at their local clubs, leagues, universities and other playing environments. We need to support



CEO REPORT CHRIS SIMON

our workforce and help develop their skills to grow and evolve in the roles they perform.

We also need to continue to work closely with the Board of England Touch. During the last six months, there has been a lot of work behind the scenes by and with the Board and senior leadership team, particularly around making us more robust and ensuring our governance is of the highest standard. We have an excellent Board and leadership group, all of whom are fully engaged and behind our strategy and business plan.

Finally, on behalf of the board of England Touch, I would like to say a massive thank you to all our members. Touch is played, refereed, coached, organised, delivered and supported by an amazing group of people and we are lucky to be part of such a special sporting community.



We need to better engage, communicate and recognise those that give up so much time for our sport – both for England Touch directly, but also at their local clubs, leagues, universities and other playing environments



COO REPORT GREGG CROPPER



It seems I say that 'last year was our biggest ever' each year, however our evolution and headway in all aspects has me saying it again

Firstly, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone involved, at all levels of our sport in England, for their commitment, dedication and contribution to the incredible progress that we have witnessed over the recent period. The #OneEngland workforce consist of countless volunteers, from local club to regional and national collaborators who make all this possible.

Participation has seen growth year on year, with an increased focus on building the player base across a range of demographics, in order to not only establish Touch as a leading sport and physical activity in England, but also to enhance the commercial appeal of the sport.

We've hosted more domestic events, performed and delivered results at the elite level on the international stage, and most importantly become a viable, more sustainable National Governing Body for our sport, our members and participants at all levels.

Partners and projects

Back in January 2019, we launched a new project to help get prisoners back on track with new-found partners Koi Sports CIC. The

ground-breaking project uses Touch to help the rehabilitation of prisoners back into mainstream society, which we will look to nurture over time.

The team confirmed that we'd continue our broadcast partnership with 247.TV, following the production of over 150 hours of viewing, with 1.5 million minutes of footage viewed and eyeballs from over 40 countries in 2019 alone. Chris Wearmouth, in collaboration with 247.TV, brokered the deal to show the Touch World Cup live on the BBC Sport website, app and iPlayer, the first time the sport's global showpiece has received such exposure.

It has been really pleasing to see the positive way the Touch community embraced our live streaming, thanks to all those contributing their insight and expert commentary on the microphone. The impact our live streaming has had, shows how much an operational decision can have on other aspects of the organisation, as some of our squads at both the World Cup and Junior Championships welcomed new sponsors, to whom we are very grateful.

If these were ordinary times, we would now be in the final stages of planning the delivery of

what would have been the biggest Euros in history, with around 80 teams from 23 nations confirming their attendance in Nottingham. This had been two years in the planning, ever since the final hooter went at the 2018 Euros, so we are naturally all very disappointed, however, we've been able to postpone the event until summer 2021, and are now looking forward to a busy few weeks next year!

Operations

The biggest operational undertaking was the Touch World Cup. The whole England Touch World Cup campaign and tour was meticulously planned, budgeted and delivered, certainly one of the best organised in our history, something I'm enormously proud of being a part of. Many thanks to Pippa Bourke for working with me in the build-up to the tournament and running the week itself in Putrajaya.

Throughout the campaign, we had a huge number of playing and non-playing staff, 56 to be precise, who helped us prepare and compete in the main event. From coaches, S&C, physios, psychologists, nutritionists, doctors,



COO REPORT GREGG CROPPER

administrators, media and High Performance staff, I express my gratitude to every single one, who's dedication, hours, and professionalism is second to none. Just as everyone at NASA from the janitor to the flight director played their part in putting man on the moon, our success on the international stage would not have been achieved without the contributions of all these people and more.

The 2019 TWC brought all that we expected, and more:

- The 50°+ heat, humidity and brutal conditions
- A clash of cultures, the highs/ lows that sport brings, life-long friendships and everlasting memories
- The buzz of pulling on your jersey with team-mates as you head out to battle
- An eagerness to keep closing the gap on the Southern Hemisphere teams

It was also brilliant to have representatives from England Touch on the tournament organising team, namely Kevin Hill, Zoe Malarkey and Erica Robertson, reflecting the outstanding reputation that we have for the quality and experience of our volunteers.

Domestic events

The past years have seen England Touch set new standards for tournament planning and delivery. 2019 continued this trajectory and we saw an action-packed season, scheduled around the international calendar, with new hosts and a rationalised number of venues.

We co-hosted the re-invigorated Club Championships and our domestic National Touch Series and annual Nationals competition continued to flourish, expanding in terms of the number of teams participating and volume of multi-day tournaments.

A massive thanks to Aisling and Mitch (and his team) for all their efforts during the past 12 months, and to everyone who has helped our tournaments run smoothly.

The work of volunteers is crucial to all sports, especially an emerging sport such as Touch. Rewarding their efforts is so important and the reason that our #OneEngland programme was established to recognise the contribution of these unsung heroes, as it's often easy to take these contributions for granted.

The #OneEngland Awards Dinner, held at

Twickenham, provided an opportunity to thank our workforce, without whom all of this wouldn't be possible.

Looking ahead

As we move into a new era for our sport we are increasingly looking further ahead, at new ideas and ways to engage our audiences.

Making sure that we have a robust operational framework is key if we are to achieve our ambitions, whether it is delivering great events, fulfilling the requirements of our Sport England recognition submission, facilitating development or any of the many other projects that we have in the pipeline.

I've relished being part of the fabric of our sport. 2020 sees us celebrating our landmark 25th year, so much has happened since I joined 10 years ago, and so much yet to happen, I'm honoured to play my part.



The work of volunteers is crucial to our sport. Rewarding their efforts is so important and is the reason that our #OneEngland programme was established

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGY

Taking Touch in England to the next level

Building on the Strategic Plan set out by England Touch last year, we finished 2019 with a five-year Business Plan, taking the organisation beyond the next World Cup to 2024.

The sport of Touch in England is changing. We are in a period of unrivalled growth in terms of the number of people playing and the exposure the sport is gaining through increased media coverage. People are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of Touch: it is fun and social, whilst at the same time promoting an active lifestyle and improving fitness.

As we move into 2020, the sport of Touch in England is ready to be taken to the next level. Our core focus is to build the participatory player base across a range of demographics, in order to not only establish Touch as a leading sport and physical activity in England, but also to enhance the commercial appeal of the sport to increase the revenues generated for England Touch.

Our Vision is to:

Build the participatory player base across a range of demographics and geographies throughout England. From that, we will capture more data on those individuals and provide them with a pathway to move from grass roots Touch, through to playing opportunities locally, regionally and nationally.



Our core focus is to build the participatory player base across a range of demographics, in order to not only establish Touch as a leading sport and physical activity in England, but also to enhance the commercial appeal of the sport



BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGY

Our strategic aims are:

- To become the world's largest and most significant Touch organisation with truly global reach
- To grow participation/opportunities to play
- To help improve levels of physical activity in adults and children
- To increase the membership base and the percentage affiliating to England Touch
- To increase income from and the number of events through an enhanced domestic club calendar, introduction of new premium opportunities and hosting of global events
- To develop a structure to capture data from *all* players/viewers, not just members and capture the global touch market through the digital transformation of England Touch
- To create significant brand recognition and digital presence

Our strategic objectives are:

- 500,000 people playing and engaging with the sport of Touch in England
- 50,000 players affiliating either directly, or via clubs, leagues and events to England Touch
- Create in excess of £1million of commercial revenues per annum

We believe Touch can be a sport for life and we intend to:

- Introduce and embed into Primary and Secondary Schools – from 5 to 18
- Expand and increase participation in and between Universities – from 18 to 25
- Introduce as a Workplace health and wellbeing activity – from 18 to 75
- Develop a structured Social Touch model – from 5 to 75
- Engage and develop the Competitive Club model – from 5 to 75

We have the potential to create a sustainable 'Touch' economy, driving revenues through membership, events, subscriptions, merchandise and sponsorship. Crucially, engaging the informal Touch audience; and getting them to contribute to the cost of the development and growth of the sport in England.



FINANCE

Despite hosting no international tournaments and travelling to Malaysia, 2019 was a positive financial year

Executive Summary

England Touch had a positive financial performance in 2019, despite not hosting a major international event.

The organisation delivered a small surplus at the end of the financial year, with performance largely underpinned by the following key drivers:

- Overall increase in income across almost all areas
- Continued growth in events, enabling further investment in live streaming
- Increased investment in equipment and marketing
- Tight control of costs in line with budget

During the year, England Touch continued to focus on financial compliance, appointing a new Finance Director and starting a fresh review of the financial processes and protocols in place. We continued to consider our position with regards VAT and Corporation Tax ensuring all legal requirements are in place. We are also continuing to assess opportunities around our financial ledger system, allowing more efficient

management and reporting, which in turn allows more robust and sustainable accounting for England Touch.

In 2019

- A small surplus of £2,879 was retained for the year
- Overall revenue grew by 38% to £433,580 (comparison excludes the 2018 Euros)
- Growth in event income by 9% to £108,714
- Income from membership remained flat year-on-year





FINANCE

In 2020

- We have established a five-year Business Plan for Touch, with the focus on driving participation in the sport and the subsequent revenues expected to be generated from much higher numbers of participants engaging with England Touch as the National Governing Body. Increased revenues from membership and events will drive overall income upwards, enabling us to invest heavily back into the sport
- Moving into 2020, England Touch is moving to a more Profit and Loss-based accounting system and further enhancing our financial controls. The appointment of a new Finance Director and Chief Executive, and a strong and balanced Board of Directors, will further assist with regards good financial management and reporting
- We have recently introduced a payroll system for our two employees – a Chief Executive and a Chief Operating Officer and as we continue to grow we expect to increase the size of our paid workforce further. We will continue to consider

our position with regards VAT and Corporation Tax, ensuring all legal requirements are met

- England Touch is proactively working with Sport England to explore suitable options to help the Association navigate its way through the coronavirus pandemic and offset some of the lost revenues brought about by tournament cancellations
- An application has been submitted to the Sport England Volunteer Fund which will help the Association develop its volunteers and coaching pathways for the future



We have established a five-year Business Plan for Touch, with the focus on driving participation in the sport, and the subsequent revenues expected to be generated from much higher numbers of participants, enabling us to invest heavily back into the sport



FINANCES FULL YEAR 2019

All figures in GBP £		Total
Income:		
Membership and Affiliation		280,488
Events and Tournaments		118,280
Courses		10,466
Kit sales		3,059
Other income		21,287
Total		433,580
Expenditure:		
High Performance participation		200,897
Equipment and Kit		38,544
Staff and Volunteer Expenses*		65,198
Events and Tournaments		85,138
Marketing and Promotion		8,081
Courses		7,291
Insurance		9,803
Professional Fees**		12,515
Other costs		3,233
Total		430,702
Surplus		2,879

* Includes £21.5k #OneEngland reward payments

** Legal/Accounting/IT





MEMBERSHIP AND AFFLIATION

Executive and 2019 Summary

Executive Summary

England Touch's membership has continued to grow in 2019, albeit in a more modest way than previous years. Nevertheless the work done on the Association's membership platform has streamlined the way England Touch operates and had a positive impact on revenues.

The membership platform is now supporting the majority of member engagement, offers and transactions, and while there are a few remaining data security and compliance issues to resolve, having more England Touch management volunteers using the platform will only bode us well for the future.

In 2019

- All coach and referee course booking was migrated to the membership platform, channelling all non-marketing communications, personal data collection and payments through one secure platform
- The Google Sheets back-end was re-built to make it more resilient and allowing for better real-time interrogation of membership profiles
- Relevant people were given access to relevant data – eg emergency contact details available to the High Performance team – and other England Touch volunteers were trained to make fuller use of the Love Admin platform

2019 in Figures

1,780

Individual Members
62.5% male / 37.5% female

22%

of Members aged under 20
42% 20-30, 18% 30-40
18% are 40+

66

Affiliated Clubs
with 50 leagues across venues

4,600

Players at Member Clubs
(self-reported by clubs)

5

Top Clubs for Membership
Nottingham Touch Club
CSSC London Eagles
Cambridge Touch Association
Galaxy London
Thames Valley Vikings





MEMBERSHIP AND AFFLIATION

In 2020

- A new insurance provider, Sports Insure, will be giving our members more benefits via the AON Plus programme, and we will be aiming to further refine our membership package further
- We will continue to improve our member needs, remove redundant data and upskill more of the England Touch management to help the association make the most of the Love Admin platform
- We will continue to liaise with our fellow national governing bodies to ensure that England Touch is at least meeting best practice standards across the sector
- Membership will work closely with other departments, such as Governance to review DBS records, Marketing to provide high resolution segmentation of opted-in members and aid engagement, and Development to increase school members





COMMERCIAL

Commercial growth is essential to fund the sport's expansion

Executive Summary

England Touch's revenues largely come from membership affiliation fees and hosting events. We do appreciate that sponsorships and other external funding needs to become an increasing part of the commercial mix, both to fund England Touch's growth and to help reduce financial burdens on individual players.

Our aims are to have a proactive strategy, to work with sponsors looking to increase their brand exposure in a cost-effective way, and to develop partnerships which provide benefits to individual members.

In 2019

- England Touch continued to work in partnership with Belief, through a revenue sharing agreement and kit supply deal. We also maintained strong relationships with Sporttape and Steeden as sponsors of the National Touch Series of events
- The partnership with the Rugby Football Union and O₂ Touch came to an end in 2019, largely due to our desire to be formally recognised by Sport England as the governing body for Touch in England. We have been the governing body for the last 25 years when Touch was first introduced to England in 1995 and we felt it was important for the organisation to be officially recognised. We will continue to provide a pathway for those participating in O₂/RFU clubs so long as they become affiliated to England Touch

- Maxi Nutrition came on board as England Touch's Official Sports Nutrition Partner, with significant discounts available to individual members and clubs and revenue sharing with the Association
- 2019 was also a World Cup year and England Touch would like to thank all those organisations and individuals who provided financial and in-kind support to the England teams that trained for and participated in Malaysia. Team sponsors included Champion Power UK (Men's Open), Peter Armitage Builders (Mixed 30s) and Open Air Design (Men's 40s), with Capita supporting the Women's 35s. Thanks, too, to Autotech Recruit for sponsoring the Mixed 15s at the Junior Touch Championships





COMMERCIAL

In 2020

- Despite not having a formal partnership with the RFU, we continue to engage in positive dialogue and alongside conversations with the RFL and other stakeholders, England Touch will be at the forefront of driving the sport of Touch forwards
- SportsInsure (part of AON) has agreed to become England Touch's Insurance Partner, with a range of rewards and benefits for individual members and revenue sharing with the Association
- England Touch continues to actively seek sponsors and partners who can help the Association achieve its ambitions. Our focus will be on securing partners for the different channels we seek to drive participation – schools, universities, social, club and workplace. By growing the game in these environments, we will further enhance our commercial appeal to third parties – both in terms of potential sponsors and wider stakeholder engagement



England Touch continues to actively seek sponsors and partners who can help the Association achieve its ambitions. Our focus will be on securing partners for the different channels we seek to drive participation

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Successes at the Touch World Cup and Junior Touch Championships and building for the future

2019 Touch World Cup

2019 saw exceptional success for the England Touch High Performance Programme. Building on the success of 2018, we took 10 teams to the 2019 Touch World Cup in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

We achieved bronze medals in the Women's 27s and Women's 35s divisions, with the Men's 30s, Mixed 30s and Men's 35s all finishing in fourth place with narrow loses in their bronze medal playoff games.

Overall, all-but-one of the teams finished in the top six of their categories as England reinforced its place as the third-best nation in the world across the entirety of the age ranges and categories.

We had unparalleled success off the field in Malaysia as well, with our Medical, Strength and Conditioning, Sports Psychologists and management teams all providing world class support to our teams and athletes.

We had a number of players reach significant milestones at the 2019 Touch World Cup; Martin Wright (Bristol Jets) and Ryan

Miemczyk (BBR) played in their 75th international matches, with Rich King (CSSC), Sue-Ellen Godde (Cambridge), Byron Tibbitts (Bristol Fijians), Chris Wall (CSSC London Eagles), Dom Tripp (London Scorpions), Julia Kang (Manchester Chargers), Ollie Sills (Cheltenham), Ruez Durrani (Galaxy London) and Sarah Rosenburg (Bristol Jets) all hitting the 50-cap mark.

2019 Junior European Touch Championships

The 2019 Junior Touch Championships saw unprecedented success; not only did all four of our divisions (Mixed 15s, Mixed 18s, Boys 18s, Girls 18s) win gold medals, but all teams went through the entire tournament undefeated – 27 wins and two draws from 29 matches played in Paris.

The growth in our Junior Programme has been unparalleled over the past 18 months and the success at the 2019 JTC is underpinned by the tireless work of the coaching teams, the medical team, and management team and our highly dedicated athletes (and their parents).

 **WATCH >** Highlights from the Touch World Cup 2019 in Putrajaya, Malaysia





HIGH PERFORMANCE

Looking ahead: 2020 – 2023

The England Touch High Performance programme is entering a new phase as we work towards the 2023 Touch World Cup.

The highly-experienced Ben Powell has been appointed as High Performance Director, with Sammie Phillips (Head of Elite Performance), Pippa Bourke (Head of Elite Logistics) and Peter Bell (Head Coach) providing leadership and expertise across the operation.

We have been working hard to process the 2019 High Performance Review (which was contributed to by athletes, coaches and management from the 2019 Touch World Cup and JTC) and build a strategic plan that take the programme through to the 2023 Touch World Cup.

We have established a clear focus on the following areas in our strategic planning:

- Establishing and maintaining a competitive advantage
- Innovation
- Sustainable Coaching Development
- Sustainable Athlete Development

We have continued a strong focus on coherence and collaboration within the programme and continue to see this model deliver a successful experience and outcome for all of our athletes.

We are expecting an extremely busy few years, and planning is going to be fundamental to continuing our upwards trajectory to establish and maintain our status as one of the leading nations globally in our sport.

We are particularly looking forward to building towards the re-scheduled European Touch Championships and Youth Touch World Cup, which are both being hosted by England in 2021.



We are expecting an extremely busy few years, and planning is going to be fundamental to continuing our upwards trajectory to establish and maintain our status as one of the leading nations globally in our sport



EVENTS

NATIONAL SERIES

From Development to Elite across England

Executive summary

England Touch ran a comprehensive series of events in 2019, with 20 tournaments across the National Touch Series and The Nationals. The Touch World Cup brought a later-than-usual start to the Elite National Touch Series and Elite Men's and Women's National Touch Series, which again ran for whole weekends.

All of the Elite National Touch Series, Rounds 1 and 2 of the Elite Men's and Women's National Touch Series, The Nationals and European Club Championships were all live streamed, with the latter two also live streamed on the BBC Sport website and app.

A weekend-long approach was also taken to the Development National Touch Series (held on Saturdays) and Emerging Men's and Women's National Touch Series (held on Sundays of the same weekend), so that clubs could consolidate their resources for the single gender competition without giving up an additional weekend.

England Touch took the National Touch Series to new venues, including Derby, Wymondham and Chester, and used the year both to introduce new members into the events team to share the workload but also develop a new approach to venue booking for the future to meet minimum standard requirements and member expectations.



[WATCH >](#) Highlights from across the 2019 National Touch Series





EVENTS NATIONAL SERIES

In 2019

- We retained a healthy profit, despite incurring more more costs due to further investment
- Two national events assistants were brought on board
- Tournament breakdown was as follows:
Opens and Juniors Nationals*, Seniors and Masters Nationals, 3 x Elite National Touch Series*, 2 x Elite Men's and Women's National Touch Series*, 5 x Development National Touch Series, 3 x Emerging Men's and Women's National Touch Series, 5 x University National Touch Series.
* denotes weekend tournaments
- Elite National Touch Series rounds hosted between 17 and 22 teams, Elite Men's and Women's National Touch Series had between 10 and 11 teams
- All five Development National Touch Series rounds hosted between 20 and 24 teams, Emerging Men's and Women's National Touch Series hosted between 16 and 20 teams

- All tournament dates and venues were announced earlier than in previous years
- Positive feedback about the Events team from players

In 2020

- England Touch had established partnerships with venues which met our minimum standards and this will be the model for the future, with higher quality pitches and markings
- We will be furthering our communications with clubs as part of a continual review and improvement process, with more clarity around match scheduling
- Events will be working with Referees to improve provision at tournaments
- England Touch has used the lockdown period to review the format and frequency of tournaments throughout the year, including closer working with Development and Universities





MEDICAL AND SPORTS SCIENCE

Supporting and preparing our athletes for the rigours of training and playing

Executive Summary

England Touch continues to be a standard-bearer within world Touch for the level of medical and sports science support provided to its athletes, especially at elite and international level.

The 2019 Touch World Cup saw an extensive programme both before and during the tournament to prepare athletes for the rigours of performing in the challenging Malaysian conditions and then in keeping them at their peak throughout their campaigns.

The leadership team of Cari Thorpe (Head of Medical and Sport Science), Nick Dobbin (Lead Sports Scientist) and Aaron Green (Lead Strength and Conditioning Coach) was supported by an extensive team of medics, physios, sports scientists and psychologists, who attended various camps to implement testing protocols, coach continuing professional development and player education.

Emma Cropper has stepped down from her role as Head Physiotherapist after nearly a decade's direct involvement in England Touch,

with Claire Lawson appointed as Lead Physiotherapist. We thank Emma for her contributions and research which has made a significant impact on the sport in this country.

In 2019

- Medical support was provided at eight of 13 High Performance camps during the winter. All England athletes were provided with training and nutrition programmes based on successful testing data and previously collected movement and energy demands
- This support rivals many professional club set-ups and we believe leads the way within amateur national governing bodies within the UK
- Just nine athletes required further medical attention outside of the England Touch provision. Eight were heat-related with one trauma-related. Meanwhile the efficient collection of hydration and wellness data allowed us to address potential issues before they arose

- Medical support was also provided at every Elite National Touch Series, Elite and Emerging Men's and Women's National Touch Series and Development National Touch Series event, along with the Nationals, European Club Championships and Junior Touch Championships



MEDICAL AND SPORTS SCIENCE

In 2020

- England Touch is using the enforced hiatus brought about by the coronavirus pandemic to put robust plans in place to build on the 2019 successes into the winter training programmes building towards the 2021 Youth Touch World Cup and European Touch Championships
 - We will start to explore research areas that will promote the technical and tactical ability of Touch players, including the importance of physical, psychological and social factors for progression and selection in Touch
 - This research will help us implement programmes to modify the deficiencies in movement patterns in Touch players
 - The knowledge and understanding which has been developed over the last few years at elite and international level will be cascaded through the Touch community to enable Regional Leads and clubs to better prepare their players for the rigours of tournament Touch
- It is our ambition to provide the growing University National Touch Series with similar medical provision to that of the other tournaments within the National Touch Series, working with host universities to give their physiotherapy students the opportunity to increase their experience



REFEREES

A successful, productive and proactive referee development programme

Executive summary

Having a successful, productive and proactive referee development programme is crucial in maintaining standards and assisting the growth of Touch overall.

Referee management for 2019 took an international flavour with New Zealander Nathan Thompson taking up the management, assisted by Australian Andrew Martin. With a healthy representation at the Touch World Cup – England had the third-highest number of referees in Malaysia, behind Australia and New Zealand, and equalled New Zealand with the joint second highest number of female referees – and a regular flow of participants attending courses the referee community is growing all the time.

Touch is not immune to the pressure on numbers of officials seen in other sports, so it is one of England Touch's key priorities to maintain positive engagement with all referees and players, encouraging individuals to gain qualifications and experience.

In 2019

- Almost 60 referees attended at least one day of the Open or Seniors/Masters Nationals
- Bronwyn Wake and Jordi Bittloch were upgraded to Level 5 at the Touch World Cup. Kathy van de Rijt and Genevieve Mitchell were upgraded to Level 4, with Dan Harrison, Laura Mitchell, Ryan Macmillan and Duncan Mascarenhas all upgraded to Level 3
- Throughout the season a host of new referees picked up Level 1 and 2 badges, including the first Level 2 upgrades given at a University National Touch Series event
- 14 courses were run, with venues as far afield as Bath, Manchester and Peterborough, and 158 participants attended





REFEREES

In 2020

- England Touch introduced a comprehensive range of materials and communication to educate players, referees and coaches with the changes associated with the implementation of the Federation of International Touch's version 5 rules
- Robin Budd was appointed as National Referees Manager with a new team to assist, namely Jack Harris, Rita Shevchenko, Gareth Hinds, Jane Temple and Jordi Bitlloch
- More than 30 referees expressed interest in officiating at the European Touch Championships, in what could have been England's strongest officiating team at an international tournament yet
- Five in-person courses were held in January and February – three Level 1 and two Level 2 – with Level 1 courses then being held online in May and June. At the time of writing nearly 100 participants have received training

- A new online Foundation Course was introduced, with England Touch partnering with Edinburgh Napier University
- The lockdown allowed for time to review processes and looking for future improvements as well as supporting High Performance CPD. This has included the aforementioned online courses, and supporting England Touch Governance in development of a new complaints system



The England Touch Referee Pathway





PARTICIPATION

A renewed focus on participation and increasing involvement in our sport

Executive Summary

Participation at all levels is essential if a sport is to grow and thrive, and Touch is no different. England Touch has renewed its focus on this area of operations with the appointment of a newly-created position of Head of Participation, with Tom Hewson-Haworth appointed in early-2020.

This will enable England Touch to build on and amplify the outstanding work which has been undertaken at our affiliate clubs to introduce Touch to a new audience of all ages, notably the Under-18 age group.

The remainder of the year will be used to develop programmes and partnerships to maximise the opportunities provided by the Youth Touch World Cup and re-scheduled European Touch Championships, both of which will be held in England during summer 2021.

In 2019

- During 2019 we witnessed further growth in schools, universities and clubs, both in terms of numbers participating in touch and those affiliating with the Association
- The 15-19 age group is the second largest single category within the England Touch membership, behind the 20-24 age group
- England Touch remains a sport with a healthy gender split of individual members – 62.5% male: 37.5% female
- The team of schools' development officers and managers continued to develop resources for use across the educational sector, with these being used in a number of areas across the country





PARTICIPATION

In 2020

- A core focus of our new Business Plan is to grow the number of people playing touch in England and with it the numbers engaging with England Touch as the National Governing Body for the sport. Our Business Plan sets out some ambitious targets of 500,000 players and 50,000 members, but these are numbers that we believe are achievable
- Our Participation Strategy focuses on five key channels of growth – Schools, Universities, Clubs, Social and Workplaces. As we move through 2020, we will be engaging in several 'Growing the Game' conversations throughout the country. These will help connect different aspects of the game at a local level, as well as help us to better understand where to focus our resources
- As we develop the playing participation offer, we will also continue to invest in the development of coaches and referees, both of whom are crucial to the success of the game of Touch in England. We have developed our own

coaching pathway and suite of resources over recent months and we expect to do a similar thing for our refereeing. Applications have been submitted to the Sport England Volunteers Fund to enable this work



5

Our Participation Strategy focuses on five key channels of growth:

Schools
Universities
Clubs
Social
Workplaces



CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

Giving the Touch community the tools and knowledge to succeed

Coaching Courses and CPD Workshops

England Touch has embarked on the creating the Association's own suite of Coaching Courses as we move into a new era of coaching development and autonomy. We have seen unprecedented growth and maturity within our performance coaching and the creation of our own accreditation pathway will only enhance this in our coaching pyramid and pathway.

The England Touch Coaching Course Pathway allows more organic coaching development, and we have started the process of accreditation with The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMPSA), UK Coaching and 1st4Sport Qualifications.

The new courses have received excellent uptake and participation, with over 150 participants already moving through the new pathway across the Level 1 Essential Principles, the Advanced Defensive and Attacking Principles and the Level 2 Advanced Performance courses.



An overview of England's Touch Coaching Course pathway:





CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

Outside of the England Touch formal Coaching Accreditation Pathway, we have also delivered a range of Coaching continuing professional development. November 2019 saw the launch of our inaugural England Touch Coaching Conference which was held at Twickenham. It included a range of presenters from inside and outside of Touch; launching the conference on the HIVE Learning platform took the conference and experience digital as well and was a huge success, with over 80 participants in attendance over the two days.

We have also delivered a range of digital CPD workshops to upskill the full range of coaches, players and referees on topics that are not ordinarily covered in formal qualifications. We have had over 20 presenters deliver across the 11 workshops and over 350 participants in the workshops. 2020 will continue to see growth in this area as we continue our commitment to CPD and digital learning.

▶ WATCH > Highlights from our inaugural England Touch Coaching Conference





UNIVERSITIES

Exponential growth sees a rise in new teams and playing standards

Executive Summary

The University National Touch Series has continued with its exponential growth, and Touch in universities is becoming increasingly important in the overall development and expansion of England Touch.

With new competitions and over 300 players taking part in the Series it is a substantial area of activity in its own right with its own calendar based around the academic year, and before the end of the 2019/20 season there had been plenty of further university engagement with a view to expanding the Uni National Touch Series for 2020/21.

In 2019/20

- Three new universities joined the Uni National Touch Series to take the total number of universities taking part to 17, and three new teams took the number up to 27 teams participating
- England Touch facilitated a 24-team tournament at this level for the first time
- A first Uni Men's and Women's Tournament was held in Exeter
- Six tournaments were planned, with two cancelled due to weather and coronavirus
- A Uni NTS assistant manager was brought into the team and we improved the transparency and relationships with teams





UNIVERSITIES

In 2020/21

- A potential eight new universities have expressed interest in joining the Uni NTS in 2020/21, taking the total of universities up to 25 and teams up to 35
- A universities-specific Club Toolkit will be available to support new university teams
- England Touch is committed to providing better quality venues and pitches to give teams the best possible opportunity to achieve their potential
- England Touch is exploring expanding the Uni National Touch Series into a combination of regional and national tournaments to allow for new teams to join and reduces travel time, with a capacity of 32 teams for the nationwide tournament
- The England Scholars programme will be introduced to provide a pathway into the High Performance programme for elite players



GOVERNANCE

Ensuring England Touch is in as good a shape off the pitch as it is on it

Executive summary

Governance remains an essential and important part of the England Touch operation behind the scenes, providing the framework for the Association to develop and the robust policies and documents such as safeguarding, code of conduct, data protection, etc, to support our clubs.

England Touch now has an enthusiastic and active Board of Directors with strong recruits in both the executive and non-executive roles. As England Touch professionalises its operations, expectations will rise and it will then be up to the management to meet and exceed them.

In 2019

- Articles of Association updated to reflect best practice accounting standards
- Disciplinary procedures reviewed and updated
- Governance structure workforce status reviewed and required changes identified

In 2020

- England Touch will be looking to strengthen the governance, adopting best practices from larger governing bodies and cascade them to every level
- The Association will be seeking to make the Board of Directors more representative of the playing community and society more widely
- England Touch has been growing over the last few years, but 2020 is an opportunity to fix things which do not work before the two major international events in 2021



WORKFORCE #ONEENGLAND

The #OneEngland workforce, the heartbeat and soul of a growing sport, from clubs to country

Executive Summary

England Touch has had a stable management across both the administrative and High Performance areas for a sustained period.

While there is a full-time Chief Operating Officer and a newly-appointed Chief Executive Officer, the remainder of the management remains volunteer-based, and as with similar organisations England Touch faces the challenge of maintaining this stability of management while also putting the processes in place to enable the Association to continue on its development path.

England Touch is committed to promoting a partnership approach with clarity of collective and individual responsibility to help underpin ongoing growth and development of the Association.

In 2019

The second #OneEngland Awards were handed out, this year at a gala dinner at Twickenham Stadium. Congratulations to all of the winners, listed right.

▶ WATCH > The Inaugural #OneEngland Awards evening at Twickenham Stadium



#OneEngland Award winners 2019

Club of the Year	Nottingham Touch Club
Volunteer of the Year	Pippa Bourke Max Raymond
Sports Achiever of the Year	Matt Mahoney
Coach of the Year	Alastair Chadwick
Referee of the Year	Gareth Hinds
Young Leader of the Year	Evan Michaels
Unsung Hero of the Year	Julian Gilding Aisling Musgrove
Special Recognition Award	Cari Thorpe



WORKFORCE #ONEENGLAND

In 2020

- A programme of continuing development workshops were run during the lockdown via Zoom, led by a range of presenters. These have covered a wide range of areas and have been open to anyone within the Touch community, not just members
- England Touch also moved both coaching and refereeing courses online during the lockdown
- England Touch is developing a strategy to empower the workforce to be able to deliver change, be entrepreneurial, creative and innovative, developing teams to support managers and increase delivery for members





MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Building the profile of England Touch on and away from the field of play

Executive summary

England Touch has had a higher profile in 2019, building on the successes of 2018, including more national coverage ahead of the Touch World Cup. This has led to the nice challenge of seeking to exceed the extremely high expectations of players and teams.

There was extensive coverage of the Nationals and the club National Touch Series tournaments within England Touch channels, and a coherent look and feel is giving England Touch a more professional appearance, and the support of coaches and players has been essential in helping this, not least on the live streaming coverage.

In 2019

- For the first time England Touch had a multi-tournament live streaming agreement with BBC Sport Online, with the European Club Championships and Nationals both having all their days shown

- England Touch also facilitated the live streaming agreement between the BBC and Federation of International Touch for the Touch World Cup
- There was extensive coverage of both the World Cup and Junior Touch Championships for the first time, with 82 separate photo galleries from Malaysia and every match covered in Paris, with daily round-up videos and other features from both tournaments
- There was an emphasis on improving coverage of the Development and Emerging Men's and Women's National Touch Series, especially on social media. The marketing and content team was expanded to achieve this
- There was an increase in coverage of day-to-day club activities, both through videos and re-sharing content on social media
- The 178 galleries of photos and videos from 2018 and 2019 are now archived online





MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

In 2020

- England Touch is undergoing a full digital review to give the Association a comprehensive online platform
- Marketing is working closely with all departments to raise the level of engagement and content, and in promoting events, courses and other initiatives
- Plans are being put in place to maximise the two tentpole events in 2021, specifically the Youth World Cup and European Championships, developing the existing relationships with national media outlets
- There will be a focus on University and Youth Touch to accentuate the coverage of this rapidly-growing area of the sport
- Resources will also be available for Regional Leads and for individual clubs to use for their own marketing and development



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