

THE TOUCH UNION



England
Rugby

CLUB GUIDE



CLUB GUIDE —THE TOUCH UNION

With fun, fitness and inclusivity at its core, The Touch Union is a non-contact, local level playing format that links closely to the main skills of rugby union. Relaxed, adaptable and sociable, it's about getting everyone involved and making the players feel good - whether by improving their physical fitness, offering a break from their hectic schedule, or introducing them to new friends.

Offering The Touch Union at your club is a great way to boost participation levels and recruit players who may not fancy other formats. It also provides a fun, off-season rugby alternative for existing players.

We've put together this handy guide to share everything you need to know about the format, as well as providing a selection of assets that you can use to promote your club and The Touch Union.

We hope you are as excited by this new format as we are. We look forward to welcoming you to The Touch Union community!





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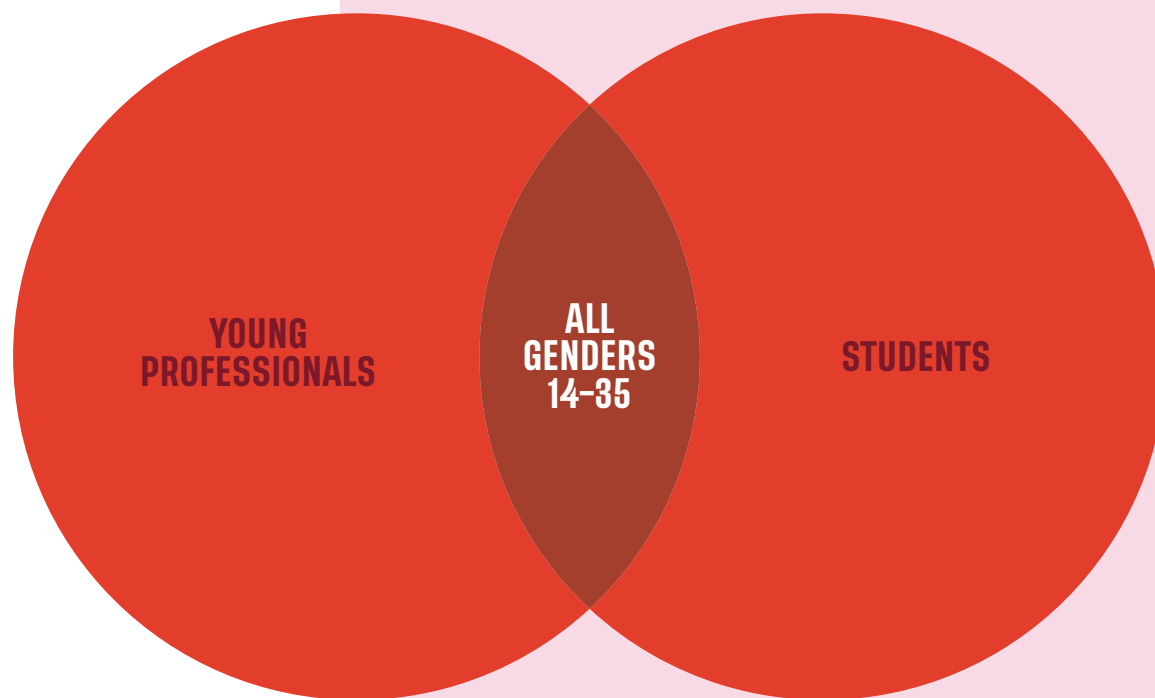


CLUB GUIDE —OUR TARGET AUDIENCE

While The Touch Union is open to absolutely everyone, our key target audience is 14-to-35-year-olds of any gender.

We will help support your club by:

- Retaining and developing players
- Recruiting new players
- Recruiting and retaining high quality coaches, volunteers and referees
- Integrating with the local community



Everything we do should have our audience in mind.

- These are the best years of our audiences lives.
- It's when they've got the most friends and when they're having the most fun.
- They're open to new opportunities.
- They like to keep fit but find themselves trapped between the world of overwhelming competitive sports or the boring gym.

**CASUAL
EXERCISERS**

Looking for more ways to get fit and anything that makes exercising fun.

**LIVE FOR THEIR
SOCIAL LIVES**

Enjoy a night out and a laugh

**VERY
ACTIVE ON
SOCIAL MEDIA**

88% prefer to visit websites on their mobiles

CONFIDENT

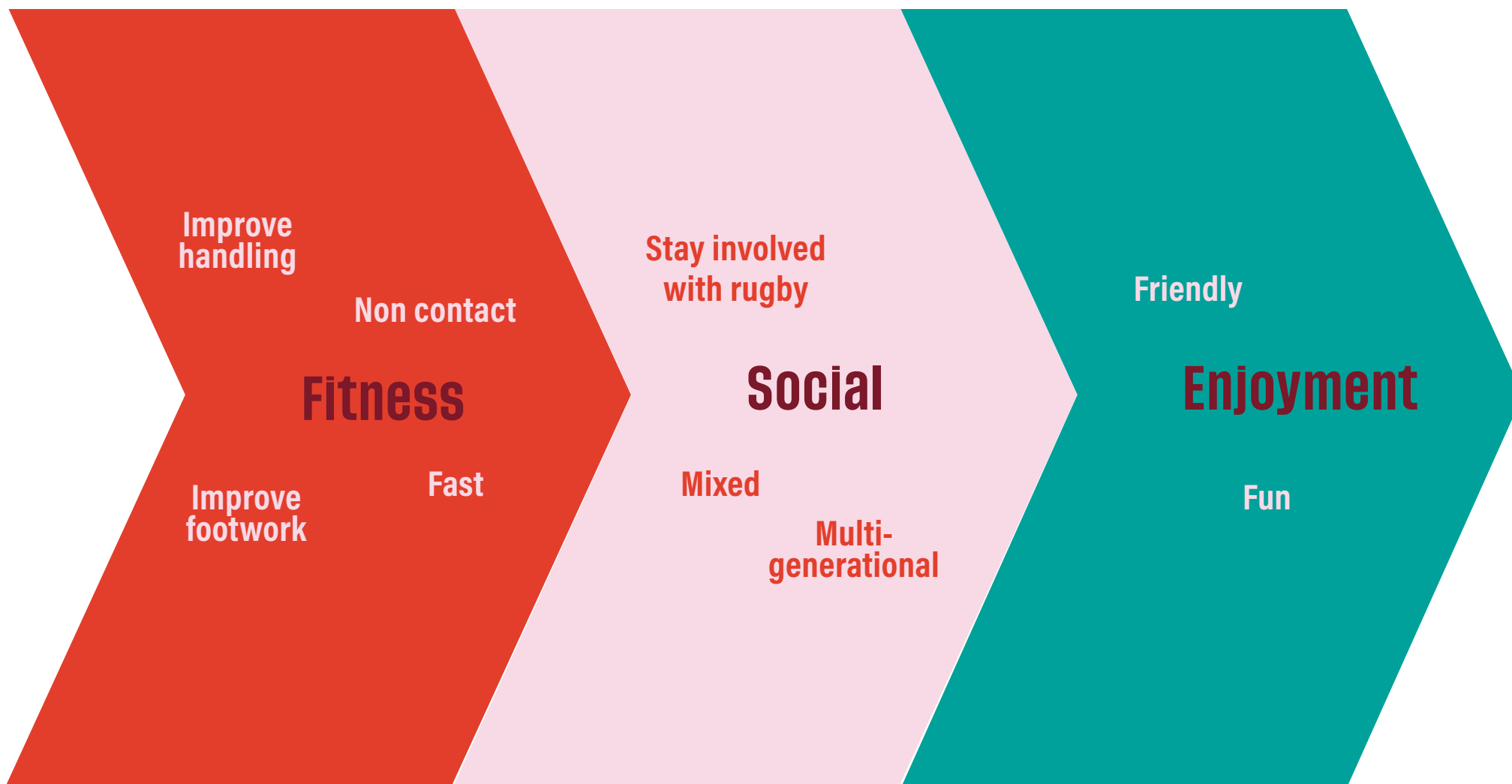
Active enjoy getting outside

Understand the importance of
**HEALTH &
WELLBEING**

**INTERESTED
IN SELF
IMPROVEMENT**

Wearable tech, lifehacks etc.

Why should they take part?



Before your session

- Is all information you’ve provided on your session clear and up to date?
- Have you contacted any new participants to confirm that they are still attending and answer any questions they may have?
- We’ve found that new participants are less likely to cancel at the last minute if they think someone is expecting them to show up.
- Are the bibs washed and ready to wear?

Arriving at the session

- **What will the player’s first impressions** be when they arrive at the session?
- **Is the club dark and empty** or well-lit and inviting? Does it look safe?
- **Is the location of the session obvious?** We’ve found that new players are more likely to leave before a session begins if the venue seems quiet or as if there’s nothing going on.
- **Rugby clubs often won’t have the clubhouse open** during mid-week sessions, making them seem quieter and darker. So, make sure it’s obvious that the session is on, and that people are around.
- **When the pitch in use is not obvious**, use signs or cones to guide participants.
- **Is someone on hand to greet the players?** Are you providing a specific welcome for new participants?
- **Think about the pre-session flow** that seasoned players will take for granted - where to change, where to leave belongings and what generally happens before a session. Letting new players know this information as they arrive will make them feel at ease and reduce anxiety.



After your session

- Before participants leave, let them know that their attendance was appreciated and that you are looking forward to seeing them at the next session.
- Make sure to chat to any new participants to find out how they found the session and tell them what they did well.
- Follow up with any participants you think may still be unsure or nervous to encourage them to attend your next session.

Here we've shared some ways that organisers can think about and approach their Touch Union sessions from the participant's perspective.

The goal is to reduce the anxiety of participants, ensuring they feel welcome and at ease from the start. This increased sense of belonging will make them more likely to return for the next session... and beyond!

Our research shows that our most popular and regularly attended sessions across the country have considered these elements beforehand.

We ask that you use the brand assets we've provided whenever possible. This helps to ensure that The Touch Union is shown consistently and professionally across all national and club communications, which is key to developing our brand and making sure it's recognised by all players from all clubs.

If you need to create any of your own assets, you must follow our brand guidelines. They can be found [here](#) along with all the official assets which you can download.



Considering the age and interests of our target audience, social media is an invaluable communication tool to recruit new players and build an engaging platform for your club members.

You can use your existing club channels to post about your Touch Union sessions, or if you're a standalone Touch Union centre, we recommend setting up your own channels. If doing this, please use this name format - <name of club> TheTouchUnion.

To help get new players involved, you should ask your followers to share your posts to increase their reach to a new audience. You could also consider using paid search to increase the reach. A small budget can go a long way if you set your targeting up correctly!



Facebook

All about information

- Hold information about your club and sessions – where and when are they held?
- Set up events and invite players to attend
- Post about previous sessions

Instagram

All about photos

- Share memories and photos from your sessions
- Encourage players to share photos and tag you
- Post interactive stories with polls, questions and more

Twitter

All about the now

- Make people want to get involved and stay involved
- Keep people informed about sessions with key information



BaildonRugbyClub For good vibes with even better people, give The Touch Union a try. This non-contact rugby format is all about having fun, making memories and being part of something amazing. Join us on [INSERT DAY] at [INSERT TIME] to get involved. #TheTouchUnion #WelcomeToTheSquad
9 MINUTES AGO



Here are our top tips when it comes to posting on social media...

Post 2-3 times a week to keep your audience engaged. We recommend that you...

- **Promote your sessions** and give key information on their time and location.
- **Repost or share relevant content for your audience**, such as posts from the RFU channels, fitness accounts, or wider club initiatives.
- **Share photos of your players** enjoying The Touch Union to encourage others to attend future sessions.
- **Keep text as short as possible** to make it easy and quick to read on a mobile (that's what most people will be using!)
- **Check your page regularly**, making sure to reply to all comments and direct messages.
- **Follow your players** and other relevant accounts – such as the RFU and club sponsors.

- **Don't just broadcast information.** Ask questions in posts to encourage your audience to engage.
- **Only use official The Touch Union photography** or content from your club.
- **Use our hashtags #TheTouchUnion** and **#WelcomeToTheSquad** in all posts.



To sign your club up to The Touch Union...

Please contact TheTouchUnion@rfu.com with the following details:

- Your club's name
- Your club's key contact for The Touch Union – name, email and phone number
- Your club's full postal address for sessions
- Your chosen day and time to hold sessions

Once you've signed up...

You'll have access to guidance and our range of materials and assets to support your club and the recruitment of players.

You'll be invited to join the official Touch Union Facebook group where you can find key updates to share with your own club.

Your session information will be added to The Touch Union listings on the 'Find Rugby' page on Englandrugby.com.





CLUB GUIDE —THE RULES

While we encourage you to follow the new rules created for The Touch Union, they are also adaptable to meet the needs of your players.

Detailed rules and possible adaptations can be found [here](#).

We recommend sharing the rules with your players before their first session, so that they can read and understand them in their own time. They can then arrive with some prior knowledge, able to discuss and practice the rules.



The safety of our players is priority, so please make sure you follow the latest Government and RFU COVID-19 protocols at each session. To help, the RFU have set-up a handy page with the latest information and requirements [here](#).

Beyond the protocols above, we recommend demonstrating to your players the ongoing measures you have in place, including regular ball cleaning, access to hand sanitiser stations, and the thorough washing of bibs after each use. Please encourage all players to respect each other, and consider different behaviours and exemptions.

Please make sure you are fully insured to host this activity. Your club or venue as part of the pitch hire may already provide insurance, but you must check before holding any sessions.





As The Touch Union allows for all ages and skill levels to play together it is extremely important that Clubs are aware of the regulations and safeguarding required. If during a game of social touch injury is caused to a child the first thing that will be requested is the risk assessment and associated safeguarding procedures in place.

Here are excerpts from the regulations

Reg 15.6.2 states

W Players of all ages and both sexes may train and play together in non-competitive, non-contact rugby provided the following conditions are met:

- (a) Regulation 15.8 is applied;
- (b) the organiser and/or coach has assessed

the session and/or match to be safe for all players; and

(c) under no circumstances is any element of contact rugby permitted and the training session and/or match should be conducted in accordance with the best practice principles set out in the Code.

RFU Safeguarding Policy states

Contact Rugby

The wellbeing and safety of children must be placed above the development of performance. Contact skills must be taught in a safe, secure manner paying due regard to the physical development of the players involved. Adults and children must never play contact versions of the sport together including training games or contact drills. They may play either tag

or touch rugby together if these **games are managed and organised appropriately** (see englandrugby.com for further information). **A risk assessment on the conditions, players and apparent risks should be carried out by a person responsible for the overall session.** There is further information available in the Age Grade Rugby Code of Conduct, which also provides a variety of alternatives.

Age Grade Codes of Practice

Item Code 2 Item 10 states

While adults and children may play non-contact rugby together, **it is important to consider safeguarding or safety aspects before the session.**



CLUB GUIDE
—CONTACT US

**If you have any questions
or want to know more about
The Touch Union, please
get in touch with us at
TheTouchUnion@rfu.com**

