



2022-2023 Annual Report



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WELCOME

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A welcome from our Chair

My welcome last year concluded that with Birmingham 2022 on the horizon, it was 'Our Time to Shine'. The experiences, excitement and memories of Beach Volleyball at the Commonwealth Games truly provided the sport this opportunity.

On the court, the fantastic performances of Jess Grimson and Daisy Mumby and the historic bronze medalists Javier and Joaquin Bello provide clear evidence of the talent that we have in England and that we have the potential to rise to prominence on the world stage across all formats of the sport.

In addition to this monumental achievement, the Commonwealth Games provided many other opportunities for the Volleyball community. I must express a heartfelt thank you to the army of volunteers, Volleyball England Hub Staff and Board members who worked tirelessly on the lead up to and during the games to deliver an eye-catching experience and exposure to the sport that we can harness and build upon.

As detailed within this report, the legacy of the games is clear to see in relation to people, facility and Beach Volleyball pathway development.

We have spent considerable time this year reviewing Our *The Game Plan* strategy (2020-30). As promised when it was first launched, we will regularly review, revise, and recalibrate to ensure it remains fresh and relevant.

“”

I would like to convey a sincere thank you to everyone in the Volleyball community - in particular our dedicated steadfast volunteers - who continue to commit their time, energy and passion to drive the sport forward.



Through conversations and listening to the Volleyball community, we have adjusted our plans and have realigned our focus to ensure we are better connected to the sport at all levels.

To support the above, we are now taking a much longer-term view in relation to financial planning and income diversification, which includes optimising system partner funding and commercial endeavours, such as the creation of a new online store and partnerships with Mikasa and Errea.

At the heart of our strategy is a commitment to place our members firmly at the heart of everything we do. I would like to convey a sincere thank you to everyone in the Volleyball community - in particular our dedicated steadfast volunteers - who continue to commit their time, energy and passion to drive the sport forward.



I would also like to thank our close partners, the Volleyball England Foundation, the British Volleyball Federation, NEVZA, CEV, FIVB and Sport England for their ongoing support and friendship.

My final show of appreciation, and by no means least, is for my fellow Board members, Sub/Working Group members and the Hub Team. Although a small group of people in comparison to other National Governing Bodies, we continue to punch above our weight and, through our focus on insight and learning and willingness to innovate, we not only keep pace but, in many senses, lead the way.

Adam Walker, Chair

EXECUTIVE REFLECTIONS

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Executive Reflections from Charlie Ford and Guin Batten



“““

As you will read in this report, growth is very much a common theme. Whether this be junior interest/engagement, our HEVO programme within Universities or regional/national competitive Volleyball, the trajectory is very much in an upward direction.

Before we touch on some of our key achievements, our observations and the opportunities that are ahead of us, we would like to firstly thank everyone for welcoming us both firmly into the Volleyball family.

Having spent considerable time with the Board, Sub/Working Groups and the Hub Team in Loughborough – as well as getting out and meeting the hard-working people within Clubs, Counties, and Regions – we have been hugely impressed and inspired by the passion and commitment that is poured into the sport, in particular from our hard working and resilient volunteers.

As you will read in this report, growth is very much a common theme. Whether this be junior interest/engagement, our HEVO programme within Universities or regional/national competitive Volleyball, the trajectory is very much in an upward direction.

To support this growth, we have invested significant time and resource into digital and technological transformation, which includes migrating to our new SportLomo

powered membership and competition management platform and migrating our safeguarding processes and management over to Globocol.

We have also invested into the HUDL video and data analysis system that will significantly uplift competitions, national team performance and workforce development.



Importantly, these developments were scoped and implemented to add value and provide benefits across the sport at all levels, an approach that continues to sit at the heart of our *The Game Plan* strategy and decision making.

As we enter the next phase of *The Game Plan* strategy and its implementation, we will continue to use insight and learning to galvanise our strengths and to face challenges head on.

6 The number of Volleyball England working groups (Competitions, Officials, Talent, Coaching, Children and Young People and Sitting Volleyball) who implemented and/or developed specific projects throughout the year.

The work of the Ace Service Sub Group in spearheading the substantive officiating review is a great example of how data and insights can be turned into actions that will, over time, improve the sport and our members experiences considerably.

Finally, but by no means lastly, we must convey a sincere thank you to our volunteers, including the Board, Sub/Working Groups, and the Volleyball England staff. It is our firm belief that the hard work undertaken at all levels of the sport throughout the first two years of *The Game Plan* provides a solid foundation to explore and capitalise on growth opportunities across all formats of the sport as we move forward.

Charlie Ford

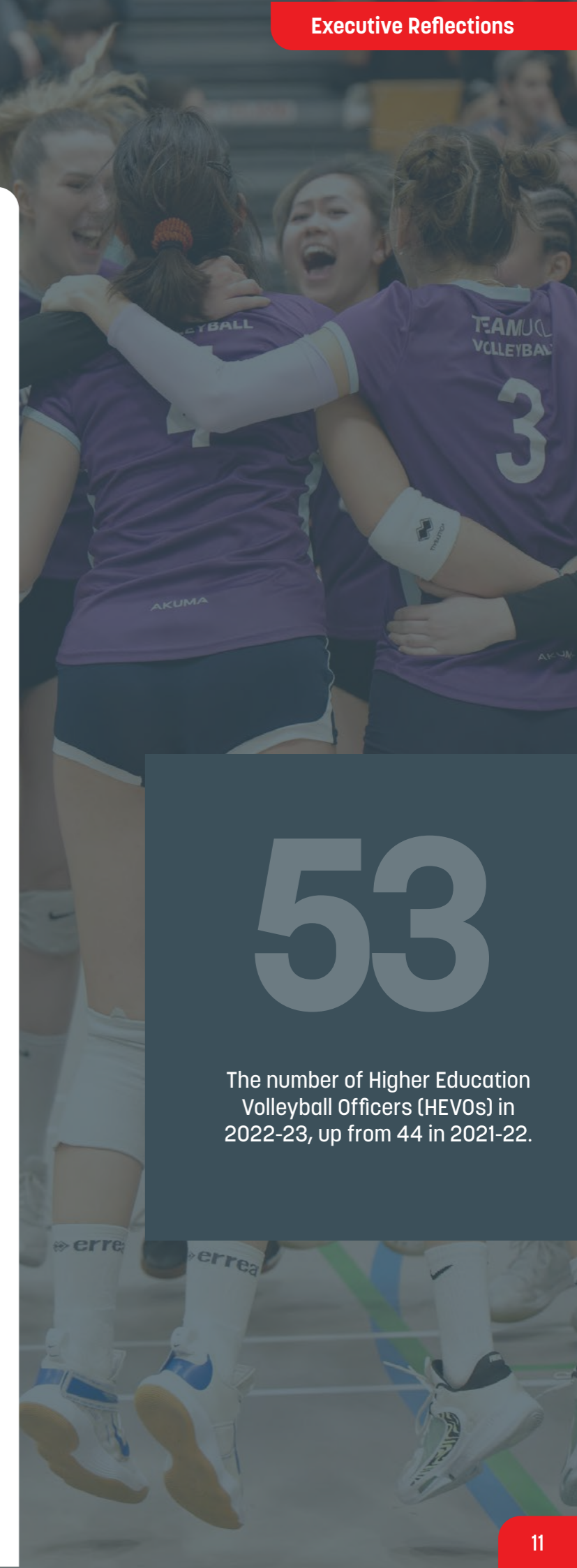
Charlie Ford, Chief Executive Officer

Guin Batten

Guin Batten, Deputy Chief Executive Officer

53

The number of Higher Education Volleyball Officers (HEVOs) in 2022-23, up from 44 in 2021-22.



GET KEEP GROW

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Connected and Stronger



Club Development

Following on from the Club Survey in November 2022, Volleyball England has started to run online workshops for affiliated clubs (including funding and community engagement) to attend, based on the top five responses from the 126 clubs who completed it. The survey confirmed the club newsletter is still highly valued since its launch in 2021 and provides latest updates to regions, counties, and clubs.

10
The number of Regions and Counties taking part in the online Community of Practice forum, where best practice is shared.

Higher Education Volleyball Officer (HEVO) Programme

The HEVO Programme is into its 12th year and saw growth since the pandemic with 53 HEVOs and 44 universities, giving more than 3,800 students an experience Volleyball.

There have been over 10 mass participation events with over 600 students participating and 75% of them returning to regular Volleyball activity within their university. In turn, this has resulted in the pathway into competitive Volleyball, strengthening the Volleyball England Student Cup and BUCS Championships.

Hall of Fame

The Dr Don Anthony MBE Hall of Fame recognises the success and achievements of Volleyball players, referees and coaches at an international level.

During our 2023 Annual Awards ceremony held at Cup Finals weekend (see case study), Volleyball England was honoured to recognise some of the sport's most inspirational individuals, who are now recognised on a website page.

Safeguarding

Volleyball England has launched a new policy with an accompanying "reporting a concern" link. There have been 245 DBS checks processed for our coaches, referees and club volunteers.

Membership and Servicing

A total of 403 clubs affiliated, with 899 coach registrations, 5,350 player registrations and 621 referee registrations, which will be moved over to the new VolleyZone. The formation of the Regions and Counties Community of Practice Forum has helped shared best practice and improved relationships.

Digital Transformation

The move over to the new VolleyZone platform was initiated at the end of June and will allow regions and clubs to manage their membership, create local competitions and better communicate with their members.

177

The total nominations received across 11 categories for the Volleyball England x Deep Dish Sixes, which was the first in-person event since the Covid-19 Pandemic.

CASE STUDY

For this year's Volleyball England x Deep Dish Sixes Annual Awards, it was astounding how many nominations were received, 177 in total. In one category, the high quality of nominations made it very tough to call.

Eight nominations were received in the Higher Education Volleyball Officer (HEVO) of the Year Award, with Abderrahman 'Dudi' Zairi named as the winner.

Dudi lives and breathes Volleyball and is a huge inspiration to new players. The many roles he holds allow Volleyball to thrive at the University of Surrey, developing others and himself.



On winning the award, Dudi said:

"Being a HEVO for three years has meant the world to me, inspiring newcomers to Volleyball. Helping people discover the sport and nurturing their passions for it truly has been an honour and winning the award is the pinnacle."

AN ACE SERVICE

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National Volleyball League (NVL)

The growth in demand to compete in the NVL continues with 24 new teams entering the 22-23 season (nine women's and 15 men's) - the biggest increase in the last 20 years. Much of which has been attributed to the increase in junior Volleyball, resulting in the introduction of a third conference in Division 2. Durham Palatinates asserted their dominance at the top of the men's and women's Super League ladder, winning both titles. Stockport Men, Coventry and Warwick Riga Women and London Lionhearts Women will be three new top tier teams for 2023-24 after promotion, while Everton achieved a treble promotion across their three teams in Divisions 2 and 3. A strategic emphasis has been placed on developing the Super League in 2023-24, with improved streaming, central venue weekends and play-offs.

National Cup and Shield

From the 68 mens and 49 womens teams entering in August, spectators were treated to gripping finals in April. Black Country emerged five-set winners in the men's Shield and Stockport shone in the women's. The women's Cup Final was a re-run of 2022, but, this time, Durham edged out Team Polonia SideOut (London). The men's final saw Malory Eagles, re-claim their throne over emerging giants Essex.

8%

The growth in the number of teams competing in the National Volleyball League.

A growing demand



National Junior Competitions

The Junior Grand Prix Series has continued to thrive, with 9% growth in team entries (1,001) from across the country achieved across the tier 1 and tier 2 competitions. The tier 1 competitions culminated in three exciting Last 8s competitions (at U15, U16 and U18), where new teams such as London Sharks and Deep Dish emerged.

Sitting Volleyball Grand Prix

A regular seven teams competed across six grand prix events within the season with Help for Heroes and Sitting Bucks emerging as the dominant teams, the latter repeated their 2022 cup final success. The competition is currently at a stage of review with a need to attract a wider audience to ensure sustainability.

Student Cup

For the qualifying rounds, a total of 76 teams (40 men's teams and 36 women's) took part across three weekends in Ashcombe, Leeds and Kettering.

The top 14 teams from each gender and previous season's finalists qualified for the finals, held at UEA in February, where Northumbria University won the men's competition and University College London winning the women's.

9%

The growth in team entries to the Junior Grand Prix Series.

15%

The growth in views of national competitions streamed live.



Junior Competition Pathway

Volleyball England has produced guidance on how this will look locally, regionally and nationally in the future.

You can view it [here](#)

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One strategic area of focus within the Ace Service team was to trial several new measures to enhance fan experience for the 2023 Cup Finals.

Following feedback from 2022, seating and ticketing was a primary challenge to overcome. This was achieved through a mixture of designated and open seats surrounding the courts, rather than just on one side.

Through different marketing strategies, the results were significant. Ticket sales revenue grew from £5,400 to £12,000 and the atmosphere created in the arena throughout the weekend was immense.



Other enhancements included electronic scoreboards, merchandise, food vans, bespoke wristbands, photography, videography and enhanced media content and coverage.

Spectator survey satisfaction grew from 7.6 to 8.5, and this will remain a key strategic focus in the next five years.

VOLLEYBALL FOR LIFE (TALENT)

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Talented teams, talented teens



The talent team has been focused on the development of junior performance for both Indoor and Beach athletes during 2022-23.

Regular training camps have been run while a review of the current programme is being carried out.

A record number of Indoor U17 and U19 athletes requested to trial for the national programme at October's Open trials (480), while work is continuing to establish a hub of Beach Performance Centres.

49

The world ranking of England's Beach Volleyball pairing of Javier and Joaquin Bello (June 2023).

U17s and U19s - Indoor

The England U17s and U19s teams both competed in NEZVA this year, with competitions staged in Denmark and Finland respectively.

The U19 teams fought hard but finished seventh (girls) and sixth (boys) against tough competition. England players Mia Bradbury and Nathan Hall were given the titles of most valuable player for their teams.

The U17s teams finished fourth (girls) and fifth (boys), showing some excellent potential. Both teams went on to compete in the CEV European Championships 2022, in Bulgaria (boys) and Germany (girls).

Senior - Indoor

The England Senior teams travelled to Luxembourg for the Novotel Cup, competing against Luxembourg, Germany and Ireland.

England's women won 3-0 against Ireland and contested an extremely close 5-set match with Germany. The women finished third whilst the men took second after defeating both Ireland and Germany.

Beach - Age Groups

In July 2022, the women's U20s team of Katie Keefe and Isabelle Tucker finished in ninth place – the outstanding result from the age group competitions that also saw the likes of Peter and Bartosz Soczewka, Enrique Bello and Peter Soczewka, Rob Morgan and Peter Soczewka and Maia Darling and Lisa Canevari compete in various age groups.

Selection for this year's Beach age group events is underway, with U22, U20 and U18 CEV tournaments taking place in July and August 2023. Athletes for August's Youth Commonwealth Games in Trinidad and Tobago will be announced in July.

Senior Beach

In addition to last summer's bronze medal success at the Commonwealth Games (see the case study below), both of England's top two men's and women's teams entered the Nations Cup, where the men achieved second place, losing to the Olympic champions in the final, and the women's teams claimed third.

122

The number of players involved in the England U17s and U19s squads across the male and female categories.

CASE STUDY

A seminal moment for English beach Volleyball at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games captured the imaginations of both a packed Smithfield stadium and the millions watching on at home.

With passionate home support cheering every point, Javier and Joaquin Bello clinched a bronze medal in the men's competition with a 21-11, 21-12 over Rwanda pairing Ntagengwa/Gatsinzi.



It was a first medal in the sport for England – and has provided inspiration to the next generation of players from Newquay to Newcastle.

"It would've been amazing for us to win the first medal anywhere but to do it here, at home, it felt like the whole country was behind us," said Javier.

It was the culmination of years of hard work and training that had seen the pair win gold for England at the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games before claiming the first World Tour medal for a British men's team with a bronze in 2019.

Anti-Doping



Volleyball England undertook the following Anti-doping activities during the 2022-2023 season.

1) Assurance Framework

We worked to maintain our compliance toward the UKAD assurance Framework.

This included for example:

- Planning of Anti-Doping Education to the Volleyball community.
- Keeping our website up to date.
- Improving our communication about Anti-Doping.

2) Education

We delivered anti-doping education to:

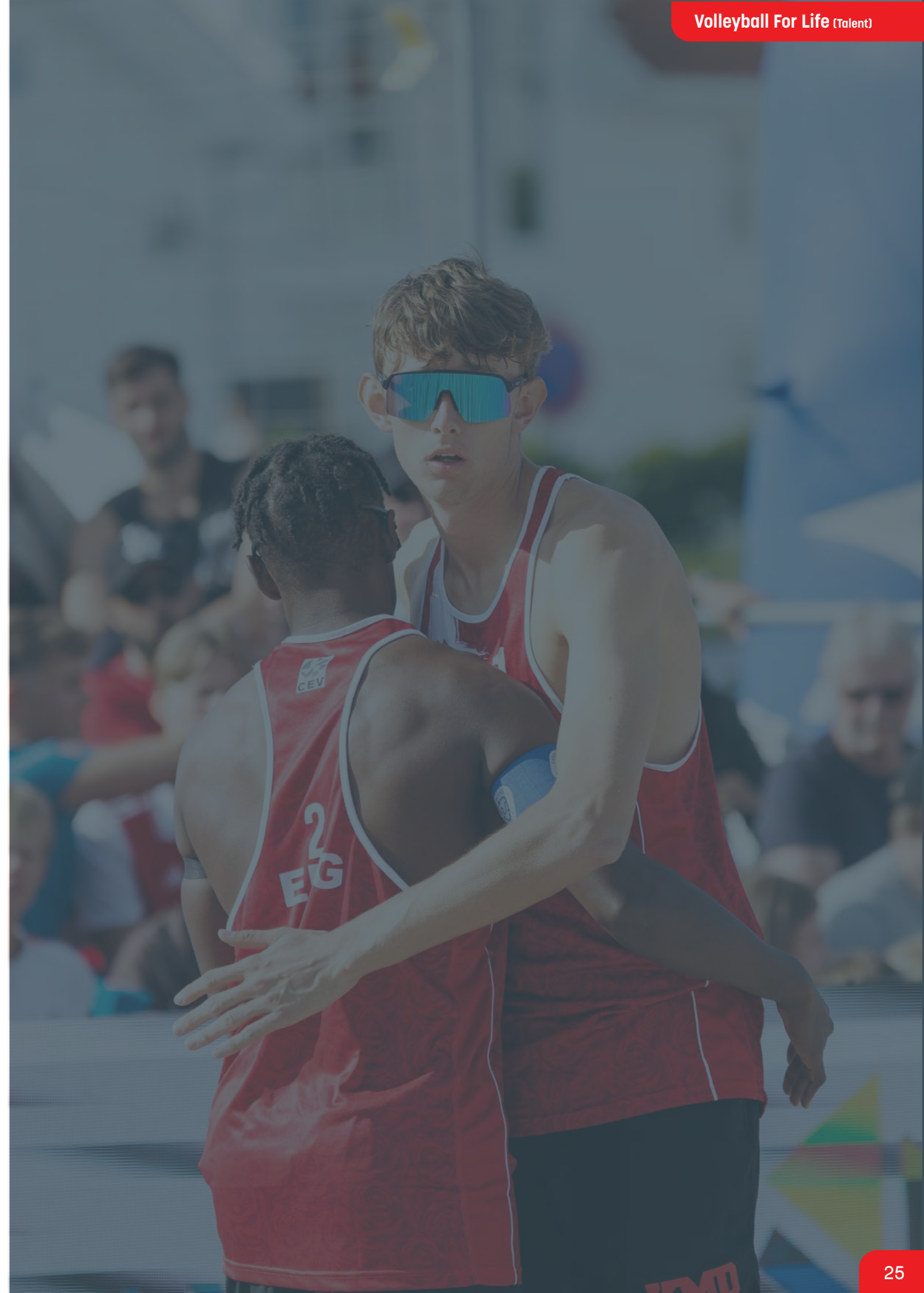
- U19s and U17s squads, staff and parents (December 2022).
- Athletes considered to compete at the Youth Commonwealth Games (June 2023).
- GB Sitting Volleyball squads (March 2023).

3) Webinars

We delivered a series of webinar to help clubs understanding the Anti-Doping context and how they can help their members to stay Clean and that the anti-doping rules apply to everyone at any level of the sport (athletes and other people involved in the sport. (May-June 2022).

4) Support

We supported parents and players who were unsure about their situation about Anti-Doping (e.g., TUE required or not).



VOLLEYBALL FOR LIFE (WORKFORCE)

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Over the last 12 months there has been an emphasis on providing opportunities for people who want to take the first step on the coaching and referee pathways, working with partners in the regions and counties to identify need.

Coach and referee registrations

It is pleasing to see the growth in the number of successful learners with a record number of 426 new coaches and 372 new referees qualified.

There has also been a steady increase in the number of registered coaches and referees with a remarkable post-Covid Pandemic bounce back. Coach registrations are up by 36% and referee registration up by 46%, year on year.

38

The number of scorers and line judges who achieved the official Volleyball England Scorers Award or Line Judge Award.

Officiating Review

The review was initiated last year to improve the retention and overall number of qualified officials within the sport and involved a substantial analysis of the available data on officiating in England. A series of 10 recommendations emerged, focusing on developing the pathway, making refereeing a more attractive and rewarding proposition, and better recognising the contribution of officials.

Offering a helping hand

International appointments

Greg Thompson took the stand to represent England at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and he has recently been appointed to August's Youth Commonwealth Games Beach Volleyball event.

Jeff Brehaut has been kept busy, with FIVB Age Group World Championships, Birmingham 2022, and NEVZA Beach Championships among his appointments.

Indoors, England referees, Dominik Biegajlo, Katarina Cepinova, Joe Gore, Nick Heckford and Seb Widlarz had a number of CEV Cup and FIVB international appointments, while Maciej Madejsza and Istvan Andras Elsik gained valuable international experience at NEVZA Age Group Championships.

England Technical Delegates have been in demand, with international assignments for Jonathan Moore, James Murphy, Stewart Dunne, Jeff Brehaut and Lenny Barry.



Coach and referee development

Sian Godwyn qualified as a Beach Volleyball International Referee in August 2022, and Dee Wauchope has been accepted by World ParaVolley to train as a Technical Delegate - the first women from England to achieve these high-level technical qualifications.

In readiness for Birmingham 2022, Debra Smart spearheaded the recruitment of Beach Volleyball national technical officials, with eight scorers learning to e-score, 18 line judges trained to international standard and 11 passing the Grade 4 Beach Volleyball Referee Award.

Tim Clifford and Ben Fairweather were among the 160 delegates at the annual CEV Coaches Convention in North Macedonia. Closer to home, Alex Smith and Sam Bragg graduated from their respective UK Coaching Coach Development Programmes.

International Referees Glynn Archibald and Peter Parsons supported officials Sam Yip, Steve Smith, Rita Grimes, Herman Prada and Alexandru Calin to upskill as technical officials for the ParaVolley Europe Silver Nations League event.

46%

The year-on-year increase in referee registration with Volleyball England.

C The revised Volleyball England Coach Award, which replaces the UKCC Level 2, was successfully launched in March with 38 learners enrolled.

A The new course follows a blended delivery model, bringing together face to face webinars, on demand e-learning, self-study, and a 2-day Technical Module (Beach, Indoor, junior or Sitting) allowing coaches to specialise in their preferred discipline.

E "In creating the Coach Award, we were guided by feedback from learners who have taken the new Assistant Coach Award and followed a similar approach reducing the course from four to two days practical," said Gillian Harrison, Strategic Manager (Volleyball For Life).

S "The focus was on the technical and tactical aspects of the sport – and introduce online learning for generic coaching practice, knowledge and understanding."

T Kevin Sousa, from Stockport Volleyball Club and North West U15 Boys Head Coach, was among the first to sign up.

U He said: "The Coach Award has allowed for me to continue the development of my Volleyball coaching education in a flexible and dynamic way. I have found the entire course to be stimulating and exciting, with Volleyball England staff and course tutors fully supporting my development whilst being excellent resources and educators."



BIRMINGHAM 2022 LEGACY

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Birmingham 2022 Legacy



The Birmingham 2022 legacy continues to create more opportunities and push Volleyball development within England. Projects are working across a number of different areas, as detailed below.

Facilities

The sand from the Games' Beach Volleyball tournament has been distributed to two sites in the Birmingham area. The three courts at Birmingham Moseley Rugby Club are close to completion and they are set to be officially opened towards the end of July.

The six courts at Alexander Stadium will commence work in early 2024 to be ready for the summer.



Club Development

Volleyball England has supported Birmingham City VC and Starbank School with equipment to ensure that both junior and adult development can take place and the club is able to grow.

Workforce Development

Volleyball England has full or part-funded several members of the Volleyball community to upskill in the Volleyball coaching qualifications, with more members being supported over the coming year.



Beach Volleyball Performance Director

Kirk Pitman has been employed as Beach Volleyball Performance Director. He is currently supporting England's top senior teams, as well as engaging with the wider Beach Volleyball organisations who focus on junior development. He will be a lead figure in the Beach Volleyball Development Centres (BVDCs).

Beach Volleyball Development Centres

Volleyball England has now approved eight BVDCs. These centres will be pivotal in the development of juniors and coaches. The programme will be overseen by Kirk Pitman and Jake Sheaf and will aim to improve the talent pool and cohesion of athlete development.

Equipment

B2022 Legacy equipment has been distributed to some of the country's top-ranked national teams, as well as other community organisations.



FINANCE



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Volleyball England’s financial situation remains strong. The support given to us by the Government, Sport England and our Membership has allowed us to continue to invest in our sport with revenue up almost 40% year on year.

£365,000

The amount the GB Sitting Volleyball team has received to support with their Paris 2024 Olympic Qualification campaign.

Sport England supported Volleyball England during 2022-23 with the Year 1 ‘System Partner’ award of £456,782. In addition, we were also awarded £224,997 from the Birmingham 22 NGB Participation, Innovation and Digital Fund.

During the 2022-23 Financial Year, £86,000 was drawn down to help Volleyball amplify its legacy ambitions following the huge success of the Commonwealth Games.

Interestingly, and significantly from a sustainability point of view, Volleyball England now generates over half its income in-house, which has been an ambition of the organisation for many years.



Financial Report

Sitting Volleyball has received £365,000 of funding from UK Sport to help with our bid to qualify for Paris 2024, with £126,000 of this award has been used in the year to support GB Training camps, Silver League Events and Cup competitions.

The Return to Play during 2022-23 continues to be very encouraging in terms of the National Volleyball League, Student Cup entries, Technical Course income and Membership all showing huge year on year growth and surpassing budget levels.

Interestingly, and significantly from a sustainability point of view, Volleyball England now generates over half its income in-house, which has been an ambition of the organisation for many years.

During 2022-23, an investment into IT infrastructure has helped improve security and collaborative working. The website has been upgraded and the board approved the way forward on a much-needed digital transformation project to improve access to, and dealings with, Volleyball England. Sport England has allowed us to use money set aside from previous years to fully finance this work.

It is a very exciting time to be involved in Volleyball.

TURNOVER: £1,510,902

OF WHICH SPORT ENGLAND GRANT INCOME: £608,965

EXPENDITURE: £1,500,782

WHERE DID THE MONEY COME FROM?

Sport England Grants 22-23	£608,965
Other Government Grants	£134,784
Commercial Income	£40,404
Talent Income	£226,458
Technical Courses	£126,137
Student Income	£30,447
Membership	£56,131
Diploma in Sporting Excellence	£97,538
Competition & Events	£190,038

WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?

Operating Cost (inc Digital Transformation)	£369,412
Salaries	£526,974
Commercial Cost	£31,311
Talent	£244,320
Technical Courses	£53,905
Student	£35,027
Commonwealth Games 2022	£31,130
Diploma in Sporting Excellence	£32,110
Competition & Events	£41,333
NSSF Expenses (Sitting Volleyball)	£135,260

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Volleyball England Foundation



Foundation Trustees

The Foundation has said goodbye to two of our Trustees, Bev Ward and Steve Schindler. They have been a huge asset to the Foundation, and we will miss them, but wish them all the best in their next chapter.

Aston Villa Project

The Aston Villa Project, funded by the Sport England E&D fund, has been delivered by 15 Aston Villa Foundation coaches. They have been trained by Nick Shaffery to deliver 2v2 Volleyball in Birmingham primary schools situated in some of the country's most deprived areas, as well as during holidays. In the last 12 months over 2,000 children have had an experience of Volleyball for the first time.

Afghan Ladies

Working with Kirklees Council and Leeds Gorse, a group of 20 Afghan refugee women have been given an opportunity to improve their physical and mental well-being by playing Volleyball, helped by a donation of 10 Birmingham 2022 balls by Volleyball England.

Supporting B2022 volunteers

The Foundation held a fundraising event to support the 20 young people and their chaperones who were volunteering at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. The proceeds helped to cover travelling and training costs.

LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ project has been working with clubs to understand the barriers faced by LGBTQ+ individuals when playing Volleyball. The goal of this project is to create an inclusive culture, working with clubs to provide the knowledge and resources to create positive environments through a five-stage programme. The project is working with six community clubs to identify good practice and develop an e-learning platform, which will be shared across the Volleyball network.

Christmas Fundraising

The Christmas Auction helped to raise £1,100 for the Volleyball community. Two grants to support Sitting Volleyball were received from the Bruce Wake Foundation and Arnold Clark, while £4,500 was raised by clubs, individuals and through events. The Foundation also supported 12 community clubs to find funding through grant applications.



Social Media

There have had a steady increase of visits to the Foundation's website at just under 23,000 unique users, with 70% coming directly to the website from 100 different countries. The Facebook page has added over 400 new followers (up to 944), while LinkedIn followers have doubled to 318.



Player Pathway Support

The Foundation has been using its 'Just Giving' page to support young athletes on the performance pathway, with two athletes be supported to the tune of £2,600 over the last 12 months.

Foundation Ambassadors

We are delighted to welcome Clayton Lucas as our newest ambassador, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to the team. Clayton has played at all levels of the game, from grassroots to the GB squad, and currently commentates around the world.

We also want to congratulate two of our other ambassadors, Joaquin and Javier Bello, on their amazing Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games bronze medals!

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North East

North East Volleyball at beginner level is continuing to grow, with lots of interest from participants new to the sport.

As an example - Newcastle Volleyball Club have seen approximately 300 people coming to try Volleyball for the first time between October and May!

However, clubs are struggling to cope with these numbers, due to hall hire, coaches and space.

A key achievement for this year has been the reintroduction of teams for the second year, entering both the U18 and U16 national competitions as well as teams representing the NE at the inter regionals.



They competed and it's a start for our region - lots to work on but all those involved enjoyed the experience.

The NE still struggles with having enough coaches and referees, especially to ref National League, and we rely heavily on volunteers to run all our clubs, matches, refereeing, junior squads, training, events and meetings.

Regional Reports

South East

Competitive Volleyball in the region is thriving with 20 teams competing in the National League and a further 108 teams entered into our various county leagues.

We also had 65 junior teams entered across both tiers and age groups of the Junior Grand Prix tournaments, making up nearly 20% of the total entry.

We have run referee and coach courses throughout the year and given referees the opportunity to be observed and assessed for upgrading at our regional tournament.

Our junior squads represented the region with passion at the Inter Regional Championships, whilst four of our fantastic volunteers were recognised at the 2023 annual report.

Within the regions we now have 156 coaches, 118 referees and 63 affiliated clubs.

The most significant playing achievement from clubs in the region was the Sitting Bucks team winning the Sitting National Final.

South West

This has been a successful season. The SW Leagues had 10 mens and 10 womens teams – won by Exeter Storm and Cheltenham & Gloucester. The SW Vets tournament in November had 12 entries, won by Torexe SagaLouts. The SW Championships had 10 mens teams - winners Exeter Storm - and 10 womens - winners Torexe.

There has been a full programme of training for the regional junior squads, with large numbers in attendance from across the region. All of our teams reached the semi finals at the IRC finals. A similar programme takes place for junior Beach squads in the coming months.

The JuVoTo series had a record number of six events. Teams from right across the region participated with 14 clubs, 73 teams and 219 players taking part.

Our Executive Committee has met three times and members are fully engaged. Unfortunately we still have some crucial vacancies – particularly that there is currently no coaching officer.

Most areas have seen their competitions continue with generally stable numbers.

As usual, I would like to thank all those who give up so much of their time to make organized Volleyball possible, particularly our Chair, Dave Reece, who gives up so much of his time to the cause.

East Midlands

It has felt like this was the year we got back on track. We relaunched our regional Grand Prix series for juniors and had 24 teams take part and our adult leagues grew a little and are nearly back to pre-pandemic levels. Outside the regional level, our NVL teams have continued to shine too.

We had 118 juniors take part in the trials for the Inter-Regionals which is a record and we hosted four or five sessions for each age group. Whilst we are saying goodbye to two titans (Ian Clews and Helen Britten) who have done a huge amount to support junior development at the regional level, we have attached five new coaches to the programme.

We are doing better at engaging with people in the region through social media, trebling the number of Instagram followers and trebling engagement, allowing us to promote Volleyball and the region to a wider and wider audience.

Our goals for the year ahead are to recruit more coaches and help our coaches develop their skills.



Yorkshire

In season 2022/23 we introduced a Yorkshire "Super League".

We now have a three-tier league structure that allows for fairer more equitable competition across our region. The "Championship" underpins the structure feeding developing players into our "Premier" League and ultimately into our "Super" League where clubs can truly showcase their talents across Yorkshire with no limits on NVL player involvement.

49 teams representing 14 clubs competed in our nine league divisions.

High standards of play were observed across our region and matches were contested in good spirit and with very little complaint.

Junior Volleyball continues to expand across Yorkshire, with more and more players competing in our adult leagues. This bodes well for the long-term future of Volleyball in our region.

In addition, Leeds Gorse were National U15 Boys Champions whilst the region was also victorious in the same category at the 2023 Inter-Regional Championships.



Regional Reports



We are looking forward to challenging the dominance of the traditionally strong teams such as Richmond, Urmston and Boswells.

On the beach, Skyball and Beach Volleyball in Yorkshire continues on its impressive upward trajectory.

All the results and league tables from the Yorkshire leagues can be viewed at <https://league.yorkshirevolleyball.org.uk/>



West Midlands

It really doesn't seem a year ago that the Commonwealth Games lit up the West Midlands – and brought Beach Volleyball to the centre of the second city.

There's no doubt that those Games will live long in the memories of many of us within the West Midlands Volleyball Association – but hopefully, the longest-lasting ones will be with the 40-strong junior band of volunteers who took to the sand each day as rakers and ball retrievers. Young players from Telford, Tettenhall Tigers, Tamworth Spartans, Coventry & Warwick Riga and Nuneaton took up their roles as court-side assistants with gusto – and the way they talk about their experience a year later should give us all hope that the legacy of these Games will live on through them.

A word too, for the adult volunteers from our clubs who also made the Beach Volleyball what it was. We saw West Mids representation across the technical officials, event management, media relations and crucially, team management, with Riga's Chris Jones supporting the Bello brothers as they took home their stunning bronze.

More recently, we've seen some huge success in the growth of the junior programmes across the West Midlands – well over 100 youngsters tried out for our inter-regional squads. A silver medal for our Under-17 girls at the tournament at the end of May was a very special moment for us all – as was our Under-17 boys' progress to the semi-finals, and watching both Under-15 teams have a first taste of competition at this level.



Finally, alongside a very healthy level of competition across our own leagues, and a men's and women's cup double for Cleobury Volleyball Club, our NVL presence continues to grow.

Coventry & Warwick Riga 1's promotion to the women's Super League and Tamworth Spartans' to Men's Division 1 have been specific highlights – alongside Black Country's victory in the men's shield.

There's plenty to celebrate in West Midlands Volleyball this year – but as ever, ensuring we don't stand still will be a specific focus in the coming months, not to mention harnessing the enthusiasm generated by those sun-kissed days on the Birmingham beach last July.



East

The East region has successfully delivered eight senior adult leagues this season, with four divisions for both men's and women's disciplines.

Eight men's and eight women's teams have also taken part in the monthly Eastern Region Volleyball Series.

The Junior Grand Prix series were another great success as they provided fabulous opportunities for our junior players as they were able to learn, grow and compete through playing matches. It was a rewarding and worthwhile experience as we saw the progress and passion for the sport from our junior players who took part in the series.

The Inter-Regional championships were held in May 2023 – all our junior players had an amazing time - our U15s came 6th (Boys) and 7th (Girls) and our U17s 6th (Girls) and 3rd (Boys).



Regional Reports



We also hope to increase the number of coaches and referees within our Region by running more courses in 2023-24. We currently have four coaches from Cambridge Volleyball Club currently completing the Assistant coach award course.

A huge thank you to our brilliant coaches and referees - Volleyball wouldn't be the same without their dedication and commitment to the sport.

We hope to invite more members to be a part of the Eastern Volleyball Federation (EVF) committee so that the Region can be developed in the way its members want it to.



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VOLUNTEERS. PLAYERS. COACHES.
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