

THE OT7

OT7_ISSUE #02

SCOOOP

TALES FROM THE TOUCHLINES

WHAKAPAPA NOT PASSPORTS

THE GROWTH OF INDIGENOUS EVENTS



- KARLEY BANKS & COACHING • LUXEMBOURG LANDMARK •
- TOUCH SPAIN AT 20 • TRIALING A FOUR-REF SYSTEM •
- AND MORE...



WELCOME TO THE OT7 SCOOP #002

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FROM ME TO YOU...

Hi, I'm Gregg and welcome to the first *real* edition of **The OT7 Scoop**.

I'll be honest, I've put this off for a while. Not because I didn't want to do it (I really did), but because I wasn't quite sure where to start.

There's already some brilliant people out there sharing news, content and stories from across the Touch community, and I wasn't sure if there was room for *one more voice*.

But the more I saw, the more I realised how much good stuff was out there, and how much still goes under the radar.

So, I figured, why not try? Why not create something informal, fun, a little scrappy at times, but packed with stories worth telling?

So here it is.

A mix of features, quick snippets, event reviews, behind-the-scenes bits, snapshots of small wins, and people doing things for the right reasons.

If you're in it, thank you. If you're reading it, thank you too.

And if you've ever shared a sweaty social Saturday or shouted "*rollball!*" into the wind... this one's for you.

Let's see where it goes.
Gregg



WHAKAPAPA, NOT PASSPORTS:

Credit: aucklandcouncil

The world's first Indigenous Touch World Cup to debut in Aotearoa, 2027

“This isn't nationalism, it's cultural sovereignty.”

Patariki Spellman

CULTURE. COMMUNITY. CONNECTION. TOGETHER, IN TOUCH.

That's the powerful strapline behind the newly announced *Indigenous Touch World Cup*, a groundbreaking international event that will flip the script on what representation means in sport.

Set to take place in November 2027 at Mountfort Park in Manurewa, Auckland, this four-day tournament will be the first of its kind, welcoming Indigenous teams from around the globe to compete, connect and celebrate through the game we all love, Touch.

“This is more than just another touch tournament,” says WAI Chairperson, Patariki Spellman.

“This is about pride. This is about whakapapa. It's a platform for us to sing another song, one that sounds like liberation.”

Unlike traditional international formats where national teams must compete under a single flag, this kaupapa allows Indigenous representation based on whakapapa (genealogy), not passports.

Teams can register as Nations, Villages, Mobs or Collectives, opening up space for Indigenous groups often unrecognised by global sporting systems.

“The existing international body only allows one nation per country,” Spellman explains.

“That may work for some, but it doesn't work for us. This tournament is our response to that. It's not a game-changer, it's a whole new game.”

QUICK FACTS

**Location:**

Mountfort Park,
Manurewa,
Aotearoa (New
Zealand)

**When:**

November 2027
Exact date TBC

**Eligibility:**

Whakapapa
(genealogy), not
passports

**Organisers:**

We Are
Indigenous
(WAI)
Foundation,
Māori Touch NZ,
Touch New
Zealand

**Who can play?**

Indigenous
Nations, Villages,
Hapū, Mobs,
Tribes





WHY MANUREWA? WHY MOUNTFORT PARK?

The answer is simple: Community.

Mountfort Park, one of Auckland's most iconic venues for grassroots Touch, will provide the stage. For many, its selection as host venue is no surprise.

"Manurewa is the spiritual home of Touch in Auckland," says Manurewa Local Board Chairperson Matt Winiata.

"We're proud to support this kaupapa and help create a high-standard event that reflects the mana of all who will stand on that field."

ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

For many Indigenous communities, the main barrier to participation isn't talent or willingness, it's travel cost. That's something the WAI Foundation is tackling head-on.

"Cost is a major hurdle for many of our Pacific and Indigenous nations," says Spellman. "We're doing everything we can to break that down and make this a true gathering of the global Indigenous touch community."

The aim? A world-class, culturally rooted event that's accessible and inclusive, not just another logo on the calendar, but a legacy-builder for future generations.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE

The driving force behind the Indigenous Touch World Cup is a powerhouse board

Made up of Indigenous leaders from across sport, and culture, each bringing deep lived experience and passion for community uplift:

- **Patariki Spellman** (Chairperson) – Founder of the Pacific Cup, Director for Māori Touch NZ and Counties Manukau Rugby League.
- **Were Maiava** – Tikanga Māori expert and community leader from South Auckland.
- **Tarsh Poching-Ileremia** – Former Samoan Rugby Sevens player, broadcaster, and advocate for women in sport.
- **Harley Wall** – NZ Olympic Committee team ops manager, Level 4 referee, and board member for multiple sport organisations.

“We aren’t just building an event,” says Spellman, “we’re building a legacy for our mokopuna. This is a platform that doesn’t currently exist. So we’re creating it, unapologetically, and on our terms.”



A CULTURAL CELEBRATION BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD

Beyond the games themselves, the Indigenous Touch World Cup promises to be a festival of identity, showcasing cultural performances, storytelling, food, and workshops.

Teams will be encouraged to not just play, but to share their traditions and taonga with others.

This isn’t just a world cup. It’s a homecoming for people who’ve never had a place like this to come home to before.

TOGETHER, IN TOUCH

The event is being delivered by the WAI Foundation, a non-profit Charitable Trust based in Aotearoa. With support from Auckland Council, corporate partners, and Touch NZ, it’s already gaining global attention, with dozens of expressions of interest lodged from First Nations and Indigenous communities across the Pacific, the Americas, and beyond.

Thousands of participants, whānau and spectators are expected to descend on Manurewa in 2027. And behind every jersey will be a story of resilience, culture, and community. In the words of the organisers:

“Alone you’ll go fast. Together, we’ll go further.”

Whether you’re a player, a supporter, or a storyteller, you’re invited. Not just to watch, but to be part of history.

www.indigenoustouchworldcup.com
[@indigenoustouchworldcup](https://www.instagram.com/indigenoustouchworldcup)



**INDIGENOUS
TOUCH WORLD CUP**
MANUREWA | TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU





“We’ve never been allowed
to play the game.
So we’re creating our own.”



Credit: Māori Touch NZ





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4 WEEK
TURNAROUND



CUSTOM
DESIGN



TEAM
STORES



NO
MINIMUM
QUANTITY



TOUCH
SPECIALISTS



FOUR'S A CROWD? Not anymore

Touch trials four-ref system for Men's Open games

"Fast, furious and fair: Four officials now cover elite Men's Open games."

At the 2025 National Touch League (NTL), eagle-eyed spectators tuning into the Men's Open division may have noticed something unusual – four referees officiating each game.

It wasn't a mistake or a last-minute fill-in; this was a deliberate trial of a new officiating system aimed at keeping pace with the ever-evolving, high-speed nature of elite-level Touch.

The question that followed...

WHY THE CHANGE?

Touch has always adapted its rules and systems to match the speed and skill of the game.

Historically, the sport transitioned a single referee with two Touch judges with flags to the now-familiar three-referee model, which has been the standard for over two decades.

But recently, that model finally showed signs of strain, especially in the Men's Open division, where transition speed and line pressure are faster than ever before.

At the elite level, transition moments are everything.

The attacking team is encouraged to restart play almost instantly after a turnover, often racing to the 7m mark to launch

their next strike before the defense is fully set.

That puts enormous pressure on the in-goal referee, who has just ruled on a Try attempt and now needs to sprint 15+ metres to reset and control the next defensive line.

**It's not a
matter
of fitness.
It's physics.**



LET'S BREAK IT DOWN:

- Attacker runs 7m
- Referee needs to run 14–17m (in-goal to 7m, then a further 7m deeper).
- All this happens in seconds, during one of the fastest and most critical phases of play.

THE OPTIONS:

To solve this, they likely considered two choices:

- Slow the game by forcing the attack to wait until the referee is ready.
- Add a fourth referee to take control of the defensive line instantly.

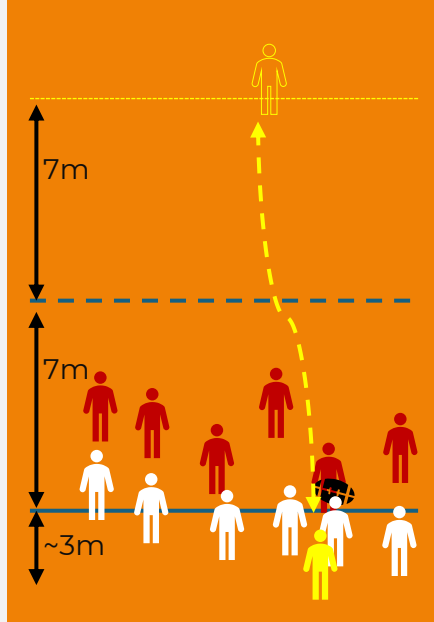
The latter won.

With a fourth official now stationed near the 14m mark, they are ready to step in immediately following a changeover, ensuring smooth setting of the defensive line without impacting the speed or flow of the game.

EARLY REACTIONS

"seamless for players and coaches"

Coaches and players involved in early trials didn't even notice the extra ref, which is a strong sign the system is working without disruption.



THE MOST NOTICEABLE DIFFERENCE?

Improved coverage and fewer officiating errors, particularly during the chaos of transitions.

It also reduces the likelihood of count errors, something that has frustrated many coaches over the years.

With referees no longer switching positions mid-field as frequently, and changes happening behind play instead, communication is clearer, and continuity is preserved.

Challenges:

Referees are human too

Like any change, there's a bedding-in period.

Some referees were seen instinctively sprinting to the 14m mark after ruling a turnover, only to realise someone was already there.

But this is just muscle memory, and something that will improve over time.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE? NUMBERS.

There simply aren't enough referees of the right calibre to roll this out across every division.

Men's Open was chosen first because it's arguably the most physically demanding and fastest-paced division in the sport.

And while Women's Open, Mixed Open, and Men's 20s may follow next, it'll depend on referee availability.

WHY IT MATTERS

Touch is often overlooked when it comes to discussions around high-performance officiating, but it's arguably one of the most physically demanding sports to referee:

- No rest periods.
- Constant movement.
- Rapid-fire decision making.
- Endless communication.

Adding a fourth official is not about pampering the refs, it's about maintaining the integrity and pace of the sport at the highest level.

And if it helps prevent burnout while delivering more accurate outcomes, it's a win for everyone, right?

This article was informed by a YouTube video by [Touch Screen](#), relating to the TFA 2025 [The Championships](#) Men's Open division.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Did you spot the fourth ref?

Should this be adopted in other divisions?

Where should it go next. Mixed, Women's, 20s?

Screenshot from Sky Sport Next's YouTube Channel



OTHER TOUCH PUBLICATIONS



thirty-two
Susie Baxter-Seitz

Now up to issue #6, Susie lead the charge on Touch magazines, with her first edition of thirty-two coming out in May 2023.

Beautiful design and exceptional imagery set this apart. Albeit there's no set rhythm of release, they're worth the wait.

Read more [here](#)

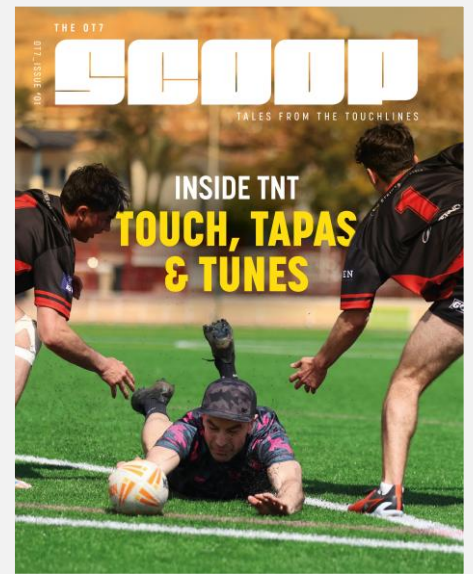


SIDELINE CHAT
7th TOUCH

7th Touch all started back in 2019 with the simple aim of championing our sport and showing it off to the world, hoping to grow the reach of Touch in the digital and physical world.

They've just launched their own monthly newsletter publications.

Read more [here](#)



The OT7 SCOOP
On The Seven Events

We aim to grow The OT7 Scoop into a wide-ranging global Touch online magazine, covering more voices, more events, and more of what's happening across our sport.

Whether a player, coach, referee, organiser or just a fan of the game – we will have something for you.

Read more [here](#)



BREAKING THE TOUCHLINE

Karley Banks flips the coaching script

Credit: Karley Banks Personal Collection



HISTORY MADE.

The first woman to coach a Men's Open State Of Origin team - and win.

THE COACH WHO SHOOK THE SYSTEM

Karley Banks isn't just breaking glass ceilings, she's cartwheeling through them

It's not every day someone *completely rewrites* the coaching playbook, but Banks has never been one for staying inside the lines. In a sport where the phrase "history made" gets thrown around like a loose pass, her achievements are the real deal.

HISTORY MADE IN SKY BLUE

In a sport with deep-rooted tradition and fierce inter-state rivalry, Banks has rewritten the script.

In July 2025, she became the first ever woman to coach an Open Men's team in Touch Football State of Origin series shattering a 30-year gender barrier.
Just let that sink in. Thirty. Years.

Karley stood in the sub box of the deciding match in the much-anticipated State of Origin series, a game that would decide whether the shield stayed with New South Wales or returned to Queensland for the first time in 23 years.

With the series locked 1-1, and the weight of a state on their shoulders, Karley's NSW Men's Open team delivered one of the most gripping deciders in Origin history.

But this was far more than just another result on the scoreboard. It was a milestone moment for gender equality in elite sport, a tangible demonstration that coaching ability transcends traditional expectations.

"For them, not us,"

became the team mantra. Leading with clarity, courage, and confidence, showing that leadership in Touch has no gender.



Credit: Karley Banks Personal Collection

“

This win, this moment, is for all those who never stopped believing.

WE GOT THE BICKIES!

”

Karley Banks - 2025



Credit: Glen Eaton / TFA



Credit: Glen Eaton / TFA

Banks coached New South Wales MO to a nail-biting Origin series victory over Queensland in a decider that closed out 18 fiercely contested divisions. It all came down to the Open Men's Game 3.

No pressure, right?

But make no mistake: this wasn't an overnight success story. Karley had been building towards that moment for two full years, laying foundations, rebuilding systems, and rallying players and staff around a simple but powerful philosophy.

It's simple, and it works.

- **SPEAK UP**
Everyone's voice matters
- **TEAM-FIRST**
Leave your ego at the door
- **BRING THE ENERGY**
Train with intensity

THE RESULTS?

A men's State Of Origin win.
A well-earned slice of history.



Credit: Karley Banks Personal Collection

COMMUNITY COACH OF THE YEAR

Off the back of her historic Origin win, Karley was named NSW Community Coach of the Year at the 2025 Sport NSW Awards. It was an unexpected but well-deserved honour, recognising her lifelong dedication to the sport.

"This award isn't mine alone," Karley said. "It belongs to everyone who supports, trusts, and walks this journey with me. From Clifton to Cooks, Doylo to Vawdon, this is for all of you."



Credit: Sport NSW

FROM LIONS TO LEGENDS

Karley's journey started back in Toowoomba, suiting up for Lions Touch Club in 1985. From there, it was a rocket-fuelled ride through representative Touch, rugby league, rugby union, and about five million whistle-blown drills later, she's now one of the most decorated female coaches the sport has ever seen.

And while the coaching halls have traditionally been a boy's club, Karley kicked that door off its hinges years ago.

"There's still a belief out there that women can't coach men at the top. I like to think I've disproved that. Loudly."

COACHING CREDENTIALS LIKE NO OTHER

Karley's coaching résumé is stacked with elite success, and 2024–2025 might just be her most decorated season yet:

NSWTA Men's Open Head Coach

🏆 State of Origin - Winners '25

Indigenous All Stars Co-Coach

🏆 NRL TFA - Winners '25

TFA Men's 30s Head Coach

🏆 Touch World Cup - Winners '24

Doyalson Dragons Men's Open

🏆 State Cup - Winners '24

Doyalson Dragons Men's Open

🏆 Country Championships – Winners '24

Indigenous All Stars Head Coach

🏆 NRL TFA - Winners '24

Hunter Western Hornets Head Coach

🏆 National Touch League - Winners '24

DID YOU KNOW...

- A dual international in both Touch and Rugby League
- Coached more elite youth than any other person in TFA history
- Represented Queensland in 5 Sports (Touch, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Cricket, Indoor Cricket)
- Her résumé includes three World Cup wins, eight NSWTA Country Champs
- Inaugural Tony Trad Medalist NSWTA Coach of the Year 2023
- Mentored players from Charlotte Caslick to Benji Marshall
- Coached teams from Chile to Cook Islands, and schools from Toowoomba to Tokyo (well, almost)

KARLEY BANKS
COACH | PIONEER | CHAMPION

WHAT'S NEXT?

Karley is enjoying a short break from elite coaching after Origin focusing on new employment roles at two of Toowoomba's elite private schools, working as The First Nations Coordinator at Concordia College and in the High-Performance coaching arm at The Glennie School.

It won't be long though until the NSWTA summer representative season ramps up and Karley will be back on deck preparing the Doyalson Dragons for a shot at defending both their Country Championships and State Cup Men's Open titles in 2025 and will link up again with the Hunter Western Hornets who will be shooting for a 3 peat at TFA's "The Championships" (NTL) in 2026.

Even during her downtime, Karley remains deeply embedded in the game, mentoring players/coaches from afar, attending development camps, and contributing her experience to shaping the next generation of athletes. Her impact extends well beyond the sidelines.





CALLING ALL COACHES

YOUR EXPERIENCE MATTERS.

Women in Sport have just launched the first national survey of its kind to understand the culture of coaching and want to hear your experiences.

They need ALL coaches, male and female, whether you coach seniors, juniors, are paid or volunteer, new or experienced, including ex-coaches too.

- Takes 15-20 minutes
- Completely anonymous
- Help improve coaching for everyone

Survey link:

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/school-of-sport/coach-working-conditions-survey>

Deadline: 12 August 2025

UNION FRANCOPHONE OF TOUCH RUGBY (UFTR)



Launched in June 2022, the UFTR is a collective initiative uniting French-speaking Touch Rugby communities from around the world.

Born out of collaboration between Touch France and Lebanon Touch, UFTR exists to promote both the sport and the French language across diverse regions.

ITS MISSION?

To create a supportive, inclusive network that fosters the development of Touch Rugby in Francophone regions, within established FIT-affiliated federations, emerging clubs, or grassroots groups.

The UFTR also welcomes collaboration from non-French-speaking countries looking to adopt French-language resources or translations.

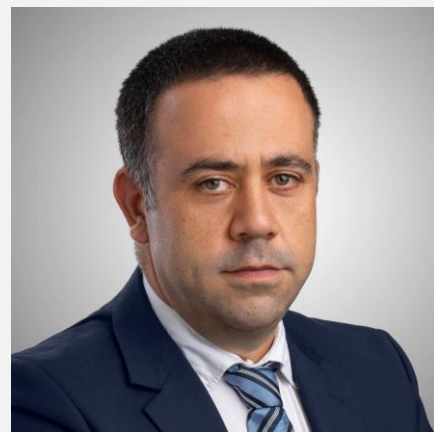
More than a sporting alliance, UFTR aligns with the values of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), using Touch as a tool for cultural exchange, multilingualism, and solidarity. It acts as a springboard for new

federations aiming for FIT membership, while championing inclusivity, gender equity, and the transgenerational nature of the sport.

UFTR is helping shape a broader, more connected future for Touch, one where language, culture, and sport come together.

LEADERSHIP CHANGE MARKS NEW CHAPTER FOR THE UNION FRANCOPHONE OF TOUCH RUGBY

Touch Rugby continues to grow globally, and the French-speaking world is no exception. On 1 July 2025, Georges Aoun, President of Lebanon Touch, stepped into a new international role as the President of the General Council of the Union Francophone de Touch Rugby (UFTR), taking over from Jérôme Brahim, head of Touch France. This change follows UFTR's rotating presidency model, designed to ensure fair representation and shared leadership across its member nations. Georges will hold the role until 31 December 2025, leading the Union through the second half of a pivotal year.



A NEW VOICE, FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

For those unfamiliar, Georges Aoun is no newcomer to international Touch. As co-founder of Lebanon Touch, launched just five years ago in 2020, Georges has played a crucial role in bringing the sport to a region where Touch had little historical presence.

His efforts have already paid off:

► **Lebanon's debut at the 2024 Touch World Cup** in England saw them claim an impressive **bronze medal in the Men's Open division**

► In the same year, **Lebanese juniors competed at the European Youth Touch Championships in Vichy**, marking a breakthrough for youth development in the Middle East

Georges brings that same drive and momentum to his role with UFTR, with a clear focus on deepening international collaboration, building grassroots structures, and championing emerging talent across the Francophone world.



10000 TRIES AND COUNTING

Credit: Federation of International Touch

Can Australia reach the milestone in 2028?

Australia have always been the team to beat in Touch. Since the first World Cup in 1988, they've dominated the international game in ways few other nations in any sport can match.

They win golds. They set standards. They dictate the tempo of the sport globally. And... they score tries. A lot of them.

Across 10 editions of the Touch World Cup, Australia have racked up a staggering **8,864 tries** (give or take a handful from stat-tracking errors over the years). That's not a typo. Eight. Thousand. Eight hundred. Sixty-four.

So now the question being whispered around the Touch world is:

Will they hit 10,000 in 2028?

Let's break it down.

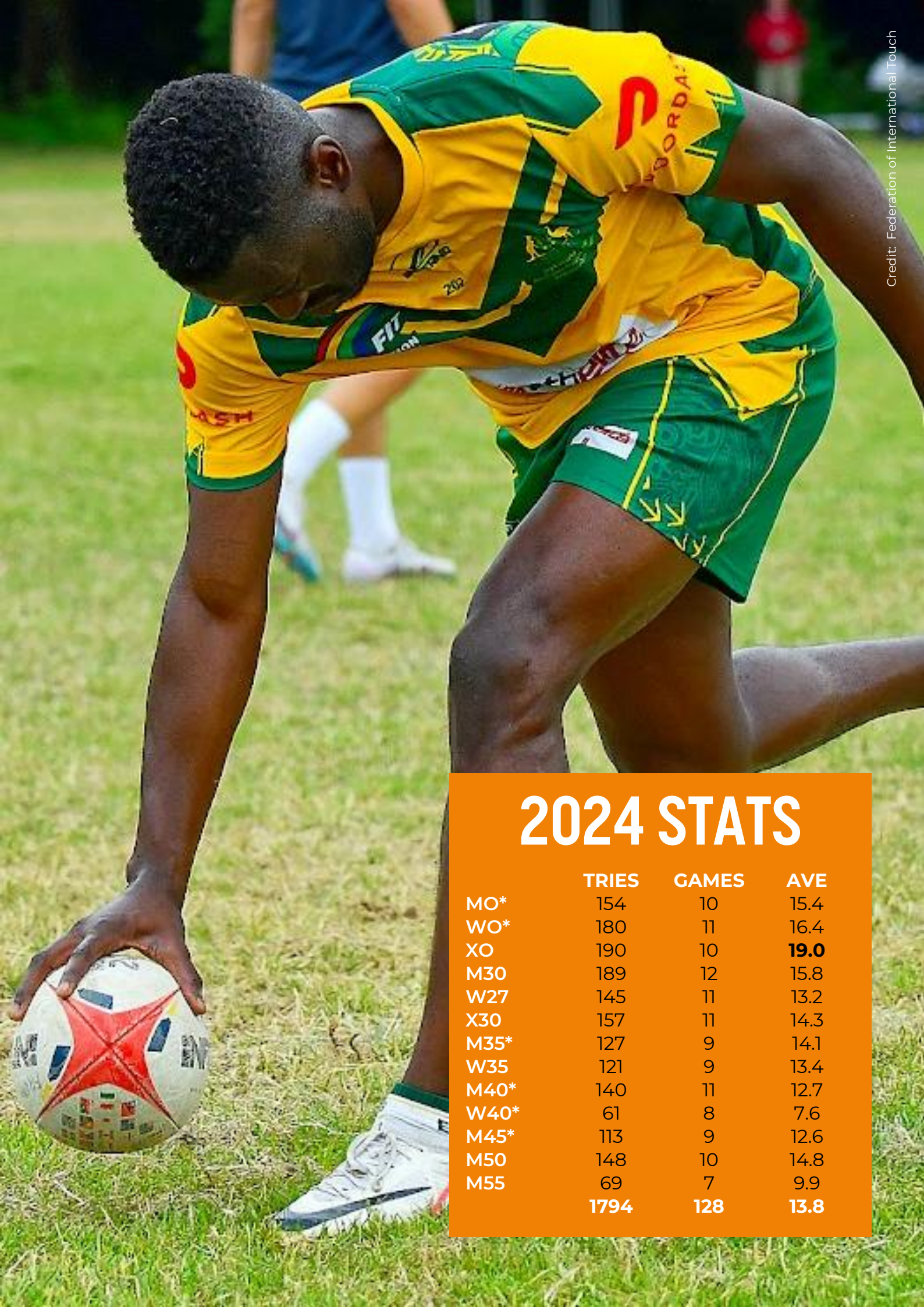
THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE

At the 2024 World Cup in Nottingham, Australia scored **1,794 tries*** across their teams. That was in 13 divisions, across men's, women's and mixed opens, seniors and masters, all firing on all cylinders.

Their most prolific team was the **Mixed Open** with **190 tries**, closely followed by the **Men's 30s** on **189**, **Women's Open** with **180**, and **Mixed 30s** and **Men's Open** clocking over **150 each**. 11 of the 13 Australian team averaged over 12 tries per match, with the overall contingent averaging 13.8.

Their lowest total? The **Women's 40s**, still managing **61 tries**. And let's not forget, this wasn't an easy World Cup. England, New Zealand pushed them hard. Some matches were won by two tries or less. And still, the green and gold machine kept rolling.

** More tries likely scored against PNG, but not counted as the games were listed as a forfeit.*



2024 STATS

	TRIES	GAMES	AVE
MO*	154	10	15.4
WO*	180	11	16.4
XO	190	10	19.0
M30	189	12	15.8
W27	145	11	13.2
X30	157	11	14.3
M35*	127	9	14.1
W35	121	9	13.4
M40*	140	11	12.7
W40*	61	8	7.6
M45*	113	9	12.6
M50	148	10	14.8
M55	69	7	9.9
	1794	128	13.8

2028 PROJECTIONS

Let's say they enter 13 divisions again in 2028.

And let's say scoring slows a bit, as other nations close the gap, which is already happening.

Even with an average of just 88 tries per team (40 per team less than 2024), they'd notch 1,144 tries again. That's still enough to get them across the 10,000 mark.

If they maintain current form, they'll probably go well beyond that, potentially reaching 10,500+ tries by the end of the next tournament.

It's not just likely. It's probable.





Credit: Federation of International Touch

WHAT MAKES THEM SO LETHAL?

It's not just about elite players, although they have plenty of those. It's the full system.

- **Depth:** Every division is stacked. There are no weak links.
- **Experience:** Players often return for multiple cycles. Some 2024 athletes were competing in their fourth and fifth World Cups.
- **Skill execution:** They rarely waste attacking sets, it's all clean and sharp.
- **Culture:** There's a real pride in the jersey. They expect to score. They expect to win. And they've built an environment that fuels that belief.

WHAT WOULD 10,000 MEAN?

Let's be honest. It's just a number.

But in sport, some numbers matter more than others.

- **10,000 tries** is a milestone that reflects not just success, but consistency.
- It represents a legacy that spans generations.
- It's a tribute to a system that continues to evolve
- And for the rest of the world? It's a benchmark to chase.

Touch is growing. The gap is narrowing. But Australia reaching 10,000 tries in 2028 would be a reminder, they've been here since the beginning, and they're not going anywhere.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Unless something dramatic changes, like half their teams not showing up, Australia will hit 10,000 tries in 2028. Probably before the medal matches even begin.

It'll be a milestone worth celebrating. Not just for Australia, but for the sport itself.

Because every try they've scored has made someone else better.

Every time they raised the bar, others followed.

And every time they ran one in... someone, somewhere, decided to lace up their boots and start chasing them.

QUICK SNIPPETS



FISH OUT OF WATER? FERSHAD MAKES A SPLASH IN THE NETHERLANDS.

What do you get when you cross a travelling Touch coach, a wealth of wisdom, and a whirlwind trip across the Dutch Touch scene?

You get Ferahad Irani, better known as @fishintaiwan casually dropping into the Netherlands and leaving behind a list of clever drills, and fresh perspectives.

Fresh off the plane and straight into the thick of it, Ferahad hit up Fluffy Dragons, XXX Amsterdam, and even jumped into Touch NL's national training camp.



In a highlight moment, Ferahad was presented with an official Netherlands TWC kit, presented by Dutch M30s player Bradley Bonafacio. A classy gesture, a fitting thank you and a reminder of how connected the Touch community really is.

Big love to Ferahad for sharing your time, energy and top-tier tips.

PITCH PERFECT: TOUCH LUXEMBOURG HITS A LANDMARK MOMENT

It's blue. It's bold. And it's officially a first for Luxembourg.

After years of makeshift fields, the Touch Luxembourg community has its very own full-sized, purpose marked touch pitch.

Thanks to a summer collaboration between RCL Touch, Rugby Club Luxembourg, and the Ville de Luxembourg, the new field was laid out as a trial.



Social Sunday, 31 deg, sun blazing, smiles everywhere. It was hot, it was sweaty, it was everything community Touch should be.

It might be a trial, but it feels like a turning point. Is it here to stay? We hope so, but until then, the message is simple: bring your boots, and go see the future of Touch Luxembourg, one touchline at a time.

TOUCH SPAIN AT 20

It's been two decades since Touch Spain joined the Federation of International Touch (FIT) back in 2004, and the last 12 months have been their biggest leap forward yet.

From Madrid to Malaga, the sport is booming. There are now 43 active teams, marking a 200% increase from last year.

With Touch being mixed, minimal contact, and played by all ages, more Spanish rugby clubs are beginning to add Touch to their programmes, either as a social supplement or a proper competition team.

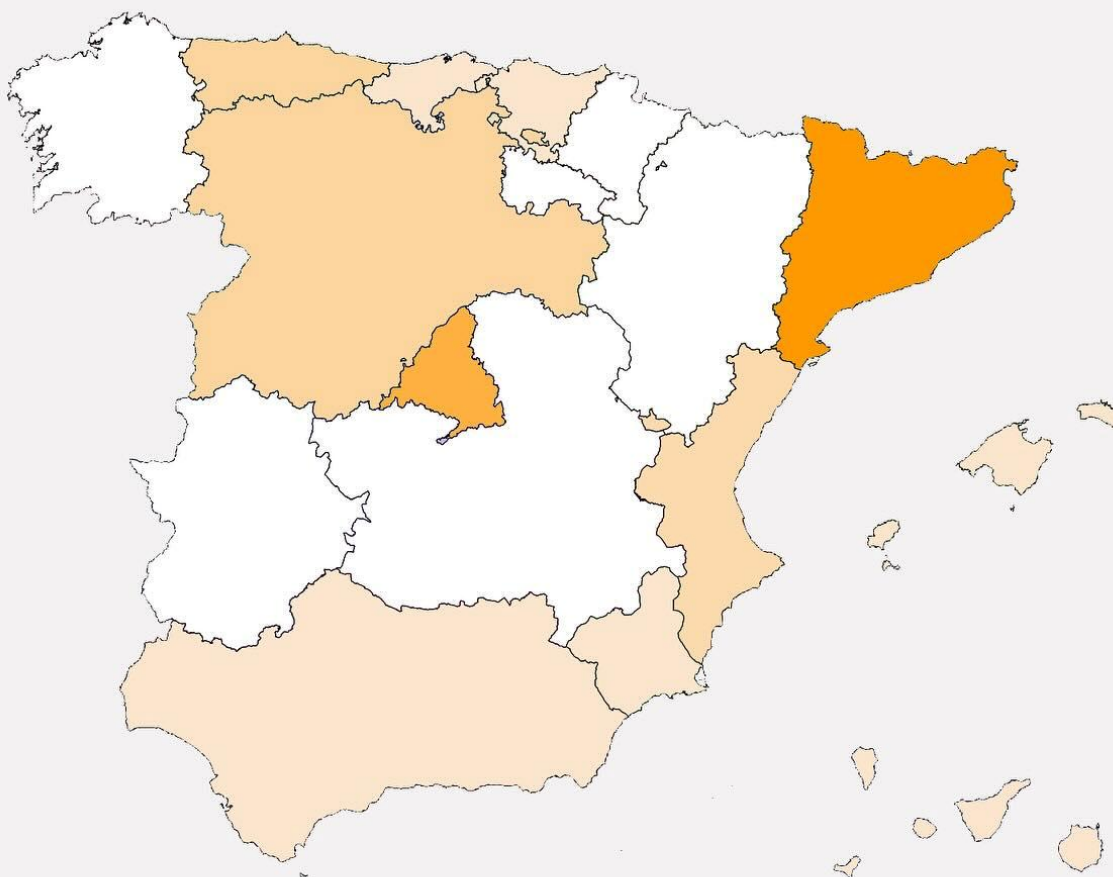
And with regular tournaments, the infrastructure is quickly catching up to the enthusiasm.

Blowing the whistle on progress

It's not just players making moves, Spain's referees are stepping up too. In just this season alone, five L1 courses have been run, and over 10 referees have completed their practical exams to step up to the next tier.

Of course, you'll know that Spain is home to **OT7's** own **Touch N Tapas**, the seniors and masters tournament with serious skills on-field and sangria off it.

**¡Felicidades,
Touch España!** 🇪🇸



CLUBES DE TOUCH	
CATALUNYA	14
COM. DE MADRID	10
CASTILLA Y LEÓN	4
P. DE ASTURIAS	4
COM. VALENCIANA	3
ANDALUCÍA	1
BALEARES	1
CANARIAS	1
CANTABRIA	1
EUSKADI	1
GIBRALTAR	1
REGIÓN DE MURCIA	1

2024 TOUCH WORLD CUP

ONE YEAR ON

Credit: Susi Baxter-Seitz

HOW'S IT BEEN A YEAR ALREADY?

Take a walk down memory lane, in both pictures and words, as the 2024 TWC edition of thirty-two Touch Magazine is live and [available for free](#).

It covers...

1. **WELCOME BACK** | World Cup
2. **A GAME OF NATIONS** | Who showed up, why that matters
3. **MIXED OPEN MAGIC** | Heartbeats beyond the headlines
4. **WOMEN LEADING FROM THE FRONT**
5. **THE MEN'S OPEN** | Power, parity, and a new era
6. **PLAYING THROUGH DISTANCE** | The isolation challenge
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JUNIOR TOUCH CUP | SMASHES RECORDS England

The National Junior Touch Cup just levelled up, with 24 teams from across the UK and Jersey, it became the biggest junior club competition the country has ever seen.

With fierce contests across U12, U14 and U17 divisions, and both Boys and Mixed formats, the day was packed with action and potential. Nottingham cleaned up in the B12, B17 and MX17 Cups, while Horsham claimed the X12 title and Oxford topped MX14.

New Era took the B14 Cup, with Bishop Vesey '67 and Jersey winning the B14 Bowl and Plate respectively. OL Mavericks grabbed the B12 Bowl, Joeys Rangers lifted the B17 Bowl, and Midlands Barbarians rounded things off by winning the X17 Bowl.

A brilliant day of Touch and one to remember.



Credit: Junior Touch Cup

NATIONAL TOUCH SERIES | FINALS FOOTY England

After three weekends, the Touch National Series wrapped up in style. Heading into the final event, it was set to be a straight shootout for the Div 1 title: Nottingham Hoods vs NQ Rebels.

But with both sides falling short in their semis, the 3rd/4th playoff became the series decider, and it was Hoods who took it, 6-3, to clinch the crown.

Galaxy Southwest took the win of the weekend, with a storming run from Div 2 to Div 1 final winners (with just one loss all series) sets them up nicely for 2026.

Over in Div 3, London Eagles 3 did the double, Cup winners and overall champs, after a win against Southampton Stormers.



Credit: Nottingham Touch Club



TOUCH IN PARIS | WILDBUNCH, WINE, & WINNING France

Touch in Paris 2025 delivered again, 24 top-tier teams from nine nations descended on Gif-sur-Yvette for a day of high-level play and even higher vibes.

This event blends competition with side-line laughs, and a cracking post-match party. WildBunch made it three in a row, beating Hot Custard in a fast-paced final, and yes, it was that man Louis Treays pulling the strings again. Does he ever lose?

A star-studded Otters, and even a combined Gower-Back Riders team could stop them.

Touch Roosters 91 deserve huge credit. From intense on-field battles to the legendary shared dinner and all-night party, it's an event that reminds you why you love this sport.



Credit: PB_Visuals



OLDWESLEY DRAFT X Ireland

Ten years deep: Old Wesley Draft delivers again.

The Old Wesley Draft returned, marking a full decade since the club's first run-out.

This year's tournament was as fiercely contested as ever, but with Maël Pin, Cecile Mas, and James O'Donnell lining up together, the Rabbits were always going to be a handful. In the end, they lived up to the hype, powering through to lift the trophy.

The day captured everything that's made Old Wesley tick for the last 10 years. And while the draft has changed shape, the heart of it hasn't: a club rooted in community, and a love of the game.

The legacy? A vision that started with founding member Brian Leveau, and a decade later, still very much alive.

Credit: Old Wesley Touch

FESTIVAL OF WOMEN'S AND MEN'S TOUCH

SWITZERLAND

In July, Zurich played host to its second two-day Festival of Touch, a tournament born just nine months earlier as a light-hearted counterbalance to the high-intensity 2024 World Cup season. Designed to offer players – and particularly women – more opportunities to compete in single-gender formats, this event has quickly earned a spot on the calendar.

Unlike in traditional club tournaments, players signed up individually and were allocated to teams in advance, draft-style, creating a weekend of fresh combinations on the field and new friendships off it.

From the Saturday lunchtime to Sunday afternoon, teams battled it out in separate women's and men's divisions – with the numbers in the women's division making it the largest women's touch competition ever held in Switzerland.

Led by Tim Berthon (of Lausanne Lakers) and Anika Rahm (of Touch Rugby Bern), the Griffins and Valkyries emerged victorious in the men's and women's competitions, respectively.

PLOT TWIST:

The games didn't
end there





Credits: Daniel Flury

With a twist in the format, players from both winning teams were split into two new squads to run against each other in the Mixed Grand Final.

No stretching, no resting, straight into it with the beauty of chaos.

In a fast, fun showdown to round off the tournament, in the best kind of way – drop off! 10-10 at full time. Captain Tim Berthon scored twice, and the ‘Blue Team’ took the spoils!



While the standard of play and refereeing remained high, the atmosphere kept a strong community feel. Teams comprised a mix of ages, abilities, and home clubs; and for many female players with no experience of training and playing at national squad level, it was a rare and valuable chance to experience single-sex touch – taking on new roles and thriving in them!

With support from countless volunteers, and with friends and family watching on from the sidelines, the *Festival of Touch* showed once again that competitive Touch and community spirit can thrive side by side.

Beyond the games themselves, the event offered something more intangible – a space where newer players could grow in confidence, seasoned players could mentor, and connections across clubs and regions could deepen. It was a reminder that, at its best, Touch brings people together in ways that go far beyond the pitch.



IT WAS A RARE AND VALUABLE CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE SINGLE-GENDER TOUCH

PALM TREE INVITATIONAL



SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, USA

After a year off, the Palm Tree Invitational returned for its third year in beautiful Ocean Beach, California, just blocks from the Pacific Ocean. The goals of this year's tournament were:

- Competitive Men's/Women's divisions
- Partner with the San Diego Surfers 7s tournament for a full weekend of rugby
- Share good vibes, great Touch,
- Jump in the ocean after your last game.

SHOUTOUTS

Austin Touch made a splash, entering men's and women's teams (first time) proving they're building something special.

San Francisco Touch brought serious pace, with their women's team reaching the final and the men lighting it up with standout moments.

San Diego's Men's Open team looked sharp, beating the Vipers in pools. Several new players, showed major strides. Defense will be the next frontier as the squad further develops.

The Vipers women's side featured a brilliant mix of experience and athletic new talent and were the most improved teams throughout the tournament.

Ending Saturday with tacos by the ocean and custom 'Surfer Dude' boomerang trophies, what's not to love!

For info on next year's tournament, to give them a follow: [@sdtouchrugby](https://twitter.com/sdtouchrugby)

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

MEN'S OPEN CHAMPIONS: The Vipers/Peaks Academy

The Vipers brought a strong squad featuring a mix of Masters and Open players. After a pool loss to San Diego, they bounced back to take the win in the final, where it mattered most.

WOMEN'S OPEN CHAMPIONS: San Diego Touch

San Diego's women swept their pool and took home the championship with a stacked roster of returning Nationals players, World Cup players and staff, elite 7s athletes from the Surfers, and standout talent like Sara Levy and Jess Lu from the USA 7s program.

This event has always been about more than just results. This year was special as it was a space for new players to try Touch, 7s athletes to sharpen their skills, and for teams to get quality reps in a competitive but friendly environment



CANADIAN TOUCH RUGBY NATIONALS



NATIONALS DEBUT DRAWS A CROWD



Touch's meteoric rise in Canada reached a new peak this summer, hosting its inaugural Canadian Nationals on 28–29 June in Colwood, British Columbia. The two-day tournament brought together 10 teams from across Canada and the US, marking a major milestone in the sport's comeback on Canadian soil.

For many, it wasn't just a tournament, it was a statement. From first touch to final whistle, the event was a blend of competitive fire and community spirit, with plenty of signs that this is just the beginning for Touch in Canada.

Fuelled by Canada's return to the international stage at the 2024 Touch World Cup, their first appearance since 1988, the domestic scene has flourished.

"The growth of the sport in the last three years has been immense," said [Touch Canada](#) President Daryl Conneely. "I was very proud to see our sport on display at the highest level in Colwood and expose some new fans to the blistering speed of Touch."

This homegrown event showcased just how far the national scene has come. Reigning champions Meralomas Touch came to defend their title. The quality on display was high, with plenty of internationally capped players in action.

The weekend featured a mix of experienced internationals and exciting new talent, and in the end, it was Portland who emerged victorious, beating Samurai in a tight final, while Toronto claimed third after a strong campaign.

The off-field atmosphere was just as vibrant, with spectators enjoying the Goose Step Challenge, won by England's Emily Crowe and Alan Ouya.

The event was supported by 18 officials from Canada and the US. Included a Level 1 referee course, and three upgrades. The finals were overseen by Rachael Ogilvie-Harris, Jay Alston, and Jon Baron. Special mention to Aaron Frisby for his organisation of the event.

With free entry, high-level action, [live streaming](#) and an inclusive format, the Nationals felt like the start of something big.

And based on what we saw in Colwood:

Canada's just getting started.



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THE 'INTERNATIONAL SEASON' IS UPON US

Credit: Steve RH





31st July - 3rd August 2025

The second Atlantic Youth Touch Cup will be coming to the University of Limerick on the west coast of Ireland in August 2025.

Featuring 15s, 18s and 20s age categories, the event is expected to be the biggest international youth event ever, with over 40 teams forecast.

Event Details

Event Classification

Tier 2A

Website

<https://www.internationaltouch.org/events/atlantic-youth-touch-cup/2025/>

Divisions available

Boys 15s
Girls 15s
Mixed 15s
Boys 18s
Girls 18s
Mixed 18s
Men's 20s
Women's 20s
Mixed 20s



15th - 17th August 2025

The first European Seniors Cup will be coming to the University of Stirling in Scotland during August 2025.

Featuring a mix of women's, men's and mixed divisions across a range of senior and masters age categories, the event is expected to attract teams from across Europe and further afield.

Event Details

Event Classification

Tier 2B

Website

<https://www.internationaltouch.org/events/other-events/european-seniors-cup-2025/>

Divisions available

Women's 27s
Women's 40s
Mixed 30s
Men's 30s
Men's 35s
Men's 40s
Men's 45s
Men's 50s
Men's 55s



21st - 24th August 2025

The first European Opens Cup will be coming to Calvisano in the Italian Lakes during August 2025. This is an uncapped event aimed at developing Touch across the region.

Featuring women's, men's and mixed opens divisions, this event is expected to attract teams from across Europe and further afield.

Event Details

Event Classification

Tier 2B

Website

<https://www.internationaltouch.org/events/other-events/european-opens-cup-2025/>

Divisions available

Men's Open
Mixed Open
Women's Open

ATLANTIC YOUTH TOUCH CUP

1st - 3rd August 2025



Credit: Noel Cuddy

A RECORD BREAKING RETURN FOR YOUTH TOUCH

The second edition of the Atlantic Youth Touch Cup is back, bigger, bolder, and breaking new ground.

Taking place from 1–3 August 2025 at the University of Limerick, this year's event will be the largest international youth Touch tournament ever staged, featuring 45 teams from 12 nations across nine competitive divisions.

Players will line up in the U15, U18, and U20 categories, with male, female, and mixed divisions represented across the board. While the tournament is rooted in Europe, its reach is now global, with teams travelling from as far afield as South Africa, China, and the Cayman Islands.



- **PORTUGAL**
makes its FIT youth debut
- **LEBANON**
return following a strong showing at the Asia Pacific Youth Cup
- **UKRAINE**
enters their first ever international Touch event

The tournament began as a response to the cancelled 2021 Youth World Cup. Just four years on, it's exceeded expectations, with a **25% increase in teams**, and the **addition of new age groups**.

Note: B20/G20 only have 3 teams, so will play friendlies against the Irish Opens teams too.

The depth and breadth of participation highlights the event's continued mission, to make youth Touch more accessible than ever before. It's not just about participation,, there are scores to settle.

With hundreds of young athletes, coaches, and officials descending on the west coast of Ireland, **this promises to be a celebration of youth sport at its finest.**

45 TEAMS

12 NATIONS

9 CATEGORIES

3 DAYS



WHO'S GOING FOR GOLD?

England arrive firm favourites as defending champions, winning **5/7 titles in 2023**, will be looking for a clean sweep this time.

France and Wales, will return and to defend their Mixed crowns.

Ireland will be hoping that home support and advantage will play in their favour.

Scotland and South Africa could easily cause an upset, with a strong field of challenges



EUROPEAN SENIORS CUP

15th - 17th August 2025



Credit: Steve RH

MERGED DIVISIONS AND MIXED FEELINGS

A FRANK LOOK AT THE EUROPEAN SENIORS CUP, AND WHY THERE'S STILL PLENTY TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT.

With merged divisions, dropouts from key nations, and a heavy reliance on England-based teams, the European Seniors Cup 2025 has had a shaky start, but the opportunity it offers for the senior game shouldn't be overlooked.

The Seniors Cup, a revamped version of the Senior Touch Championships last held in Edinburgh back in 2017, had the potential to carve out a new era for the senior and masters divisions in Europe.



Of the 22 teams entered, England alone supplies half (11). 'Select' or 'Barbarian' teams make up a further six.

notably absent are Belgium, Italy, Jersey, Luxembourg and Spain, all of whom entered senior/masters sides at the 2024 World Cup in Nottingham.

Ireland has entered no women's teams. Switzerland has no men's representation.

Wales, historically strong in the age groups, and arguably Europe's second biggest NTO, is down to just two men's teams, a 75% reduction from recent years.

THE NUMBERS TELL A MORE COMPLICATED STORY.

WITHOUT A SINGLE CATEGORY ABLE TO STAND ALONE, IT'S A TOUGH SELL FOR SOME IN THE MASTERS COMMUNITY.

THAT SAID...

The 2025 European Seniors Cup still brings with it a lot to be excited about.

- It's a way for seniors and masters players to stay involved in international-level Touch, without the intensity of a full-scale Euros or World Cup.
- As the first year in a new four-year cycle, it's a lower-stakes environment that offers space to trial combinations, build squads, and keep momentum going.
- Gives experienced players a chance to support the next wave, through coaching, mentoring, or simply sharing their insight within merged or developing squads. The event is uniquely placed for growth and rebuilding.
- For players yet to represent their country, this is an accessible steppingstone into international Touch. The looser structures and merged formats make this the ideal year to try something new or return after time away.
- And for the many veterans of multiple campaigns, it's a welcome opportunity to recover, reset, and still enjoy competitive Touch among familiar faces.

SILVER LININGS IN STIRLING

The scenic Stirling campus provides a fresh backdrop and marks the first major event in Scotland since 2017.

Away from the usual Nottingham base, it offers something different, and maybe even the start of something bigger.

22 TEAMS

10 NATIONS*

6 CATEGORIES

3 DAYS



WHO'S GOING FOR GOLD?

England it's hard to envisage a scenario where England aren't in every final, with multiple times playing another England team.

France lost the M30s TWC bronze medal match to England, is this their time to shine? Their W27s will push England W35s for the gold medal match spot.

EuroStars/Select have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Wales will be looking to make inroads in the M40s division

EUROPEAN OPENS CUP

21st - 24th August 2025



Credit: Itala Touch

THE PERMIT RETURNS

Back in 2017, the EFT Premiership Permit gave Europe a sharp dose of high-level, uncapped Touch, culminating in some punchy finals, with the backdrop of Edinburgh. England Crusaders took both men's and women's titles, beating Celtic Devils and England Knights respectively.

Fast forward eight years to 2025 and it's (kind of) back and it's safe to say the game has certainly progressed within this timeframe. This time we head to Italy, with more teams, more divisions, and more at stake.

This year's reboot, sees eight teams entering each of the men's and women's divisions.

Ireland, France, Italy, Scotland, Netherlands and three England outfits, Mavericks, Phoenix and Storm. Splitting your talent might seem risky, but with England's depth, it'd be a surprise not to



see at least two sides reach the semis in the men's and potentially an all-England final in the women's.

Missing from the lineup are Wales. A tactical pause or strategic oversight in the buildup to Euros 2026 and the 2028 World Cup in New Zealand? Watch this space, but it's a headscratcher for sure.

The Mixed division is a welcomed addition. Belgium, Lebanon, Middle East Touch, France, Switzerland and hosts Italy make up a pool that feels quite unpredictable and genuinely exciting.

14 TEAMS
10 NATIONS
3 CATEGORIES
3 DAYS



MO/WO

England Mavericks
England Storm
England Phoenix
France
Ireland
Italy
Netherlands
Scotland

XO

Belgium
France
Italy
Lebanon
Middle East Touch
Switzerland

The Permit's original vision was about performance and progression. Now? It's about preparation too.

Will this event will set the tone for the next three years? The stage is set. Let's go.

WHO'S GOING FOR GOLD?

England have strength and depth, and with three teams in men's and women's, hard to see them not taking multiple medals. All England finals?

Ireland men's have been building momentum over the last cycle, is this their time to take England?

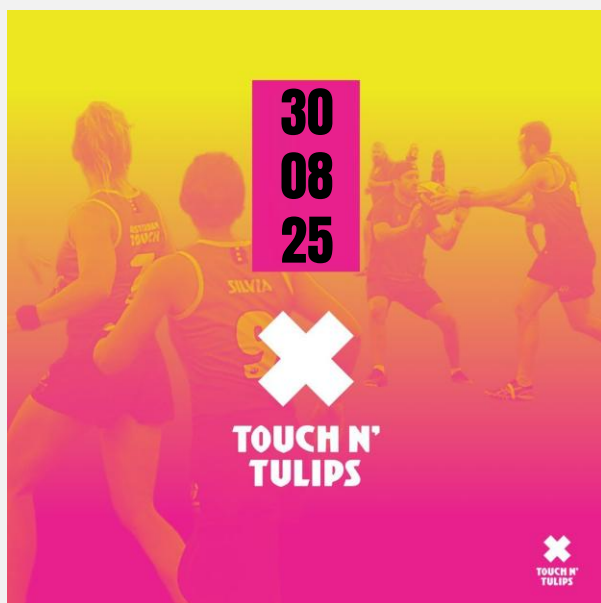
France and **Lebanon** ended 2nd in the TWC pools. **Italy** came 3rd, it's likely to be a three-horse race in the mixed, but will Belgium pull something out of the bag?



UPCOMING EVENTS LIST

Touch and Tulips

- 30 August
- Amsterdam, Netherlands
- €560 per team
- Mixed
- [amsterdamtouch](http://amsterdamtouch.nl)



Edinburgh Open

- 13 September
- Edinburgh, Scotland
- £250 per team
- Mixed
- touchsuperleague@gmail.com



In2Touch Social Touch World Cup

- 6 September
- London, England
- £245 per team
- Mixed
- in2touch.com



XVIII Touch Mixed / La Laguna

- 25 & 26 October
- Tenerife (Canary Islands), Spain
- €100 per player
- Mixed
- www.touchlaguna.es/en





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SENIORS & MASTERS

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TALES FROM THE TOUCHLINES

YOU'VE MADE IT TO THE BACK PAGE. CONGRATULATIONS!

There's no prize, but we admire your commitment.

This independent publication has been stitched together with love, late nights, and far too many WhatsApp chats.

We welcome article submissions from every corner of the Touch world, whether you're coaching in Canada, playing barefoot in Fiji, or just have something to say about your local league's dodgy ref calls. If it's about Touch, we want to hear it.

Praise, complaints, stories, Touch memes?
Fire them all over to: Play@OnTheSevenEvents.com

We'll read everything. Eventually. Probably over coffee.

Until next time, keep running forwards and passing backwards...

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