



THE CHANGING FACE OF SPORT

 **VOLLEYBALL
ENGLAND**
ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019

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Deserved recognition to Volleyball England's fantastic volunteers, partners and sponsors

In England, volleyball is a very inclusive sport and has embraced diversity in all areas and at all levels.

Our board is made up of 62% male and 38% female members, with 25% of the members from a BAME background. We have an independent Chair and two independent Directors, in line with the Sporting Code of Governance. The staff also has a good gender

balance – 75% of our Senior Management Team are women and our whole staff team has a 50% gender balance. We are also a disability confident employer with a recruitment process that encourages people with disabilities to become part of our organisation.

Across our competitions, there is fantastic diversity. There is a gender balance of 52% male and 48% female participation, while the National

Volleyball League includes 50% of participants coming from non-British backgrounds. In the flagship scheme to increase participation in the sport, the HEVO programme has 37% of participants from BAME backgrounds.

If you would like to know more about Volleyball England's commitment to diversity, visit http://www.volleyballengland.org/about_us/equality_and_diversity



WELCOME

The Annual Report is an important look back - and forward - says Chair Adam Walker



▲ Adam Walker

The Annual Report is a look back at the work that has happened over the past 12 months. The volleyball community are often that busy delivering the sport, that there are not as many opportunities to review what we've done as we would probably like. The report gives us a chance to reflect on the last year and consider what this means for the future.

You will have read how the landscape of sport is changing, with less government funding going into sports and national governing bodies. The emphasis is on all sports to become more sustainable. In 2019-20, volleyball received £593,000 and this will be reduced to £457,000 in 2020-21. Volleyball is facing a challenge to adapt and find new ways of working.

While that is the reality we face, these pages serve as a reminder that the strength of the sport has always been in the volleyball community. It is the clubs, volunteers, players, officials and organisers who are at the centre of delivering the nation's volleyball experience.

As registered clubs, officials and coaches, as well as volunteers in working groups, on the board and at events, many are part of Volleyball England too. We're fortunate to have the HUB staff who can deliver key services, including coaching and refereeing qualifications, competitions, talent programmes, as well as club support with safeguarding, funding and management. However, Volleyball England has always been a volunteer-led organisation and it extends beyond the HUB to a host of dedicated people who are part of delivering services.

The financial reality it faces means that Volleyball England can't do everything we would like it to do. But it remains the volleyball community's organisation, committed to representing you and



▲ It's been a busy year of volleyball.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Volleyball England is committed to ensuring we comply with the Sport England and UK Sport Code of Governance. The code provides guidance and support on how to ensure we are open and transparent and provide our members and stakeholders access to important information which helps to improve accountability and supports stakeholder engagement. For the Volleyball England Annual Governance Statement, visit: www.volleyballengland.org/about_us/about_us_governance



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN.

▲ People are involved in volleyball in so many different roles.



▲ Volleyball England is there to support the sport at all levels.



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS.

▲ Many clubs, officials, coaches and volunteers are part of Volleyball England.

improving how it operates.

In this year's Annual Report, you'll see an openness about the future and a reflection of what has happened in the last 12 months; you'll get a snapshot of how, even with diminishing resources, the great things that happen in the sport are down to the strength of the volleyball community.

The volleyball community's spirit, knowledge and expertise, which is one of the key areas Volleyball England aims to develop and support, will be vital for the future. We can all build a vision of what can be achieved and, more importantly, work together to achieve it. 🐦

VOLLEYBALL'S JOURNEY

While the future brings challenges, history shows that volleyball has been constantly evolving since it arrived in this country

The landscape of sport in this country is changing – as it always has. As volleyball faces the need to evolve again, looking back can be a tonic that provides inspiration and realism moving forward.

Having formed in 1955, the volleyball federation of this country, which would later be branded Volleyball England, grew for a near decade before a breakthrough. Volleyball became an Olympic sport at the 1964 Tokyo Games, and that year the federation became part of the International (FIVB) and European Volleyball Federations (CEV).

Volleyball also gained recognition at home that year with the Department of Education and Sport granting £650. For perspective, the average wage of the time is reported as being around £1,000 but it was the start of receiving central funding which the sport still relies on to this day.

The sixties continued to be a time of change as more people became invested in the sport. The federation came to focus on volleyball in England, as Scotland set up its own federation.

The National Volleyball League (NVL) began in 1968 for both the men's and women's games although there had been a London league, local leagues and a Motorway league. The women's NVL had fewer teams so experimented with different formats until 1977 when it adopted more the structure seen today.

The country was represented at international level too. The national team received some funding



CREDIT: ©BM TOTTERDELL

Don Anthony (right) founded the association.

to support the teams in getting to matches and competitions, but it was estimated that in 1965 each international athlete was contributing £150 to play.

CENTRAL FUNDING

After its formation in 1972, the Sports Council became the body for distributing government funds to sport. Membership numbers were important to the amount of allocation from the Sports Council and the federation gained its first paid for officer in 1973. Canadian Barrie MacGregor came in with 75 per cent of his salary being funded by the Sports Council. By 1975, there were 215 clubs, compared to 117 affiliated clubs and schools a decade before.

Government policy for sport was beginning to emerge, as the political leaders were beginning to realise the resonance of sport in the electorate. Sport gained momentum with a more independent Sports Council and the number of indoor sports facilities exploding, with leisure centres increasing from less than 30 in 1971 to over 400 in 1981.

By 1988, 41 per cent of volleyball's income came from the Sports Council. Affiliations were continuing to grow with 510 clubs by 1985 and beach volleyball began to come to prominence. Sport lost some government backing though, as Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was indifferent to sport but sponsorships had been good, the membership remained resolute and numbers boomed to an all-time peak of 1200 clubs in 1994.

The National Lottery funding began that year and the Sports Council, which later was replaced by Sport England, had the responsibility to distribute those funds. Volleyball was classified as a category C sport though and received less funding.



CREDIT: ©BM TOTTERDELL

▲ Beach volleyball emerged in the eighties.

Moving into the early noughties, some funding was available to the Regional Associations channeled through the Regional Sports Councils and later the Counties, rather than going directly to the national governing body. The headquarters was established at the Loughborough Technology Centre with eight staff in 2003 but the English Volleyball Association continued to be driven by volunteers as the main workforce through commissions, events and regions.

LONDON 2012

The number of clubs plummeted over the next decade to 395 in 2005 but there was a significant boost as London was awarded the 2012 Olympic Games. Great Britain competed at indoor volleyball for the first time at the 2012 Games with a funded volleyball programme for all three disciplines through the British Volleyball Federation.

More money was being poured into sport and volleyball benefitted from this. Volleyball England received a grant total of £5.6 million for 2009 to 2013, and a further £5.1 million for the 2013-17 cycle. Staffing numbers soared to over 30, with a variety of programmes, such as Go Spike and Volleyball Relationship Managers. Despite the high level of investment, participation only steadily grew reaching 449 affiliated clubs in 2017.

The landscape was already beginning to change



CREDIT: ©BM TOTTERDELL

▲ The England women's team in action in the eighties.

again though. In the wake of the credit crunch and changing political times, funding for sport has been gradually withdrawn as sport joins the queue for public money along with vital services, such as the NHS and uniformed services. Government policy had also shifted to an 'Active Nation' which focuses on a wider range of ways of getting people active, not necessarily through sport.

After the boom of funding surrounding the Olympics, Volleyball England had to cut its cloth. 2017 saw a reduction of over half the HUB staff, down to the current number of 15. The organisation emerged from a difficult place by working with Sport England to restructure its governance and re-set its targets to ensure it still received central funding.

The funding for the 2017-21 cycle was broken into instalments as volleyball proved its credentials to Sport England. £1.3 million was awarded until 2019, with funding then being reduced to £1.05m for the latter two years of the current cycle.

Providing such a wide range of services from the National Talent Pathway and NVL, to education and club support, the association now has the challenge of becoming more sustainable while offering what the membership needs. The volleyball community are the constant thread through this history – they are the sport – and it is by coming together, as it has done before, that the future will be shaped. 📌

THANKS TO...

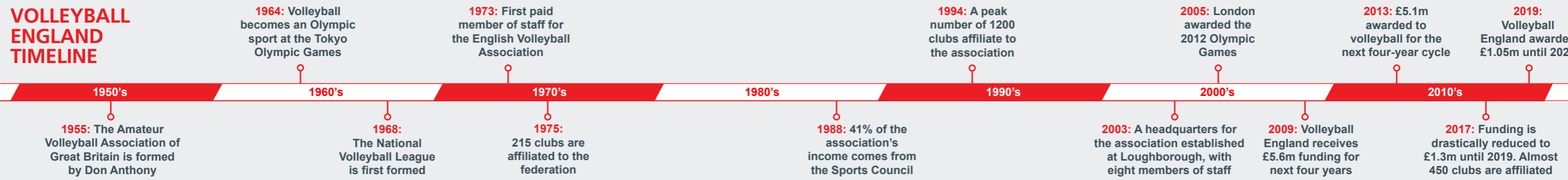
This feature would not have been possible without the help of former 3Touch editor Barbara Totterdell. A stalwart of the volleyball community, Barbara is undertaking the paramount task of charting a detailed history of volleyball in a book. She provided her research to allow us to give a brief history of the association.



CREDIT: ©BM TOTTERDELL

▲ An early sitting volleyball demonstration from 1992.

VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND TIMELINE



CHAIR'S REPORT

This year's achievements provide inspiration says Adam Walker, as he recognises what needs to change to move the sport forward



▲ Adam Walker

As my second year as Chair of Volleyball England draws to its conclusion, we can all look back with great pride at what has been achieved during the last year.

A snapshot of the sport's activities provides many highlights. Through the incredible and tireless commitment of our 382 affiliated clubs, who are admirably supported by over 697 registered coaches and 630 officials, the sport has provided a highly enjoyable and developmental experience to many thousands of junior and senior players. Notably, 4000 of these participants made an active decision to take part in Volleyball England competitions in 2018-19.

Running in parallel, our sports infrastructure has been significantly strengthened, with over 4000 people now actively involved in our HEVO programme. While through the delivery of 45 educational courses we have been able to support and enhance the skills, knowledge and experience of 696 learners.

Underpinning this, we must never forget the vast and almost immeasurable contributions made by the sport's national, regional and club volunteers. More often than not these incredibly dedicated people carry out their administrative and organisational tasks outside of the everyday gaze.

While we are, and remain, committed to encouraging new people to take up and enjoy our great sport, we must also look to support our most talented performers. Through the Talent Pathway we help and improve over 100 of our most talented performers, many of whom go on to achieve fantastic things. Most notably, during last year we saw great performances from athletes who have made their debuts at senior level, earned places at a senior academy university, achieved volleyball scholarships at American universities, have since gone on to play professionally and represented their country at youth level.



▲ There's been a lot of volleyball activity this year.

“WE MUST EMBRACE THE FACT THAT WE ARE A SPORT THAT IS RELIANT ON THE ENDEAVOURS OF OUR VOLUNTEERS”



▲ Upskilling the volleyball community through courses and conferences is an important part of Volleyball England's role.

EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Collectively, we have achieved such great outcomes with significantly less statutory funding than we have ever had before. This demonstrates two key points relating to our ongoing success. Firstly, we must embrace the fact that we are a sport that is reliant on the endeavours of our volunteers. Looking at next year and beyond we must make sure it is easy and appealing to volunteer within our sport and that this involvement is rewarded with a fulfilling experience.

Secondly, we must accept that sport in general is facing a significant finance challenge with funding being reduced next year. Given that statutory funding is not going to increase in the foreseeable future, we must take greater control of our income generation potential. While the relaunch and reinvigoration of the sports charitable arm, the Volleyball England Foundation, will allow us to access new trust income, it will not solve all our income generating challenges.

As a sport, we will need to be assertive and bold in our pursuit of commercial partnerships and we must be equally courageous in our efforts to generate additional income through those playing the game. I fully appreciate that this latter point may not be palatable to many. However, the collaborative development of this area is one of the only ways in which we can embed sustainable growth.

At this point last year, I openly acknowledged that we had spent the previous year progressively



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN

moving away from a perilous business position. Although we are certainly not out of the woods yet, we have made impressive and measurable progress, a point positively illustrated by Sport England, who a year ago were portraying us an example of how not to do it and have this year used us an example of good practice.

To further broaden our appeal, a dedicated team have spent a significant amount of time presenting the case for Beach Volleyball to be included within the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

It gives me immense pleasure to announce that this professional approach has resulted in our inclusion within the games. We now have a few exciting years to capitalise on this fantastic opportunity and develop the best possible teams.

CHALLENGING TIMES, POSITIVE APPROACH

From a personal point of view, I have had an extremely busy period at work. Consequently, I have taken time to reflect on my own performance as your Chair. Although I have done several things well, I am very critical of myself for not being as visible out and about in the sport. Although it is a challenge to balance both demands, I am fully committed to being more involved within 2019.

In conclusion, we as a sport have many things to be proud of and many reasons to be optimistic about our future. At the same time, we as a sport must be reflective and acknowledge the many



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTO

▲ Volleyball relies on people taking up a wide variety of roles including volunteers, coaches and referees.

challenges we face. Having done this, we must be brave and decisive in our future endeavours. Sometimes this may require us to go out on a limb and potentially ruffle a few feathers.

I very much look forward to collectively enjoying our success and to collaboratively embarking on finding and delivering solutions to our future challenges. While it won't be easy, let's do all we can to make it fun!

Thanks to every one of you for your ongoing efforts and support, they are very much appreciated. 🙌

▲ Talented players have had the chance to excel.

1828
players competed in the National Volleyball League

696
learners have engaged in volleyball courses this year

There are **382** affiliated volleyball clubs

CEO REPORT

As Volleyball England must continue to evolve, the togetherness of the volleyball community will be crucial says Janet Inman



▲ Janet Inman

It's great to take time to reflect on the challenges and successes over the last year and contemplate what the next 12 months might hold.

Perhaps the biggest achievement, from my perspective, was that Volleyball England became compliant with the UK Sport and Sport England Code of Governance. Without this we aren't eligible to receive government funding. The financial backing we receive from Sport England makes up a significant part of our total income; about 60% in the last three years.

With further reductions to our government grant coming, the challenge we face going forward is how to manage all the programmes and events our members expect. This isn't a challenge unique to volleyball, all sports are being instructed to reduce their dependence on central funding.

As an organisation, we have made significant economies and efficiencies over the last three years; reducing the staff team by half, downsizing to a smaller office, cutting back on back office costs and using technology to reduce costs.

We are also focused on finding ways to increase our income and ensuring we make the most of the limited resources we have. In the next 12 months, we will bid for funding for the 2021-25 cycle. We will need to show the impact of the work we have been doing and make a case for continued financial support.

ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

Despite the limited resources, the HUB team have continued to support the delivery of programmes and events, supported by our amazing volunteer workforce. We were delighted to see in the Club Survey 2018, the results of which were published in October, 87% of respondents felt that Volleyball England had maintained or improved the service to our members, in spite of the cuts to resources. Gaining a better understanding of the membership was a key aim this year and will continue to be a top priority. Safeguarding, competitions and our education programmes were identified as areas that our members valued the most.

The heart of our sport is our clubs. Through the Club Survey, our membership asked for more support in applying for funding, developing a junior



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN.



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS.



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS.



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS.

section and marketing their clubs. So new advice documents have been shared and we also provided clubs with GDPR guidance, with the new rules applying to all organisations, no matter what size. This year's AGM on Saturday 27th July will also feature the inaugural Club Conference. This will see workshops on volleyball club development led by experts, including the top areas clubs asked for in the survey. It's part of Volleyball England's commitment to listen to the membership and be a trusted source of support and advice.

Another area where you, the membership, had requested change was in our coaching courses. Following the revamp of the Level 1, the Level 2 coaching course was relaunched this year to make them both aligned to the 6 v 6 game. We must have coaches who are appropriately trained and skilled in developing players at all levels. Both have been well received this year by tutors and learners alike.

Volleyball England continues to provide opportunities for talented athletes to develop through training camps and competitions. We're grateful that the athletes have supported this by contributing more and it's true that the maintenance of this performance pathway is only possible through the dedication of the coaches and support staff that give their time and skill to helping others

achieve their playing ambitions. I want to thank you all for your continued support. We must have a performance pathway to support players' aspirations and give them the opportunity to represent their country.

MOVING FORWARD

The focus for the last year has been about maintenance, not growth. However, now, with the support of our volunteer workforce, we can start to look at how we can develop our sport. I would like to thank the unsung heroes, our volunteer workforce: the coaches, referees, club members and all the others that week in, week out, support at local, regional and national level. There would be no volleyball without you.

As finances become more scarce, volleyball will become more reliant on its volunteer workforce to allow it to thrive. The board, delivery leads and staff are already talking about the plan for 2021-25. We will not be able to deliver this without the volunteers that make our sport work.

The HUB team will be there as a central source of support and guidance, but with such a small team, delivering volleyball will rely on our volunteer network. I'm old enough to remember when this was the norm and how much I enjoyed being part

of that volunteer delivery team; putting down the floor at Cup Finals, being a cadet team manager, helping to develop strategy as a county and regional chair.

I'm sure there are more people who would relish the opportunity to give something to the game – it's rewarding and appreciated. Volleyball has always been a volunteer-led sport; please contact us if you would like to be part of that volunteer family – we need you now as much as ever.

A VOLLEYBALL COMMUNITY

I hear people talk about 'Volleyball England' as if it is a faceless person. Volleyball England is a community – our community. Everyone who plays, volunteers and supports in any way are part of Volleyball England. The representatives of this community, your board, elected by you, are on a mission: to develop the long-term sustainability of volleyball; to make it a self-sufficient organisation that connects with our volleyball community at all levels.

A new day is dawning for volleyball and sport across England. We need to accept the changes; we might not like them but to continue, we must evolve. We can't do this without your support. Remember, we are all Volleyball England. 🙌

1. These young volunteers were on hand at the National Cup Finals!

2. Volleyball is a volunteer-led sport.

3. All sports are receiving less funding.

4. The clubs are a foundation of the sport.

“THE HEART OF OUR SPORT IS OUR CLUBS”

FINANCIAL REPORT

Chief Operating Officer Stewart Dunne gives an update on Volleyball England's finances



▲ Stewart Dunne

2018-19 has seen the finance team continue the work of the previous 18 months and further consolidate Volleyball England's financial procedures. A key element of this has been effective budgeting and stringent cost controls that have once again seen income exceed expenditure.

Following three years of losses, it is very pleasing that for the second consecutive year we are able to report a positive result in our accounts. The business continues to operate in a streamlined manner and all opportunities are taken to gain value for money for the resources we have.

As is well known, the business has been operating on reduced exchequer funding and we have met this challenge full on and ensured that we have maximised the programmes we deliver. During the period of recovery, more focus was placed on establishing a secure business platform, which we are happy to report is now in place. This will see key programmes, such as Volleyball Futures and club development, expanded at a pace in 2019-20.

Volleyball England recognises it is here to serve the volleyball community and during 2019-20 you will see the new community platform – VolleyZone – become a key component of how we communicate

▼ Supporting clubs and delivering programmes will continue to be a priority.



▲ The federation has been working to gain a better understanding of the volleyball community.

and understand the needs of volleyballers in England. Only with insight can we ensure we develop programmes and products that are demanded by the volleyball family.

The surplus generated this year has replenished, to a small extent, the reserves needed to run a business and gives Volleyball England the stability of three months of operating funds. Part of this key financial stability was the introduction of a Financial Controller, who has worked long and hard to ensure we follow the processes established two years ago. The Financial Controller's role is of key importance and, as such, this role has been added to the senior management team (SMT). This explains the increase year-on-year on SMT costs and reflects in the decrease in HUB costs.

We still face fiscal challenges in 2019-20 with our central funding dropping by £136,000 next year. While we will need to change the ways in which we work, the endeavours of the last 18 months mean the drop doesn't pose a challenge to our existence and we can make positive decisions for the sport. With the professional and vigilant attitude of all involved, financial stability is getting closer. 🐦

“FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR WE ARE ABLE TO REPORT A POSITIVE RESULT IN OUR ACCOUNTS”



MANAGING THE MONEY

A look at how Volleyball England has managed its finances in the last 12 months

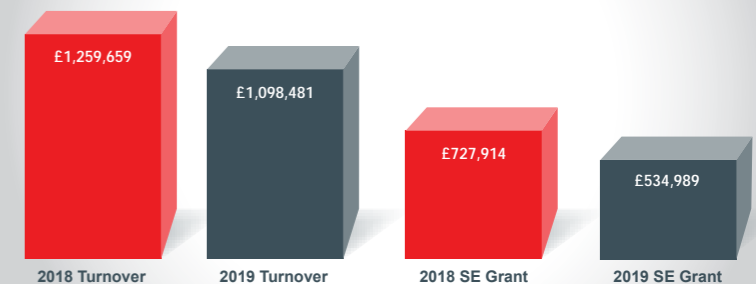
Where did the money come from?

Sport England 18-19 Grant	£534,989
Additional Sport England Grant	£13,297
Other Grants	£8,408
Commercial Income	£50,278
Talent - General	£69,761
Technical - Courses	£56,479
Children & Young People	£2,892
Membership	£57,725
DiSE	£101,546
Competitions and Events	£203,107
Total	£1,098,482

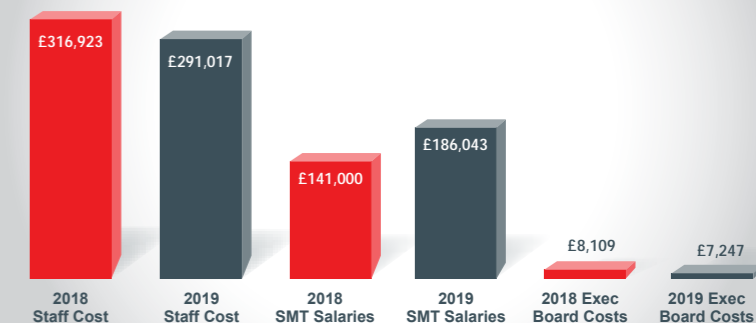
Where did the money go?

Operating Costs	£206,116
Salaries	£477,060
Talent - General	£121,000
Technical - Courses	£30,087
Commercial Costs	£11,877
Competitions and Events	£121,693
Children & Young People	£57,655
Total	£1,025,488

Volleyball England Turnover and Grant Funding 2018 vs 2019



Volleyball England - Staff and SMT Costs 2018 vs 2019



THE HEART OF THE SPORT

As the centre of the volleyball community, the core market is crucial to the sport's future says Sam Jamieson



▲ Samantha Jamieson, Core Market Officer

Last year, I wrote about the need for volleyball to become more sustainable in order to secure a brighter future for the sport. As those who are committed to volleyball on a regular basis, the core market is at the heart of the sport, and that vision.

We're adjusting to a reality where government funding for sports is in decline. It's also Volleyball England's main source of income, so cuts in Sport England funding mean we're having to adapt.

Funding works on four-year cycles around the Olympic games. While previous four-year cycles saw volleyball awarded over £1.25m per year, the current 2017-21 cycle saw us receive £593,000 for 2019-20, the third year of the cycle. Next year, we face a further reduction to £457,000 for 2020-21.

It's not just volleyball. Across all sports there is an increased emphasis on becoming more sustainable. So the focus for this year was to work with the core market to deliver progressive change to build towards becoming more sustainable. I am pleased to say we've had many great responses.

The parents of the young people in the National Talent Pathway decided they would rather make a greater investment in the programme, instead of what it offers being reduced. While a fantastic group of volunteers stepped up to lead on the delivery of some competitions.

Important strategic decisions were made too. After six years, we decided not to host NEVZA age group championships and the Super 8s Finals. While we worked with valued partners to outsource some services, such as the ClubMark accreditation, which is now delivered by local sports partnerships.

This has saved money and time to work on

“NO ONE LIKES HAVING TO GIVE MORE BUT THE REALITY IS THAT WE ARE LEARNING TO LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS”



▲ Volleyball England works to serve those at every level of the sport.



▲ The core market includes players, coaches, officials and volunteers.

projects that will help to safeguard the future. This includes the development of VolleyZone – the new portal which will make it easier for the core market to access resources and services. Providing better communication and service was a key part of the feedback from the Club Survey 2018 – that's why we've dedicated time to developing VolleyZone.

Gaining insight and collaborating with the core market has been key to our successes. The Level 2 coaching course has been refreshed with more content you said you wanted. While the launch of the Club Conference is the start of providing even more of the support that our clubs have asked for.

To me, it also highlights that working together, the volleyball community can overcome challenges to provide a quality volleyball experience.

The senior management team have been preparing for next year's reduced funding and completed a cost analysis of our activities. The results showed the stark reality of how much Sport England funding subsidises many of our programmes.

Everyone will need to share some of the cost to help to plug the gap left by declining funding. At the HUB, we're further streamlining costs.

No one likes having to give more but the reality is that we are learning to live within our means so that volleyball can become the master of its own destiny. By all working together that can become the future. 🐦



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN

CORE MARKET REPORT

Working with the membership has seen improvements in a wide range of services, says Core Market Coordinator Rob Payne

▲ The clubs are a foundation of the core market.

This year has seen steady progress as Volleyball England strives to understand the core market better and provide more valued services. We have worked to engage the core market more and be insight-led in what we do. This had led to improvements in many services and the development of longer-term projects which should pay dividends in the future.

A reduction in funding next year will pose challenges but Volleyball England's role is to continue to support and add value to what the core market do, at every level of the game. While we may not be able to do everything, we will continue to be a trusted source of resources and advice for our members.

Delving into this year underlines the variety of ways Volleyball England supports the membership and we only want that to continue to expand.

UNDERSTANDING OUR MEMBERS

As a member organisation, we know that gaining a better understanding of who the volleyball community are and how Volleyball England can support them is crucial – for the sustainability of the sport and so we can improve the service to members. That's why attaining insight about the membership is a key priority in the 2017-21 strategy.

This year saw us conduct the Club Survey 2018

which was sent to all secretaries of affiliated clubs. Gaining a great response rate of 25%, the survey aimed to research their perceptions of Volleyball England, identify the areas that we provided which were of the most value and areas where more support was required. Three main themes were identified for more support: gaining funding for clubs, addressing challenges with venues and marketing clubs in their community. This inspired the launch of the Club Conference which will see a series of expert-led workshops for volleyball clubs, covering each of these topics and more. The aim is to make the event a regular fixture in the calendar, with the inaugural Club Conference on 27th July in Loughborough.

As well as highlighting where more support is needed, the survey gave an overall indication of how the membership rate the service from Volleyball England (scored at 5.53 out of 10), giving a benchmark to strive to improve on moving forward.

The introduction of the new membership platform, VolleyZone, which we have been putting a lot of work into, should really help. The platform will be open to anyone interested in the sport, allowing us to gain a better understanding of who is involved in the sport, as well making it easier and more efficient ▶

Clubs benefited from **116** DBS checks this year



▲ VolleyZone will become the administrative home of volleyball.

to access Volleyball England services. The West Midlands Volleyball Association will also be piloting their league registrations for teams and players through the platform. The future aspiration will be that this can reduce the administration burden put upon players, clubs and leagues.

MEMBERSHIP

In 2018-19 there were 382 clubs affiliated to Volleyball England; this was a reduction of 38 from the previous year. The reduction was mainly due to the changes to the colleges' affiliation structure, which resulted in a drop from 59 to 13 colleges affiliating. The positive news is there were 26 new clubs that affiliated, highlighting a new cohort of clubs engaged in the sport.

The focus for 2019-20 is on supporting clubs to become more sustainable and reducing the number that fold. HUB research has also identified that there are over 800 teams playing volleyball in 40 leagues in England, of which 95 are part of unaffiliated clubs. Encouraging those clubs to affiliate is important too, as the volleyball community is stronger together in greater numbers.

In terms of individuals memberships, there was a significant growth in coach registrations to 697 this year, from 478 in 2017-18. This increase was mainly due to a surge in the number of Level 1 coaching courses ran, which include free coach registration for a year. Referee registrations also saw a growth, increasing by 41 to a total of 630.

COURSES

A staggering 235 coaches were trained through the Volleyball England Level 1 Introduction to Coaching course. The course was relaunched after the membership said it needed to be adapted to better suit their needs and the feedback about the course content and style of delivery has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Level 2 coaching course was also refreshed to follow on from the Level 1 content, with the award focusing on the 6 v 6 game. The early courses have been very well received and with the volume of Level 1 coaches trained this year, the focus will be to offer those learners the opportunity to continue with their development into the second tier of training.

Volleyball England has facilitated 45 courses this year, with the highlights of 265 learners engaging in Grade 4 refereeing courses, 118 teachers trained in delivering volleyball, 40 people receiving welfare training and 258 learners taking coaching qualifications, including a beach coaching clinic.



▲ Referee registrations increased this year.

“A STAGGERING 235 COACHES WERE TRAINED THROUGH THE VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND LEVEL 1 INTRODUCTION TO COACHING COURSE”



▲ There's been an increase in the number of coaches, to nearly 700.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding continues to be an area in which the membership value highly support from Volleyball England.

This year has again seen us awarded a green rating for safeguarding by the CPSU of the NSPCC, highlighting us as a model of best practice. Clubs also completed 116 new DBS checks, which are provided free of charge by Volleyball England, saving clubs over £10 on each check. Nine clubs also benefitted from specialised safeguarding support from trained HUB staff when a formal investigation was required.

Aiming to grow the network of Club Welfare Officers (CWO) – those who take the lead on safeguarding and welfare at their clubs – we have introduced a Club Welfare Officer forum. This online forum is used to share best practice. In recognition of the vital role CWOs have at clubs, this year a new award has been introduced into the Volleyball England Annual Awards: the 'Serena Morten Safeguarding Award'. This will be awarded to an individual who displays the fantastic qualities that Serena did towards safeguarding in volleyball.

CLUB SUPPORT

The clubs are at the centre of the sport in this country and Volleyball England is striving to keep supporting them and developing even more value for their membership.

A purpose-built Funding Guide, including useful resources, has been provided and some clubs are using their member benefit of the Funding Feedback Service, receiving tailored advice and feedback on their club's bid for funding, with the most recent bids resulting in two clubs receiving over £10,000 in grants between them.

The introduction of the new GDPR laws in May 2018 also saw Volleyball England provide advice for our clubs. A series of advice articles, including a source of template documents and wording to use at your club, were well received.

We have tried to communicate better with our clubs too, sending out direct emails to club secretaries to keep in contact with updates and



The HEVO programme saw over **4000** students play recreational volleyball this academic year.

resources, such as Club Matters – a brilliant toolkit from Sport England on a wide range of areas of club management.

It is Volleyball England's role to stay up to date with the sporting landscape and support volunteers in running clubs. The introduction of VolleyZone will help reduce the burden on club volunteers as it will make the administration more efficient and the aim is to develop it into a one-stop shop of resources for the volleyball community.

YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

This year a formal Children and Young People working group has been formed. Driven by the lead Nick Shaffery, a series of networking events have been held to audit the provision of junior volleyball, set out aims and provide direction for future developments. There has been extensive support for the events, demonstrating the passion within the volleyball community to offer more for the younger generations.

In the short time in the role, Nick has led a group to re-develop the school games resources, these are used as a framework for delivering volleyball to young people. Designed to make it easy for facilitators and enjoyable for children, these resources have been published. The next step is to digitise the Volleyball England Let's Play Volleyball resources, which show how to teach children volleyball.

HEVO PROGRAMME

This year the Higher Education Volleyball Officer (HEVO) programme has made strides towards engagement with the volleyball community.

All of this year's 68 HEVOs and Senior HEVOs have their profile on the Volleyball England website allowing engagement with local clubs and leagues. Community leagues are becoming more responsive to accommodating University teams, this has involved having to show flexibility around start dates for their fixtures and breaks during university holidays. However, the impact is significant with university clubs demonstrating substantial numbers of players.

The introduction of HEVO transitions was piloted in the HEVO Conference. This aimed to support the HEVO alumni when they leave university to set up new volleyball sessions in their new communities. Despite a good uptake of HEVO Alumni with interest in the programme, it has not become established due to alternative priorities that students face when leaving university.

The sustainability of the HEVO programme has been examined over the last three years. Each year efforts have been made to reduce the need for Sport England funding on the programme. For 2019-20, universities will be charged £100 for their first HEVO place on the conference and £250 for further places. With a rating by the students of 4.7/5 last year the value is evident and therefore, the impact of the fees is forecast to be minimal. 🐦

▲ The Children and Young People working group have been working on junior development.



▲ Younger generations are the future of volleyball.

TECHNICAL AND TALENT REPORT

The strength of the talent programmes are the people involved, reports Technical and Talent Coordinator Gillian Harrison



▲ Gillian Harrison

► The Talent Pathway coaches are experts in junior development.

With the backdrop of a reduction in government funding for volleyball, we have had to continue to adapt the national team programmes and seek new approaches to ensure we provide the opportunity for talented athletes to progress and develop through the Talent Pathway.

With a further reduction in funding coming in 2020-21, there will be more challenges to meet to adjust to the financial reality. What this year has shown though is that the resilience of our programmes lies in the people involved. They are the driving force behind the achievements of the programmes, with some great results in the last 12 months.

NATIONAL TALENT PATHWAY

The price for camps increased from £20 to £90 and athletes now pay the full cost of travel, accommodation and entry fees for competitions. When we knew the costs would need to be increased, we communicated with the parents and spoke about small cutbacks that could be made to save money. They were incredibly supportive and insisted they would rather contribute more to give their children the best experience.

Securing the cadet and junior training base at the National Volleyball Centre means we can provide monthly camps, where the best athletes can train together. Most importantly though, they are working with coaches who are outstanding at developing junior talent – that’s the real value of the programme. The coaches are not just some of the best in this country, they would be recognised beyond these

“AWARDED BY 1ST 4SPORT, THE LEVEL 2 COACHING QUALIFICATION HAS BEEN REFRESHED FOLLOWING FEEDBACK FROM THE MEMBERSHIP”



CREDIT: LINCOLN DOKWANI

shores for their ability to nurture talent.

Still conscious of the increased costs though, the HUB’s Vicki Carr has worked hard to find external grants to support athletes in the programme. This has generated over £74,000 that goes directly to 37 athletes to fund their volleyball. Backing the Best and Sports Aid are the main contributors, along with local charity foundations, schools and sports agencies.

We were grateful to receive 10 Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme awards. These have been split between men and women, and indoor and beach athletes. The programme supports athletes with some funding and some access to sports services, such as physiotherapy and psychology.

The Talent Pathway and its quality coaching continues to have a great impact on athletes’ futures. Many athletes within the programme continue to push their volleyball development alongside their studies, with athletes attending universities which are senior academies, earning scholarships at US universities or pursuing playing at a high club level in England and abroad.

As well as taking pride in the athletes, we have been buoyed by the feedback from parents, to keep finding ways to keep the programme going and developing where we can.

VOLLEYBALL NATIONAL SQUADS

The NEVZA Championships 2018 were the main competitive focus for the youth England squads.

The cadet girls finished fifth out of eight teams in the Under 17 championships in Ikast, Denmark, while the junior women were edged out 3-1 in the bronze medal match on home soil in the Under 19 competition.

As part of the cycle of volunteer coaching roles, both teams were appointed with new head coaches at the start of this year, with Danny Primus leading the Junior Women and Darren Lewis coaching the Cadet Girls. They immediately widened the pool of athletes for their squads.

They will be targeting improved results at the NEVZA 2019 championships. Danny began the Junior Women’s preparations for that at the Cornacchia World Cup in April where they enjoyed close matches against top French, Italian and German club sides. The Cadet Girls will face Israeli, Croatian and Slovenian opposition at the Sardinia Challenge in June, as part of their build up.

On the men’s side, a new cohort of Cadet Boys managed 7th place at the U17 NEVZA championship, gaining vital international experience. The Junior Men, aiming to contest the gold medal



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN

match, were disappointed to lose to Denmark in the bronze medal play-off. With new head coach Steve Anderson, they returned to the Cornacchia World Cup at Easter and tested themselves against high level opposition in readiness to contest the NEVZA U19 Championships which will be hosted in Finland in October.

The Cadet Boys head coach Luis Bello, scooped Ashley Cullen as their new team manager. Ashley’s international experience and professional background will be invaluable to the squad. Meanwhile, the Cadet Girls begin the search for a Team Manager as Amy Bell stepped down from the role.

The senior men’s and women’s teams have been at the sharp end of the financial cuts and have to be totally self-financing. Head coaches Maria Bertelli and Simon Loftus have been working hard to bolster the programme and encourage new players into their squads. We’re thankful to all the athletes who have been committed to the senior squads.

It remains a real challenge to find the estimated £50,000 per squad to enter the European Championships. On the plus side, younger athletes are grabbing the chance to step up from the Talent Pathway and play for the seniors, with Ben Lucas, Zakk Hadgett and Sam Marsh gaining their first

► The NEVZA Championships were the England youth team’s main focus.



► Javier and Joaquin Bello represented Great Britain at the Youth Olympic Games.

“A NEW MODEL IS BEING IMPLEMENTED FOR THE JUNIOR BEACH PROGRAMME”

► Jess Grimson and Vicky Palmer in action at the Continental Cup.

caps in the full international match against Scotland in June, while Calum Sage, Max Norton-Steele and Chester Searle debuted in a scrimmage game.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Javier and Joaquin Bello provided a real highlight of the year, as they represented Great Britain in the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires last October. They had an epic encounter with hosts Argentina in the quarterfinals to end with a superb 5th place finish. This matched their 5th place at the U19 World Championships in China, in July 2018; the highest ever finish for an England team.

Holly Bentley and Ellie Austin scaled new heights too, with their 9th place in the U20 European Beach Volleyball Championships in Anapa, Russia. Later in the summer, Ellie paired up with Katie Keefe in the Czech Republic for a record-equalling 9th, at the CEV U18 Beach Volleyball European Championship.

To ensure the continued development of talented beach volleyball athletes, within tighter financial constraints, a new model is being implemented for the junior beach programme.

As well as attending national team camps, the more than 60 committed young beach athletes will be signposted to one of the England Beach Volleyball Hubs. These are a network of beach volleyball coaching setups which will be more local to the athletes so they can receive quality coaching on a weekly basis.

Matt Rhymer and Luis Bello have been appointed as head coaches for the programme and they will play a key role in supporting the development of the coaching expertise at the HUBs and help direct athletes to appropriate domestic competitions.

The senior beach programme received a real lift with a successful application to the UK Sport Aspiration Fund to help Great Britain qualify beach



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS

volleyball teams for Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

The grant of £68,750 awarded to the British Volleyball Federation includes an element to deliver a social action plan designed to engage and inspire British communities in beach volleyball. The funds help England teams prepare for the Continental Cup, a two-year competition, which began in May 2019, and that provides a qualification route into the 2020 Olympic Games.

It was fantastic to see the men's team of Chris Gregory, Issa Batrane, Javier Bello and Phil Smith qualify for the second round. While despite missing out on qualification for round two, the women's team of Vicky Palmer, Jess Grimson, Ellie Austin and Anaya Evans performed really well and gained vital experience in a brilliant event at Leyton as international beach volleyball returned to England.

SITTING VOLLEYBALL

Amanda Pollard timed her arrival as Team Manager for the Great Britain Women's Sitting Volleyball team to coincide with the start of the 2020 Paralympic qualifying campaign. Head coach Ian Legrand hopes a blend of youth and experience will see the team progress through from the 2019 European Sitting Volleyball championships in Budapest in July.

The desire of the women sitting players to train and compete in major competitions, despite not receiving any funding, was recognised as UK Sport awarded them £11,000 to support their bid to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics. The team also set their own fundraising targets to support their costs and a generous £12,000 sponsorship from Credit Suisse has enabled the team to

intensify their preparations in the lead up to the qualification tournament.

The Sitting Volleyball Development Squad was strengthened following trials in March, with coach Richard Osborne transitioning athletes from the Sydney 2018 Invictus Games squad where Great Britain, under Richard's guidance, finished with a silver medal.

VOLLEYBALL FUTURES

Thirty-nine athletes and fifteen coaches from eight regions attended the inaugural Volleyball Futures Camp. The programme aims to spread knowledge on how to create the best environment to develop talented young players. The initial camp saw under 15 age group athletes and coaches find out what it takes to become a top volleyball player.

The athletes experienced two days packed with top tips on what to eat, how to combine volleyball and academic studies and a glimpse at the training it takes to become a top-level volleyball player. Coaches learned how to use the Volleyball Fundamentals – the vital stages of individual game play – to improve players' basic attack and defence skills, and how to create a safe, engaging physical development programme.

The Volleyball Futures camp will return next Easter for athletes born in 2006 and 2007. Before then, Volleyball Futures will feature a series of regional workshops for coaches and athletes to spread expertise and knowledge.

DIPLOMA IN SPORTING EXCELLENCE

There are currently 56 students on the programme which is an educational qualification taken alongside



further education, which prepares them for life as an athlete. It includes learning on sporting topics such as nutrition and mental skills but also includes finance management and lifestyle.

▲ The Volleyball Futures programme is aiming to share expertise.

TECHNICAL

Awarded by 1st4sport, the Level 2 coaching qualification has been refreshed following feedback from the membership. The four-day course now follows on from the Level 1 Introduction to Coaching Volleyball course, which was revamped last year and has been popular with learners.

The Level 2 course focuses on the 6 v 6 game and building learners knowledge and understanding of a game-based approach – this coaching method looks to develop players technically, tactically, physically and psychologically through sessions which replicate game-play situations. All attendees get a comprehensive resource pack which helps them complete the assessment tasks.

The membership said they wanted coaching courses which focused more on the 6 v 6 game. This is great example of how by working together, the membership benefit from a better service which uses the latest thinking in coach development. 🙌

“WE HAVE BEEN BUOYED BY THE FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS, TO KEEP FINDING WAYS TO KEEP THE PROGRAMME GOING AND DEVELOPING WHERE WE CAN”

▼ The Great Britain Women's Sitting Volleyball squad are aiming for Tokyo 2020.



COMPETITIONS REPORT

A new approach is needed if competitions are to continue providing highlights to thousands of the volleyball community, says Jonathan Moore

► The Cup Finals saw 11 superb matches, including this great battle between IBB Polonia and Durham.

This year has proved once again the positive impact competitions have on the volleyball community, but I feel we are at a crossroads with the competitions.

Volleyball England has continued to deliver fantastic competitions this season to the benefit of over 4000 players and hundreds of coaches, referees and volunteers.

We have focused on providing value to the membership and have taken steps to find new ways of working and streamline spending on events to make them more sustainable. We are, however, reaching the limit on what cost savings are available and practical.

When considering the full delivery costs of Volleyball England's competitions and events, income doesn't cover expenditure. With funding from Sport England to be reduced next year, the options available are to cancel certain events – which is not something we want to do – or find new ways of generating income and lowering costs for competitions, if we are going to be able to still deliver the events that the membership want.

As central funding for sport declines, Volleyball England needs to evolve to become more self-sustaining. Most sports federations use their events to generate income to allow the federation to fund other activity, whereas Volleyball England is currently making a loss on competitions and events. We need to change the approach.

Moving competitions and events around the country is one way of making them more



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS

accessible to the membership. We have been through successive tender processes for the National Cup Finals but have not been able to secure a different location, which means that we will continue to utilise the National Volleyball Centre, Kettering, for the Cup Finals. The National Volleyball Centre is often criticised, but I can assure members that it represents value for money for Volleyball England and the membership. Cheaper venues that offer the same number of courts and flexibility to set-up for different events do not exist. Volleyball England chose to continue its relationship with the National Volleyball Centre until end of May 2021, meaning we can continue to deliver competitions centrally for the next few years.

Delivering great competitions remains a top priority and we want to see the volleyball community produce more highlights like this year.

NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

Volleyball England engaged in a consultation process about a new competition model for the top tier of English volleyball. The Super 8s model was unsustainable as a disproportionate amount of National League income was being used to deliver the playoff finals.

Changing the competition format was a difficult decision to make given the reduction in the number of showcase events that Volleyball England would run, but the right decision given the organisation's

focus on sustainability.

Through the consultation process, the Super League was born. A 10-team competition meant that more teams would experience the top tier and required a reshuffling in the NVL league structure. The Super League's new format, split-league system, where all teams play each other once, before the division splits into two halves, has proved to be an engaging new concept.

The National Volleyball League maintained a healthy number of teams (131), including eight new teams for the 2018-19 season. There were notable performances across the divisions, with four teams shining brightest as they went undefeated all season long: London Lionhearts (Women's Division 3 South West), the University of Nottingham Volleyball (Women's Div 1), Weymouth Beach Volleyball Club (Men's Div 3 South) and IBB Polonia London (Men's Super League).

The National Volleyball League and, in particular, the Super League, were impacted by changes to the UK Immigration Tier 4 visa regulations, which resulted in an interesting end to the season. We hope that this issue is now in the past as we look forward to another exciting NVL season ahead.

VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND BEACH TOUR

The model for the Volleyball England Beach Tour (VEBT) has changed over the last few years, as we have moved from the HUB supporting the delivery of a small number of top-level events (5) in 2016, to working in partnership with beach volleyball event organisers to deliver a tour with



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS

► The Continental Cup was delivered thanks to support from Waltham Forest Council.

events for all abilities in 2017. This change led to more beach volleyball events being accessible to many more players.

Last season saw 21 VEBT events, while the launch of the UK Beach Tour (UKBT), which was unconnected to Volleyball England, saw over 40 more events held under their banner. This represented great growth in beach volleyball events across England.

For the 2019 season, Volleyball England are delighted to be working in partnership with UKBT as the official delivery partner for the VEBT. The UKBT consists of over 70 beach volleyball events throughout the UK aimed at all levels of player. The tournaments are categorised into 5 different levels, with 1 and 2-star events aimed at engaging beginner level players. The 3 and 4-star events are aimed at the more experienced players and the Grand Slam Series is for the nation's elite! This is a fantastic development for beach volleyball and I hope you will all support the events on offer.

In other beach volleyball events, Volleyball England have continued to support the delivery of the BUCS Beach Volleyball Championships alongside partners SportBU and Deep Dish. The event continues to grow and in 2019 will be welcoming 122 teams to the sand.

Volleyball England recently worked in partnership with SideOut and the London Borough of Waltham Forest to deliver the CEV Continental Cup – Phase 1, the start of the #RoadToTokyo at the new SideOut beach facility at the Feel Good Too Centre in Leyton, London. It was a fantastic event, ►

▼ International beach volleyball returned to England with the CEV Continental Cup.



Volleyball England delivered or supported over **15** competitions and events this year.

▼ Over 175 junior teams have entered Volleyball England competitions.



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS

“VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND IS CURRENTLY MAKING A LOSS ON COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS”



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS.

▲ Sitting volleyball has been very popular this year.

► Sweden did the double in the U19 NEVZA Championships.

which demonstrated that events of this type can be delivered in England with partner support and investment.

SITTING VOLLEYBALL

A record number of teams graced the Grand Prix Series this season. 17 teams in all took part in the Grand Prix Series, with a record 14 at a single Grand Prix event. It was also the most competitive season on record, and the first time that the top two teams at the Grand Prix finished level at the top of the league standings and had to be separated on total match points countback from all of their games throughout the season.

The competitive nature of the season didn't end there with the Grand Prix final going the distance. For a second year in a row Sheffield Volleyball Club claimed top spot over East London Lynx 3-2 (24-26, 25-18, 20-25, 26-24, 15-11).

10 Teams entered the Sitting Volleyball Cup in another good turnout for the competition. A fantastic one-day competition saw Sheffield Volleyball Club take home the gold once again, as Loughborough Fusion picked up the Shield trophy for a second year in a row.

NEVZA

Volleyball England delivered a Northern European Volleyball Zonal Association (NEVZA) youth competition for the sixth year in a row, with the third edition of the Under 19 Championships. The quality of the competition was as good as we have seen and gave the England teams the opportunity to test themselves against international opposition.

We had a fantastic group of volunteers help organise the event and we provided a free stream with scoreboard graphics via the Volleyball England YouTube channel, so people could follow every single game.

Despite the success of these events over the years, they come with considerable cost. On review, and after fulfilling our agreement to host the U19 event for three years, the board took the difficult decision not to stage the event next year. Due to a reduction in Sport England funding, hosting NEVZA again would have meant using income from membership competitions, making it unsustainable. While no longer hosting, England teams will enter, and we will be looking to try to bring international events to England in the future.

▼ Tendring Ladies VC were crowned the winners of the women's Super League.



“WE HAVE HAD OVER 175 TEAMS ENTER JUNIOR COMPETITIONS IN THIS LAST SEASON”



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN.

Over **500** young people play in each of the U15, U16 and U18 National Junior Championships.

SENIOR COMPETITIONS

The Student Cup has been running since the seventies and volunteers are fundamental to its longevity and success, and this year was no different. Volunteers oversaw all parts of the delivery of this year's event as the University of Essex did the men's and women's double, as their performance programmes go from strength to strength.

The National Cup saw 103 (50 men's and 53 women's) teams enter the competitions, with 19 of those coming from outside of the NVL. It was the first time since 2006-07 that the Cup welcomed more women's than men's teams.

The National Cup Finals format saw Volleyball England deliver 11 finals matches over two days on two courts at the National Volleyball Centre, Kettering, in what was a real celebration of volleyball. Having moved to the two-court format last year, and the introduction of three additional matches to the Cup Finals weekend this year, we looked to develop a larger pool of volunteers.

The event was used as a development weekend for Higher Education Volleyball Officers, with experienced volunteers helping to train all new volunteers. With a new model of volunteering, we were able to deliver a superb showcase, and everyone had a good experience, which will hopefully help to build the volunteer workforce moving forward.

JUNIOR COMPETITIONS

Junior competitions are one of the most important contact points between Volleyball England and the membership. We need to find a way to overcome the fact these competitions run at a significant deficit as it is imperative that the sport as a whole continues to invest in the next generation of volleyballers. While competition numbers naturally fluctuate, we have had over 175 teams enter junior competitions in this last season, which highlights the fantastic effort that clubs and regions put into junior development.

In 2018-19, the U15 competition format was changed to be in line with the U16 and U18 formats, and we learned a lot from the first year that this was implemented, which we will take forwards. We have also worked hard to limit the calendar conflicts between junior competitions and national squad training and competitions, but we appreciate that there are still some inevitable clashes.

Ongoing uncertainty surrounding Brexit impacted on the Inter Regionals as the nation took to the polls as part of the European Elections. The National Volleyball Centre took on the role as the main count location for Northamptonshire. We worked hard in connection with the Regional Working Group to find a solution. We forged new partnerships with alternative venues which saw



the University of Leicester and the University of Warwick host this prestigious event.

Having to find alternative venues late on can create a lot of stress, so I'd like to personally thank all those involved for their support during this testing time. I am pleased that we found a solution to allow this incredible competition to go ahead on the date planned which was what the region's most wanted, rather than change the dates, or worse, cancel. True to form it was a great event, which saw London win the U15 and U17 boys, while in the girls' competition, South East won the U15 competition and South West took gold in the U17.

LOOKING FORWARD

While we face a new financial reality, I hope we can continue to deliver a quality competitions service. Through the implementation of VolleyZone we will be able to improve our efficiency, making life better for everyone.

It's been a fantastic year, and I am sure you will all have your own highlights. As we look ahead to the 2019-20 season, we will continue to aim to give people more opportunities to play and be involved with volleyball. If you are interested in helping Volleyball England deliver events or would be interested in joining the Competitions Working Group, don't hesitate to contact us at competitions@volleyballengland.org

▲ Volleyball England will partner with UKBT to deliver the VEFT.

Over **800** people played competitive beach volleyball last year.

Over **35** people volunteered to help deliver the National Cup Finals.



REGIONAL REPORTS

We get an update on what's happened in the past year in the nine volleyball regions

YEAR IN NUMBERS

Northern Counties
21 TEAMS

Tees Valley
10 TEAMS

6 NVL TEAMS

2ND YEAR
of the Tynemouth
BEACH LEAGUE



5 TROPHIES
for North East
NVL teams

NORTH EAST

Chair: Keith Sowden
Web: www.ncva.org.uk / tvva.leaguerepublic.com



PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS

There was huge success for the NVL teams in the region, with Durham Women and Men winning the National Cups, Sunderland winning Men's Division 1, Sunderland winning Women's Division 2 North and Haughton Darlington taking the Men's Division 3 North title. There was also non-NVL team Newburn Panthers reaching the National Shield quarter-finals.

The Tynemouth Beach League ran for its second year, and there were successful beach tournaments at Tynemouth and South Shields. On the grass, the White Rose Tournament was a real hit.

On the junior front, Newburn U18 reached the last 8s again, while a schools' tournament was run at Sacred Heart School, organised by Newcastle VC through the Newcastle United KICKS programme. Unfortunately, due to a lack of coaches, there were no Inter Regional teams this year, although training sessions were held.

One of the highlights of the year was a 'meet and greet' exhibition match between Sunderland men and Durham men to welcome Newcastle VC to their new venue at the Newcastle Eagles Arena. The players put on junior and beginner sessions prior to the game.



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

We have the same issues as last year. We have a problem with volunteers for the North East Volleyball Association as people don't seem to understand its importance as a regional association. Our region is quite split with the two areas and there is difficulty finding out what's going in the south of the region. This was discussed at our last meeting and we hope to address it at our AGM.

The Tees Valley league has been struggling, although Northern Counties is running fine. The referee situation is dire at the moment, especially as we have several NVL clubs and teams.

NORTH WEST

Chair: Phil Chanin Web: www.facebook.com/NWVolleyballENG



HOW DO YOU REFLECT ON THE CURRENT STATE OF VOLLEYBALL IN YOUR REGION?

The North West region have continued to push its junior development commitment, with the boys U14s Regional Grand Prix now established alongside the girls. Both competitions have strong junior teams representing Gt. Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire.

The region has now both girls and boys' junior representation at Volleyball England Inter Regionals and continues the region's commitment to develop a sustainable development programme. This has led to junior players attending the Volleyball England Futures weekend and others gaining junior recognition at a national level. The region now has one boy in the England Cadets squad, five girls picked for England Juniors and six girls for England Cadets. The region has also provided international level junior competition by again attending Flying Scots international tournament, playing against Scotland and Northern Ireland representative teams.

North West junior clubs have continued to have strong performances at national age group competitions, with Urmston making national U15s girls' final and Tameside winning the U18s girls'.

The region has also seen two new sitting volleyball teams be set up this year, at City of



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN

Salford and Springfield (Ulverston). It is the region's intention next season to run its first regional sitting volleyball competition.

With regards to NVL, the region is well represented, with Intervolley Manchester making the Men's Shield finals and NWVA supported applications to play NVL from Liverpool (both men's & women's) and from Urmston.

On a local level, both the Manchester and Merseyside leagues continue to thrive, providing high quality local competitions. While over the summer, the North West now has a budding beach league at Crosby.

YORKSHIRE

Chair: Tim Godson Web: www.yorkshire.heyva.org.uk



PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

After re-entering the Inter Regional Competition last year, our juniors continued to grow with entries to most Volleyball England age group

competitions from the region with three teams entering in some of the competitions. A team from Leeds RGA also went to the U14 Juvoto event – to take part, their main aim, and also finished second.

Successful referee and coaching courses were held as the Association provided support to train new volunteers.

SHORT-TERM AIM

To embed junior volleyball in the four areas across the Yorkshire Region.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Embedding junior volleyball is a key part of overcoming our biggest challenge, which is to continue to maintain and grow volleyball in Yorkshire.



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS

YEAR IN NUMBERS

2 SENIOR LEAGUES

26 MEN'S TEAMS **6 MIXED TEAMS** **23 WOMEN'S TEAMS**



2 NEW TEAMS FOR SITTING VOLLEYBALL

12 ENGLAND JUNIORS FROM THE REGION

YEAR IN NUMBERS

13 NVL TEAMS

30 REGIONAL TEAMS



8 MIXED TEAMS



SHEFFIELD VC SITTING VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONS

YEAR IN NUMBERS

5 REGIONAL LEAGUES



TEAMS



388 MALE PLAYERS



277 FEMALE PLAYERS



WEST MIDLANDS

Chair: Aneel Khanna Web: www.wmva.org.uk



PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

To see Black Country VC plan and host the first U14 National JuVoTo festival in the region. There were 35 teams and over 140 juniors participating, as well as 13 young people volunteering to help run the event.

Junior participation is one of the key focus areas in the region and the regular regional JuVoLe and JuVoTo sessions underline our commitment to growing this area of volleyball. In addition, the appointment of Nick Shaffery and Pete Bragg to the Children & Young People Working Group ensure the West Midlands is able to influence junior development.

SHORT/LONGER TERM AMBITIONS

Continue to support junior development in the region, grow the volunteer workforce to support activities, support existing clubs with their development requirements and sign-post opportunities. See the region develop the option for sitting volleyball.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The West Midlands committee is experiencing the effects of losing the Volleyball England relationship



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN

manager, who provided valued development support to clubs and delivered activities within the region.

A number of clubs have withdrawn from the league this season. While support for beach volleyball, the Inter Regional Championships, and other demands mean that the current committee representatives are not able to expend the appropriate time required to ensure all areas are satisfactorily covered. Changes to the Volleyball England calendar, especially relating to juniors, means that it is very difficult to plan and then deliver sessions.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

5 COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE REGION

31 AFFILIATED CLUBS

58 REGISTERED COACHES

62 REGISTERED OFFICIALS

EAST MIDLANDS

Chair: Paul Kaerger Web: www.eastmidlandsvb.com



PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

The work on junior development – they are the next generation of volleyball players. There has been an U17 Grand Prix series, as well as U13 and U15 Grand Prixes running too. Four squads were entered into the Inter Regional Championships.

There are junior events running in the counties too, training sessions, competitions and the inclusion of volleyball in local school games.

Junior development is also a key area the committee want to focus on and will decide on the goals moving forward.

SHORT/LONG TERM AMBITIONS

The committee want to look at our role and determine what it is we want to achieve. The AGM this year will be about setting objectives and the direction we want to travel in. Once we have set those goals, everything we do will be about working to achieve that.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Our biggest challenge is engaging the clubs and counties. Few attend the regional meetings and we need to create much more of a two-way flow of



working together. We need to do this to build the sustainability of the game at grassroots level.

STATE OF VOLLEYBALL IN THE REGION

Action needs to be taken to revitalise volleyball in the East Midlands. We're losing teams and deciding on our goals will be key to making change. The five counties have different ways of operating and if we can find ways of all working together it will benefit the long-term prospects of the sport.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

5 COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS PROVIDING VOLLEYBALL

NVL TEAMS



5 NVL PROMOTIONS

TENDRING VC LADIES SUPER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

EASTERN

Secretary: Frances Balaam

Web: www.volleyballengland.org/about_us/regional_associations/eastern



PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

Junior development is active in all counties in the region which is a positive. We hope to encourage more competitions amongst the junior teams as we know how much they enjoy playing matches and how much they get out of them as well! It was wonderful to see a couple of junior teams participate in the Eastern Region volleyball series hosted by the Norfolk Volleyball Association.

Four teams competed in the Inter Regional Championships. We're also in the process of recruiting junior players to compete in the Inter Regional Beach Championships in July.

It was also fantastic to see Tendring VC Ladies become the Super League champions.

SHORT/LONGER TERM AMBITIONS

In terms of our short term and long-term ambitions, we are still much the same as last year – the Eastern region is still being developed. Our short-term goal is to build the committee and develop our strategy of what we want to achieve.



CREDIT: PHIL GIBBIN

We want to be able to bring together all the work that is being done in the region.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The biggest challenge is people's time. We need to find more people to volunteer to be part of the Eastern Region Association to be able to develop in the way we want to and have a bigger impact on the sport in our area.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

5 COUNTY LEAGUES IN THE REGION

129 TEAMS COMPETING IN THE LEAGUES (an increase on last year)

44 WOMEN'S TEAMS

133 REGISTERED COACHES

142 REGISTERED REFEREES

13 HEVO OFFICERS

SOUTH EAST

Chair: John Biddiscombe Secretary: Freda Bussey

Web: www.southeastvolleyball.co.uk



HOW DO YOU REFLECT ON THE CURRENT STATE OF VOLLEYBALL IN YOUR REGION?

Based on the numbers of teams, coaches, and referees things are heading in the right direction and meeting people involved in delivering volleyball there is a modest optimism for the future. There is a fair amount of interaction between the counties taking place in the region, especially in relation to junior volleyball.

PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

This season, we staged an Under 14 Grand Prix style event and this, combined with ad-hoc friendly matches between clubs with junior players and the junior section of the successful Ashcombe Outdoor Tournament, is beginning to provide this age group with competitive opportunities. This can bridge, the sometimes intimidating, step up to regular training with the regional squads, which incidentally continue thrive.

SHORT/LONGER TERM AMBITIONS

Short term, we are looking to expand the Under 14 Grand Prix so that there is one event held in each school term so as to provide a more joined



up development pathway for our junior players. We also aim to run regular referee and coaching courses in the region.

Longer term, as an association we need to continue to facilitate the great work that is already happening, making sure that it is more widely appreciated and get more people involved in delivering it.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Like most voluntary organisations, our biggest challenge is the time that our volunteers can put into the sport. It is not that they begrudge the time, but often simply that they cannot be in two or three places at once.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

- 959** COMPETITION FIXTURES
- 58 CLUBS**
- OVER 1300** LONDON LEAGUE PLAYERS
- OVER 9000** RECREATIONAL PLAYERS
- 87** REGISTERED REFEREES
- 104** REGISTERED COACHES

LONDON

Chair: Charlie Orton Web: www.londonvolleyball.org.uk



CHALLENGE WITH VENUES

We are always short of good quality facilities in London. So, we have been working with the owners and operators of facilities, London Boroughs, schools and campaign groups to try to develop more potential volleyball venues.

Some Boroughs have responded well. Greenwich Leisure Limited and Everyone Active have been good in some venues. The campaign group 'Save Earls Court', even invited us to attend a meeting in the House of Commons, which provided another opportunity to make volleyball known to campaigners. Giba also produced a video to support the scheme.

Waltham Forest Council saw the popularity of the Legacy Beach venue at the Score Centre in Leyton, and offered the SideOut Club who were running it, a better, larger venue close by as part of their year as London Borough of Culture. They built a purpose-built six court beach volleyball facility.

LONDON LEAGUE

The London League reached its climax with the promotion play offs taking place at Crystal Palace



CREDIT: SANDSPHOTOS

NSC. With 11 divisions and 84 teams it is a major competition with considerable strength. Richmond were the Men's champions. The Women's Premier division was very close with London QKX winning with 35 points ahead of Lionhearts East on 34 and Inter Premier on 33. With Lionhearts and Inter also fielding NVL teams, QKX's performance is all the more impressive.

The largest event was the National League match between IBB Polonia and Sheffield Hallam which attracted 1100+ spectators. We hope to see more of these events in the coming seasons.

SOUTH WEST

Chair: Dave Reece Secretary: Ron Richards Web: www.swva.org.uk



HOW DO YOU REFLECT ON THE CURRENT STATE OF VOLLEYBALL IN YOUR REGION?

The SW Volleyball Association continues to offer competitions, courses and junior development opportunities. In general, there is good progress, though realistically there is little growth and in some parts of the region there is a decline in organised volleyball.

PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

A strong competition structure for the South West league with 18 teams competing. Exeter Storm were the men's champions, while Cheltenham and Gloucester were the women's champions.

The running of the South West Mini Volleyball Grand Prix series, culminating in the season-ending

Mini Volleyball Championships. It is good to see such a healthy and active junior programme, with entries and winners spreads over a large range of clubs and geographical areas.

The hosting of the Whitefield Tournament – the biggest volleyball tournament in the country.

SHORT/LONGER TERM AMBITIONS

The SW Volleyball Association was founded in 1969, so this year will see us celebrate our 50th anniversary. We hope to hold a celebration evening as part of the Vets tournament in November. We will be pleased to welcome anyone who has been part of our journey over the last 50 years. I am really grateful to all those who give up so much time to make volleyball in the SW such a success.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Because we run regional squad training from September to May, we have to book venues early to get ahead of other users and achieve best value. It has been difficult to do this in recent months without a confirmed Volleyball England calendar for the coming season. We may have booked venues and dates that cannot be used and suffer financial loss due to the lack of a national calendar.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

- 62** AFFILIATED CLUBS
- 105** REGISTERED COACHES
- 80** REGISTERED REFEREES
- TEAMS IN THE SOUTH WEST LEAGUE
- 8** MENS **10** WOMENS
- 12 TEAMS** ENTERING VETS TOURNAMENT



THANK YOU

Thank you to all of our incredible volunteers, partners and sponsors. Your support, guidance, advice and funding is so invaluable and appreciated. Long may your commitment to volleyball continue.



Volleyball England's mission is:
Championing the sustainable development of volleyball.

www.volleyballengland.org



VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019

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