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ENGLAND TOUCH

UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES BRIEFING PACK 2021



ENGLAND TOUCH



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES WELCOME TO THE UNI NTS

The Uni NTS is the premier inter-university Touch Rugby competition in the UK. Originally created with only a handful of university teams, interest continues to grow year on year.

After a disrupted 2020-21 season, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Uni NTS is back and re-structured to provide the best possible experience for university touch players. Whether you are a new or vastly experienced club, the competition is designed to give you enjoyable yet challenging experiences in an environment that is friendly, inclusive and professional.

This document has been created as a 'one-stop-shop' for university club captains, committees and support staff to refer to when taking part in the Uni NTS. It gives background on:

- Who can enter the competition
- How to enter
- The competition structure
- Code of Conduct
- How to get in touch with the competition management team

This document goes hand-in-hand with the England Touch Club Toolkit which gives more information about how to get involved in Touch, how to play and how to grow your club. You can find the toolkit [here](#).

If you are looking to enter the competition for the first time, please feel free to get in touch with us if you have any further questions. We are always happy to support you and look forward to helping you grow your club until you are a regular on the Uni NTS circuit.

We look forward to seeing you on a Touch pitch very soon.

Jack Harris

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University Touch Management Team

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THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES AIMS OF THE UNI NTS

The University National Touch Series (Uni NTS) was formed in 2014 to provide an inter-university Touch competition that caters for all levels of teams. Over the past seven years the series has expanded dramatically to cater for the increased number of universities now playing the sport. The series aims are split into our vision, mission and values:



Vision

- Provide opportunities for everyone from all Universities to participate in a way that suits them, on a regular basis in a high quality and friendly environment
- To facilitate and govern the expansion of Touch to every institution across the country and become widely recognised within the university sporting community
- To grow Touch within Universities & Colleges to a level where the sport is affiliated with the British Universities & Colleges Sport Association (BUCS) and help continue to develop the sport within higher education.

Mission

- To provide opportunities for all students to play Touch, developing competitive outlets via nationwide tournaments
- To provide a platform for elite University players to be recognised and selected for regional and international squads
- To provide a platform for developing players to gain experience and enjoy Touch in a friendly, inclusive and enjoyable environment
- To assist University clubs in providing high quality environments for their members to learn and develop to fulfill their desired potential
- To assist University clubs in gaining the support of their Universities and Students' Unions for further support and funding.

Values

- **Inclusive** – The sport is a sport for all
- **Transparent** – Central to fabric and underpins the sport
- **United** – Success in the sport is only achieved by working together
- **Ambitious** – Strong desire and determination to succeed in the sport
- **Respect** – Characterises the basis of the sport

THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES INSTITUTION & INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY

Institution Eligibility

Institutions may enter team(s) into the Uni NTS provided said institution is:

1. A member institution of British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) and by proxy:
 - a. A registered Legal Entity
 - b. A recognised provider of Higher Education (HE)
2. The institution (or Touch Rugby Club registered to that institution) holds a valid ETA club membership (see 'Membership with the ETA').

The ETA chooses to require that institutions are a BUCS member as this gives the body more confidence that the institution is adhering to policies and regulations that ensure:

- Financial Fair Play
- Student and Athlete Welfare
- Anti-Doping
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

It is also hoped that Touch Rugby will become affiliated to the BUCS sports program in the very near future. As a result, this requirement also allows for smoother transition into the BUCS program when the time comes.

Individual Eligibility

ETA Uni NTS individual eligibility guidelines mirror those of the British Universities & Colleges Sports (BUCS) Regulation 4 which defines individual eligibility at BUCS sports level. The ETA has chosen to mirror these regulations for simplicity and alignment with other university sports. Regulation 4 can be found [here](#).

For an individual to be eligible to play in the University National Touch Series (Uni NTS):

1. They shall:

- 1.1. Be a registered student at an institution which holds a level of BUCS and ETA membership¹ which entitles them to participate in Uni NTS competitions.
 - 1.1.1 An individual can only represent an institution/Playing Entity with which they are registered².
 - 1.1.2. Establishing which institution/Playing Entity an individual may represent on a seasonal basis is determined via which Playing Entities are being utilised to function within BUCS & ETA competitions and the individual's relationship to them.
 - 1.1.3. No individual may compete for more than 1 institution/Playing Entity in an academic season (1 August – 31 July).

AND

- 1.2. Be aged 18 or over.
 - 1.2.1. studying at BUCS member institutions in Scotland will be eligible to compete in all Uni NTS competitions from the age of 17.

AND

- 1.3. Be registered on a course which is at or above one of the following minimum levels:
 - 1.3.1 Level 4 on the Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ).
 - 1.3.2 Level 6 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).
 - 1.3.3 Level 3 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework for England and Northern Ireland (RQF).
 - 1.3.4 Level 3 on the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).
 - 1.3.5 Level 3 standalone QAA Access to HE Diploma.

AND

- 1.4. Be undertaking a study programme equivalent to:
 - 1.4.1 Where the course is credit rated under CATS (Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme), at least 60 credits per year.
 - 1.4.2 Where the course is run using guided learning hours, a minimum of 225 hours per year.
 - 1.4.3 Where the course is a postgraduate course which is not credit rated, no less than 50% of the full time student programme per year.
 - 1.4.4. A year will be taken as 12 months from the start date of their course. If a course finishes in the middle of the academic year, please refer to point 2.2.

AND

- 1.5. Have paid the appropriate Athletic Union or equivalent subscription.

1. As detailed in 'Institution Eligibility'

2. 1.1.1 and 1.1.3 are not applicable for the Uni NTS Men's & Women's Social Round

THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES INSTITUTION & INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY

2. Special cases for Participation

The following individuals are classified as eligible to represent their institution in Uni NTS competitions:

2.1. A sabbatical officer of an Athletic Union or equivalent who has paid the appropriate Athletic Union or equivalent subscription.

2.2. A student satisfactorily finishing their course of study after the start of December will be eligible to participate until the end of the season provided their Athletic Union or equivalent subscription has been paid and their institution still classifies them as a registered student.

2.2.1 Satisfactorily finishing a course of study is not when a student graduates, but is deemed to be when their teaching, research and/or examinations are completed.

2.2.2. Suspension of studies is not classed as satisfactorily finishing a course of study. Any student who has their studies suspended must wait until their studies recommence and they meet the requirements of point 1 to compete again. (Note point 2.5 for an exception to this)

2.3. A student from a BUCS member institution embarking on a Sandwich Course and/or Study Abroad Course is eligible during this time provided all of the following:

2.3.1. They have paid the appropriate Athletic Union or equivalent subscription

AND

2.3.2. The duration of the placement/course in industry and/or study abroad is 1 year or less.

2.3.2.1. If the duration is more than 1 year, then the student will be deemed ineligible after the passing of the 12 month mark.

2.4. A visiting student doing a Study Abroad Course (e.g. Erasmus) at a ETA member institution is eligible during this time if they and their study programme meet the requirements of point 1.

2.5. Any student who has their studies suspended on medical grounds during the season, but still meets all other requirements of point 1, shall be eligible to participate until the end of the season. The ETA may request evidence of suspension of studies on medical grounds in order to ascertain the eligibility of an individual to compete. Such evidence will be treated confidentially. Any costs associated with obtaining such information cannot be covered by the ETA.

3. Transgender Athletes

3.1. Transgender athletes are eligible to compete in the Uni NTS under the gender category they feel most closely aligns to them. Further guidance is detailed in the ETA Transgender, Non-Binary & Gender Diverse Policy which can be found [here](#).

4. Anti-Doping

All Uni NTS participants are subject to the Anti-Doping rules of the England Touch Association, and as such are subject to testing.

4.1. Any individual who is serving an Anti-Doping Rule Violation will not be eligible to participate in any Uni NTS competitions.

4.2. For further guidance, potential sanctions and sampling regulations, please see the ETA Anti-Doping Policy [here](#).

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

The ETA Uni NTS Eligibility Regulations are designed to allow all students from all backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, sexualities and genders to participate in the series. They align to the ETA EDI policy which can be found [here](#). If you would like any further information please feel free to get in touch.



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES KEY CONTACTS: NATIONAL AND REGIONAL

Key contacts in the England Touch Team

England Touch has an extensive management team to help you get your club up and running and then taking the next steps on your journey. Here are some of our key individuals – and a full list of the England Touch team is at:



englandtouch.org.uk/represent/whos-who



University Touch & Uni NTS Management

Jack Harris
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University Touch & Uni NTS Management

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Coaching & Referee Courses Erica Robertson coaching [or] refcourses@englandtouch.org.uk	National Development Officer Sammie Phillips performance.support@englandtouch.org.uk	Funding Manager Adam Irvine funding.manager@englandtouch.org.uk	Marketing and PR Manager Chris Wearmouth marketing@englandtouch.org.uk	Referees Manager Robin Budd referees@englandtouch.org.uk

Regional Lead Contacts

Regional Leads are on hand to help you establish local connections and give you advice on and off the field. They also have contact details for development tournaments in your area.

 Midland Tigers Vicki Franks midlandstouch@gmail.com	 North East Raiders Jonathan Clark northeastraiders touch@gmail.com	 North West Blades Cari Thorpe northwesttouch@gmail.com	 South East Touch Association Andy Penniceard andy@seta.org.uk	 South West Saxons Martin Wright SouthWestSaxons@gmail.com	 West Wildcats Sam Powles / Amro Karim wildcatstouch@gmail.com
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THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES 2021-22 SEASON DATES, LOCATIONS & STRUCTURE

Mens & Womens Social Round

The Mens & Womens Social Round allows players to experience single gender games, which can present new challenges and learning opportunities. This round does not count towards the main Uni NTS season league tables and some eligibility regulations are relaxed (see 'Individual Eligibility'). With this competition being placed at the beginning of the season, it gives clubs an opportunity to allow new members that may have been recruited at Freshers Week to experience a more social Uni NTS competition. We hope this will aid with the retention of players for the rest of the season.

The ETA University Management team are more than happy to allow clubs/teams to join forces to ensure more players get an opportunity to take part. If you need any support with this, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Main Competition

The 2021-22 Uni NTS season includes 5 rounds for mixed gender teams. To accommodate for the growing number of institutions taking part in the Uni NTS, the season will initially be split into a Northern and Southern League for Rounds 1 & 2. These rounds will act as qualifying rounds for the national competitions that will occur in the second half of the season.



Date	Location	Entry Fee	Round	Spaces Available
Autumn Semester				
23/10/2021	Banbury	£120	2021-22 Uni NTS Mens & Womens Social Event	24
Autumn Semester				
06/11/2021	Manchester	£120	2021-22 Uni NTS Round 1 / Northern League	16
13/11/2021	Oxford	£120	2021-22 Uni NTS Round 1 / Southern League	16
27/11/2021	Leeds	£120	2021-22 Uni NTS Round 2 / Northern League	16
04/12/2021	Guildford	£120	2021-22 Uni NTS Round 2 / Southern League	16
Spring Semester				
12/02/2022	Nottingham	£140	2021-22 Uni NTS Round 3	32
05/03/2022	Nottingham	£140	2021-22 Uni NTS Round 4	32
26/03/2022	Nottingham	£140	2021-22 Uni NTS Round 5 (Finals)	32

THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES 2021-22 SEASON DATES, LOCATIONS & STRUCTURE

Regional Map

The regional division map is shown below, along with a list of teams who have previously entered Uni NTS events who qualify for each league. If you are new to the Uni NTS please use the map as guidance for which league you qualify for.



Northern League

- **University of Birmingham**
Birmingham Lions
- **University of Cambridge** -
Cambridge Uni Touch
- **Durham University**
Durham Knights (1sts)
Durham Archers (2nds)
- **University of East Anglia**
UEA Touch
- **University of Edinburgh**
Edinburgh Uni Touch
- **University of Leeds**
Leeds Uni Touch
- **Loughborough University**
Loughborough Uni Touch 1sts
Loughborough Uni Touch 2nds
Loughborough Uni Touch 3rds
- **University of Manchester**
Manchester Uni Touch
- **Manchester Metropolitan University**
Manchester Met Touch
- **Newcastle University**
Newcastle Uni Touch
- **Northumbria University**
Geordie Knights
- **Nottingham Trent University**
NTU Touch
- **University of Sheffield**
Sheffield Uni Touch
- **Stirling University**
Stirling Uni Touch

Southern League

- **University of Bath**
Bath Hawks (1sts)
Bath Sparrows (2nds)
Bath Chickens (3rds)
Bath Eggs (4ths)
- **University of Bristol**
Bristol Vipers (1sts)
Bristol Pythons (2nds)
- **University of Cardiff**
Cardiff Dragons
- **University of Exeter**
Exeter Hurricanes (1sts)
Exeter Monsoon (2nds)
Exeter Typhoon (3rds)
Exeter Storm (4ths)
- **University of Oxford**
Oxford Uni Touch
- **Oxford Brookes University**
Oxford Brookes Touch
- **Royal Veterinary College**
RVC Touch
- **University of Southampton**
Southampton Uni Touch
- **University of Surrey**
Surrey Uni Touch

THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES SEASON STRUCTURE, LEAGUE TABLES & POINTS

Mens & Womens Competition

As previously mentioned, the Mens & Womens Competition will take place before the main Uni NTS series as an opportunity for clubs to give new players a chance to experience a Uni NTS event. This event will not contribute to the series league table.

Nationwide UNTS Events

Rounds 1 & 2 are open, 16 team competitions which will act as qualifying tournaments for the national events which are open to up to 32 teams, split into 4 tiered divisions.

At each competition, teams are awarded league points based on their finishing position. The maximum number of points available is based on the number of teams attending the competition. For a 16 team event: 1st Place wins 32 points, 2nd Place wins 30 points...16th Place wins 2 points. For a 15 team competition 1st Place would win only 30 points. The overall winners of the Uni NTS will be determined by the number of points gained at the 3 Nationwide competitions only.

The Nationwide competitions are designed for teams to be able to play other teams of similar ability. The 4 tiers of 8 teams allow the competition organisers to develop a fair competition structure with efficient use of facilities.

After Round 2, it is intended that the top 4 teams in each regional league will be placed in the 'Cup' tier for Rounds 3, 4 & 5, 5th to 8th placed teams into the 'Plate' tier, 9th to 12th placed teams into the 'Bowl' tier and the final 4 teams into the 'Shield' tier; as illustrated below. After each nationwide round, the winner from each tier will earn promotion to the next tier up, whilst the lowest placed team will receive a relegation to the tier below.

Disclaimer

Please note that this structure may be subject to change as a result of team participation or relative standard of each regional league. For example, it may be more suitable for 5 teams from one region to join 3 teams from the other to form an 8 team tier...as opposed to 4 and 4. Teams are not required to commit to entering all rounds at the beginning of the season, nor will they be disadvantaged if they are unable to compete in all rounds. The Uni NTS is designed for any team to be able to take part in as much of the competition that they wish to. As a result, organisers will always review the structure and make amendments as necessary to provide the fairest and most enjoyable competition for all. This will be communicated openly throughout the season.



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES END OF SEASON AWARDS

Awards for 2021/22 Season

The winners of each tier after each competition day will receive a trophy during the presentations. Awards will also be given to the 'Most Valuable' Female and Male players from the day's proceedings as chosen by opposition teams.

At the Finals Round on the 26th March, the standard awards will be given out along with the following:

- Overall Series Winners Trophy & Medals (as determined by series points)
- Female Player of the Season
- Male Player of the Season
- Top Try Scorer – Female
- Top Try Scorer – Male
- Most Improved Team
- Best Newcomer Team
- Team Spirit Award (Awarded to team who have shown the highest level of sportsmanship as voted for by opposition teams)

End of Season Social

It is hoped that an end of season social event will also be organised in Nottingham after the finals event on the 26th March.





THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES COMPETITION ADMIN

Membership with the ETA

All clubs and players are required to have a valid England Touch membership to attend Uni NTS competitions, this is for insurance and affiliation purposes. There are also a number of benefits that come with an ETA membership. Find out more here [here](#).

An annual University Club Membership is £80 whilst a player membership is £5.

Individual Membership

All players in the Uni NTS must be registered with the England Touch for insurance and welfare purposes. The fee is only £5 for the season, however, this covers an individual for Uni NTS events ONLY. If a player wishes to take part in other England Touch organised events such as the National Elite/Development NTS or Mens/Womens series then they must pay for a Full Individual Student Membership (£14). Please ask your players to follow the following process:

1. Go to www.Englandtouch.org.uk
2. Under 'Develop' > 'Membership', please select 'Account Login' (This is applicable to everyone, even if the player does not yet have an ETA account.)

3. For players who already have an ETA membership, use your login credentials. Use the 'Forgotten Password' button if applicable. If you have had an ETA account before but cannot remember your email or password do not be tempted to create a new account.
4. For players who do not yet have an ETA membership click 'Sign Up' and fill out the details requested. (Do not panic if your university club is not yet listed.)
5. Once you are logged in click 'Membership' in the top left.
6. Click on the red 'Memberships' placard button.
7. Choose the membership that is right for you (nominally 'University').
8. Follow instructions and complete payment.

Feel free to explore the membership area, it is through this platform you can sign up to courses and use membership benefits as well.

It can take up to 5 working days for payment to be processed and to get your account up and running so please be patient. If there are any issues please use the email membership@Englandtouch.org.uk

Club Membership

In order to register your club with England Touch please follow the below process.

For a new club who has not previously been registered with the ETA:

1. Login to your existing personal account, or create a new one in your name if you don't already have one as per above.
2. Navigate to the 'My Profile' section and click on 'Credentials'
3. Choose 'Add Credentials' and select 'Application: Touch Operator'
4. Complete and save the form to let us know about your operation. If accepted, we will create a 'club' profile for your operation and get in touch with you to complete the full affiliation registration and payment form.

For a club who has previously been registered with the ETA please see the guidance document [here](#).

You may need to contact your previous club chair if they currently have admin rights for the account.

The club registration and payment must be completed before event registration and entry can occur. It is recommended that this is completed at least 4 weeks before the intended entry of your first event.

It can take up to 5 working days for payment to be processed and to get your account up and running so please be patient. If there are any issues please contact membership@Englandtouch.org.uk

NOTE: Only one membership payment is required per club, not for each team within the club.

England Touch Membership

Expense	Amount	Payable by	Notes
Club Association and Membership Fee	£80	The Club	Yearly membership with England Touch
Player Membership Fee	£5	The Player	Yearly individual membership with England Touch



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES COMPETITION ADMIN

Event Registration

Once clubs have completed their membership, they are able to sign up to Uni NTS Events through the membership portal. This can be done by:

1. Clicking 'Events & Courses' in the top left.
2. Choosing the 'National Touch Series' placard under Categories.
3. Selecting the 'University' Placard.

Entry Fees

Excluding the Mens and Womens Social Round, the cost for entering all 5 rounds of the Uni NTS series would be £660 (2x £120 Regional Events, 3x £140 National Events) per team.

A discounted rate of £600 is available to clubs who are confident they will enter a team in all rounds of the series. This is payable by selecting the £80 entry fee for the series finals (instead of the standard £140 option.) This offer is only available until the entry deadlines for round 1 for each region.

Please note:

- Registration for all events will open on the 27th September 2021
- Places are given on a first come first served basis
- Clubs may enter multiple teams however please alert the organisers of this before registering
- Registration will close 2 weeks before the event date
- The entry fee can be paid via three different systems:
 - Set up a direct debit
 - Use of a credit card
 - Requesting an Invoice

UNTS Event Entry Fees

Expense	Amount	Payable by	Notes
Regional (Rounds 1 & 2) & Social Men's/Women's Event Entry Fee	£120 p/t	The Club	Payable upon registering to enter a Uni NTS event. Cost is for a single team at a single event.
National (Rounds 3, 4 & 5) Event Entry Fee	£140 p/t	The Club	Payable upon registering to enter a Uni NTS event. Cost is for a single team at a single event.



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES COMPETITION ADMIN

Communication & Information

Email

Uni NTS organisers will continually keep teams updated with information and news throughout the season via email. Clubs should provide an email address that is accessible to multiple committee members as opposed to personal inboxes. This makes it less likely that information will be missed or lost.

If you do not believe you are receiving emails, or they are being sent to the wrong address please contact the team as soon as possible.

The table right outlines the timeframe of emails the organisers will use for tournament information and communication.

Timeframe of Emails

Day	Email	Description
-14	Registration Deadline	
-13	Tournament Confirmation	– Confirmation of Entry List – Crucial Information such as exact address and location of tournament
-7	Team Sheet Deadline	
-6	Info Pack	– Circulation of Info Pack to all Teams, Referees and Interested Parties
-5	Team Sheet Check	– Individually sent to clubs – Request for amendments to Team Sheet(s) such as expiry of membership etc.
0	Tournament Day	
+2	Report	– Summary email and thanks – Reminder for future events

WhatsApp

Organisers will use a WhatsApp group chat to communicate any urgent information to captains or committee members. This has worked very well in previous seasons and can be used by club leaders to also communicate any urgent information to tournament organisers.

If any club wishes for a captain or committee member to be added, they should advise the Uni NTS organisers through the group.



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES COMPETITION ADMIN

Team-Sheets

Upon registering for an event, clubs will be emailed a link to fill out a team-sheet for the event. Team-sheets ensure that all players are registered with England Touch and allows organisers to track players for scoring statistics, scouting, disciplinary and insurance purposes. Please note:

- The deadline for team-sheet submission is 1 week before the day of the relevant event
- Organisers will contact clubs in the week before the tournament if the team-sheet seems incomplete or includes players with expired memberships
- Teams must present a paper copy of their team-sheet to tournament control at the captain's briefing on the day of the event. The sheet must include each player's vest number
- If an ineligible player is found to have taken part in event, a club risks disqualification or a points deduction
- If a team-sheet is submitted late then a team risks a points deduction

Institutions with Multiple Teams

In some cases, University clubs may be large enough to enter multiple teams into Uni NTS competitions. Uni NTS organisers will always endeavour to accommodate as many teams as possible and allow as many players to play as possible. For the 2021-22 season, clubs wishing to enter multiple teams should follow the below guidelines:

- Uni NTS organisers are currently aware of the following clubs who are likely to enter multiple teams in the 2021-22 Uni NTS season – Bath (x4), Bristol (x2), Durham (x2), Exeter (x4) and Loughborough (x3).
- If any of the above clubs wish to enter a different number of teams into a competition, they must first make the organisers aware
- If any other club wishes to enter multiple teams into a Uni NTS competition they must first make the organisers aware before registering
- Places at Uni NTS competitions will always be given on a first come first served basis (as mentioned), concessions will not be made for clubs with multiple teams
- At tournaments, clubs must assign players to specific teams as per their team sheet. Players will be prohibited from playing for multiple teams regardless of injuries or other circumstances. However players are free to change teams between rounds.
- Clubs entering multiple teams will be required to provide Full-Time Referees to events they attend. Please see 'Refereeing Requirements' for further details.



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES TOURNAMENT DAYS

Playing Rules

All games in the Uni NTS are played under the FIT 5th Edition Rules, a copy of which can be found [here](#).

Clubs should make themselves fully aware of the rules before attending competitions.

Tournament Schedule & Set-Up

For each Uni NTS competition, organisers will send out an information pack to all participating teams and officials roughly 6 days prior to the event. The information pack will include specific details for the event including: address, timings, regulations, draw, setup etc. However, please use the below as guidance for general Uni NTS practice.

Draw - 16 Team Setup

For Rounds 1 & 2, 16 places are available in each competition for each league. The 16 teams are drawn into 4 pools of 4 teams. For Round 2, the draw is dependent on the current position of each team within their league. For Round 1 the draw is dependent on a team's final position in the 2019-20 season. Any newly participating teams will be placed at the bottom of the draw in alphabetical order.

During the morning of the competition, teams will play the other 3 teams in their pool. Teams are awarded points as follows:

- Win – 4 Points
- Draw – 2 Points
- Loss – 1 Point
- Forfeit – 0 Points

After all pool games are completed, the 4 teams in each pool will be ranked based on the number of points they have gained. In the case of a tie of points, teams are ranked by the following:

- Try Difference (Scores For minus Scores Against) (Highest to Lowest)
- Head-to Head Result (If applicable)
- Number of Tries Scored (Most to Least)
- Initial Pool Ranking (Lowest to Highest)

A team's rank will determine where they qualify for the knockout competition in the afternoon. First and second placed teams will qualify for the Cup Quarter Finals. The winners of these games will advance to the Cup Semi Finals whilst the losers will be placed in the Plate Semi Finals. From these Semi-Finals, all teams will either advance to the respective Final or a Play-Off. This allows teams to achieve a final ranking of 1st to 8th.

Third and fourth placed teams will qualify for the Bowl Quarter Finals. The winners of these games will advance to the Bowl Semi Finals whilst the losers will be placed in the Shield Semi Finals. From these Semi-Finals, all teams will either advance to the respective Final or a Play-Off. This allows teams to achieve a final ranking of 9th to 16th.

For a visual representation of this tournament format please see an example schedule [here](#).

Draw - 32 Team Setup

For Rounds 3, 4 & 5, 32 places are available in each competition. The 32 teams are split into 4 divisions of 8 teams based on their league positions after Round 2. Within each division, the 8 teams will be split into 2 pools of 4 teams.

During the morning of the competition, teams will play the other 3 teams in their pool. Teams are awarded points as per above. After all the pool games are completed, teams are ranked 1 to 4 within their pool based on the number of points they have gained. In the case of a tie of points, teams are ranked as per above.

The team's rank will determine where they qualify for the knockout competition in the afternoon. Teams will be placed against the oppositely ranked team from the other pool in that division:

- Pool 1 1st v. Pool 2 4th
- Pool 1 2nd v. Pool 2 3rd
- Pool 1 3rd v. Pool 2 2nd
- Pool 1 4th v. Pool 2 1st

Teams will then advance through to either Semi Finals or Play-Off games to eventually rank the 8 teams in the division from 1st to 8th.

For a visual representation of this tournament format please see an example schedule [here](#).



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES TOURNAMENT DAYS

Timings

Normal timings for a Uni NTS event are as follows:

- Arrival – 08:30
- Captain's Briefing – 09:00
- First Games – 09:30
- Lunch Break – 12:30
- First Knockout Games – 13:00
- First Final – 15:20
- Cup Final – 15:55
- Presentations – 16:30
- Close – 17:00

Presentations

Organisers would always like to see teams remain at the venue for the presentations. Trophies will be awarded to the winners of the Cup, Plate, Bowl & Shield and also to the Most Valuable Male and Female Players. The presentation also gives teams an opportunity to also thank referees and officials who have helped make the event happen.

Number of Games & Playing Time

To allow for a full competition to be played on the day of a Uni NTS round, games are shortened from the standard playing time of 40 minutes to 20 minutes. These games are played in 10 minute halves with a 3 minute half time.

Competitions will always be configured to ensure that teams play at least 5 games in a round, amounting to 100 minutes of playing time. Teams will never play more than 6 games in a round, totalling 120 minutes.

In some very unlikely cases due to reasons out of the Uni NTS organisers control, such as a late drop-out, teams may only play 4 games in a round but organisers will endeavour to avoid this as much as possible.

Teams may play more minutes if they need to take part in a drop-off in the case of a drawn knock-out game.

Organisers will always aim to ensure teams are not required to play games back-to-back and have at least a 30 minute break between two games. In some cases this may be unavoidable but teams will be made aware of this in advance.

Tournament Schedule Google Sheet

At tournaments, organisers will use a spreadsheet to track scores and rank teams as per the process mentioned above. The link to this document will be shared in the tournament information pack, which can further be shared by club committee's to their players.

Using this system allows teams to track their progress and look up all tournament information without needing to visit tournament control.

Tournament organisers will always endeavor to communicate tournament information to teams via tannoy and/or the WhatsApp group, however it is assumed that teams will be using the spreadsheet to know where their next game may be and at what time.

In the case of urgent, unexpected communications, tournament organisers will ensure that a team is communicated with directly.

Tournament Control

At all tournaments, organisers will set up a tournament control post where teams will be able to confirm and double check information as necessary. Tournament control will also act as a place for referees, officials and first aiders to rest.

Teams will be expected to report to tournament control at the beginning of the day to confirm they have arrived and to also attend the pre-tournament briefing at the prescribed time.

THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Event COVID-19 Protocols

It is hoped that COVID-19 and lockdown regulations will no longer impact Uni NTS events in the 2021-22 season. However, this is not guaranteed. As a result, England Touch will continue to take further steps to ensure the safety of tournament participants.

It is likely that event participants will be required to complete a COVID symptom declaration form before attending said event. It is the responsibility of club leadership to ensure all their members complete this before going to competition. It will also be highly recommended that participants complete a lateral flow test as well.

Sanitising hand gel will be provided in the sub-box of each pitch for players to use during a match. The ETA recommends players use the gel at half time and full time. Referees will also sanitise balls at half and full time also.

COVID safety is ultimately an individual and club's responsibility. Clubs should continue to manage their own COVID safety and put in place any measures they see fit to keep their membership safe.



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES REFEREEING REQUIREMENTS

Team Referee Requirements

Refereeing Requirements are outlined in the ETA Team Referee Requirements Policy which can be found [here](#). Clubs must adhere to this policy to be able to enter Uni NTS events.

Definitions

Full-Time Referee

Someone who attends an event solely to referee, is not part of a team or named on a teamsheet to play. As a result, this person is entitled to expenses as per the ETA Referee Expenses Policy found [here](#). This person will have at least attended a Level 1 referee course.

Player Referee

Someone who attends a tournament to play but will referee games when they are not playing to help the tournament happen. This person will not be asked to referee the same number of games as a full-time referee and as a result is not entitled to referee expenses. A player referee should attend a competition prepared to be asked to referee and **have their own whistle**.

To enable Uni NTS events to happen, teams may be asked to provide player referees, this is because the availability of Full-Time Referees will not cover all games that happen throughout the competition.

Clubs entering a **single** team into a Uni NTS event are **expected** to provide a full-time referee, but are **not required** in order to enter the competition. If a club nominates a full-time referee they are less likely to be asked to provide player referee.

Clubs entering a **single** team who do not provide a full-time referee are required to have **at least three** players who are capable of player-refereeing and have at least attended a Level 1 course.

Exception

The only exception to this is for clubs who are entering the Uni NTS **for the first time**. It is noted that these clubs are newer to the game and trying to establish a strong player base first and foremost. These clubs should look at having **at least one** player who is capable of player refereeing and be aware that, next season, the exception will not apply.

Clubs entering **multiple** teams **have to** provide a full-time referee for each team they enter beyond their first.

Player referee slots will always be highlighted on the tournament schedule google sheet. It is the responsibility of each team to manage their player referees. Event management will always aim to ensure player referees are aware of when they are needed but it is ultimately the club's responsibility to manage this. Missing a player referee slot may result in the player referee's team being deducted league points.

These requirements are a minimum standard and if teams wish to nominate and provide more than their quota of referees, they are more than welcome to do so.



THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES BEHAVIOUR & CONDUCT

Discipline & Code of Behaviour

All participants must comply with the code of conduct while taking part and supporting at the Uni NTS, the full details can be found [here](#). The England Touch Code of Behaviour applies to all participants including players, coaches, referees, administrators and supporters and sanctions can be applied to individuals, teams and clubs as necessary. Participant enjoyment should not be compromised at any point and necessary actions will be taken should they be needed to ensure this.

In the event that any complaint is made or the Code of Behaviour is not followed, the ETA Disciplinary Policy will apply and be used to determine if a sanction is necessary and the severity of that sanction. The policy can be found [here](#).

If any participant wishes to make a complaint, they should visit tournament control or follow the guidelines outlined in the Disciplinary Policy.

Points Deductions

Organisers may use league points deductions in cases where teams do not follow tournament regulations or the England Touch Code of Behaviour. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Missing a Player Referee Slot – 2 Points (See 'Refereeing Requirements')
- Late submission of Team Sheet or failure to hand in-- 2 Points
- Leaving changing room or training area in an unacceptable state-- 2 Points

Serious Foul Play & Referee Abuse

If organisers are alerted to any serious incident such as referee abuse, they hold the right to sanction the player and/or team as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy. Referee abuse and serious foul play will not be tolerated under any circumstances within the Uni NTS. If referee abuse occurs, this carries the potential for individual(s) and/or teams to be disqualified from the tournament and in serious cases, may receive further disciplinary actions from England Touch. This is standard protocol for all England Touch tournaments.





THE UNIVERSITY NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES THE ENGLAND TOUCH SCHOLARS PROGRAMME

England Touch Scholars Program

For performance athletes, or players looking to further develop their game at a high level, the Uni NTS already provides a pathway into elite levels of the sport in the UK. This structured platform allows for the best players from the university circuit to develop and play together, increasing competition at the right level without significantly increasing costs for university players.

The pathway is based around an annual ETA organised tournament to compete with other international teams, following the end of the Uni NTS season. The England Scholars programme creates two single sex teams (a men's and women's squad; with the view to add additional mixed team(s) in future years). Talent identification takes place during the regional events for training squads to be selected ahead of Semester 2, with training sessions held on the Sunday following each of the national events. The programme is viewed as the steppingstone from Uni NTS into higher level Touch and the England High performance Touch Squads (HPTS), which are the teams that represent England in International competitions.

This higher-level competition also acts as a primary driving force to grow and develop the Uni NTS by allowing higher level coaching to distribute between all universities while maintaining an enjoyable but performance orientated environment. Forming part of the high-performance plan developing the pathway for new and existing players into the England high performance touch squads.



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