



England Touch Annual Review 2023

#OneEngland

englandtouch.org.uk



Annual Review 2023

Contents

2

— **Overview from The Chair**

Tim Loveridge

6

— **CEO Report**

Chris Simon

11

— **Financial Report**

Financial Summary 2023
Balance Sheet overview
Profit And Loss by Class

15

— **Growing the Game**

Clubs
Leagues
Universities
Schools
Other opportunities

17

— **Commercial Operations**

Membership and affiliation
ETA Events
Kit and equipment
Courses and learning

21

— **Evolving the Organisation**

The Board
Board Sub-committees
ETA Wider Workforce
Financial controls
Policy review and implementation
Safeguarding and welfare

26

— **High Performance**

28

— **Environmental Sustainability**

31

— **Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity**

33

— **Looking ahead to 2024
and beyond**



Overview from The Chair

Tim Loveridge



Achieving National Governing Body Status for the ETA in 2023 was a massive achievement for us and the culmination of a number of years of hard work by the ETA team

I can't believe it has already been a year since you all put your faith in me and elected me as your Chair. Whilst it only seems like yesterday, looking back and reflecting on the past year has highlighted the many achievements we have made in our key areas of focus: Growing the Game; Developing the Sport; and Evolving the ETA.

Board/Management

Firstly, I must thank Justin Conway for stepping into the breach as Interim Chair in 2022 and ably steering the Board and organisation during this short period. It has certainly made my role easier having his skills and knowledge on our Board. It was also reassuring that both Justin and Emma Hardaker wished to be considered for re-election as Directors of the ETA and I was delighted that they were both successful for a second term, ensuring that we maintain continuity.

I must also thank and congratulate Emi Beredugo on her election to the Board last year along with myself and it has been great working with her during the year.

During the year we have seen a number of Directors stand down from the Board at the end of their terms. Whilst it is always difficult to lose good people and their contributions to the ETA, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jane Sabugueiro, Andrew Wilding and Ben Powell for all they have given to the ETA, the Board and the wider sport. Whilst stepping down from the Board, Ben is still actively involved in our High Performance Programme, both as lead and Women's Open Coach and stepping down from the Board will allow him to focus on these areas, in what is a critical World Cup year. I know both Jane and Andrew retain a strong interest in our sport and still remain part of our family. Thank you to all of you for your valuable contributions – we all appreciate it.

Growing the Game

Following a tough few years coming out of the Covid pandemic, last summer really saw us returning to normal across all our competitions and events. Aligned with this is our desire to grow the game outside its current base, but to do this we need to look at additional funding

opportunities and support. We have historically attracted some sponsorship that has allowed us to develop some local programmes for growing the game but have also focussed some of our energies on building relationships with Sport England and seeking formal recognition by them.

Achieving National Governing Body Status for the ETA in 2023 was a massive achievement for us and the culmination of a number of years of hard work by Chris and the ETA team. This provides us with the recognition to help us grow the game but also opens the doors to potential Sport England funding.





Overview from The Chair Tim Loveridge

Developing the Sport

Alongside Sport England recognition, 2023 also saw us achieve Tier 1 Status with the Federation of International Touch, becoming only the third nation to reach this milestone. Another great achievement and acknowledgement of all the hard work put in over a number of years by the whole team at the ETA and everyone in the sport.

This recognition also acknowledges our ability in hosting highly successful major events, both nationally and internationally. Last year saw us change the format and timings of our national events, with increased entries and a fantastic level of competition.

On the international side, we hosted the inaugural Atlantic Youth Cup in Nottingham with teams coming from across Europe and from as far afield as the USA, Cayman Islands, South Africa and China. The event was a huge success and enabled us to refine our approach at Nottingham ahead of this year's World Cup. At Open, Seniors and Masters levels, we also sent a full cohort to the European Championships in

Vichy returning with 9 Gold Medals and 1 Bronze Medal – another amazing achievement.

None of this would be possible without the commitment of the players but more importantly, the commitment from all the coaches and support staff that make our High Performance programmes so successful.

Evolving the ETA

As we look to grow the game and develop the sport, we also need to ensure that we evolve the ETA as an organisation with a strong financial base and governance structure.

Following on from the COVID years, we have needed to stabilise our financial position. As you will see, we have managed to achieve a positive position before taking into account some legacy issues which brought us close to a break even position in 2023. As a Board, part of our focus is ensuring we maintain a strong financial base and we are confident that in 2024 we will build our reserves, primarily from hosting a successful World Cup.



X15 / England v France / Atlantic Youth Cup 2023 / Nottingham, UK



Overview from The Chair Tim Loveridge

We have also added to our voluntary workforce with some key appointments to ensure we continue to focus on the right areas and provide the support needed across our players, referees, coaches and support staff.

None of what we do would be possible without the massive contribution that so many of you give to the sport that we all love. I would like to take this opportunity to say a **very big thank you** to all of you for everything you do and hope we can continue to move forward this year.

None of what we do would be possible without the massive contribution that so many of you give to the sport that we all love. I would like to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you to all of you

The World Cup

As we look ahead, this year will be dominated by the World Cup we will host in Nottingham in July. This will be the biggest World Cup ever and we owe it to all of you to make sure it is also the **best** World Cup ever. We will be very focussed on making this the case and I know all of you will support us in showcasing our sport and our country to the world.



From refereeing to regional operations, our sport relies on volunteers



Big crowds anticipated again in July at Nottingham for the World Cup 2024



We sent a full cohort, at Open, Seniors and Masters levels, to the European Championships in Vichy, returning with 9 Gold Medals and 1 Bronze Medal



CEO Report

Chris Simon



We have already started to realise the benefits of being moved to a FIT Tier One status NTO, contributing to discussions around the global calendar and future direction of FIT and the sport of Touch

2023 has been another year of recovery and building for the future, but it has also marked a significant step in the sport and ETA's history.

Sport England recognition... at last

In September 2023, after several years of work from many people, we were finally informed of Sport England's decision to recognise the England Touch Association as a National Governing Body. Whilst we have governed Touch for some time, being officially recognised should not be underestimated and whilst it may be a few more years before we see the benefits flowing through the wider game, it has already provided us with an opportunity to sit alongside other NGB's, both within and outside the rugby family, as well as engaging with other important stakeholders in the sector.

We now have a voice within the sporting landscape and the ETA's contribution to the health and wellbeing of the nation has finally been recognised. We are in the room and hope to contribute more to Sport England's **Uniting the Movement** strategy soon.

Federation of International Touch recognition ... a welcome surprise

A few months before Sport England recognition, we received the news that our own international governing body – the Federation of International Touch (FIT) had taken the decision to move the ETA to a Tier One status National Touch Organisation (NTO). Sitting alongside Australia and New Zealand, Tier One status enables us to contribute more to the future strategy for the global game and is recognition of the work we have been doing and continue to do here in England.

We have already started to realise the benefits of this, contributing to discussions around the global calendar and future direction of FIT and the sport of Touch. It is also helped further our credibility to deliver what will be the largest ever Touch World Cup later this year.

On behalf of the ETA, I'd like to thank the FIT Board of Directors for their confidence in us.

The financial recovery continues

Our financial performance continues to improve as we recover from the effects of the pandemic. Whilst our accounts show a small loss and slight worsening in our balance sheet, our core operations have recovered, and we are seeing the benefits of our new membership structure and pricing as we move into 2024. Membership and affiliation accounted for £50,000 of our commercial income and continues to rise as we engage more people across the sport.

Without the impact of two non-cash items, a provision against historic kit supply and a small bad debt write-off with London Irish after they went into administration, we would have realised a small surplus in our finances last year – a key objective for me and the Board as we continued the recovery from the pandemic.

With the additional commercial opportunity that the Touch World Cup brings this year, we will be able to add to our reserves in 2024 and start to look to the future, with planned investment in growing the game of Touch and the ETA at the same time.



CEO Report Chris Simon

Other highlights from the last 12 months...

2023 also witnessed further growth of the game and success on and off the field across domestic and international competition.

World Class High Performance

A record medal haul and number of teams participating at the inaugural Atlantic Youth Cup in Nottingham and Euros in Vichy.

Our youth teams dominated the Atlantic Youth Cup, with five golds and two silvers as we not only took on (and beat) the best in Europe, but also those from across the Atlantic. Only our mixed 15s and mixed 18s missed out on gold, both in incredibly close finals and I know both will be expecting to go one better in Vichy this year.

Meanwhile a month later in France, we again dominated proceedings with 9 golds across the 10 recognised divisions, with England also fielding Men's and Women's 35s and a second Women's 40s team, making it our largest ever international event with 13 teams.

Congratulations to all those who participated

as players and referees and a huge thanks to all the coaching, medical, nutrition, logistics, sports psychology, team management and other personnel who made this possible. You are World Class.

A thriving domestic events scene

2023 marked our largest number of events successfully delivered, engaging the greatest number of players, clubs and referees. It started with our largest one-day domestic event as 32 student teams came together for the opening national round of the BUCS University Touch Championships and culminated with our largest Junior Nationals as 25 teams competed across five divisions for under 14s, under 17s and under 19s medals. With almost 50% of our membership under the age of 25, Touch is growing across junior and youth players which bodes well for the future.

In between, we witnessed our largest Nationals, as we moved our signature event to May and with it, combining Open's, Seniors and Masters categories; and we delivered ten national club events across the Men's, Women's and Mixed



M30s Winners: South West Saxons / The Nationals 2023 / Nottingham, UK



CEO Report Chris Simon

National Touch Series. A total of 216 teams from 72 different clubs, institutions and regions took part in one or more of those events.

And last, but by no means least, our model for regional growth made big steps forward with all regions now offering some form of competitive pathway with a regional development series of events, or similar activity.

Thank you to all those who played and officiated, but also to all the volunteers in our clubs and regions who make that possible. Thanks also to our enlarged volunteer event organising team, without whom there would be no events.

Thank you to all those who played and officiated, but also to all the volunteers in our clubs, regions and events teams who make our offering possible

A new strategy for membership and affiliation

We made no apologies that we had to review the pricing and structure of our membership and affiliation in 2023. Our strategy is to get to a place where everybody who plays contributes to the cost of the ETA governing the sport they love. But we're not there yet.

We started by reviewing the membership categories and pricing, implementing a new structure in April last year and at the same time introducing a regional structure as a stepping stone to national membership. Whilst the former was a success, generating additional revenue for the ETA, the latter has some work still to do and will be a focal point for the organisation as we move into the autumn later this year.

It is, however, still our aspiration to get everyone who plays across our leagues, clubs, events and activities to contribute directly to the ETA, and we have to continue to develop our offers to ensure that this is well received and valued by all.



Mixed NTS / Burton, UK



CEO Report Chris Simon

Partnership working

We are strong believers in collaborative ways of working with a focus on growing the base together. In 2023, we announced a new partnership with In2Touch to grow and develop local Touch leagues together and completed the first full year of our partnership with the Rugby Football League as we look to establish Touch across more rugby league clubs and explore ways of working together in education.

Our partnership with In2Touch takes us closer to building awareness and relationships with those that play Touch in a social environment across much of the country. It also enables us to develop this model in other areas and work together to build the social playing base for Touch.

2024 – our biggest year... ever?

2023 has been a busy year for the sport, the ETA and everyone one who works, volunteers, or participates across the country... but 2024 is already looking so much bigger.

Almost three months into 2024 and some six months into our financial year and we haven't delivered very much yet. The weather has put pay to much of the planned BUCS university event activity to date, but we have a lot to look forward to.

Two BUCS UTC national rounds, two Men's and Women's domestic events, three mixed events, two Nationals, five schools' events, a new youth club competition and a rather large thing called the Touch World Cup starting on 15 July!

I can't wait, it's going to be a very busy few months, but what an exciting period for the ETA and Touch in England. 2023 was an historic year for us, but 2024 has the potential to go one better.

Thank you to everyone across the ETA organisation, our regions, our clubs, leagues and everyone else involved in helping to ensure our addictive sport can continue to grow and develop. Without you it simply wouldn't be possible.



BUCS UTC / Nottingham, UK



2023 marked our largest number of events successfully delivered, engaging the greatest number of players, clubs and referees.



Financial Report

The 2023 Financial Year saw a continuation of the trends of 2022 with the organisation returning to something like business as usual. The COVID years left us in a somewhat precarious position, and we took several steps to help move England Touch back to a stable financial footing.

Having not made any changes to subscription fees for several years, largely to protect members already suffering from the financial impact of the pandemic, we made changes to both the structure of membership and the rates. In addition, we reduced spending on broadcasting to help reduce the cost pressures on tournament delivery and keep entry fees the same.

Revenue

As a result of these steps, we saw a small increase in revenue for the year to £623.4k, an increase of 4.5%. However, the full benefit of the membership changes which took place midway through the year will only be seen in FY24. Through significant cost control

we were able to improve our gross margin from 15.4% to 17.8% and by largely holding Administrative Expenses at a consistent level with the prior year, we therefore improved our pre-tax loss from £25k last year to £6.7k in FY24. Without the impact of two non-cash items, a provision against historic HP clothing stock from our previous supplier and a bad debt provision for a coaching programme delivered with London Irish RFC we would have almost got a break-even position. Cash increased to £39k at the year-end from £32.6k in FY22.

Surplus

Our aim is to run a small surplus and create and maintain cash reserves of £50k in the short-term and £100k long-term. Whilst we didn't achieve that surplus in FY23, we believe the trajectory of improvement in results from FY22 and the opportunities the World Cup brings will put the organisation on a strong financial footing going forward.



NTS / Burton, UK

Finance Report

Profit and Loss / Balance Sheet

Profit and Loss	30/09/2023	30/09/2022
<i>All figures in GBP £</i>		<i>Per PY Stats</i>
Turnover	623,371	596,872
Cost of sales	(511,904)	(504,755)
Gross surplus	111,467	92,117
Administrative expenses	(118,156)	(116,951)
Operating loss	(6,689)	(24,834)
Loss on ordinary activities before taxation	(6,689)	(24,834)
Tax repayment	1,245	4,701
Loss for the financial year	(5,444)	(20,133)

Balance Sheet	30/09/2023	30/09/2022
<i>All figures in GBP £</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Per PY Stats</i>
Current assets		
Inventories	7,545	7,066
Debtors	5 35,135	53,506
Cash at bank and in hand	38,966	32,565
	81,646	93,137
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	6 (70,822)	(76,869)
Net current assets	10,824	16,268
Net assets	10,824	16,268
Reserves		
Profit and loss account	7 10,824	16,268
Members' funds	10,824	16,268

Finance Report

Profit and Loss by Class

Profit and Loss				
01/10/2022 – 30/09/2023				
<i>All figures in GBP £</i>	Commercial	High Performance	Overheads	Total
Income				
Course Income	8,377	-	-	8,377
Event Income	208,392	279,988	-	488,379
Kit sales	5,771	-	-	5,771
Membership Income	49,418	-	-	49,418
Other Service/Event Income	67,351	2,150	-	69,501
Sponsorship	724	1,200	-	1,924
Total Income	340,034	283,338	0	623,371
Cost of Sales				
Course Delivery	2,519	-	-	2,519
Event / Tournament Costs	204,690	283,038	-	487,728
HP Training Software & Support	-	8,798	-	8,798
Other Costs of Sales	10,893	-	1,966	12,860
Total Cost of Sales	218,102	291,836	1,966	511,905
Gross Profit / (Loss)	121,932	(8,499)	(1,966)	111,467

Profit and Loss				
01/10/2022 – 30/09/2023				
<i>All figures in GBP £</i>	Commercial	High Performance	Overheads	Total
Admin Expenses				
Advertising	-	1,750	10,856	12,606
Bank charges	4,931	-	272	5,203
Employee travel expenses	1,922	323	9,664	11,909
Insurance	-	-	11,772	11,772
IT Costs	3,269	-	2,986	6,255
Legal & Professional Fees	-	-	3,206	3,206
National Insurance	-	-	1,187	1,187
Pensions	-	-	1,833	1,833
Salaries	-	-	61,086	61,086
Subscriptions	-	-	2,470	2,470
Sundry Office Expenses	-	-	521	521
Workwear	-	-	107	107
Total Admin Expenses	10,122	2,073	105,961	118,156
Profit / (Loss) before Tax	111,810	(10,572)	(107,927)	(6,689)



With Sport England recognition, we will explore delivery in areas of inequality and inactivity: Women and Girls, lower socio-economic groups, sexuality/gender and mental health.



Growing the game

Our game continues to grow, and our ambition to create increased awareness of the game of Touch and to provide as many people as possible the opportunity to play, continues at the forefront of our Growing the Game strategy.

A key element of this ambition is to be more diverse, equitable and inclusive and we believe in Touch that we have a product to enable this to happen, but we can't do everything at once and our Growing the Game needs funds to do so.

With Sport England recognition, we will explore delivery in areas of inequality and inactivity: Women and Girls, lower socio-economic groups, sexuality/gender and mental health.

The Sport England recognition will hopefully lead to funding opportunities soon, particularly if we can further demonstrate how our strategy to get more people playing helps to address the key elements of their Uniting the Movement – inequality and inactivity. However, at the moment, and without funding, we have to focus on the areas where we can have most impact.

As such, our core focus to increase awareness and ultimately participation in the game has, and continues to focus on the following key areas:

Clubs

The number of clubs offering Touch and engaging with the ETA at a local, regional and national level continues to grow. The size of our core clubs also continues to grow with several clubs now exceeding 100 members and regularly getting 60-70 players training.

- In rugby league, our partnership with the Rugby Football League introduced our game to a broader audience via the Rugby League Foundations and their own series of events and activities.
- In rugby union, we continue to work with clubs directly to help facilitate growth of the game, support in officiating and coaching, and competition between local clubs. We also continue to engage with several Constituent Bodies responsible for growth at a local level, as well as holding ongoing conversations with the Rugby Football Union directly.



Womens NTS / Banbury, UK



Growing the game

Our belief that a collaborative approach to club development across all three codes of rugby is the best one. By working together, we can jointly grow the base of participation in clubs, ensuring we attract new audiences and retain those moving out of contact versions of the game.

Leagues

We continue to engage with league operators across the country, with the joint aims of growing participation and providing pathways for further development. Our partnership with In2Touch is at the centre of this approach as we seek to support their growth in London and the South East, as well as identify new opportunities in other large conurbations across the country. Discussions have been had in Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester, and a new league was introduced in Newcastle last year.

Universities

A number of universities introduced Touch into their sporting provision through either the establishment of a student club or society, or in some cases a university led intra-mural

set-up alongside rugby league or union. Both have seen success in 2023 witnessed with an increased number of universities and teams participating in the only two BUCS University Touch Championships events that were held in the autumn.

The mixed and social nature of Touch provides an ideal opportunity for large scale growth and we anticipate Touch forming a core part of sport and physical activity in universities over the next few years.

Schools

Whilst developing the game in schools is part of our longer-term strategy, it is important nonetheless and we believe presents the biggest opportunity to truly embed the game of Touch across society in this country.

In 2023 we continued to develop our resources, working with Boing in primary and secondary education and more specifically Priority Touch in secondary education where competition takes on a more meaningful role for many.

Working in partnership with Try Sports and the

Independent Schools Association, we delivered two schools competitions engaging over 50 school teams across the South of England.

Plans are firmly in place to expand this work, with five events planned for the spring this year. We also continue to approach and engage with stakeholders from across education and physical activity as we aspire to make Touch a core part of the National Curriculum in both primary and secondary education. Conversations are ongoing with the Youth Sport Trust, The Association of Physical Education, a number of Active Partnerships, School Sports Partnerships and Multi-Academy Trusts. We have also developed a number of relationships with School Games Organisers, many of whom now offer Touch at a local level.

Other opportunities

Whilst the workplace has not been a specific area of opportunity, we do continue to work with a number of organisations to help deliver participation and social Touch activities. These include Balfour Beatty, The Civil Service, HSBC, Grocery Aid and the RAF.



Schools Tournament / Maidenhead, UK



Commercial Operations

The wider game of Touch is growing at quite a rate. Our challenge is to keep up with that growth and be able to commercialise our operations in order to generate the necessary funds to invest in future growth and to develop the ETA to be able to continue to safely manage and govern the sport.

Membership and affiliation

2023 witnessed the single largest change to membership and affiliation since its introduction. A simplification of membership and affiliation categories, a first increase in price for many years and the introduction of a regional tier of individual membership were all aimed at generating additional revenues for the ETA whilst also trying to expand the number of people contributing directly to the cost of running the governing body.


Overall, the changes were very well received, with membership increasing during 2023:


- **18%** increase in overall income from membership and affiliation
- Individual membership up **12%** year-on-year


- **108** clubs and leagues affiliated
- **49%** of members are under **25**
- **37%** female membership

2023 Marketing highlights

Top viewed content 2023

 Nationals Day 3: **8,038** Youtube views

 Facebook Reach: **324k**

 Instagram Reach: **116k**

   Social media followers: **25k**

Thanks to our growing marketing and communications team during 2023.

ETA Events

Event hosting – Atlantic Youth Cup

England Touch demonstrated our ability to host and organise events once again with the inaugural Atlantic Youth Cup in July. A bigger than expected 32 teams took to the fields at the University of Nottingham and despite the weather, the event was a big success for the ETA, both on and off the field.



B20 England v South Africa / Atlantic Cup 2023 / Nottingham UK



Commercial Operations

Commercial income was generated from the event delivery and secondary spend through the sale of food and beverage and event merchandise and the set-up for the event was a great test for things to come with the World Cup in July this year.

- 32 teams from 10 countries
- 3 days of competition
- 6 fields
- 129 matches

BUCS University Touch Championships

Our first year as a BUCS sport culminated with three national rounds of competition. A record 32 university teams came together in February for round 1 and after the three rounds, the University of Exeter came out victorious, pipping Loughborough University to the title by just four points, with the University of Bath taking third place.

- 33 teams from 20 universities
- 618 players, 429 games and 2925 tries
- 4 regional events (in 2022) and
- 3 national events
- 5 new institutions engaged

The Nationals

Our signature event – The Nationals moved to its new location in the calendar in May and with it combining the Open’s, Seniors and Masters divisions. A record 46 teams attended the three-day event at the University of Nottingham’s Highfields Sports Complex.

Junior Nationals

Meanwhile our junior event remained at the end of the Touch season, allowing a better transition of players from winter contact sports to try and develop their skills in Touch over the summer. Another record with 25 teams participating across the weekend at the University of Nottingham’s Riverside Sports Complex.

The Nationals moved to its new location in the calendar in May and a record 46 teams attended the three-day event

<p>Opens</p> <p>Category Winner MVP</p> <p>Mens Open</p> <p>South East Taipans Felix Ducourneau <i>SW Saxons</i></p> <p>Womens Open</p> <p>South East Taipans Mimi Paton <i>West Wildcats</i></p> <p>Mixed Open</p> <p>South East Sharks Maddie Thomas <i>Midlands Tigers</i> Ollie Simon <i>Midlands Tigers</i></p>	<p>Seniors and Masters</p> <p>Category Winner MVP</p> <p>Womens 27s</p> <p>South East Taipans Hana Suzuki <i>Midlands Tigers</i></p> <p>Mens 30s</p> <p>South West Saxons Neil Hennigan <i>NE Raiders</i></p> <p>Womens 35s</p> <p>South East Sharks Hester Williams <i>NE Raiders</i></p> <p>Womens 40s</p> <p>Midlands Tigers Rachel Ashley <i>North West</i></p> <p>Mens 40s</p> <p>South East Taipans Gregg Cropper <i>North West</i></p> <p>Mens 45s</p> <p>Midlands Tigers Jon Lovell <i>Midlands Tigers</i></p> <p>Mens 50s</p> <p>Midlands Tigers Andy Verney <i>Midlands Tigers</i></p>	<p>Juniors</p> <p>Category Winner MVP</p> <p>Mixed 19s</p> <p>Midlands Tigers Harry Missin <i>Midlands Tigers</i></p> <p>Girls 17s</p> <p>West Wildcats Louisa Sambell <i>Midlands Tigers</i></p> <p>Boys 17s</p> <p>Midlands Tigers Ellis Watts <i>Midlands Tigers</i></p> <p>Girls 14s</p> <p>Midlands Tigers Jessie Yarker <i>SE Sharks</i></p> <p>Boys 14s</p> <p>North West Bulls Ffion Wheatley <i>North West</i></p>
---	---	--



Commercial Operations

Men's and Women's National Touch Series

- 4 days of competition at Banbury Rugby Club
- 36 men's and 23 women's teams
- 30 clubs represented

Men's Champions Old Wesley

Top English team London Galaxy

Division 2 Winners Canterbury Invicta

Division 3 Winners London Scorpions 2

Women's Champions NQ Rebels

Division 2 Winners Wigan Warriors Touch

Division 3 Winners London Vipers

Mixed National Touch Series

- 6 days of competition at Burton Rugby Club
- 58 teams from 39 clubs

Overall Champions NQ Rebels

Division 3 Winners Peterborough

Sponsorship and Funding

Special thanks to the following as we continue to grow and develop income generated from sponsorship and third-party funding:

- BPE Holdings for its continued sponsorship of the Men's Open programme.
- Linux Recruitment, Thimble Construction and Didi Rugby Leicester for their player sponsorships for Euros 2023.
- Autotech Group for its player sponsorship for the Australian State Cup Tours.
- Get Berkshire Active for supporting our Walking Touch and Young Leader development.
- Element 6 and The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) America for their support of the Women in Sport and Business Conference.

Kit and equipment

We continued to develop our new partnership with EV2 launching a new range of off field kit to supplement that developed in 2022. Environmental sustainability remains part of our focus and EV2 sponsored our Green Challenge Trophy. We continue to work closely to develop more products from recyclable materials as well as explore initiatives to recycle our own kit.

Courses and learning

Refereeing courses

- 9 x L1 courses, with 154 attendees
- 3 x L2 courses with 24 attendees
- 1 x L3 course

Coaching courses

- L1 - 5 courses, 53 attendees
- Attack - 2 courses, 32 attendees
- Defensive - 2 courses, 36 attendees
- Principles of Play - Applied = 1 course
- 17 new presenters upskilled as L1 presenters



NTS Winners: NQ Rebels / Peterborough / London Galaxy / NQ Rebels





A total of 216 teams from 72 different clubs, institutions and regions took part in one or more of our NTS or Nationals events





Evolving the organisation

The Board

As the sport of Touch develops and more people pick up a ball to play informally, the ETA needs to evolve to be able to cope with the increasing demand for our services.

Of primary importance is to ensure we continue to safely govern and administer the sport whilst developing the financial and other resources needed to support the growth.

The ETA Board

The Board is ultimately responsible for the ETA governance, finance and strategy. The Board sets the vision for the organisation and meets four to five times a year to assess performance against financial and other performance indicators.

During 2023, Board meetings took place in January, April, July, September and November, with all current Board Directors attending at least 80% of meetings. All meetings were quorate, and a record of meeting minutes is available to members.

The current Board of Directors is made up of the following:

Chair

Tim Loveridge

elected for a two-year term in March 2023

Non-Executive Directors

Justin Conway

re-elected for a two-year term in March 2023

Emma Hardaker

re-elected for a two-year term in March 2023

Emi Beredugo

elected for a two-year term in March 2023

Amy Gardner

appointed in April 2022 and due for re-appointment in April 2024

There are currently two Non-Executive Director vacancies to be filled. Both are appointed roles and expected to be filled on or around the Annual General Meeting.

Many thanks to the outgoing Non-Executive Directors who served during 2023 – Andrew Wilding and Jane Sabuguiero.

Executive Directors

Chris Simon, CEO

re-appointed for a two-year term in January 2024

Will Tenbroeke, Finance Director

re-appointed for a two-year term in January 2024

There is currently one Executive Director vacancy to be filled. It is expected that this position will be filled later this year following the Touch World Cup. Many thanks to Ben Powell who served as an Executive Director until November 2023.

Company Secretary

Alison Devlin

appointed in March 2023

Board sub-committees.

The ETA has two sub-committees of the Board as follows:

Nominations, Appointments and Remuneration

Audit, Finance, Governance and Risk

Nominations, Appointments and Remuneration

Tim Loveridge, ETA Chair (meeting chair)

Emma Hardaker, NED

Head of Volunteers – vacant

(previously Nikola Halse who has stepped down)

Head of Governance – vacant

(previously Barry French who has stepped down)

Responsible for Board and employee nominations, recruitment and remuneration. The Nominations, Appointments and Remuneration sub-committee meet twice during 2023.

Audit, Finance, Governance and Risk

Emma Hardaker, NED (meeting chair)

Will Tenbroeke, FD

Chris Simon, CEO

Head of Governance – vacant

(previously Barry French who has stepped down)

Responsible for overall governance, risk management, audit and finance. The Audit, Finance, Governance and Risk sub-committee meet once during 2023.



Evolving the organisation Wider Workforce

ETA Wider Workforce

The wider ETA workforce consisted of two paid employees in 2023 with one vacancy soon to be recruited on an expected fixed term contract for the rest of this year. The paid workforce was supplemented by a couple of small consultancy contracts in critical areas, together with a largely volunteer workforce across the Executive, operations, regional operations and High-Performance areas.

As the sport and wider game develop, it is expected that the paid ETA workforce will grow and develop as well.

Executive Team

CEO

Chris Simon (employed)

Finance Director

Will Tenbroeke

High Performance Director

Ben Powell

General Manager

Sammie Phillips (employed)

Head of Marketing and Comms

Chris Wearmouth

Head of Participation

Tom Hewson-Haworth

Head of Workforce / Volunteers – vacant

(previously Nikola Halse)

Head of Governance – vacant

(previously Barry French)

Head of Systems, Knowledge and Technology

Rich King

Organisational Change Lead

Crystal Ravenscroft

Sustainability Lead

David Cope

EDI Officer – vacant

(previously Jamal McKenzie)

The executive team is responsible for the delivery of the ETA strategy as set out by the Board, but heavily reliant on a voluntary workforce.

Operations Team

Operations Manager – vacant

(employed)

Events Manager

Ash Musgrove

Refereeing Manager

Jack Harris

University Lead / Events Manager – vacant

(Jack Harris until end of season)

Finance Manager

Ed Pearce

Safeguarding Lead

Jo Hutton

DBS Manager

Sadi Musson

Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Lead

Robin Budd

Coaching Course Co-ordinator

Erica Robertson

Referee Course Co-ordinator

Chloe Spencer

Membership Support

Chris Pennington

Funding Officer

Adam Irvine

Digital / Social Media Lead

Marnie Willis

Member Communications Lead

Julian Edwards

The operations team is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation, and almost entirely on a voluntary basis.



Evolving the organisation Wider Workforce

Regional Operations

South East Regional Leads

Ash Grimsey / Erik Williams

South West Regional Lead

Max Shepstone

Midlands Regional Lead

Vicki Franks

West Regional Lead

Matt Jayner

North West Regional Leads

Cari Thorpe / Adam Brimelow

North East Regional Lead

Joy Carter

The regional operations team is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation across their respective regions and is entirely on a voluntary basis.

A huge thanks to those in our regional teams who have moved on recently – to Sam Powles in the West region, Keisha Hedley-Miller in the South East, and Lexie Williams in the South West. You will all be missed but leave your

regions in a really good place. Also to Andy Penniceard, who steps down as regional lead, but moves sideways to take on the Juniors Lead role for the South East.

High Performance Team

HP Director

Ben Powell

HP Manager / Head of Elite Coaching

Sammie Phillips

Head Coach

Peter Bell

Head of Medical & Sport Science

Cari Thorpe

Head of Elite Operations

Pippa Bourke

Lead Coach Developer

Matt Harper

Performance Psychology Programme

Hanna Gildham-Clark

Rebecca Hickman

The High Performance team is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the High Performance programme and is almost entirely on a voluntary basis.

Financial controls

The ETA Audit, Finance, Governance and Risk sub-committee maintains oversight of the ETA's financial controls and has recently introduced an independent review of our annual accounts. During 2023 we continued to update our practices and processes to enhance our overall financial controls. These included the introduction of a new expenses claim form, new levels of authorisation for payments and enhanced processes around the approval and payment of invoices.

Policy review and implementation

The ETA Audit, Finance, Governance and Risk sub-committee maintains a policy schedule on behalf of the Board. Policies are reviewed at least bi-annually, or as and when they are deemed necessary by the Board, Executive or other workforces.

During 2023, the Board approved the following policies:

- A revised Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.
- Enhanced guidance around elements of our Safeguarding Policy.

As the sport and wider game develop, it is expected that the paid ETA workforce will grow and develop as well



Evolving the organisation Safeguarding our sport

Safeguarding and welfare

One of the biggest appeals of the game of Touch is its inclusivity to be played together regardless of age, ability, or other characteristic. The participation uptake is growing. We are continually taking action to review and develop all aspects of safeguarding and welfare matters for both youths and adults.

During 2023 we have:

- Developed and delivered bespoke safeguarding training for Youth Coaches and Team Managers.
- Developed our safeguarding and welfare policies and practices further. This has included:
 - use of social media
 - transporting youths
 - information sharing with parents
 - use of photos and film imagery
 - welfare check surveys
 - and individual participant risk assessments.
- Developed guidance around Youth Tours with an underlying focus on safeguarding.

- Continued to meet all DBS requirements.

This means we now have a strong safeguarding foundation for all of our national and international youth events and are better supporting youths participating in the adult programmes.

In 2024 and beyond

In 2024 onwards, some of our focus will be on:

- Further development of mental health and well-being support for participants.
- Development of bespoke safeguarding training for referees.
- Supporting the development of safeguarding guidance to support youth referees in their role as match officials.

One of the biggest appeals of the game of Touch is its inclusivity to be played together regardless of age, ability, or other characteristic



NTS / Burton, UK



In 2023, across our Men's and Women's National Touch Series we had:

- 4 days of competition at Banbury Rugby Club
- 36 Men's and 23 Women's teams
- 30 clubs represented



High Performance

2023 marked our most successful year for our England teams.

Our High-Performance teams came together at the inaugural Atlantic Youth Cup hosted by us in Nottingham and in Vichy for the 2023 Euros. A record number of England teams – 20 participated across the two events and a record number of medals – 17 was achieved, including 14 golds.

Following a very successful summer, our Men's Open, Women's Open and Women's 35s headed down under for the Queensland and New South Wales State Cups, all having their most successful tours to the mighty Australia.

A record number of England teams (20) participated across the Atlantic Youth Cup and Euro 2023 and a record number of medals (17) was achieved, including 14 golds

2023 successes in numbers

- 4 international competitions
- 20 England teams
- 208 players
- Over 100 support staff
- 14 gold medals, 2 silvers and 1 bronze
- 12 High Performance training camps

Gold Medals

- Boys 18s / Atlantic Cup
- Girls 18s / Atlantic Cup
- Men's 20s / Atlantic Cup
- Mixed 20s / Atlantic Cup
- Women's 20s / Atlantic Cup
- Men's Open / ETC 23
- Women's Open / ETC 23
- Women's 27s / ETC 23
- Men's 30s / ETC 23
- Mixed 30s / ETC 23
- Men's 40s / ETC 23
- Women's 40s / ETC 23
- Men's 45s / ETC 23
- Men's 50s / ETC 23

Silver Medals

- Mixed 15s / Atlantic Cup
- Mixed 18s / Atlantic Cup

Bronze Medals

- Mixed Open / ETC 23

Category Winners

- Women's 35s / ETC 23
- Men's 35s / ETC 23

Participation

- Women's 40s Lions / ETC 23



International success





In 2023, we further developed and built on our Referee base, providing courses for beginners and upgrades alike:

- 9 x L1 courses, with 154 attendees
- 3 x L2 courses with 24 attendees
- 1 x L3 course



Environmental sustainability

Following the launch of our ambitions around environmental sustainability in 2022, the 2023 season was our first year of delivery. A firm foundation has been set with some notable innovations and learnings along the way.

Our member survey highlighted concerns around the climate (84%) and nature (74%) crises, waste, and plastic pollution (68%) and the harms caused by unsustainable transport (54%) and food (52%). Members wanted England Touch to prioritise the reduction of waste (better recycling, minimising plastics use and use of recycled products) and more sustainable transport. Further views were sought at the Touch Nationals, generating lots of engagement over the course of the competition weekend.

Our members want England Touch to prioritise the reduction of waste (better recycling, minimising plastics use and use of recycled products) and more sustainable transport

To deliver against these priorities, the Sustainability in Touch working group was set up. Two initiatives are worth celebrating:

- The Green Challenge Trophy was a new approach to engaging our participants in environmental sustainability, which ran alongside the domestic NTS competition. 19 teams competed during the Men's & Women's NTS weekends, and 13 teams competed during the Mixed NTS. Winning teams were Hot Custard Men, Revolution Women and Horsham Tigers Mixed. We are reviewing feedback and will run an updated Green Challenge Trophy during the domestic NTS season again.
- Conversations started with venues on improving waste and recycling provision. During the NTS season, clearer signage was introduced to help ensure participants knew the best means of disposing of waste on competition days. There are further improvements to be made, and England Touch will be working with venue hosts again for the coming year to make those improvements.



Junior Nationals, Nottingham, UK / Seeking to further reduce waste during all events and improve sustainable transport options

Environmental sustainability

Looking ahead to 2024

England has set out to host the 'greenest and most sustainable World Cup ever'. Planning has commenced, with the following objectives having been set:

- International travel footprint calculated, with opportunity to donate to suitable charity partner(s) to counter-balance impact.
- Travel around Nottingham to prioritise active transport, public transport and use of a dedicated coach shuttle service over cars and taxis.
- Onsite waste management will be sufficient to deal with the volume of visitors, with a clear waste hierarchy of reduce - reuse - recycle before disposal.
- No single-use plastic items (including drinks in plastic bottles), no containerised water and prioritisation of customer's own reusable containers to be observed by all food and beverage concessions on site.

- Surplus food to be donated to food poverty causes.
- Kit swapping and donation to be facilitated, working with a suitable charity partner.
- Onsite use of diesel generators to be avoided.
- High profile for sustainability messaging in lead-up to and during the event, with high levels of engagement from National Touch Organisations, teams and other visitors.

England Touch has set out to host the 'greenest and most sustainable' World Cup ever with many new objectives to help achieve this



Highfield Sports Centre, Nottingham, UK, venue for Euros 2022, Atlantic Cup 2023 and World Cup 2024



Encouraging growth of our female membership, with women accounting for 37% of our membership rising to 41% for under 25s. But still work to do to bring this up to 50%

Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity

We continue to strive for equity across the sport of Touch and for more diversity in those that work, volunteer, participate and support. Whilst the game of Touch is inherently inclusive, it is not yet completely accessible for all. We still have work to do.

In 2023, we continued to make positive steps forward across our workforce, our sport and the game.

What have we done?

- Developed a working relationship with Women in Sport.
- Delivered a Women in Business and Sport Conference with Element 6 and Charity Aid Foundation America.
- Launched our working group on growing the game for Women and Girls.
- Enabled increased participation in the game for those from the LGBTQ+ community through our Transgender, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse Policy.
- Extended our partnership with Pride in Touch.

Where are we now?

- Whilst 43% of our current Board and 50% of our wider workforce are women, it reduces significantly when coaching and officiating. We have more work to do.
- 37% of our membership are women, rising to 41% for under 25s. But why isn't it 50%?
- We appeal to a lot of young people, 49% are under 25, but do they remain in the sport?
- We don't yet have a disability offer for our sport.
- We don't appeal enough to people from different communities.

Making our game more diverse and inclusive takes time and needs investment. With Sport England recognition we have an opportunity, and it is at the forefront of our minds as we host 40 nations from across the globe this summer. What a great chance to really show the diversity and inclusion of the game of Touch.

We'd like to thank our outgoing EDI Officer, Jamal McKenzie for the work he has done during 2023, as well as thank the EDI working group for their continued support and commitment.



Aiming to bring more women into coaching and officiating roles within our sport



**We pride ourselves on being a flexible, fresh
and dynamic sport, on and off the pitch!**





Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond

We are confident of delivering the biggest and best World Cup for all involved, but just doing this is going to take an awful lot of work and dedication from many, many people. Simply delivering the event won't be enough, we want to make the most of the opportunity that this presents to the ETA, to Touch in England and the wider development of the game for years to come.

We want to use the opportunity to showcase Touch. We want to tell people about this fantastic game to which so many of us are addicted – not just us, but everyone we have introduced it to – our families, our friends, our work colleagues and more.

We have something special, that can be played by almost anyone, in almost any setting, and at almost any time. We want to create a lasting social impact this July – enable school children to try our sport, to get involved, to cheer on our players; and those from across the rest of the world that are spending thousands to come and participate in the sport they love.

We want the people of Nottingham, of England and those across the globe, to experience what we feel. Touch is not just a sport, it is an experience, a place to meet new friends, to have fun, to feel good, it's a way of life.

And we want to do all this whilst trying to make a positive impact on our environment. We're bringing people to Nottingham from across the world. We have to take action to try to offset what we are doing. This is crucial for the future of our game. We pride ourselves on being a flexible, fresh and dynamic sport. A sport for young people. We need to demonstrate this through positive action this summer.

We need your help. We are eternally grateful for the fantastic work that our amazing volunteers do week-in week-out to enable so many to enjoy this wonderful sport. But we have so much more we can achieve. Please keep on volunteering, playing, refereeing, coaching, parenting and more. The ETA, the sport, the global game needs you all.



Excited to welcome the world, again, to Nottingham in July for the World Cup 2024

#OneEngland



englandtouch



englandtouch



englandtouch



englandtouch

englandtouch.org.uk

