

englandtouch.org.uk



England Touch Annual Review 2021

THIS IS TOUCH

A SPORT FOR
ALL

A SPORT FOR
ALL AGES

A SPORT FOR
ALL GENDERS

A SPORT FOR
ALL SEASONS





ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

CONTENTS

2

Chair's Report

Mark Croston

4

CEO Report

Chris Simon

7

Finance Report

Financial Summary 2021
Profit and Loss
Balance Sheet

10

Growing the Game

2021 – a year of growth for England Touch
National Touch Series
2021 NTS Winners
Regional Roadshows and Competitions
Schools

13

High Performance

Autumn Series
Nationals
2021 Nationals Winners

15

Looking forward to 2022

European Touch Championships
National Touch Series
RFL Partnership
Inclusivity and Sustainability
BUCS Affiliation
Regional Growth

19

2022 and beyond...



CHAIR'S REPORT

MARK CROSTON

This year's review begins with something I prefer to avoid, yet it is inevitable following my appointment as Chair of the Federation of International Touch, which means that I will be reluctantly stepping down as Chair of the sport in England.

It brings an end to a term in office which will pass the four-year mark during which time the England Touch Association has gone from strength-to-strength and overcome the challenges posed by an unprecedented global pandemic.

In those pre-pandemic days, the ETA consolidated its reputation for excellent administration by hosting several international events, notably the 2018 European Touch Championships and 2019 European Club Championships, as well as making the National Touch Series the leading group of Touch competitions in Europe.

The support I have received from every region and sector of the Touch community enabled me to establish my knowledge and reputation with member nations, and subsequently being

asked to become the sport's global Chair. Of course it is a significant honour and responsibility for me personally, and testament to the standing of England Touch globally.

Since emerging from lockdowns, if anything the ETA is in a brighter position, with club affiliations and individual memberships both significantly up compared to 2019, and partnerships confirmed with the Rugby Football League as well as several progressive-minded professional clubs, companies, and charities.

I will of course, remain part of the Touch family with FIT, and will focus my remaining time with the ETA on the launch of the organisation's 2020s Vision – the highlights of which will be threaded through this Annual Review, and handover to the new Chair.

As a largely outsider to the sport, I knew I needed to be a very engaged Chair who took time to fully understand our sport over the last four years. Building on some very solid foundations and a very dedicated workforce, it became obvious that the sport would benefit from new ideas and innovations which challenged the traditional way

of doing things and demand the highest standards in a way which empathises with the ETA's status as a largely volunteer organisation. I took care to regulate this innovation and strived to be an inclusive leader. We developed a strong Board which now works in a collegiate manner, and the next Chair will be coming into an organisation which is in a very positive position.

During the past four years, I have been fortunate to work with so many talented and dedicated people and thank each and every one of them. The most enjoyable part of the 'job' is of course the sense of togetherness within the Touch community.

It is a very supportive environment, and as a Board we have taken care in nurturing this, whilst also developing modern practices and policies you would expect of a National Governing Body. Leading the sport through the Sport England Recognition process, achieving the status of a fully-fledged recognised body, will enable the sport to flourish further. Another key achievement in 2021 is again significant. BUCS (British Universities & College Sport) have



During the past four years, I have been fortunate to work with so many talented and dedicated people and thank each and every one of them. The most enjoyable part of the 'job' is of course the sense of togetherness within the Touch community



CHAIR'S REPORT MARK CROSTON

recently progressed our proposal to have Touch and the University National Touch Series integrated into the student sport programme, which we hope to have completed in the 2022/23 academic year.

Other departees from the Board this year are Non-Executive Director Jason Harborow and Finance Director, Geoff Howes. Jason has been with the ETA for just over two years and helped develop an enviable suite of events during very challenging times. A heartfelt thank you to both for all their support and endeavours, throughout their time in the sport.

2021 was in many ways, a stellar year for England Touch. A challenging yet superb year for the Association. The return to a full roster of National Touch Series, Nationals and international competition has seen membership numbers rebound quickly from 2019, with individual membership up 76% from this time in 2020. This might be expected, but what is more promising is that the membership is 12% up on this time in 2019, when we were at the end of

what had then been the busiest ever year of domestic and international Touch in England. The number of affiliated clubs has also grown rapidly, and the total of 106 is a 55% increase on 2019's figure of 66.

All the hard work undertaken during the various lockdowns in 2019 is now bearing fruit as the Association heads into a 2022 which will see a further expansion of opportunities for clubs and players to experience competition and England host the European Touch Championships once again. The lockdowns gave us an opportunity to reset, re-examine what we were doing and refresh ourselves as an organisation.

Our largely volunteer workforce are our most valuable asset. They are as ever driven by Chris Simon as our CEO and Sammie Phillips as National Development Officer, a fantastic events team of Aisling, Jack, Robin, Chris and Mitch, dedicated management group, and a group of High Performance coaches and staff led by Ben Powell which continues to set the highest standards. We would not have seen this growth

without everything volunteers contribute across the country, who set up and manage clubs, attract players, develop coaches and referees, and enter their teams into competitions.

Thank you to everyone, on behalf of the ETA Board of Directors.

Looking forward to 2022 we can expect even more, with structured opportunities to enter competition at a regional level, the National Touch Series going from strength to strength, more targeted partnerships, and hosting the Euros in August. The momentum is with us and the future is bright for Touch across England.

Our 2020s Vision has been developed by the sport and sets out the growth and development of the sport, right through to the Brisbane 2032 Olympiad. By the time we get to 2032 the sporting landscape will of course be quite different, and it is our responsibility to ensure we grow as a sport, along with our content, audience and our reach. I hope to still be serving the sport in some capacity and will always remain a friend of the sport in England.



Wigan Warriors Foundation Touch Session

That is all to come, but in the meantime may I wish everyone the best of health in these still challenging times and hopefully an enjoyable year ahead.



CEO REPORT

CHRIS SIMON

2021 was a challenging year for the ETA, with the shackles of Covid 19 for much of the financial year, a shortened and late domestic season, and the limiting of international Touch to the end of the summer, albeit successfully.

As with other sport governing bodies, we focused much of the year on Return to Play for our members and helped by a strong Board and a loyal group of volunteers, we focused on the following priorities:

- To get our members back playing by providing a range of quality and varied participation opportunities
- To maximise the awareness and growth of Touch across a wider playing audience
- To continue the development of the ETA to govern and administer the sport

Get back playing

Return to Play continued to dominate workstreams, conversations and discussions as we moved through different protocols dependent upon where you lived before

Touch was permitted to return in its entirety in the spring of 2021. This led to a delayed events season that after a period of consultation with clubs, didn't start until the end of June in Banbury and stretched into October at the very wet and windy Horsham.

In between we managed to squeeze in a full Elite and Development NTS calendar and Emerging and Elite Mens and Womens events. Congratulations to Wigan Touch Warriors on winning the much-coveted Elite NTS title and to Cheltenham on their Development NTS title and promotion to the Elite NTS next season. A huge thanks to the whole events team and our host clubs for their work on ensuring the season was a successful one, despite the challenges thrown at us.

A successful Autumn International Series for England over our home nations rivals in September represented a much-needed return to international touch for many, although the junior age groups have had to wait until 2022 for their chance of competition. This of course followed the news that both the rescheduled

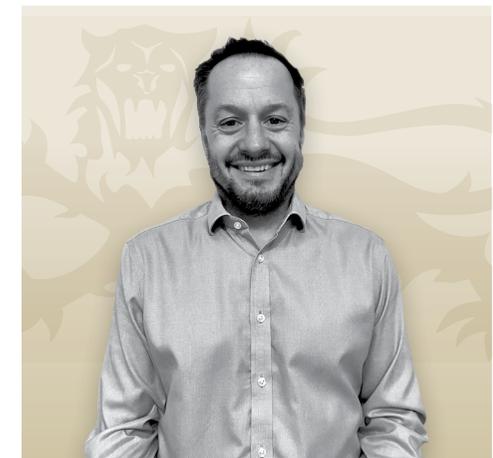
Euros and Youth Touch World Cup would be delayed to 2022 and 2023 respectively.

One of our key focuses for the year was on encouraging and facilitating an entry level of tournaments for teams who are new to the sport, and at the end of October we staged our first weekend of Regional Roadshows. This would not have been possible without the help, support and hard work of our Regional Leads and individuals across the country, as we staged events as far afield as Truro and Catterick.

We will be holding more Regional Roadshows in May 2022 and intend for them to be one of our key events going forwards.

All of this activity was reflected in our membership soaring to record levels with more than 2,000 individuals getting access to increased benefits through the AON-Plus programme as well as the personal insurance and eligibility to play in ETA competitions.

Meanwhile over a hundred people have taken coaching and referee courses at a variety of levels, and this, too, indicates a bright future for the sport in England.



One of our key focuses for the year was on encouraging and facilitating an entry level of tournaments for teams who are new to the sport, and at the end of October we staged our first weekend of Regional Roadshow

CEO REPORT CHRIS SIMON



Sammie Phillips / Relaunching the Schools Programme

Growing the game

I cannot thank Sammie Phillips enough for the way she has wholeheartedly embraced her role as National Development Officer. Alongside Tom Hewson-Haworth as Head of Participation, she has been integral to the sport's growth, relaunching our schools programme after consultation and focus groups, and developing relationships with Progressive Sports, whose coaches were given the skills they need to deliver Touch within their portfolio of sports they offer to schools across the country.

Sammie has also led on our partnership with the Rugby Football League, working closely with the RFL's Anthony Atherton to ensure that we are pulling in the same direction, and instigated the Touch My Heart initiative, which raised thousands of pounds for the British Heart Foundation, getting plenty of people more active in the process during the lockdown before Christmas 2020.

The RFL partnership is really important for us, not least because it is focused on increasing participation in both codes, not on commercial

revenues. Of course, by having more people playing the sport and affiliating their clubs we will benefit on the financial front, but first and foremost we want people picking up a ball and becoming part of the rugby family.

To this end it has been great to see Wigan and Yorkshire Thorns establish more formal relationships with Wigan Warriors and Leeds Rhinos Super League clubs, along with our own partnership with London Irish in south-west London.

We welcomed many O₂ Touch Centres to the ETA as full members and the Regional Roadshows bridged the gap left with the end of the O₂ Touch Festivals.

Making Touch a sport for all

Thanks to the fantastic work of the EDI Group, we launched our first **Transgender, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse Policy** in June 2021, reinforcing Touch's place as a sport which is welcoming to anyone, regardless of their background, gender identity, or socio-economic situation.

The group was also instrumental in helping us to raise the profile of the need for more diversity in sport with features during Black History Month and the impact of Ramadan fasting on elite Touch athletes.

We signed a partnership with Pride in Touch and supported International Gay Rugby's growth in the sport with training and provision of referees.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion are a core focus of our work and will form a significant part of our 2020s Vision over the coming years.

Restructuring, improved governance and administration

The application for full Sport England recognition provided us with the opportunity to bring forward a full review of our policies, and we go into 2022 in a more robust position across all areas of support and governance for individuals, clubs, and leagues.

The ETA structure has got us to this positive point, but we know we need to develop our provision across all areas if we are to grow





CEO REPORT CHRIS SIMON

further, including supporting more cohesive structures at regional level, giving Leads everything they need to both be the hub for high performance in their preparation for the Nationals as well as the governance contacts for clubs in their areas.

Our Regional Leads put in many hours of hard work, much of it unseen, and they are invaluable people within the ETA's structure. I would like to thank all of them for this, along with all of the other volunteers across the country at a national, regional and local level, without whom Touch would not be in the thriving position that it is in.

Inevitably at this time of year there are changes happening, none more so than at the Board level, and I would like to thank Mark Croston for his contributions to the sport and to the ETA during the last four years. He has encouraged us to think and act differently and his leadership style and approach has been invaluable to the ETA during his tenure as Chair. He has opened many doors for the organisation and provided us with the best possible platform as we emerge from the pandemic.

Personally, I will miss his leadership and friendship, but am thankful that he is moving within the sport. I am looking forward to working with him as Chair of the Federation of International Touch and wish him well with his move. I have no doubt he will have a similar positive impact on the organisation.

Thanks, too, to Jason Harborow and Geoff Howes for their support as Non-Executive Director and Finance Director, respectively. We would not have been able to achieve what we have done without their involvement and we are extremely grateful for their years of service.

Finally, in 2021 we introduced a new membership system, JustGo, which has transformed how we manage memberships, events, courses, affiliations, and everything else which is key to making Touch happen. Rich King put in many hours to research the options which would be the most suitable for us, and then led the project to get everything switched over to the new system in a seamless fashion. This is no small feat, and we are very grateful for his work as Membership Manager.

Looking ahead

Touch in England has grown significantly during 2021 with more players, clubs and leagues joining the sport. The ETA has grown with it as individual; club and league membership have all increased. We have invested heavily during this period, ensuring our strong governance and administration continues to evolve and develop in line with this unprecedented growth in the sport.

With England hosting a European Touch Championships in the summer, the return of junior international competition, a full season of National Touch Series and other events, along with expected further increases in membership and club affiliation, revenues in 2022 are expected to rise significantly. We will continue to invest this year – in our systems, our processes, our practices, and our people. We must keep up with the growth and ensure those that participate in touch can do so in a safe, enjoyable, and secure environment regardless of their level of participation.

With the recent announcement of our partnership with the RFL and the expected completion of Touch's integration into the BUCS programme, we are making big strides forward with our approach for partnership working. In 2022 and beyond, we will continue to develop existing programmes of activity and create new collaborations with others as we continue our desire to make Touch a Sport for All.

Looking further ahead, the sport of Touch and the ETA is entering an extremely exciting period. We are about to launch our vision for the next ten years and with it the impact this will have on our sport during the remaining two and half years of the current World Cup Cycle.

I feel excited and honoured to be involved in a sport that has been my passion for almost 20 years. I'd like to thank our members and especially all our volunteers for what you have done for the game during the last year.



FINANCE REPORT

2021 was a challenging year for the ETA, with the shackles of Covid 19 for much of the financial year, a shortened domestic season, and the limiting of international touch to the end of the summer.

Overall, the draft accounts show that the organisation made a pre-tax loss excluding exceptional items of £30,733 (£71,024, pre-adjustments). This is compared to a pre-tax loss of £24,591 in 2020.

Operating incomes (excluding the Sport England grant in 2020) have increased by 31% to £158,677 in 2021, whilst operating costs (excluding exceptional items) have increased by 28%. Overheads (excluding exceptional items) have increased by 7%.

The loss was made up of the following operational headlines:

- For much of the year we were still dealing with the pandemic, putting pressure on membership and event incomes in particular.
- Events including the Nationals contributed just over £14,000 towards overheads. With

a revised calendar and hosting of the Euros in 2022, we expect an improved contribution this year.

- The previous large stock holding of £28,000 of retail value built up prior to Covid has been reduced by some £7,000 through kit sales and gift in kind to volunteers for rewards and recognition.
- High Performance shows a loss of some £11,000 with adjustments made to ensure more accurate accounting of incomes received for players for the cancelled 2020 Euros and the investment in both HIVE and Athlete Assessments software tools.

As well as part adjustments in the HP accounts, the other exceptional items are as follows:

- The changes made to account for membership income monthly in 2020 has now been completed, with a full year of deferred income now included in the accounts. The difference between deferred membership income carried forward to 2022 and deferred membership income released from 2020 financial year is some £12,000.

- There was also a stock adjustment, of approximately £14k during the year with a more realistic stock value of £7,000 carried forward to 2022.
- Pre-paid fees of almost £70,000 were repaid to NTOs for Euros, with one NTA payment of £4,270 carried forward to 2022.
- There were exceptional legal fees during the year of £5,500.

With almost half of the 2022 year behind us, the ETA is now expecting a positive financial rest of the year with increasing membership, an enhanced domestic events calendar, a home Euros and an expanding footprint to develop the game of Touch in England.

We are confident of generating a surplus in 2022 as we rebuild post pandemic and will see incomes and surpluses increase during the next two-years. By year end September 2024, we expect to be generating a £16,000 surplus and reserves to be at £55,000.



Elite Winter Series / R1 / Nottingham



With almost half of the 2022 year behind us, the ETA is now looking ahead to a positive financial rest of the year, and with an expanding footprint to develop the game of Touch in England

FINANCE REPORT

PROFIT AND LOSS

Profit and Loss	30/09/2021	30/09/2020
<i>All figures in GBP £</i>		<i>Per PY Stats</i>
Turnover		
Membership fees and affiliation	28,139	19,117
Events & Tournaments	86,618	12,187
Coaching fees	11,678	16,159
Player contributions and kit sales	11,874	73,775
HP	20,369	-
Donations Received	-	28,219
	158,677	149,457
Cost of Sales		
Opening stock	28,176	12,185
Closing stock	(7,066)	(28,176)
Travel, accommodation and kit costs	72,897	92,947
Training and coaching	1,753	0
Other direct costs	933	6,065
High Performance participation costs	31,995	0
	128,688	83,021
Gross Profit	29,990	66,436
Other Operating Income		
JRS	(1,638)	-

Profit and Loss	30/09/2021	30/09/2020
<i>All figures in GBP £</i>		<i>Per PY Stats</i>
Administrative Expenses		
Insurance	7,634	6,807
Wages and salaries	67,532	6,500
Advertising	2,537	2,599
Bank and other fees	4,432	11,161
Legal and professional fees	11,240	7,076
Directors salaries	0	56,139
IT & Other Costs	8,532	-
Depreciation of tangible assets	745	745
	102,652	91,027
Recorded loss before taxation	(71,024)	(24,591)
Exceptional items:		
Full year of memberships	12,000	-
Stock Adjustment - Impairment	14,000	-
Hive costs related to PY	2,000	-
Non Revenue Utilisation of Athlete Assessment fees	6,791	-
One-off Legal Fees	5,500	-
Sub-total exceptional items	40,291	-
Adjusted Loss before Tax	(30,733)	(24,591)
Taxation on Ordinary Activities		
Corporation tax charge	-	(4,514)
Deferred tax	-	(100)
	-	(4,614)
Loss after taxation	-	(19,977)

FINANCE REPORT

BALANCE SHEET

Balance Sheet	30/09/2021	30/09/2020
<i>All figures in GBP £</i>		<i>Per PY Stats</i>
Fixed Assets		
Cost	2,979	2,979
Accumulated Depreciation	2,412	1,667
NBV	567	1,312
Stock	7,066	28,176
Debtors		
Trade Debtors	2,330	-
Deferred Tax	4,514	4,514
Other Receivables	8,366	0
Prepayments	26,929	17,877
Cash		
HSBC	39,805	22,375
Paypal	12,656	128,118
	101,666	201,060

Balance Sheet	30/09/2021	30/09/2020
<i>All figures in GBP £</i>		<i>Per PY Stats</i>
Creditors		
Trade Creditors	(16,142)	-
Accruals	(16,286)	(18,500)
Deferred Income	(42,569)	(85,612)
Net Current Assets	26,669.9	6,948
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	27,236	98,260
Provisions	(249)	(249)
Net Assets	26,987	98,011
Capital & Reserves		
Profit and Loss Account	26,987	98,011
Shareholders Funds	26,987	98,011



GROWING THE GAME



Men's Open / Autumn International Series / Manchester

55%

increase in club and league affiliations from 2019, **106** clubs affiliated, and membership up **12%** from 2019 also

2k+

individual members, and **16** affiliated league venues

977

matches in NTS competition, of which over **100** hours were live streamed

19

days of National Touch Series competition, with **35** affiliated clubs competing in the NTS

29

teams from **18** Universities entered the University NTS, with **495** players participating in the series

50

teams playing in the inaugural Regional Roadshows, across **10** different venues

80

individuals taking L1 referee course, and **33** individuals taking L1 coaching course

85

individuals attending courses dedicated to coaching in schools, and **15** people progressing through to L2 coaching qualification

2021 was a year of growth for the England Touch Association.

Across the country more people are playing the sport, more people are becoming members – with the 2,000 figure passed late in the year – and more than 100 clubs are now affiliated, along with a further 16 leagues.

All of these figures mark significant double-digit increases compared to the pre-pandemic era, and reflects the bouncebackability shown across the organisation by the complete return of the National Touch Series and Nationals, as well as a plethora of social and local development competition.



GROWING THE GAME



Elite NTS / R2 / Banbury



National Touch Series

Every day of the Elite NTS was live streamed, and for the first time the Development NTS was also broadcast on our YouTube platform, showcasing the outstanding competitive action within those tournaments.

Each round of the Elite NTS had a different winner – Hot Custard (R1), Wigan Warriors (R2) and NQ Rebels (R3) – with Wigan's consistency across the Series earning them the overall title.

In the Development NTS Cheltenham used their Round 1 Cup as the springboard to go on and win the overall title by reaching at least the semi-finals in each round, with Galaxy London taking home the Cups from Rounds 2 and 3.

The opening round of the Elite Men's and Women's NTS saw the first early finish to a day's action for many years, with Horsham on the receiving end of biblically bad weather, with Galaxy London (Men) and NQ Rebels (Women) lifting the Cups in Round 2.

Newcomers Turtles became the team to watch in the Emerging Men's NTS, winning Round 1 and coming runners-up in Round 2 to lift the title, with the established Thames Valley Vikings earning the Emerging Women's NTS crown.

The University NTS is still in mid-season, but already we have seen dramatic improvement in standards. Exeter, Bath and Loughborough have continued where they left off from 2019/20, but Cardiff, Bristol, Nottingham Trent and Durham are all closing the gap, and the likes of Surrey and Leeds have impressed by their progression, too.

2021 NTS Winners

- Elite NTS / **Wigan Touch Warriors**
- Elite MWNTS (M) / **Galaxy London**
- Elite MWNTS (W) / **NQ Rebels**
- Development NTS / **Cheltenham Tigers**
- Emerging MWNTS (M) / **Turtles**
- Emerging MWNTS (W) / **Thames Valley Vikings**



GROWING THE GAME

Regional Roadshows and Regional Competition

Launched in October 2021, Regional Roadshows are the ETA's social offering, giving teams who are new to the sport the opportunity to compete at a fun, friendly level. The inaugural weekend was split across 10 different venues as far afield as Truro and Catterick, and 15 clubs became affiliated members as part of their entry.

The regions have also been busy with their own structured development competitions, especially in the Midlands, where the Eastern Regional Development Series ended the year with 15 teams from 14 clubs participating in at least one tournament.

The South-East Touch Association continues to be a standard bearer, too, with 15 teams from 14 clubs entering the region's Men's club championships, and 10 teams from eight clubs in the Women's club championships.

The North-East has established a series of development days, the North-West have a thriving club league, and affiliated leagues have been going from strength-to-strength, too.

The West has developed a series of development days and tournaments, with a big focus on youth touch and the Southwest has extended its reach into the far corners of the region, with Touch blossoming in Cornwall.

In 2022 the ETA will be supporting the regions to run a more coherent Regional Development Series throughout the summer, and the Regional Roadshows return on the weekend of May 7-8.

Schools

Having 85 individuals complete our special schools coaching courses is a clear indication that there is an appetite for Touch to be a part of a school's sporting offering.

In addition to these courses, the ETA has upskilled Progressive Sports' network of nationwide franchisees and their coaches to deliver Touch within their portfolio of sports offered to schools, and delivered Touch within London Irish's programme of coaching camps to school-age players



Midlands / Eastern Regional Development Series / St Ives



South East / Regional Club Championships



Coaching in schools / Making Touch a part of a school's sporting offering

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Autumn Series

England hosted the first multi-country international Touch event anywhere in the world in the post-pandemic era in September 2021, with Broughton Park RFC in Manchester welcoming Opens teams from Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

England went into the two rounds of competition as the reigning European champions, and they showed that form by clean sweeping both days across the Men's, Women's and Mixed Open categories.

Elsewhere the Men's 40s beat Wales in July, the Men's 45s had competitive matches against the old foes from across the Severn, and the Men's 50s warmed up for their inaugural European Championships with a pair of wins in July and two draws in October, all against Wales, too.

"I'm really happy with the results that we had during the Autumn Series," said Ben Powell, England Touch High Performance Director.

"We wanted to give our players the opportunity to get game time and reward the hard work which has been done in training over the past 18 months, especially having had a European Touch Championships ruled out during the pandemic.

"Going undefeated across all three Opens teams was very pleasing, especially given the results we've had against Wales and Scotland in the Mixed Open in the last two international competitions. It was also fantastic to have a number of teenagers not just play, but play very well at this level, and it bodes well for our future.

"The Men's Masters was very competitive with both wins and losses, and I know that our teams will put even more effort and focus into preparing for next year's Euros.

"I'd really like to thank Wales, Scotland and Ireland for the positive way they approached the Autumn Series and am looking forward to coming up against them in Nottingham next summer."



Women's Open / Autumn International Series



Mixed Open / Autumn International Series / Manchester



It was fantastic to have a number of teenagers not just play, but play very well at this level, and it bodes well for our future



HIGH PERFORMANCE



Girls 15s / Junior Nationals / Oxford



Men's 45s / Senior & Masters Nationals / N'ham



Men's Open / Opens Nationals / Nottingham

Nationals

The South-East dominated the 2021 Opens Nationals, with Sharks and Taipans reaching the finals of the Men's, Women's and Mixed categories. All the teams shrugged off poor weather and heavy pitches in Nottingham to put on outstanding displays of Touch, and for the first time the showcase final belonged to the women.

The Seniors and Masters divisions were shared among three regions, the Midland Tigers winning the Women's 27s and Men's 45s, South-East Sharks winning the Women's 35s, South-East Taipans the Men's 40s, and the South-West Saxons came out on top in a thrilling Men's 30s final which went down to the wire.

The Juniors division saw Boys and Girls competitions at both 15 and 18 level. The West Wildcats were rewarded for their development work at age group level with the Girls 15s trophy, and the Boys 15s title heading to the North-West. The South-East showed their depth by winning the Boys and Girls 18s titles, with the Girls bringing down the curtain on the whole Nationals in the final match of three outstanding weekends.

2021 Nationals Winners

Opens

Men's Open / **South East Touch Sharks**

Women's Open / **South East Touch Shark**

Mixed Open / **South East Touch Sharks**

Seniors & Masters

Women's 27s / **Midlands Tigers**

Men's 30s / **South West Saxons**

Women's 35s / **South East Touch Sharks**

Men's 40s / **South East Touch Taipans**

Men's 45s / **Midlands Tigers**

Juniors

Boys 18s / **South East Touch Sharks**

Girls 18s / **South East Touch Sharks**

Boys 15s / **North West Blades**

Girls 15s / **West Wildcats**



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022

If 2021 was a big year, then you wait to see what's coming up in 2022! And by 2023 we want everyone in England to be aware of, and to have the opportunity to play Touch.

European Touch Championships

The European Touch Championships return to the University of Nottingham in the first week of August. With 2020's scheduled event cancelled for obvious reasons, the European Touch community is eager to come together for the world's second biggest international event.

England are the reigning European champions across all divisions, having won four of the eight categories in 2018, and coming runners-up in three more, and backed that up with a third-place overall finish in the 2019 World Cup.

The 2020 Autumn Series whetted the appetite and now the countdown is on to another memorable week at the height of summer! Keep your eyes out for volunteering opportunities!

National Touch Series

Following a successful trial of having the Elite NTS and Development NTS at the same venue on the same weekend in 2021, the same concept is being extended to include the Elite Men's and Women's NTS and Development Men's and Women's NTS, with one of the tournaments on a Saturday and the other on a Sunday.

Venues are again based in the Midlands, giving clubs from across the country similar journey times, along with referees and volunteers. Likewise, players, referees and volunteers who wish to be involved in both of these Series can plan around a weekend rather than disparate days.

Field 1 for all NTS events will be live streamed, again as they were in 2021.

To join our Events team for 2022 email events.manager@englandtouch.org.uk



Elite NTS



Women's Open



Development NTS



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022

RFL Partnership

Everyone at the ETA is excited by the new partnership with the Rugby Football League, which is based on driving increased participation in both codes.

The two organisations are already working together to boost awareness, playing opportunities, and collaboration in key operational areas, and with both the European Touch Championships and Rugby League World Cup coming up in the next few months this partnership can only go from strength-to-strength.

Other purposeful partnerships are also in the pipeline, with professional clubs in both of the other codes, coaching companies and other organisations whose priorities align with the ETA's vision.

So watch this space!

Inclusivity and Sustainability

Our aims from the 2020s Vision...



““

Other purposeful partnerships are in the pipeline, with professional clubs, coaching companies and other organisations whose priorities align with the ETA's vision



Development NTS / Oxford

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022



University NTS / Nottingham



BUCS has progressed a proposal from the ETA to affiliate Touch and the UNTS into the student sport programme



BUCS Affiliation

British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) has progressed a proposal from the England Touch Association (ETA) to affiliate Touch and the University National Touch Series into the student sport programme, and the two organisations will work together with the aim of integrating the sport ahead of the 2022/23 academic year.

The ETA made the initial application to BUCS in 2021, following a number of years in which the University NTS has expanded quickly to include clubs from as far afield as Exeter, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Norwich. Not only that, but where Touch has taken root within a university it has grown rapidly, with the University of Exeter's club now the largest in the northern hemisphere, and plenty of clubs now entering multiple teams into competitions.

This reflects the special qualities of Touch as a sport, such as gender parity on the field and extremely low barriers to entry – all you need is a ball, some space and a few players to have a game. This in turn makes Touch a good sport for any post-18 educational institution, not just universities, and the University NTS is open to all such teams to enter as well.

The news is also a timely boost for the ETA, which will host a Youth World Cup in 2023 which will include categories at Under-20 level, giving university students the opportunity to represent their country on the highest stage.



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022

Regional Growth

Having effective, efficient and responsive regional structures is essential in the growth of the sport, supporting new teams and new clubs when they take up the sport and encouraging them on their pathway, and in bringing new teams to the Nationals across different categories.

The ETA's central team is committed to giving regional teams the frameworks they need in order to achieve this ambition, from event management guides and governance support, to marketing resources and networking opportunities with similar like-minded organisations.

The Regional Roadshows return on the weekend of May 7/8, and we are hoping to increase the 10 venues and 50 teams who took part at the end of October 2021. The Regional Roadshows will give new teams or social groups the opportunity to have an experience of competition in a fun, welcoming and supportive environment.

Regions will also be running Regional Development Series during the summer for new clubs who want to take their first steps on the competitive ladder, or for more established clubs to give their newer players the opportunity to wear their shirt in a structured format. Regions will organise their Development Series in the best way which suits them, and more details will be announced closer to the time!



“
The ETA's central team is committed to giving regional teams the frameworks they need to support the growth of the sport locally



Regional growth / More regional events increasing local participation

2022 AND BEYOND...



A thank you

The ETA would like to thank our staff, volunteers, members, friends, family and colleagues across Touch for everything they have contributed to the sport during 2021. Whilst 2021 was a challenging year for many, we are confident that 2022 will be a more prosperous and positive year for all. As we look forward to the next 10 years we have no doubt that the sport of Touch will continue to grow and develop, and with it provide those that participate in our sport many positive experiences and lasting memories for years to come!



englandtouch



englandtouch



englandtouch



englandtouch

#OneEngland



englandtouch.org.uk