



# VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND

## 2023-2024 Annual Report



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## A welcome from our Chair



I would like to start my welcome by sincerely thanking you all for your patience, understanding and support as we undertook the difficult task of migrating our membership, competition management, officials' deployment and club management systems into one integrated platform through our digital partners SportLomo.

Implementing change on this level isn't easy and often includes regressions and progressions. Despite initial teething issues, I am pleased that the system was operational for the start of the 2023-24 indoor season and feedback from our recent club survey is encouraging in terms of the improvements and efficiencies it is starting to create. Further developments to simplify the system and improve the user experience are taking place during the summer months.

In the interests of strengthening our governance and connectivity across the board, sub and working groups, we have introduced the 'Volunteer Leadership Group'. This will bring together the board, sub-group chairs and delivery leads to meet collectively to receive updates, insight and have cross-group discussions on pertinent areas of strategic importance, such as the NVL and its development.

Through our An Ace Service Sub-group, we have created a five-year plan to capitalise on recent successes and deliver even greater benefits across our volleyball community. Coalescing around three key themes (reducing calendar congestion, delivering a consistent league structure and driving up standards), we now have a clear line of sight to make logical and cross-organisation strategy decisions to improve our products and services.

I would also like to highlight the formation of our Beach Volleyball Development Centres (BVDCs). A legacy project from the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, the BVDCs provide a much-needed infrastructure and pathway for athlete and coach development. It is our hope that, in addition to the groundbreaking performances of Javier and Joaquin Bello, the BVDCs will ensure many more high-level beach athletes make their mark on the international scene in the coming years.

Across everything we do at Volleyball England, we are committed to placing our members firmly at the heart of our decision making. To do this, we have actively created opportunities for two-way communication and dialogue. This includes a new home nation (England, Scotland and Northern Ireland) working group, a joint Sitting Volleyball working group, Beach Volleyball



Development Centres, and our Regions and Counties Community of Practice.

Creating these meaningful touchpoints across the sport is vital in underpinning, supporting and optimising what we can collectively achieve.

I would like to close by thanking everyone within volleyball's communities for their continued commitment and efforts. This also extends to our friends within the Volleyball England Foundation, the British Volleyball Federation, NEVZA, CEV, FIVB and Sport England.

Finally, I must thank my fellow board members for the time they give to the sport on a voluntary basis and the support they provide to the fantastic team that we have in the Hub.

Adam Walker, Chair

## Executive Reflections from Charlie Ford and Guin Batten



Back in March 2023, we made a number of changes to our *The Game Plan* strategy and created a five-year implementation plan with clear success statements that we would strive for.

As we now reflect on the first year of the implementation plan, I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress - and it is progression that you will pick up as the common theme throughout this annual report.

Before we highlight a number of key areas, we must thank everyone in the sport for their continued support of the Hub team. As our Chair has made clear in his welcome, we have worked hard over the last 12 months to connect with as many people as possible. A large part of this was through our 'Big Conversation' series of events, workshops, and surveys.

The findings taken from this have informed the priorities within our People Plan. The People Plan in its basic form sets out how volleyball can better engage with, service and reward those people that support the players and keep things running on a week-to-week basis.

It is, in essence, the blueprint to achieve our vision 'to ensure that everyone in the sport feels a sense of belonging' and aims to ensure we have enough people, with the right skills, that feel engaged and valued, that come from all walks of life and that operate in a safe environment.

Volleyball is, by design, an inclusive sport. As an integrated and integral part of our People Plan, our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) has been developed, which shows clearly not only where volleyball shines from a diversity and inclusion perspective, but also where we could, and should, be doing better.

We have a sport that is incredibly diverse at the playing level, but that representation does not always transition into other roles. We need to understand why, and appreciate that a different way of operating may be needed to provide equal opportunities as we move forward.

We would like to thank our board director, Richard Harrison, and the Volleyball for Life Sub-Group, responsible for spearheading and leading the People Plan and DIAP work.



Importantly, our commercial and income diversification plans have seen significant progress during the year. VolleyStore was launched in June 2023 and, through partnerships with Sportserve, Mikasa, Universal Services, Steroplast and Errea, we are supplying the volleyball community with all of its needs.

In addition, we secured a naming rights partnership with award-winning sports bra brand MAAREE for the Women's Super League and are in advanced conversations with other companies and organisations that can help realise the growth potential of the sport.

Aligned with this, our engagement levels are at an all-time high. Our followers on Facebook have risen from 17,957 to 50,000 since the start of the 2023-24 season and Instagram has risen from 9,000 to 25,850 over the same period. Greater engagement, in addition to its commercial benefits, is a clear sign that the sport is moving in the right direction.

This positive directional trajectory wouldn't have been achieved without the combined efforts of all of our volunteers across the sport. We look forward to taking further steps forward during the 2024-25 year and we look forward to everything that it will bring.

*Charlie Ford*

**Charlie Ford, Chief Executive Officer**

*Guin Batten*

**Guin Batten, Deputy Chief Executive Officer**

# YEAR IN NUMBERS



**30+**  
Newsletters have been shared with members and clubs



**229**  
DBS Checks carried out on behalf of members



**75%**

of clubs say recognising volunteers is an important part of their culture.



**398**  
Affiliated Clubs

There are an estimated **7,500** volunteer roles supporting affiliated clubs

**↑3x**

Increase in followers across Instagram and Facebook in the last 12 months



**6.5/10**  
Club satisfaction is back up to pre-covid levels



**760**

People have joined the Volleyball England Heritage group since November



**44%**

Growth in young players in the Junior Grand Prix Series

**3**

Birmingham 2022 legacy courts opened



**23,000**

Hours of live coverage watched on YouTube

**464**

People took the Grade 4 officials courses

**↑125**

from last year



**203**

Youth talent coaches are connected via the junior coaches group

**2,420**

players in the NVL  
**↑13%**  
from last year  
**2,149**

Volleyball England was the only sport to be awarded an

**A**

for officials in the Race Representation index

**21**

Female referees attend the first Her Call CoP meeting

**34%**

of affiliated coaches are women

**↑40%**

Growth in player numbers at the Student Cup events

2023-24 implementation plan is started

New VolleyZone and online VolleyStore are launched. HUDL Partnership is finalised

Peter Soczewka and Rob Morgan take beach volleyball silver at Commonwealth Youth Games

The inaugural Super League Opening Weekend is contested at the National Volleyball Centre

England's Senior men are winners of the Novotel Cup for the first time. Eight new Beach Volleyball Development Centres are unveiled

The Volleyball England Safeguarding Adults Policy is launched

World ParaVolley Silver Nations League competition is hosted in Nottingham

Sport England end-of-year review is completed and Annual General Meeting is staged in Loughborough

New Chief Medical Officer Dr Dane Vishnubala is appointed, while Nick Heckford officiates at the Olympic indoor qualifiers in Rio

The first Errea Super League Team of the Month and Player of the Month are selected

England Senior Coaches Simon Loftus (men) and Maria Bertelli (women) are appointed for the next Olympic cycle, post-Paris

Javier and Joaquin Bello secure a bronze medal finish at the BPT Challenge event in Recife, Brazil

APRIL      MAY      JUNE      JULY      AUGUST      SEPTEMBER      OCTOBER      NOVEMBER      DECEMBER      JANUARY      FEBRUARY      MARCH

# Get. Keep. Grow.

## New partnership with Buddle

The partnership with Buddle (formerly Club Matters) has allowed the development of governance and volunteering resources.

A series of monthly case studies has been produced, giving real-life examples of how clubs have found ways to develop their governance and junior set-ups, applied for funding and increased membership numbers.



Alongside this, a new calendar of club workshops has allowed administrators and key club personnel to virtually attend sessions that cover best practice on subjects such as junior activation and volunteering.

The majority of the additional resources have been available for affiliated clubs to access via a new secure Club Hub website page.



**Volleyball England has made great strides to connect regions, counties, clubs and stakeholders to become stronger together over the last 12 months. Considerable progress has been made in providing dedicated resource to regions and counties, as well as sitting volleyball and club development support.**

## VolleyZone introduction

VolleyZone was launched with club affiliations, competition entries (NVL and Junior), courses and individual memberships available to purchase.

Alongside that, 39 training videos, an FAQs page and step-by-step guides were created to assist members to use VolleyZone.

Clubs were also able to access 1-1 VolleyZone sessions to enhance their understanding of the membership portal.

The process in its entirety saw the monumental task completed of migrating four separate digital systems into one integrated platform.

VolleyZone continues to evolve, aiming to become increasingly user-friendly and with better functionality that serves the entire volleyball community moving into the new 2024-25 season.



## Sitting Volleyball

Towards the end of the 2023-24 season, Volleyball England appointed a dedicated sitting volleyball project lead.

In addition, the creation of the Sitting Volleyball joint Working Group, alongside the Volleyball England Foundation and British Volleyball Federation (BVF), has improved connectivity across the discipline.

A key point of progress has been hosting club meetings to understand current needs and to discuss strategies around increasing growth in the discipline.



## New Community Engagement lead

With the employment of a new Community Stakeholder Engagement lead, Regions and Counties have had access to a dedicated resource.

The lead has been able to understand issues raised by clubs and provide guidance, with a Governance Health Check tool supporting club committees looking to strengthen their governance and succession planning.

Regular, online Community of Practice sessions have become a feature and have taken place four times a year, with a focus on governance and volunteers.

## HEVO Programme

A total of 45 universities signed up to the Higher Education Volleyball Officer (HEVO) programme for 2023-24, where 57 volleyball officers gave an overall satisfaction rating of 8.76.

The programme has been building on its success of the last few years, having introduced the sport to almost 5,000 university students since its launch.

## CASE STUDY

A number of clubs have featured in Volleyball England's regular case studies on the website, which have helped highlight success stories and best practice – Royal Wotton Bassett among them.

Their website story demonstrated how they established a junior development pathway to go from having no junior provision outside of catering for members' children to having 50 junior members who now compete in a number of different competitions.

With an explosion of interest following the release of Japanese manga and anime series Haikyu!!, the club quickly set about putting plans in place to cater for the huge demand.

It included finding the extra court time in addition to that assigned for adult training and matches and significantly increasing the number of coaches who could help out in the junior set-up.

As with many of the case studies, Royal Wotton Bassett also provided a contact email for other clubs should they have wished to find out more about how they had achieved their success.

It has been a significant period of progress for the An Ace Service team over the last 12 months against the strategic aims laid out in *The Game Plan*.

## Five-year vision

Following a process involving a member-led advisory group and team consultation, three strategic priorities have been identified as part of the five-year vision to raise standards in the National Volleyball League.

The first priority is to reduce congestion in the calendar, with a process to be put in place to optimise the 27 weeks available across all national competitions.

The second is to deliver a consistent league structure, where the NVL will evolve from the expanding numbers year on year into regularly totalling 84 teams.

The structure will be incremental through the tiers from sub-region at Division 3 to national in the Super League. This will involve slimming down the Super League to eight teams and splitting Division 1 into two conferences of eight.

The third priority is focused on driving up standards, both at the top end with the continued professionalisation of the Super League, and at entry to the league through more robust criteria for entry and retention.



## An Ace Service

**90** The number of teams participating in the Student Cup



## An enhanced Junior Competition Framework

*The Game Plan's* ambitions of extending and enhancing the Junior Competition framework across the player pathway have been realised as the national junior competitions programme has continued to grow during the 2023-24 season.

Following a review in June 2023, it was determined that more playing opportunities should be introduced for the growing demand of juniors. This resulted in an additional 12 days of competition (52 in total) being offered, including new U14 Junior Grand Prix matches.

Entries at tier 1 have grown by 40%, with a record 75 teams at the under 18 age group. Satisfaction has remained high, with an average of score of 8.3 out of 10 from players, coaches and parents.

## Professionalising the Super League

Volleyball England has introduced three significant enhancements to the Super League in 2023-24 to start its journey towards a professionalised product.

The first saw the curtain raser for the season with the inaugural Opening Weekend event, where all 20 teams played their first fixture of the season at the National Volleyball Centre. The ticketed event received a spectator and player feedback satisfaction rating of 8.3 out of 10.

Stats and video analysis platform Hudl has also been introduced, which has allowed each Super League match to be filmed and uploaded to the platform, producing clips of every play and statistics for every player.

As well as allowing teams to analyse themselves and others, it has provided a rich source of content for Volleyball England to elevate the profile of the Super League, including top 10 leaderboards, Errea Player and Team of the Month updates and weekly highlights reels that have run across social media.

A third key development has been establishing the Super League Final 4 as the finalé to the season. The top four teams in both competitions progressed to the finals weekend at the National Volleyball Centre, with one team emerging as champions.

**8.3**

Satisfaction rating for Opening weekend



## CASE STUDY

Introducing MAAREE as the title sponsor for the Women's Super League is the start of the journey towards increased commercialisation.

With *The Game Plan* strategy targeted towards professionalising the Super League, more resource has been invested in growing the profile of the league, the teams and the players.

This will help engage audiences, attract partners and become an aspirational competition for emerging players, coaches and referees.

**MAAREE WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE**



# Volleyball for Life

Building the foundations for the future was the main focus for 2023-24 in the Talent work area. John Forman was appointed as Strategic Manager in May and immediately set out to develop and implement a set of programmes and initiatives to put England teams and athletes on a path to international success across disciplines.

## New Talent Plan

Volleyball England now has a five-year Talent Plan which is already starting to bear fruit, with a number of key developments.

Among these are increased medical support, including the appointment of a new Chief Medical Officer, Dr Dane Vishnubala, meaning athletes are starting to get the support they need for their wellness and to help enhance their performance.

Better communications have also been established with the creation of a Juniors Coaches Group that has created a mechanism for a two-way information exchange between the Talent staff and the youth coaching community. Public events are becoming a regular feature, with a strong emphasis on consistent community communication.

New and updated selection policies have ensured that selection for national team camps and competitive squads are more consistent and transparent.

On the sand, a new beach performance structure – based around a network of eight Volleyball England Beach Volleyball Development Centres – has been created and launched, establishing a set of focal points for both player and coach development.



# 23↑

The rank of England's Beach Volleyball pair of Javier and Jaquin Bello (April 2024)

## England teams stepping up

England athletes and teams have enjoyed a number of notable performances over the last 12-month period.

Beach Volleyball players Javier and Joaquin Bello have made steady progress up the FIVB rankings, into the world's top 30, with the help of results like fifth at the European Championships (see case study) and twice taking Bronze at FIVB Challenge events.

Fellow beach pair Rob Morgan and Peter Soczewka took silver at the Commonwealth Youth Games, while Alice Jagielska and Daisy Boardman finished fifth.

In indoor, the England senior men won the Novotel Cup for the first time beating Luxembourg, Austria and France U18, and also claimed bronze at the Mungyeong Bunpattybun International University Tournament in South Korea.

The England U17 girls placed third at the NEVZA U17 Championships to earn a place in the second round of qualification for the CEV U18 European Championships 2024.

## CASE STUDY

Last August, England's top beach volleyball pair Javier and Joaquin Bello gave notice of their ability to produce world-class performances on the biggest stage – and this has been underlined by their continued progress since.

Playing at EuroBeachVolley 2023 in Vienna, the twins made their way through the group stages before stunning home favourites Moritz Pristauz and Robin Seidl in the Round of 24, running out 24-22, 22-24, 15-12 winners in the tightest of matches.

Next up, the 2022 Commonwealth Games bronze medalists clinched their last eight berth with a superb 21-16, 21-18 victory over the Netherlands' 2013 World Champions Alexander Brouwer and Robert Meeuwssen, ranked fourth in the world.

In the quarters, they faced Ukrainians Sergiy Popov and Eduard Reznik and, though going down 21-9, 22-20, did so having already made history, becoming the first British pairing to make the Euros last eight.



## Anti-Doping

### Anti-doping Assurance Framework

Volleyball England has worked to align its Anti-doping Assurance Framework with the requirements of UKAD in order to submit all the elements of it before April 2024.

These included the planning of anti-doping education to the volleyball community, membership processes, competition registration, improving communication around anti-doping and ensuring a board member takes the lead on anti-doping.

### Delivering education

Anti-doping education was delivered to U19 and U17 squads, staff and parents (December 2023) as well as beach volleyball athletes in contention to compete at the Youth Commonwealth Games and CEV (June 2023).

Alongside this, support was provided to parents at events like Volleyball Futures to inform them of the basic processes of anti-doping.

This included guiding parents and players who were unsure about their situation regarding anti-doping (for example, whether a TUE, or therapeutic use exemption, was required or not).

Volleyball England also ensured its Anti-doping Educator's qualifications remained up to date.

# 315

Players attended  
Volleyball Futures events

### Volleyball Futures

The Futures programme has been opened up to more athletes with two layers of the programme, Volleyball Futures Foundation and Volleyball Futures Evolution.

The Foundation stage was opened to athletes born in 2010, 2011 and 2012. It was open to any player, with no need to be eligible for the national squad.

The Evolution stage was opened to athletes born in 2007, 2008 and 2009 and, for this, athletes required a British Passport and/or that their Federation of Origin was England. The cohort was mainly aligned with the U17 programme.



Volleyball England has also created a regional version of the programme that has been trialed in Leeds.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, five different Futures events were held, with 315 players attending (269 individuals, 169 girls and 146 boys) the Foundation and Evolution events. For these, athletes came from 89 different clubs and the overall feedback score was 8.94.

For the Regional Futures event in Leeds, 32 players attended the event, coming from at least three different clubs.

# Futures

## DiSE

### Diploma in Sporting Excellence

In summer 2023, 32 students completed the programme successfully. As of the start of April 2024, 40 students (100% of the cohort) who started DiSE in Autumn 2022 were on track to complete the programme successfully.

In Autumn 2023, a new cohort of 40 students was recruited and followed a new model of centralised workshops.

This ensured more one-to-one support and removed most of the workbooks, allowing for athletes to be free to create and develop their own Individual Athlete Plan, which was a key component to their learning.

Work on the current cohort (2023 starters) is in progress, with three external tutors, one nutritionist and one psychologist ensuring consistency of approach around nutrition and mental skills.

## Workforce

Positive strides forward have been made to develop both the numbers and skill-sets of officials and coaches over the past 12 months - by improving the support offered - as identified in *The Game Plan*.

### Refereeing progress

The impact of the Referee Review is becoming evident, with the recurring issue that there is a "lack of officials" dropping out of the top three concerns in the 2024 club survey for the first time since 2019.

To enhance the appeal and rewards of refereeing, several initiatives have been implemented to provide further incentives and recognition.

Referees now receive higher match fees in the National Volleyball League (NVL), while a supportive Community of Practice for female referees, called Her Call (see case study), has been established and received positive feedback.

A reworked upgrading process has been introduced, making it easier for Grade 4 referees to progress to Grade 3R.

Referees now have access to a published calendar for observation and upgrading events and two Discord channels provide a forum for referees to ask questions and receive replies from top referees.

Alongside this, training for Referee Observers has enhanced the skills of those who assess referees, while features and images relating to referees and their activities have been more regularly shared on Volleyball England's website and social media platforms.



### Education and Development

The Coach Award continues to gain popularity, attracting 41 learners enrolled in the Indoor Course, 17 learners in the Junior Course, and 15 learners in the inaugural Beach Course.

A total of 252 learners completed the Assistant Coach Award during the 2023-24 period. There continues to be a steady increase in the number of successful Grade 4 learners, too, with 464 new referees qualified.

Phil Crawford, Freddie Fairbairn, Darren Lewis, Richard Flynn, Katelynn Slade and Samuel James graduated from their prestigious UK Coaching Coach Development Programmes for coaches in the talent and performance pathways.

Darren Lewis and Elaine Brown, meanwhile, represented England at the annual CEV Coaches' Convention in Bulgaria.

### Referee Pathway redesign

The Referee Review highlighted the need for a modern Referee Development Pathway that prepares referees for their working environment, provides continuous learning and development at each stage, and also offers clear progression routes.

To address this, a small working group has been formed to redesign the pathway. The group includes Nick Heckford, Glynn Archibald, Debra Smart, Peter Parsons, Domitilla Di Stefano, Roberto Rigante, Alexander Dimitrov and Lenny Barry.



With backing from the FIVB Empowerment Fund, the top eight England beach volleyball referees will be upskilled at the International BVB Referee Seminar.

This process will be led by Sandy Steele, former President of the FIVB Rules of The Game Commission, and Jeff Brehaut, FIVB Beach Supervisor.

## CASE STUDY

Her Call is an exciting initiative that aims to empower and develop female referees across the country.

Led by Katarina Cepinova (an FIVB International Referee) and Anna Justkowska (a Volleyball England Grade 1 Referee), this Community of Practice provides a supportive space for female referees to develop, grow, and enhance their knowledge and experience in refereeing.

The opening webinar that is planned to be a regular series was attended by 17 referees.

Female referees also have access to a Discord channel where they can seek advice on live refereeing issues encountered during matches.

This initiative is a significant step forward in breaking barriers and fostering the development of female referees within the sport.

**HER  
CALL** 

## Birmingham 2022 Legacy



### Beach Volleyball Development Centres

Eight Beach Volleyball Development Centres (BVDCs) have been identified and Volleyball England are currently supporting these in a number of ways.

Head Coaches are taking part in a mentor programme led by Kirk Pitman, who is also delivering Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

A higher number of quality competitive opportunities are being created, with outreach grants awarded to engage the wider community and with a focus on low socio-economic areas. The creation of BVDC community communication channels is improving peer to peer learnings and sharing experiences.

The BVDC programme has been created to improve the skill of players and coaches at targeted venues and organisations, as well as increasing playing opportunities to engage new talent into the sport.

The BVDC programme is a key feeder of the Volleyball England Talent Pathway and allows athletes to access high-level training opportunities.

Since Birmingham 2022, Volleyball England has taken significant strides forward in the development of beach volleyball, making the sport more accessible, engaging a higher number of coaches and players and improving playing opportunities.

### Moseley beach courts

In Birmingham, Volleyball England has helped in the development of the new three-court beach volleyball facility at Moseley Rugby Club.

A full-time Activator was placed at the site following the opening where they engaged over 500 new and existing players throughout their three-month contract.

This has allowed the facility to begin its community building process and Volleyball England are now supporting local individuals and Moseley community coaches to continue increasing playing opportunities.



### Helping coaches

Volleyball England has fully, or part-funded, more than 40 coaches through their Assistant or Head Coach courses. This includes BVDC coaches who are currently going through the new Beach Head Coach award led by Beach Performance Director Kirk Pitman.

The funded spaces have focused on working with regions, key stakeholders and individuals who have shown commitment and passion to drive the sport forward in their area.

In July 2024, Moseley will play host to an Assistant Coach Award, achieving a goal of upskilling a number of future coaches to operate in the Birmingham area.

### Supporting Birmingham City

Finally, Volleyball England have supported Birmingham City Volleyball Club and funded equipment at their home venue of Starbank School to ensure they are able to compete on a local and national scale, as well as develop a junior programme.

### Ongoing legacy

The Birmingham legacy is stretching far and wide across the country and beach volleyball now has the highest engagement, playing opportunities, venues, coaches, players and funding that it ever has since the sport landed in Britain.

Volleyball England is excited to continue developing all these areas and ensure beach volleyball can be accessible to as many people as possible, as well as providing quality guidance and opportunities for the existing community.



# Finance Report

**Volleyball England can look back on the 2023-24 financial year as one of continued steady progress.**

The organisation's financial situation remains strong, with the 22-23 surplus invested back into the sport, as forecast. The strength of membership and the success of competitions has allowed us to continue to reduce reliance on Sport England funding, which now makes up 38% of total revenue.

Sport England continued to support Volleyball England during 23-24 with the Year 2 'System Partner' award of £456,782. In addition, £76,963 was drawn from the Birmingham 2022 NGB Participation, Innovation and Digital Fund to amplify legacy ambitions.

Sitting Volleyball used £167,916 of funding from UK Sport for GB Training camps, cup competitions and hosting a successful Silver League Event in Nottingham. A successful application was also made to the FIVB to fund Beach and Talent coaches.

Volleyball activity continues to be very encouraging, as the National Volleyball League, Student Cup entries, Junior Cup entries and membership all showed considerable year on year growth. Continuing its sustainability strategy, Volleyball England has developed an online shop, VolleyStore, to sell merchandise and also agreed a number of new commercial deals. As a result, total revenue is up 16% year on year.



During 2023-24, Volleyball England continued to invest in its IT infrastructure, improving security and collaborative working. The initial phase of the digital transformation project has been implemented within budget during the year, and this exciting project is being extended to provide additional talent and comms information.



**TURNOVER: £1,636,654**

**OF WHICH SPORT ENGLAND GRANT INCOME: £614,128**

**EXPENDITURE: £1,646,014**

## Where did the money come from?

## Where did the Money Go?

Sport England Grants 23-24	£ 614,128	Operating Cost (incl. Dig Transformation)	£ 373,428
Other Government Grants	£ 205,126	Salaries	£ 606,740
Commercial Income	£ 35,977	Commercial Cost	£ 3,287
Talent Income	£ 198,054	Talent	£ 169,863
Membership	£ 65,572	Technical Courses	£ 67,397
Student Income	£ 7,365	Student	£ 25,415
Diploma in Sporting Excellence	£ 103,106	Volleystore Cost of Sales	£ 47,731
Competition & Events	£ 266,424	Diploma in Sporting Excellence	£ 54,541
Volleystore Income	£ 54,984	Competition & Events	£ 96,086
Technical Courses	£ 85,918	NSSF Expenses - Sitting	£ 201,526

## Foundation Trustees

The Foundation has said goodbye to three of its Trustees, David Reeve, Anand Narayanan and Joelle Watkins. They have been a huge asset, will be missed and receive our best wishes in their next exciting chapters.

Following a recruitment process, it is hoped that new Trustees will be appointed at the 2024 AGM in June.

After five years as the Foundation Chair, Simone Turner has stepped down, but will remain as a Trustee, with Greg Brown taking over the role.

The Foundation recognises Simone will be a hard act to follow and is grateful for her vision, dedication, drive and leadership during her tenure.

## Birmingham Legacy Project

The Aston Villa Foundation Project came to an end after 12 months of community activity around the ground. During the period, 15 coaches were trained to deliver Volley2s sessions to more than 2,000 children.

The Foundation is now collaborating with Birmingham Sport, as well as working with community and faith groups, schools and colleges, to help develop community clubs across the city, providing playing kit and training courses.



## LGBTQ+ Project

The LGBTQ+ project continues to evolve, and the Foundation is now working towards developing an online e-learning platform to ensure clubs understand the needs of the LGBTQ+ individuals in their clubs. The platform will help clubs to develop an even more inclusive culture.



## Sitting Volleyball

The Foundation has been focused on supporting the sitting community network, chairing the sitting working group and supporting the development of a long-term plan that reflects *The Game Plan* strategy.

Working alongside Volleyball England, the British Volleyball Federation and the sitting clubs, the goal is now to help expand the network and provide support to build a seamless performance pathway.

## Just Giving player page

Although not part of its charitable objectives, the Foundation helps when it can. Currently there is no funding to support senior level teams wishing to train and compete, with players and staff having to cover travel, accommodation and other costs themselves.

The Foundation, working with the England Senior Men's team, have managed to raise over £2,000 to support their development. A big thank you to all the groups and individuals who have made donations.

## Providing guidance to clubs

In the last 12 months, more than 30 clubs have approached the Foundation for support in looking for funding.

Many are not aware of the potential funding partners in their local area and, with support and guidance, most have been successful in achieving additional resources to boost their development.

## Bringing people together

Occasionally, the Foundation is approached to support a project that does not require a great deal of funding - all it needs is to bring people together.

Early in 2023, the Foundation was approached by a local authority that had a group of Afghan Women Refugees who wanted to do get physically active together and had decided to play volleyball.

They approached the Foundation and were put in touch with Leeds Gorse, the nearest club to their location. The Foundation provided some balls, Leeds provided a coach and the local authority a hall. Job done.

## Support the Foundation to continue its work

As always, the Foundation is reliant on the support of the volleyball family, goodwill and donations for it to continue its work. Please feel free to reach out directly for any further information about any current projects.

You can registers you support for the foundation and donate in a way that is appropriate to you. Please visit [volleyballenglandfoundation.org](http://volleyballenglandfoundation.org) for more details.

# South East

## Season overview

It has been a year of consolidation in the South East Region in terms of teams participating. In the region's county leagues there has been a slight increase in numbers, with two new NVL teams added in 2023-24, taking the total up to 24.

There has also been an increase in the number of junior teams competing in the Volleyball England Grand Prix Series, especially at Tier 1, and across all age groups.

The regional squads put up a strong showing at the Indoor Inter Regional Championships 2023 where, in the U15 competition, the girls were second and the Boys fourth, while, in the U17 age group, the girls were fourth and the boys seventh.

At the Beach Inter Regionals, the region was victorious in both the boys' and girls' competitions.

## Coaches, Officials and Talent

SEVA has held several coaching courses in the region and used its end-of-season tournament, as well as the Student Cup events held in the region, to provide opportunities for referees to be assessed and upgraded.

A regional junior training programme, meanwhile, runs throughout the season, with selections for the Inter Regional Championships being made early in the new year.

\*At the time of publication, the following regional reports have been received. Further regional reports will be added to the document in due course.

## Regional Reports

Several of the region's counties have a bursary process in place to fund (or at least partially fund) the costs of people attending referee and coaching courses, conditional on them coaching or refereeing within the county.

## Clubs, membership, volunteers and growth

While SEVA does not run a regional league, the top two teams from each county (men and women) come together for an end of season tournament which is held in May.

One of the region's member clubs, based in Surrey, is about to introduce Air Volleyball sessions, with the aid of a local authority grant. This is the volleyball equivalent of initiatives such as walking football/netball using a larger/softer ball.



# East Midlands

In the East Midlands, the ambition is to continue to expand the amount of volleyball being played at all levels – with 2023-24 proof of that.

## Junior Development

In Inter Regional selection, boys and girls were selected who were representing 10 different clubs - and coaches from a number of those clubs were also supporting, alongside University of Nottingham (UON), Nottingham Trent University and Loughborough University students.

Nine of those clubs entered teams into the Volleyball England Junior Grand Prix as well, with Nottingham Rockets U18 Girls and Ashfield Vipers U16 Girls both qualifying for their respective Last 8 competitions.

## BUCS Volleyball

Universities from the region continue to perform to a high standard, with the University of Nottingham finishing as runners-up in the Men's Championship and Loughborough University winners of the Men's Conference.

Congratulations also go to Nottingham Trent University 1 (Men), Lincoln University (Men) and Loughborough University 2 (Women) for promotions out of their respective divisions.

## Beach Volleyball

The first UKBT tour event in the East Midlands was set to run at the University of Nottingham in May and plans are afoot to run a first Regional Beach Championship for junior players this summer. This will take place in Nottingham, Kettering and Loughborough.

# National League

In the National Volleyball League, there is wide representation across all the divisions.

At the summit, University of Nottingham finished mid-table in the Men's Super League, while UoN and Derby Darkstar competed in the MAREE Women's Super League. The highlight of the 2023-24 season, however, has to be Leicester Athena reaching the final of the National Shield.

## Regional League

A total of 11 women's teams and 12 men's teams competed in the East Midlands League, with the final standings very close in both competitions. The standard of competition continues to develop, as shown by Boston and Leicester successfully moving into the NVL last summer.

## Sitting Volleyball

The East Midlands already has two sitting clubs but is planning to run its first ever sitting volleyball tournament in the summer as a way of promoting the sport and encouraging more clubs to form. The hope is to have a regional league formed in a couple of years' time.



# South West

It has been another successful season for the South West Volleyball Association.

## Senior Competitions

Entries to the South West Leagues increased to 11 men's and 12 women's teams, requiring two womens divisions for the first time in many years. The men's league was won by the University of Bath and the women's divisions by Torexe and PMVC Ladies.

The oversubscribed South West Vets tournament in November had 12 entries, won by Wiltshire Mavericks, while another successful Championships weekend followed in Plymouth in March.

## Regional Junior squads and events

There has been a full programme of training for the regional junior squads since October, with large numbers in attendance.

Final preparations took place to finalise the teams that represented the region at the Inter Regional Championship finals in May. A similar programme will take place for junior beach squads in the coming months.

The junior squads provide an excellent training programme for coaches and volunteers, with many squad players contribute in later years to volleyball development around the region.

The JuVoTo series will feature six events across the season and, at the time of writing, there have been five events featuring 60 teams. Plans are in place to extend the junior competitions next season with a series of regional six-a-side competitions.

## Regional Reports



## League volleyball

Entries to the local leagues are generally stable, with some experiencing growth. A few associations have run referees courses this season, but there is still a lack of opportunities for coaches to become qualified.

In the NVL, the region is pleased to congratulate those who have won their divisions – Wessex in Women's Division 1, Bristol in Men's Division 2 and Cheltenham and Gloucester in Women's Division 3 South West.

## Committee matters

The SWVA Executive Committee met three times over the year and members are fully engaged.

New volunteers are always welcome as, inevitably, some officers are lost due to other commitments.

The Volleyball England Regions and Counties Community of Practice meetings are valued as a means of communication and regular registration data received from the Volleyball England head office.

The region's secretary, Ron Richards, would like to thank all those who give up their time to make organised volleyball possible, particularly Chair, Dave Reece, while Roy Pankhurst's contributions were recently recognised with a SWVA Lifetime Achievement Award.

# North West

After a hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, the North West Volleyball Association (NWVA) and its members are thriving once again.

Representing the counties of Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside and also the Isle of Man, the NWVA has established a new volunteer workforce and is moving towards a healthier governance and administration portfolio.

With over 40 active clubs in the region, two robust local leagues, in the Greater Manchester Volleyball League and the Merseyside Volleyball League, and active participation from North West clubs in both the National Volleyball League and juniors competitions, the North West continues to grow.

More than 900 active players, coaches, officials, and volunteers got involved during the 2023-24 season.

## National Volleyball League

In the National Volleyball League, the key headline performance was the success of the Wigan Seahawks' men's team, finishing the season as Men's Shield Cup finalists and going on to be promoted to NVL Division 2.

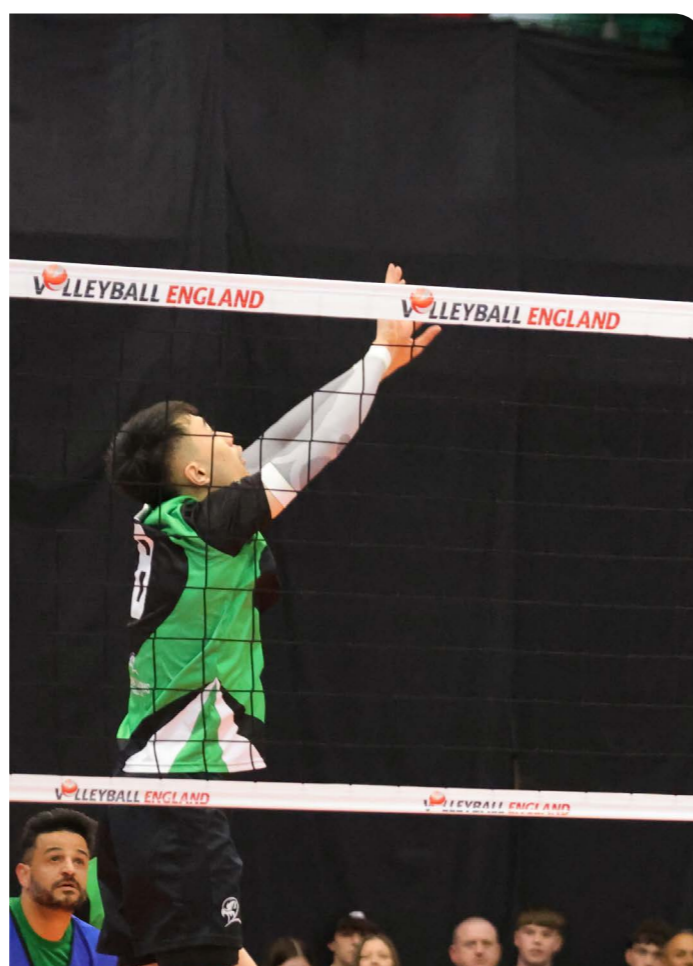
On the juniors side, the headline performance across all the boys' and girls' Last 8 age group competitions was the crowning of the Urmston Grammar U15 boys as the 2024 Volleyball England National Champions – a terrific feat.

## Regional Reports

### Juniors

The region was looking forward, at the time of writing, to supporting its North West juniors athletes ahead of the 2024 Volleyball England Inter Regional Championships held in Kettering at the National Volleyball Centre in late May.

After three busy months of trials, practices, and friendly matches, the U15 and U17 boys and girls teams were hoping to be highly competitive.





# East

## Season overview

The Junior Grand Prix series proved to be yet another resounding success, offering fantastic opportunities for the Eastern Region's junior players to learn, develop and compete through matchplay.

The Boswells School, from Essex, achieved success in reaching the U18 and U16 Girls and U16 Boys national finals, with both girls sides securing victories.

The Eastern Region's junior talent programme is building on past successes, with 95 athletes participating in the first two camps of the 2023-24 season. The coaching team has grown from five to six members, including two new female assistant coaches, enabling a senior coach to transition into a management role.

The region had, at the time of writing, very much been looking forward to the Inter Regional Championships at the end of May.

In the university space, the University of Essex Men and Women both won the BUCS Premier South Conference. The women made it to their first ever National Championship game with a team that included four out of seven starters developed by clubs in England.

Cambridge ARU won the Men's Midlands Tier 1 title and had a play-off for the chance to become the third Eastern Region university team to play in the BUCS Premier Conference.

## Regional Reports

### Coaches, Officials and Talent

There have been a number of achievements across the Eastern Region in the 2023-24 period, including Cambridge hosting a Grade 4 referee course and Suffolk hosting an officiating workshop for those who might not be ready or interested in Grade 4.

Future plans include the possibility of Suffolk hosting an Assistant Coach Award course and another Officiating Workshop, as well as Cambridge hosting a Coach Award course and another referee course.

It would also be fantastic for the region to expand its coaching and refereeing teams, particularly in guiding junior athletes along this journey.



### Clubs, Membership, Volunteers and growth

Ipswich Ravens in Suffolk is doing an exemplary job of incentivising and developing future leaders and sharing the load of running their club, and there could potentially be a new club on the horizon in the county.

Suffolk Volleyball Association continues to support schools in Haverhill, Claydon and Woodbridge to help establish community clubs in their respective areas.

A future aim is to encourage those schools to affiliate with Volleyball England as junior clubs so they can receive additional support both from the National Governing Body itself and the Volleyball England Foundation.

### Super League and NVL

The Eastern region is proud to have significant representation nationally, with the majority of counties having teams competing in the NVL and Essex and Cambridge featuring teams in the Super League.

All three Super League teams retained their places in the top flight, with Team Essex Blaze set to join them next season, increasing the number of teams in the region competing at the top level to four.

The Rebels teams in both the men's and women's competitions made the Super League Final 4 and the National Cup semi-finals.

There has also been a significant uptick in the number of junior athletes from the region playing in the national league, including in the Super League with Cambridge.



### Regional, area and local leagues

Eight men's and eight women's teams took part in the monthly Eastern Region Volleyball Series, while various county and developmental leagues, provided by all counties, have been ongoing.

New additions have been the Suffolk Mixed Intermediate League, established by the Suffolk Volleyball Association, and a local league (five to six Sundays) set up by Cambridge VC, for intermediate or recreational players.

### Future challenges

It would be fantastic for the region to explore avenues for promoting or enhancing the women's teams, as well as encouraging greater female involvement in competitions.

This challenge is evident in various county and local leagues, as well as summer tournaments, where only around 5 to 8% of the teams competitively engage in a women's league or division.



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