



**This annual report covers the
2022/23 Season from June 1st 2022,
to May 31st 2023. And incorporates
audited accounts for the 2022
financial year.**

Feel the Buzz.

It's a buzz.

A different kinda buzz.

An exciting kinda buzz.

From the court on campus,
To a beach near you.
One net, one ball, game on.

All sorts, from all over.
A melting pot of good people,
And one shared language.
Serve, pass, set, spike.

Big characters.
Big moments.
Bigger smiles.

There's nothing really like it.
Bold, competitive, fun.
And a welcome. For everyone.

Volleyball. Feel the buzz.



Our Vision is to be recognised as a leader in inclusion, whilst becoming the fastest-growing Volleyball Federation in Europe.

Over the next four years we will;

- Triple the number of players at all levels of our game
- Double the number of active coaches and referees
- Actively celebrate & promote our diversity

Contents.

Introduction

Foreword	7
Chief Executive's Summary	9
Highlights	10
Stakeholder Survey	11

Strategy

Raising The Game 2019–22	13
Feel the Buzz 2023–26	16
Scorecard 2023	18

Activities Report

Membership Growth & Profile	20
National League	22
Beach Tour	25
Schools & Youth Competitions	26
Participation & Social Volley	27
Referee Development	28
Coach Education	30
Club Support & Facilities	31
Performance	32
Marketing & Promotion	36
Commercial	38

Case Studies

PADACC	41
Youth Council	43
VLY. Live	44

Finance

Summary	46
Movements	47
Grants	49

Governance

Company Structure and Key Info	51
The Board	52
Commissions & Committees	57
Staff	58
Managing Risk	59

Appendix

Roll of Honour
External Review of <i>Raising the Game</i>
Audited Accounts 2022



INTRODUCTION



Foreword.

It's very hard to believe that I'm now at the start of my third year as President of Volleyball Ireland. Time is flying.

When I started in May 2021, Volleyball hadn't been played indoor for over a year, we had not had a league or cup competition, and even the Beach Tour was in doubt. Those hard times are thankfully fading into a distant history, and we can look forward with optimism and excitement.

In a strange way, Covid has been good to us. It has led to increased funding from Sport Ireland and gave us time to regroup and reset our focus, directing our resources to the places we felt would have the biggest long-term impact; this includes over 100k to our clubs. We have injected these funds into programmes to not only 'Return to Court' but to boost, accelerate, encourage and grow across all aspects of the game.

In contrast to my first year, this season has been hugely successful. We are celebrating a brilliant first ever Grand Finals, we saw the return of the prestigious Association Cup and the action-packed Championships weekend, and we had a record-number of guests at the Annual Awards Evening.

Youth participation is through the roof with a doubling of school entries and huge growth in junior club competitions, for both boys and girls. Incredible.

Our National teams have never been more active, and now we have a flourishing Development Centre programme to support our young players.

Off court we've spent a lot of time on our Governance in terms of the Commission structure with the new Protests, Appeals, Disciplinary & Complaints Commission (PADACC) in place, the re-introduction of the Referees Management Committee and a re-set of high standards within the National League. These projects don't grab the headlines, but so many people have given their time making it happen.

Statistically our KPIs are fantastic and show we're on the right track. But reputationally I really think we've gone up a level as well.

We were the envy of European Volleyball when we announced our partnership with the Italian Federation, we were invited to the brilliant Novotel Cup in Luxembourg, we were chosen as one of just three partners for the CEV's Erasmus project, and the FIVB have empowered us with over 100k of supports including the salary of a new Head Youth Coach & Coach Developer. The level of support is unprecedented.

The Board have spent an enormous amount of their energy and expertise devising our new strategic plan. 'Feel the Buzz' is unique in Irish sport as it focusses purely on our members, on you. The whole community has contributed to its development, and I can't wait to see the impact it will have on our game.

Feel the Buzz really encapsulates how I feel about Volleyball Ireland at this moment in time. There's so much energy, ambition and excitement for the sport.

I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the volunteers in clubs, teams and commissions that make all of this happen. Without your dedication and sacrifice, we would not be growing with such pace.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Finally, I must praise our staff. I've worked across many industries and have yet to meet a group as committed to their jobs as Gary, Conor, Simon, Matt H, Matt F, Amanda and now Gabriel. We are lucky to have such a team serving our sport.

Clodagh.

Clodagh NicCanna, President



Chief Executive's Summary.

The aim for the 2022/23 season was to bounce back from the Covid-19 pandemic and get our sport properly on its feet.

We've done more than that. The sport is thriving with an incredible increase in participation and youth clubs out the door. Volleyball is growing quickly, and I couldn't be more excited about the future of our game.

This annual report will outline how we've:

- Grown the number of licensed players by +41%
- Increased the number of u18 players +42%
- Increased revenues by +47%
- Increased our spending leading to a deficit (4k) for the first time in years
- Improved our Net Promoter Score by 1pt
- Provided more support to our National Teams
- Enhanced and shaped the development centre system
- Won our first international Youth Beach Volleyball medal
- Developed a partnership with the Italian Federation
- Expanded the National League for adults and children
- Supported our clubs with unprecedented funding .

This report features a review on *Raising the Game* our previous strategic plan, where despite Covid-19 prohibiting indoor sport for around 37% of the plan's timeframe we still achieved 72% of our targets and 89% of our actions. We've over-achieved in many of the key metrics such as participation where we now have 2.5times as

many people licensed to Volleyball Ireland than four years ago, and we have nearly five times more children playing the sport.

We also touch on our new strategy, *Feel the Buzz*, which Clodagh notes really captures the uniqueness of our sport.

We also address some challenges we're facing including the need to recruit and educate more coaches, referees and to develop facilities so our clubs can meet the demand they're facing.

An integral part of our inclusive vision statement is to celebrate and promote our diversity. We now have 77 different nationalities represented across our membership (+10), thanks to our social volley programmes and the work clubs are doing participation at all levels in growing and the vibrancy of our sport is a real strength.

The report also demonstrates our approach to growing our digital following and the priorities for our commercial work.

Annual reports are by definition, a chance to reflect on the past. But throughout the report we've highlighted our priorities for the future including the revamp of our coach education framework, the recruitment of a Head Youth Coach & Coach Developer, and the development of a facilities improvement plan.

Thank you to everyone for their contribution to this report and to our sport on a wider scale. It's a real team effort from the Board, through the Commission and staff.

Gary | Gary Stewart, Chief Executive Officer

Highlights.

We'd like to bring your attention to some of the key highlights and achievements over the 2022/23 season.

- Creation of Youth Council & Youth Advisory Committee
- School competition growth of 109%
- u18 memberships increased 42%
- NEW Boys U16 National League & Cup launched
- NEW Men's Development League introduced
- Youth Championships Weekend coordinated for 34 teams including new youth clubs from West Bolts, Gardians, Balbriggan and Kildare VC
- Invited by the CEV to present our schools programme as best practice to 21 National Federations
- Expanded competitive Junior Beach Tour
- Over 80k provided to youth clubs via the VLY. youth development fund.
- Successfully hosted the first ever VLY. LIVE Education & Training weekend
- Hosted 52 teams in provincial u14 4v4 events
- Implementation of the Ireland-Italy partnership with FIPAV and a visit to Club Italia
- A record number of guests attend the Annual Awards Evening
- Introduction of National League Grand Finals
- Re-launch of the Association Cup & Championships

Stakeholder Survey.

The Annual Stakeholder Survey is now in its fifth year and provides a great opportunity for the volleyball community to share ideas for improving the organisation.

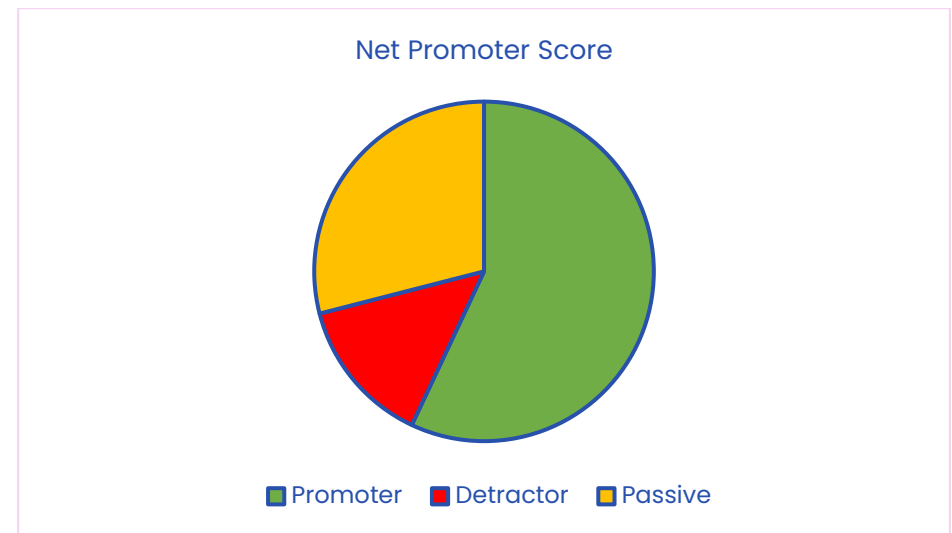
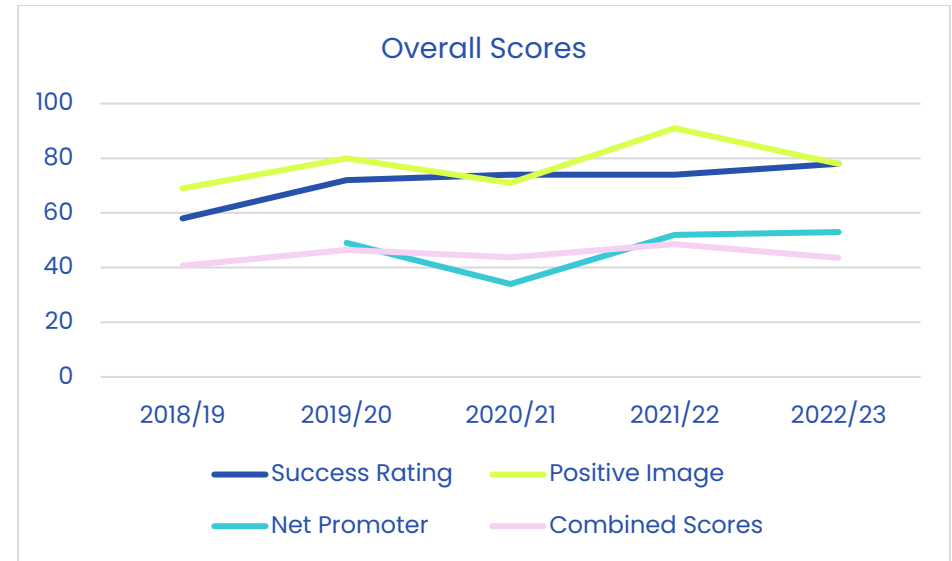
The survey has established 'performance benchmarks' in a range of different areas including Communications, Coach Education, Player Development and Leadership, as well as providing an overall view of the perception of the organisation.

Previous versions have provided a range of ideas which Volleyball Ireland has since implemented including: regular newsletters, online player registration system, more continuous coach education programmes & a new format for the Beach Tour.

This year's edition will be open for another few weeks with this report updated at the end of June. So far only 27 responses have been received, whereas we would typically expect to get around 60.

The interim 2022/23 season results have improved in some areas and declined in others. Generic overall ratings have increased with Net Promoter Score up 1pt and Success Rating +5. Less people think we have a positive image (down from 91% to 79%). Interestingly, specific ratings in areas like Competitions, Coach Education & Player Development have declined slightly.

More detail on the survey will be released in due course when trends are clearer.





STRATEGY

Raising the Game 2019-22.

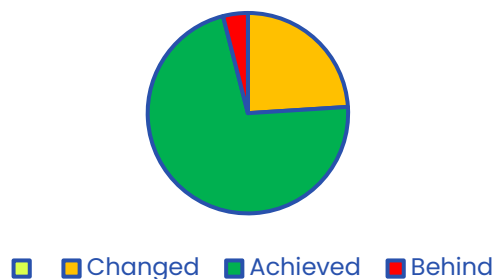
Raising the Game was published in early 2019, with a four-year vision to create **a vibrant Volleyball community that allows all clubs, players and officials to reach their potential.**

Divided into five pillars; raising participation, raising performance, raising operational standards, raising the profile, and fundraising & finance, the plan had 25 targets including;

- 50% increase in the number of licensed players,
- 12 clubs develop youth sections,
- tripling of online followers.

At the end of the strategic cycle we have achieved 72% (18) of our targets, with 24% (6) amended and 4% (1) not achieved – which was the number of Transition Year students completing the TY programme annually.

Strategic Metrics

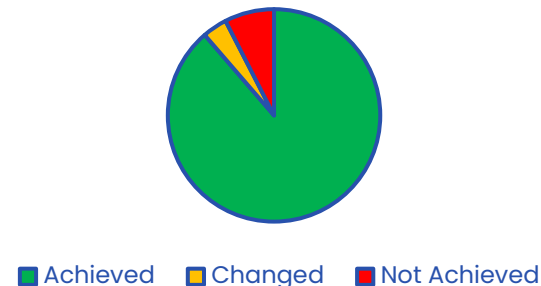


The majority of targets that were changed or weren't achieved were largely down to a change in priority, relating to the impact of Covid-

19. For example, our inclusive ChairVolley initiative for elderly people was simply un-deliverable and access to schools to enter competitions was set-back considerably.

As well as metrics we devised 56 'tactics', of which 89% were achieved such as develop a new brand identity, launch an online registration system and implement the development centre programme.

Strategic Tactics



8% weren't achieved which includes implementation of our Sitting Volley strategy and the re-launch of the Patrons of Development programme. These two projects are included in the new Strategy.

A weakness of Raising the Game was the lack of weighting to various targets, with less impactful targets being valued the same as increasing the no. of u18 players for example.

Measuring Success.

This Key Performance Indicator trajectory covers 10 key strategic areas. These are inter-connected, impacting on each other. These KPI's will be monitored monthly and will signify the growth of our sport during the last strategic plan, and where we intend the venture on the next.



You only have to look at the Key Performance Indicators outlined in the trajectory graphic to see the success of Raising the Game 2019-22.

There has been clear growth in participation, especially amongst junior players, which was the key focus of the plan.

There is a sense from speaking regularly to stakeholders both within the Irish Volleyball community, as well as the International scene, and the domestic sports industry, is that the profile and reputation of Volleyball Ireland has risen significantly.

This has been externally verified, through the winning of the Irish Sports Industry *NGB of the Year* award in 2022, becoming the first sports body to win the *Carmichael Good Governance Award* and by being selected by the Confederation of European Volleyball (CEV) to present at the 2021 Congress, as the *best practice National Federation*.

Some other key strategic achievements include:

- Launch of new brand identity and the positioning of Volleyball as a vibrant, colourful and diverse sport
- Introduction of youth grants to drive the development of youth clubs
- Partnership with FIPAV
- New Beach Tour graded format
- Significant increase in Sport Ireland grants
- Hosting of the 2019 Continental Cup
- New Governance structures and constitution
- Development of two active International referees for Volleyball & Beach Volleyball

- Introduction of Development Centre programme
- Expansion of National teams and supports
- Launch of free-to-use Beach and Park posts
- Launch of National Youth League programme
- Introduction of Independent Protest Committee
- Introduction of Youth Council
- Consistent increase in member satisfaction rates through the Stakeholder survey

Intrinsically, it feels like we've done a lot and achieved a lot. It feels like there is a real buzz around Volleyball at the moment. But at the same time, we know there's lots of work to do and areas where we want to get better for our members.

One of these areas are the number of coaches and referees active in the Sport, we need to grow this number in closer alignment to player growth. At the start of 2019 we had 1 Coach for every 11 players, and 1 Referee for every 10. That is now 1:19 and 1:21. Whilst player participation growth is brilliant, we must increase the number of Coaches and Referees as well. Otherwise, we aren't sustainable.

The elephant in the room when it comes to our progress is obviously the Covid-19 pandemic which prohibited indoor sport for 18 months, or in other words 37.5% of the duration of this strategic cycle.

Considering the impact of Covid, to achieve those results is testament to the dedication, passion and energy of our community.

Feel the Buzz 2023-26.

Our new strategic plan was launched earlier this year with Volleyball Ireland's four-year plan strategic plan focuses on growing a sustainable Volleyball community, with a vision *to be recognised as a leader in inclusion, and the fastest-growing Volleyball Federation in Europe.*

Over the next four years we will;

- triple the number of players at all levels of our game
- double the number of active coaches & referees
- actively celebrate & promote our diversity

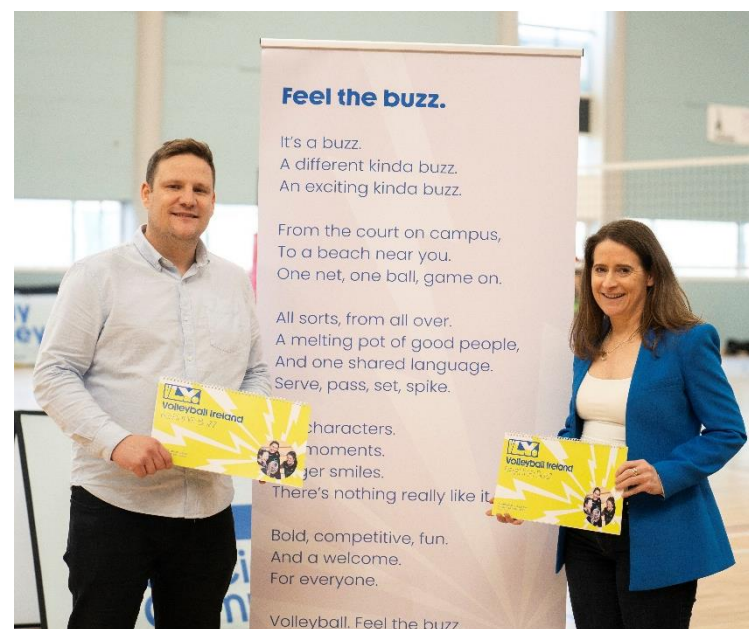
The highly detailed and comprehensive strategy includes 58 hard targets and well over 100 actions that will support, promote and grow the diverse Volleyball community in Ireland. As well as 10 key performance indicators that will measure Volleyball's success including the tripling of participation.

Amongst the ambitious key deliverables are:

- Host a major International Volleyball Event.
- Host a major International Beach Volleyball Event.
- Implement a new Coach Education framework and syllabus, aligning with
- global best practice.
- Develop at least 50 outdoor Volleyball Courts on beaches and in parks
- across the community.

- Implement a Referee centralisation system for the National League.
- All National League clubs have youth sections.
- Sign up to the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework with a commitment
- to reduce carbon emissions in half by 2030.
- Relocate Volleyball Ireland HQ to the Sport Ireland Campus.
- Win a Small Countries Association Championship Gold Medal.
- Every affiliated Volleyball club has representation on a Volleyball Ireland Board or Committee

[Read the strategy in full here.](#)



Our Strategic Plan

Period: 2023—2026
10 Key Performance Indicators
19 Objectives
58 Targets
153 Actions & Initiatives

Our Purpose

We love Volleyball. With passion, energy and enthusiasm – we are here to support, promote and grow our sport and community in a sustainable way.

Our Vision

To be recognised as a leader in inclusion, whilst becoming the fastest-growing Volleyball federation in Europe.

Over the next four years we will;

- triple the number of players at all levels of our game.
- double the number of active coaches & referees.
- actively celebrate & promote our diversity.



Our Commitments

1. To tell the story of our sport, our people, and our values.
2. To grow our sport in a sustainable way.
3. To implement the plan with purpose and ambition.

Our Community

A welcome. For everyone. From anywhere.

School Aged Children

Talent Pathway Players

Third Level, College & University Students

National League Players

Beach Tour Players

National Team Athletes

New, Social & Recreational Players

Coaches & Teachers

Referees & Officials

Club Leaders & Volunteers

People with a Disability

Partners and Supporters

Board & Commission Volunteers

Read the full strategy at
www.volleyballireland.com

Feel the Buzz has established 10 inter-linked Key Performance Indicators that are measured monthly with annual targets. From June this scorecard will be published alongside a summary report of Board meetings and Volleyball Ireland activities.

KPI	2026 Target	y/e 2022	2023 Target	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Licensed Players (incl. U18)	5000	1637	2400	1727	1859	1985	2063	2100
U18 Players	2000	593	850	624	624	675	761	851
Affiliated Clubs	50	36	38	36	36	37	38	38
Clubs with Youth Sections	30	17	19	17	18	18	19	19
Licensed Coaches	150	83	100	93	95	96	97	98
Licensed Referees	150	92	110	83	84	88	88	89
School Team Entries	1250	700	800	744	757	765	777	777
Annual Revenues	1mil	753k	850k	53k	111k	216k	288k	329k
Social Media Followers	30,000	11,101	15,000	11,499	11,801	12,001	12,124	12,264

Blue = Achieved, Green = On Track, Amber = Behind, Red = At Risk



ACTIVITIES REPORT

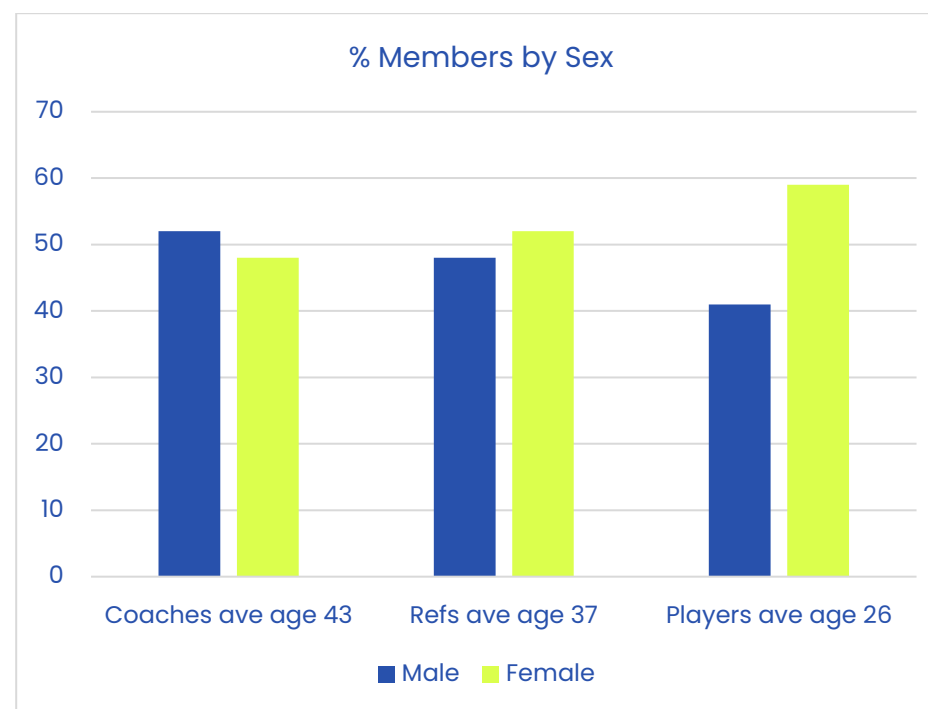
Membership Growth & Profile.

Volleyball Ireland has undergone a period of rapid growth with a significant increase in the number of players active within the game. This is largely due to successful participation programmes and social volley promotion, but also directly linked to an expansion of competition opportunities through the Youth League and Beach Tour, as well as the introduction of the Development League.

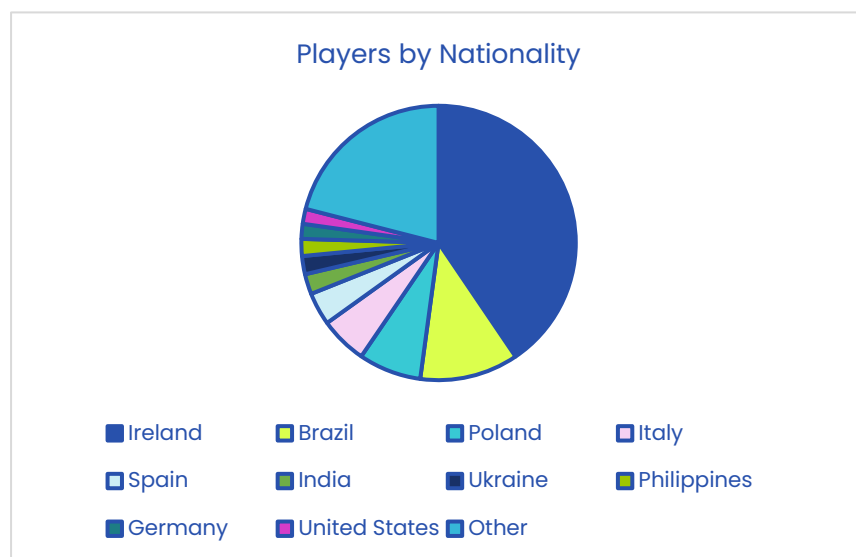


The total number of licensed players (end of May 2023) now stands at 2,100 which is an almost doubling of players since March 2020 (pre-pandemic), and a 41% increase versus last year.

59% of players licensed to Volleyball Ireland are female, which is a small reduction on last year (60%) but a higher proportion than Referees (58%) and Coaches (48%). Volleyball is a 'young' sport with an average licensed player age of 26. Coaches have an average age of 43 and Referees 37, which perhaps shows we need to work hard to retain recently retired players in the sport.

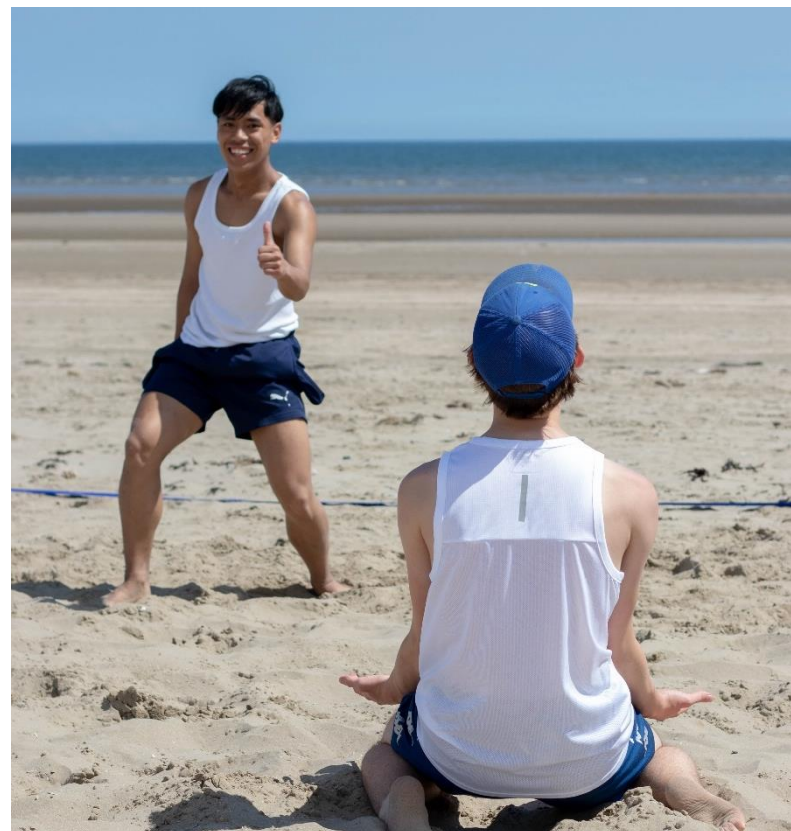


The number of players born in Ireland has increased 54% from 551 to 851. This is mainly due to expansion of the youth leagues and development league, targeting younger players. The main focus of our last strategic plan *Raising the Game* was youth development, and this continues to grow with 768 x u18s now having a license versus 540 last year and just 68 five years ago.



The number of foreign-born players continues to grow, with players now originating from 77 different countries (v. 67 in 2022 and 63 in 2020). The new social volley license option which aims to attract non-club players into the VLY. Community has proved popular with foreign nationals; 88% of social volley licenses are purchased by players born outside of Ireland, versus 56% of licenses for National Leagues (Adult & Youth). Volleyball remains one of the most culturally diverse sports in Ireland.

An increase in the number of clubs affiliating is naturally driving this growth, with 14 associate clubs purchasing a club license in 2022/23 – five of which are progressing youth sections.



National League.

The 2022/23 National League season was one of growth which reflects the trends over recent years.

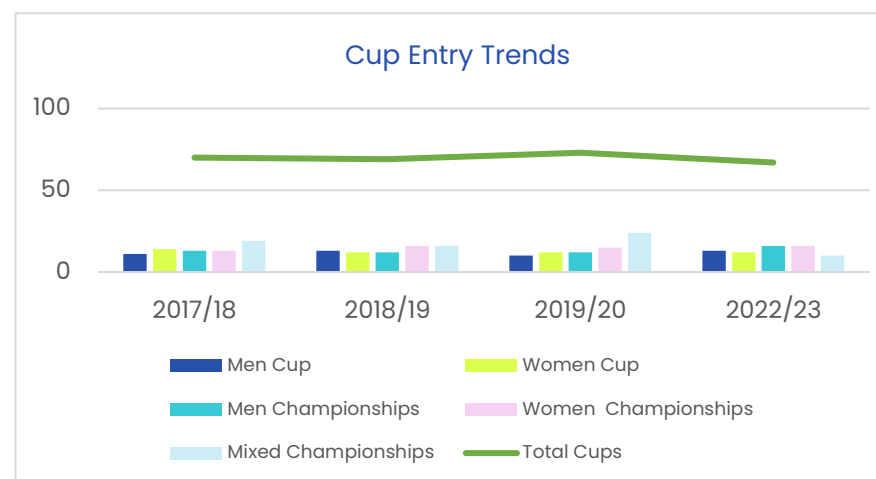
Including the Youth & Development League competitions, team participation increased by 25% from 69 to 86 teams. We now have at least eight teams in the top three divisions of both the Men's and Women's National Leagues.



388 fixtures were played in the Adult National League & Cup competition, which is the highest for some years. 18 matches were forfeited for various reasons including six for a lack of Referee. As the League continues to expand, we need to be vigilant of the need to recruit and retain more referees.

The Association Cup & Shield returned this season with 12 Women's teams and 13 Men's teams entering respectively. Balbriggan's run to the Women's final may inspire more Division One teams to enter next season. It was great to see two recreational clubs; Loughrea & Volleyball Veterans compete for the first time.

The Championships also returned with strong entries, with a 33% growth in the Men's section. There is a need to split the mixed competition from the single gender weekend events – this will allow more game time for the regular competitions and will increase capacity for more mixed entries. The reality is our maximum capacity is realistically around 48 teams for a quality 4-court tournament.



As outlined at last year's AGM, the NLMC placed a keen focus on a consistent application of the competition rules. The majority of queries to NLMC this season fell into the category of "it's in the rules". The NLMC strongly urge clubs to read the competition rules when released and ask questions at the earliest opportunity. The rules are lengthy, but necessary to cover all considered eventualities and to provide the consistency that clubs yearn for.

The Committee also urges clubs to read communication that is sent by NLMC – some confusion arose during the season, particularly in relation to cup competition logistics, because schedule clash warnings that were flagged by the NLMC went unheeded. To improve this communication pathway, we are intending to host a series of pre-season briefings and produce a FAQ document for players and club administrators. We also exploring the functionality of MS Teams with each club being provided a license.

The Grand Finals innovation proved largely popular and successful, keeping interest in the Premier Division strong to the end of the season. The opportunity to finish third and reach 'finals weekend' kept players and teams motivated throughout the season. The professional live stream production and event delivery in Kilkenny was well received by attendees with over 2,000 views on YouTube.

From a disciplinary perspective there has been a slight increase in the number of cards awarded this season. Partly due to an increase in games and an improvement in the standard of refereeing.

	2022-23	2021-22
Matches Played	369	262
Red Cards	21	19
Yellow Cards	82	53
Yellow & Red Expulsion	1	
Total Cards	104	72
Matches per card	3.55	3.63

Multiplied up, the 2021-22 average would have resulted in 101 cards across the 369 matches played, which is just three less than the 2022/23 season.

There have been some reports of poor behaviour amongst spectators attending games. As the popularity of the game grows and more people attend National League matches, we will be vigilant of this taking a no-tolerance approach to spectator abuse of referees or players.

Looking forward to the 2023/24 season, the NLMC plans to start the fixture process much sooner this summer – expressions of interest for league entries will be sent in June, with a view to having a draft fixture list by early July.

E-Scoring remains a work in progress with current paper system being laborious on clubs and VLY staff. Over the last 12 months we have met with various providers, with an appointment shortly.



Beach Tour.

Another busy 2022 season Beach Tour season with 11 events scheduled but 4 cancelled due to adverse weather or lack of entries (Kilkee and Ballybunion).

To help better communicate potential postponements, the Beach Tour Committee introduced an event cancellation policy – to ensure that events took place in situations that provided for fair and enjoyable matches. The policy utilised Met Eireann forecasts and notified players 72hours, 48hours and 24hours ahead of the event that a cancellation was possible, based on adverse weather conditions. That said, this didn't always materialise with one event on Dollymount cancelled on the morning due to strong winds.

Over the course of the summer, 74 men and 73 women took part in at least one event, which was down on 2021 (189).

The *King & Queen of the Court* Format was trialled at Balbriggan and proved to be a hit with the innovative game keeping action really intense. Despite indifferent weather in the morning, the fast and furious format to the day proved popular. New permanent posts are being installed at Balbriggan in time for the return of the event to Balbriggan in July.

The event was supported by SportWorx who have the global license for the format and provided scoring software.

There are some concerns that we are looking to address going forward including the financial viability of tour events. By

implementing a more professional approach with Referees and professional first aid, and in some locations, portable toilets the cost of hosting events is significant. We are in discussions with potential sponsors and hope to have some partnerships in place over the 2023 Summer.

There is also a lack of trained referees which can make the knockout stages of the 2* events quite difficult to deliver at high quality. The Referees Management Committee are working hard on this and have delivered a brilliant intro to beach refereeing course with 26 potential future referees taking part.

A key consideration going forward for all players is to respect our beaches. Too often last year, players left their rubbish behind on the beach, which doesn't align with our commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness.

New innovations such as the Challenger Series and the Beach Club Championships will be piloted in 2023 as we focus on developing strong structures for the sport. This includes the roll out of more permanent courts in Brittas Bay, Balbriggan, Cork and other locations around the country.



Schools & Youth Competitions.

Schools

The 2022/23 Schools programme continues to recover from the pandemic with a 109% increase in team entries. Out of the 777 teams that competed this season, 43% came from new schools (out of 415) which is an excellent sign for future growth and development.

In total, 1955 matches were played over 31 different competitions at primary and post-primary level; boys, girls and mixed, both in Volleyball and Beach Volleyball.

To best promote Schools volley, 24 finals were live streamed on YouTube and have had over 17,500 views.

Youth Competitions

As outlined above the number of u18 player licenses are risen significantly by 42% to 768. This is mainly due to an expansion in youth programmes like PlayVolley and the development of youth sections, driven by the facilitation of more youth leagues and tournaments.



Some key achievements include:

- Creation of a new 4v4 league for u14 players in line with Volleyball Ireland's Long Term Player Development model, with 52 teams competing in various locations
- Addition of an end of season Youth Championships at Gormanston, this event was particularly useful to capture teams that started close-to or after the league entry deadline
- New u16 Boys League and Cup
- Introduction of a Men's Development league to plug the gap between youth leagues and the adult national league
- Regionalisation of the Women's Development League reduced a key barrier to participation (travel) and has helped grow participation

From a youth beach perspective, the Junior tour has been grown and in 2023 will feature regional competitions and a grand final in early September.

Participation & Social Volley.

A strong pathway means performance opportunities at the top end and easy to access entry points for beginners and new players coming into the sport or returning.

This has been a significant focus as we develop our sport as a leader in inclusion. A Social Volley membership has been established, alongside the new Play4Fun programme which specifically targets new players, and has already been the catalyst behind the formation of new clubs, with 14 associate clubs joining; five of which have setup youth sections.

Out of the 269 new Social Volley members, 22 have since upgraded their license to a Non-League or National League membership so they can play in competition.

Four Play4Fun events were held for 151 players and 18 teams with two recreational cup events held by Gardians VC and Impact Wiz VC. It is clear from our stakeholder survey that there is demand for more one-day tournaments; Volleyball Ireland will support clubs with tournament software, equipment and marketing to host these events which can be lucrative fundraisers.

More and more National League clubs are now delivering fun sessions during the off-season which is a great opportunity to grow participation and recruit new players.

The Social Volley initiative was rolled out to 6 x Ukrainian Refugee Accommodation centres with great success in Cork, in partnership with Cork Sports Partnership.

To support the growth of Social Volley, 2 x Activator workshops were delivered where 24 Volleyball enthusiasts were supported with basic knowledge and skills to organise and facilitate Social sessions.

This model is replicated in third level institutions with the DIVA programme, which this year trained and supported 8 new Activators from 6 Colleges.

The Summer presents a perfect opportunity to grow social activity with parks often being available free of charge.

Outdoor Social Volley Festivals held in Killarney, Kilkenny, Cork, Portarlinton and on the beach in Wicklow, Kilkee and Bettystown.



Referee Development.

Developing and retaining referees is a major priority as playing participation grows.

Technically, the number of licensed Referees reduced by 33% (-40) versus the previous year, with the important caveat that last year all licenses were rolled over due to Covid and anyone who completed a Grade 3 automatically received a license.

In reality, 79 Referees officiated in the National League which is +10 on the previous season, and 67 Referees officiated more than 3 games (+15).

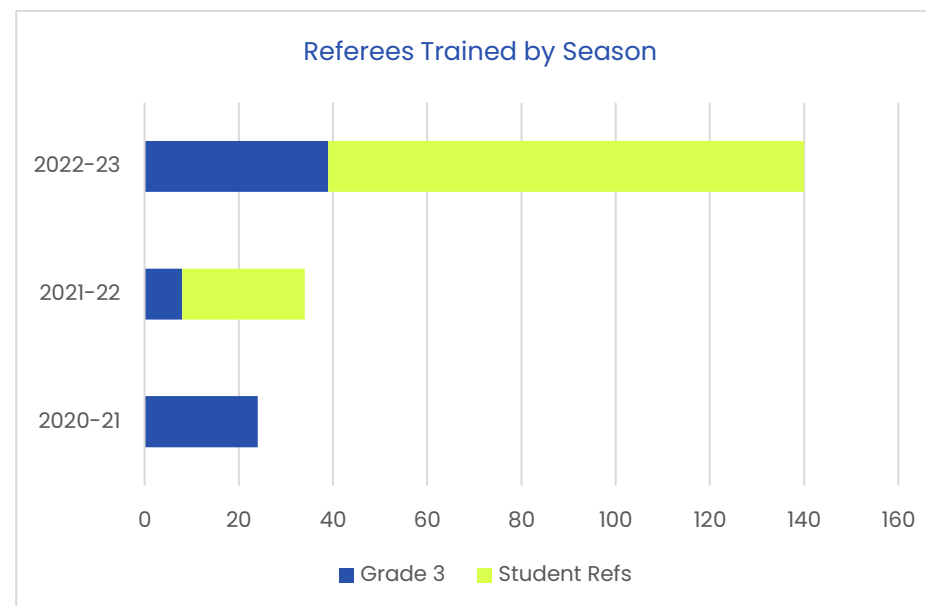
The reintroduction of the Referees Management Committee has led to an increase in the number of courses, assessments and upgrades being implemented across the pathway.

Some key highlights:

- Student referee courses were delivered to 101 students in six A/B division schools, as well as the Referee development aspect of the Transition Year programme
- 39 x Grade 3 Referees were trained across 3 courses in September, December and February (v. 8 last year)
- 10 x Referee upgrades were completed throughout the season (v. 3 in 2019/20)
- 1 Referee assessor course was delivered
- 25 referees were observed with feedback provided
- To improve the quality of referee training International Referees were invited to Ireland with Austrian Gernot Schirmbacher delivering a two-day course at VLY Live

focussing on match protocol and game management, he also delivered an online session in pre-season

- 2 x Referee forums were delivered focussing on various case studies to help improve the knowledge of Referees



It is important to support Beach Volleyball with a similar pathway, and with that in mind Aurélien Gimenez became Ireland's first International beach referee candidate on September 26th, 2022. The candidate course was heavily subscribed to with Ireland securing 1 of only 20 places (out of 100+ applicants).

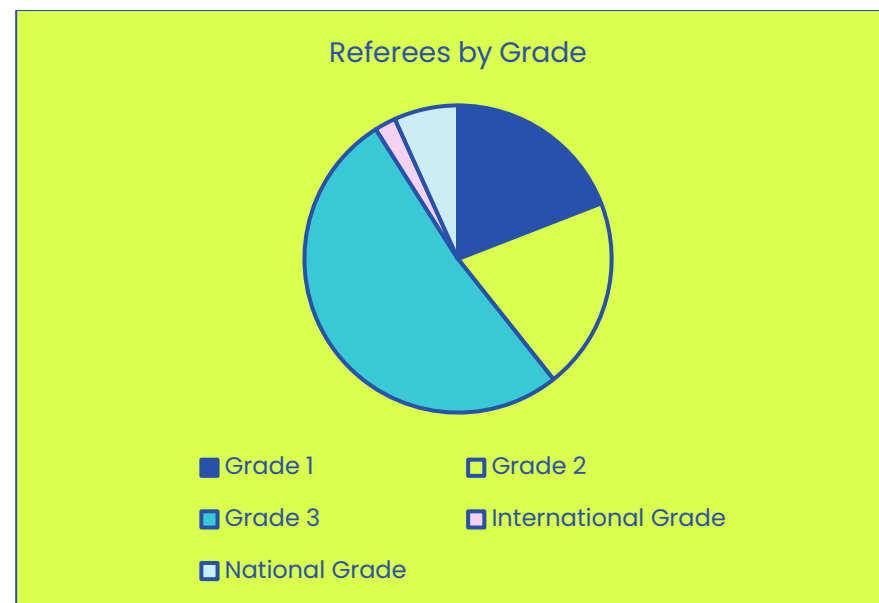
Giordano Dos Santos completed his International candidature programme and was promoted to full International Volleyball Referee.

A key part of the Referee's Management Committee's function is to protect the workload of Referees, mitigating against potential burnout as we transition to a centralised appointments system over time.

Interestingly, the 5 referees who stood in the most matches this year only made up 22% of all appointments (down 3% on last year), and the 12 referees who stood in the most matches this year only made up 41% of all appointments (down 9% on last year). This means that workload is being shared around more and may help prevent potential burnout.

Each active referee had an average of 9.3 appointments which is increased from 7.59 last year. In summary, more referees are becoming more active, and the really active ones are getting more rest which is a healthy trend.

Interesting, 77% of all licensed referees are also active players. This is a key statistic we will measure as we aim to recruit newly retired players on to the stand.



Coach Education.

Since 2019, the number of players participating in Volleyball has doubled, but the number of licensed coaches has only increased by 23%. Put another way, we had 1 Coach for every 11 players, now it's 1:21.

This is especially prevalent when the number of young people coming into sport is growing so fast.

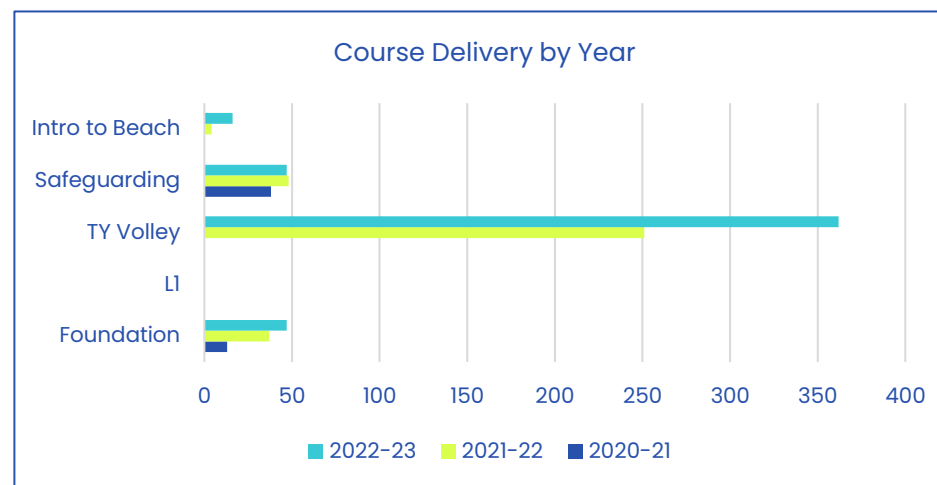
Feel the Buzz will place the recruitment, training and retention of our coaches at the top of our priority list. Work on this has already started with the Education & Training Commission delivering an increased number of courses, with an enhanced quality. They're currently reviewing the Coach Education syllabus with a new framework to be launched this year that will ensure coaches are inspired to keep learning.

Worryingly, 25% of licensed coaches last did a coaching course more than 10 years ago, and there was minimal take up for the planned Level 1 course. We need to place continuous education and training of coaches as a priority.

With this mind, there's been a sharp increase in the number of courses and programmes that have been delivered to enhance the knowledge of our coaches and teachers including:

- Teacher workshop for advanced schools held online to cover offense defence and block
- Teacher intro workshops deliver in September in Clare, Dublin and Galway

- VLY. Live weekend with French Federation Technical Director Nicolas Sauerbrey, Hannah Thornton and Mary Barrett
- Refining technical skills workshop with Andrei Molnar
- Club Italia trip for 7 coaches working specifically with junior female athletes
- Beach Volleyball Coaching course with 16 participants
- Transition Year Volley programme delivered to 362 students trained in person
- Foundation level courses delivered in September, December and January to 47 coaches
- 40 coaches took part in the 3-tier Coach Development programme which is effectively half our coaches
- SG 1 courses delivered on 4 occasions to 47 participants



Club Support & Facilities.

As well as organising competitions, programmes and educational courses, we support our clubs in a number of other ways. For the 2022/23 season the primary support was financial with youth development grants allocated for the first time ever.

Over €83,000 has been awarded to member clubs that are growing youth sections, with a further €30,000 of equipment through the Net & Post scheme. For Volleyball Ireland, this level of financial support to kick start youth participation is unprecedented.

The Summer Beach Posts programme has been renewed where clubs can avail of half price portable net systems to grow participation in parks or on sand over the Summer.

Last year's GrowVolley Club insights survey shone light on several areas in which clubs require additional support from a training and education perspective. A new club support programme will be rolled out in 2023 to help strengthen the governance of existing clubs and ensure new clubs start off with a strong foundation.

Thanks for funding from Sport Ireland we delivered our first Women in Sport Conference (June 10th) with keynote speeches around Effective Communication, Growing Cultures and Athlete Nutrition.

From a Beach perspective, focus will be given this Summer to the development of Beach Volleyball clubs. This will include equipment support, training and marketing help to get new Beach clubs off the ground. As outlined above, a new Beach Club

Championship will be introduced with the winners qualifying for European competition.

Facilities

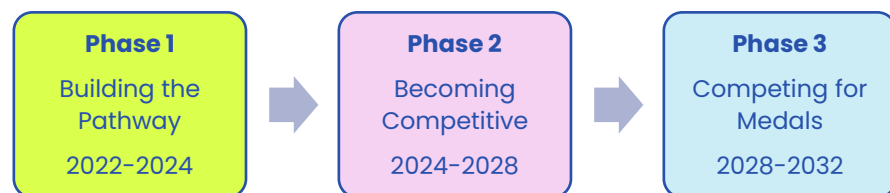
With Beach Volleyball in mind Semi-Permanent posts were installed in Kilkee (Clare), Clondalkin & Lucan (both South Dublin parks), with agreements now in place for installation in Balbriggan (Fingal Dublin), Brittas (Wicklow), Cork and Limerick.

A key priority for 2023 is the development of a facilities improvement plan for our club network and national programmes.



Performance.

Volleyball Ireland's High-Performance programme works within the 10-year High Performance Framework, which is built around three phases of development.



As the 2022-23 season has fallen in the heart of Phase 1, a significant amount of time and investment has focussed on growing the development centre system and supporting National team structures through enhanced services including the appointment of: Nutrition Advisor (Hannah Thornton), lead Strength and Conditioning coach (Maja Ban) and Head Statistician (Cillian Bracken-Conway).

We have also appointed Matt Hanlon as Pathways & Performance Manager to oversee, strengthen and grow the system.

Talent Pathway

The Volleyball Development Centre programme was expanded with 18 female athletes selected (born 2007-09) in both East and West regions. A total of 82 girls attended trials. There was less

demand in the male programme with 20 players chosen from 26 attending trial sessions with a centralised approach.

The development centre programme aims to provide an environment where advanced players can train and play with better players to drive on their development, preparing them for a transition to National teams in the future. They also work with a collection of experienced coaches on technique, strategy, and advanced volleyball topics.

Friendly games were organised with Northern Ireland Volleyball in January, and a domestic camp alongside Snr. National teams in February. A highlight of the programme was a trip to the famous Manu Bennelli Easter Camp in Italy, where 47 players underwent high level technical coaching with the former Italian setter.

The Development Centre model is replicated in Beach Volleyball with 13 players selected last summer. This led to Ireland's first ever International medal at the five nations event in Cardiff (Silver girls u18, bronze boys u18).

79 players attended Beach trials ahead of the 2023 season.

Some key successes of the Development Centre programme include:

- Better integration between East & West centres
- More opportunities to play and train at a higher level
- Overall technical level is improving, giving more opportunity to focus coaching on more advanced concepts

However, with all new programmes there are teething issues and opportunities to improve. There is a belief that the once-a-month sessions aren't enough to really impact on a player's skill acquisition. Generally, the overall skill level is quite low, meaning coaches are focussing more on core skills rather than aspects of tactical and strategic performance. From a logistic perspective, camps and other activities should be planned out further in advance to allow players, clubs and parents to plan.

To enhance the programme a number of improvements will be made for next season including:

- Exploration of additional sessions to augment training.
- Add a specific coach education module to bring development centre drills and concepts into the club and school network.
- Attend u16, u17 tournaments abroad.
- Introduce skill development sessions for younger players (12-14 years old) to help with talent ID, rather than being dependant on one-day trials.

National Teams

As mentioned in the opening section, phase 1 of the framework is about building the system, and as such additional support services have been put in place to help our athletes and coaches including nutrition workshops, S&C support and a trained statistician to provide real time data and performance analysis.

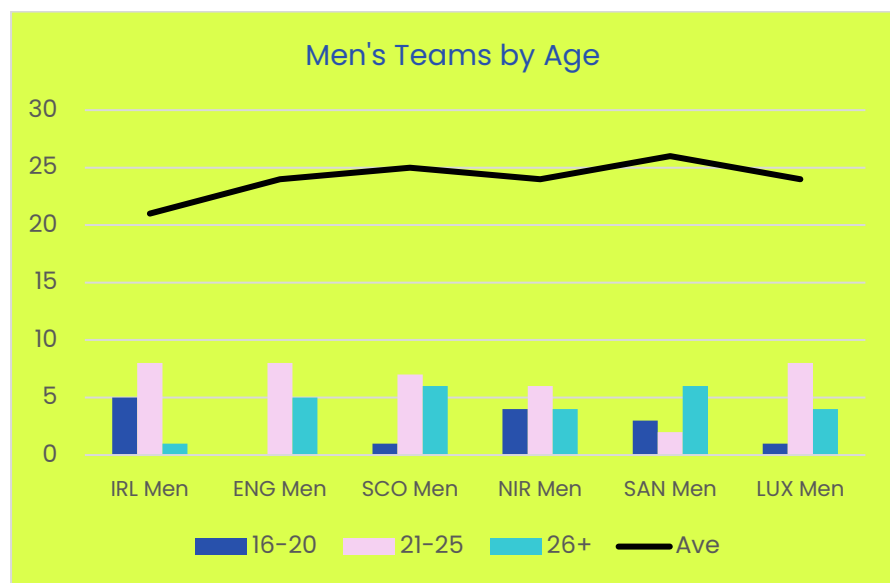
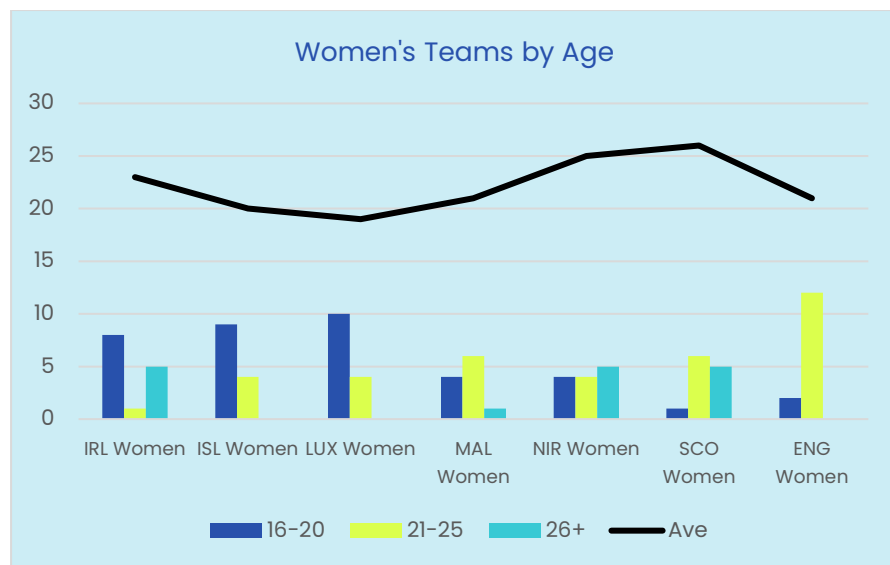
From a beach perspective, two young teams and an experienced duo competed in the SCA Championships in Ayr with Miriam Gormally and Kama Teterycz taking 4th place. Whilst the junior

boys and girls teams took bronze at Cardiff's 5-nations tournament.

Indoor, both Men's and Women's Senior National teams have had similar seasons in terms of competition and training including:

- SCA Championships (Women 5/6, Men played in June)
- Novotel Cup (both teams finished 4/4)
- Italy Camp
- Domestic weekend camps
- St. Patrick's Challenge (Women won 3:1, Men lost 3:1)

There are similarities in age profile, with both teams being significantly 'younger' compared to their peers, with the Ireland Men's team easily the youngest within the Small Countries Association Championships and the Women's team having the third highest number of u21 players.



What is clear is that there is now competition across all teams with players wanting to be involved in the National Team, which in recent years hasn't always been the case. This is testament to the culture and environment the Coaching teams are creating.

There is also a wider split of clubs represented across the National team programme, with **23** affiliated clubs providing players for the u18W, u20M and Senior teams (in 2019, only 11 clubs provided players for u18M, u17W and Snr Women's teams). This is a significant increase, and the importance of such a diverse spread of clubs contributing players should not be understated when looking at the holistic health of the system.

Due to a change in Small Countries Association age groups the u20 Men's and u18 Women's teams were formed later than anticipated, and as such didn't have enough time together pre-competition to properly gel.

The u18W team finished 5/5 in Malta which included a 5-set game with Northern Ireland. Ireland were one of only two teams to take a set off San Marino, which was positive. The team improved as the tournament progressed.

The u20M team demonstrated clear improvement versus the same tournament last year losing out 3:1 in the bronze medal match (4/6) after beating Gibraltar. The team fielded a number of players born in 2006, who will have another shot at this age group in 2025.

Key highlights:

- Snr Men training camp and friendlies with England and partnership with Potentino (Italy)
- Snr Women/u22 training camp with Club Italia
- Invitation to the Snr. Novotel Cup in Luxembourg
- Ciagan Davoren named 'best libero' at u20 SCA
- Joint u18/20 women training camp with Scotland
- Medals for youth teams at 5-nations beach event in Cardiff

There are similar issues and areas of improvement required across both male and female programmes including:

- General skills need to be enhanced, especially in areas of serve and serve-reception. Our young players in particular, are not familiar with receiving higher quality serves at an increased speed and we need to find ways to expose them to higher level competitions before they get to international tournaments.
- Due to a focus on technical skills in many National team training sessions, not enough time is spent on match strategy and playing systems. This means the ability to adapt and adjust tactics to match our opponents is sometimes lacking.
- The physicality and athleticism of our teams needs to be improved through an age-appropriate S&C programme, and an increased focus on fundamental movement skills at a young age.
- Long term planning around team and programme formation, i.e. min 2 years in advance of competition.

Some next steps:

- Appointment of an FIVB funded Youth Coach to work across the pathway
- Expansion of S&C programme to Development Centres
- Development of talent ID system
- First-time participation in age-group EuroVolley Beach Championships this Summer

A significant positive of the whole programme is the conduct of National team players when abroad. Our teams are excellent ambassadors for Volleyball Ireland, which is reflected by the increased number of invitations to friendly competitions and kind messages we receive from other Federations.



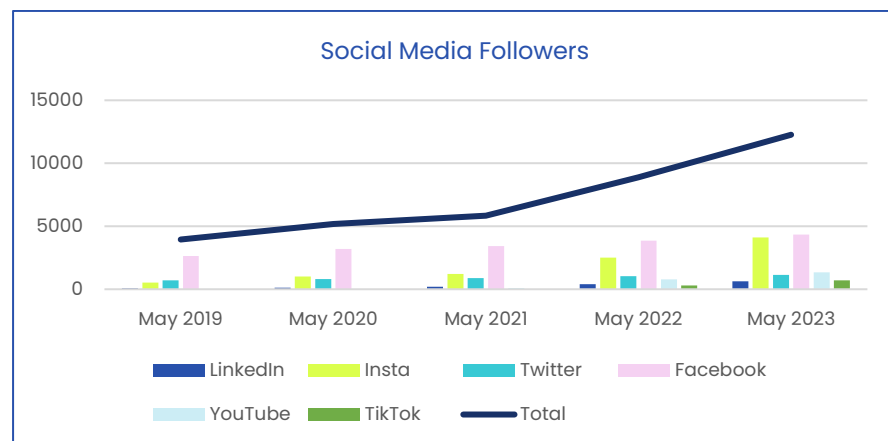
Marketing & Promotion.

A key part of our purpose is to promote our sport. With limited financial resources, and the fact that large numbers of our core target market live online, much of our focus is on social media and digital channels.

Social media channel followers have grown by 37% or 3,363 followers, which is a higher increase in growth versus last year.

The biggest increase has been on Instagram where the Game of the Week reel series has had particular success. It is the social media channel where most of our active players are most active, and now is our biggest channel overtaking Facebook.

Proportionately, TikTok has grown the most (138%), but we haven't been particularly active and are starting from a low base. This is a priority channel for 2023.



There is an expectation that our digital growth will plateau in the coming years, so a significant focus has been on quality of content rather than quantity. We have also been more strategic in terms of what we're posting encouraging more engagement and direction to the Volleyball Ireland website.

Whilst we do aim to promote Volleyball in general, we utilise our channels to promote referee courses, coach education, ticket sales, retail products and club activities.

The following data is based on the VLY Instagram channel comparing January-May 2022 v 2023.

From the table below you can see that our overall posting has reduced, partly to do with no international events in 2023 (St. Patrick's Challenge and u20 SCA were held in 2022), but engagement, impressions and website taps have increased.

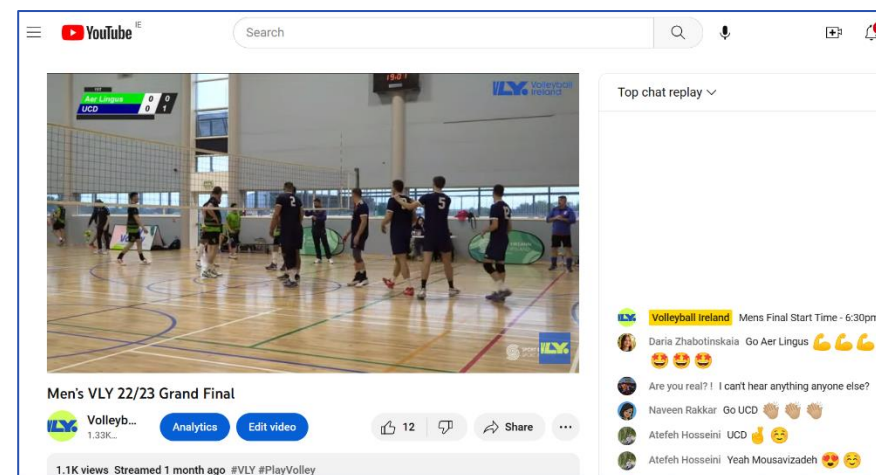
Instagram Jan-May	2022	2023	Growth
Posts	248	157	-37%
Accounts reached	89177	68854	-23%
Profile Visits	27062	30532	13%
Website taps	1064	1192	12%
Impressions	1.01m	1.20m	20%
Accounts Engaged	30551	43420	42%

Now we are above 1,000 subscribers on YouTube, we can begin to monetise content through advertising which is a new revenue stream for Volleyball Ireland.

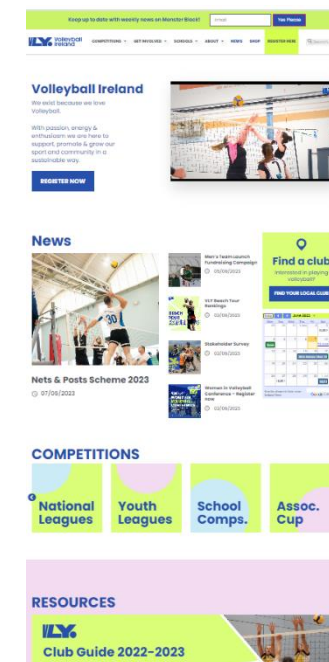
However, hosting no Internationals in 2023 so far, has directly impacted our YouTube channel growth with a reduction on live stream impressions, watch time and unique viewers visiting the channel. For example, the 2022 u20M SCA Championship had a watch time of over 2,000 hours in just three days.

The professional broadcast of the Grand Finals has been the most watched content so far this year, with a combined viewership of just over 2,000. These high-quality broadcasts (and matches) have increased the average watch time per video by over 2minutes.

YouTube Data Jan-May	2022	2023
Live Streams	91	53
Impressions	679016	325219
Watch time hours	6377	3948
Unique Viewers	15882	11416
Ave Watch time	5.16	7.27



The new strategic plan was accompanied by our *Feel the Buzz* campaign and 'manifesto' which promotes the inclusive values of our sport. This now lives on a newly designed homepage which is easier to navigate and which highlights the key information we want website visitors to see first, such as breaking news, competition information and find-a-club. Educational resources are also to the forefront as we look to inspire and recruit more coaches and referees.



Commercial.

The Commercial & Marketing committee is in its relative infancy but has developed a strategy for growing the organic and self-generated revenues that can be reinvested in the sport.

Led by CEO Gary Stewart and Director Lochlann Walsh the strategy focuses on seven broad areas ranging from existing programmes and fees through to the acquisition of sponsors. Action plans have been created in some of these areas and are in different stages of development in others.



The reasons for focussing on these areas are cyclical; everything impacts on everything else. For example, quality and engaging digital content will drive more people to purchase a membership fee, which helps VLY invest more in performance programmes which improves results which leads to higher sponsorships or may inspire participation.

Acquiring a sponsor for Volleyball Ireland is a major focus and is at an advanced stage. A three-phased approach has been developed to recruit new partners.



The last 3+ years have been spent building the brand and reputation of Volleyball Ireland, which has included a new brand identity and winning awards such as NGB of the Year. We've also invested in delivering a sustainability project which is a differentiator for our brand versus other NGB competitors. Growing our social media channels and reach is a key part of being an attractive proposition for a sponsor.

Building our brand and reputation is an ongoing process.

We have also developed a range of properties that we believe are attractive to a potential sponsor including a headline partnership to include National Teams, as well as other rights like the VLY Beach Tour, National League and Schools/Youth programmes, which we have taken to market.

Presentations have been delivered to a global brand as well as Irish businesses with valuable feedback and encouraging signs received.

Anti-Doping & Garda Vetting.

Anti-Doping

It remains a condition of an adult player's registration to play in the National Leagues that each completes Sport Ireland's anti-doping information module and we remain one of the few NGB's who insist on doing so. No Anti-Doping testing was carried out at any Volleyball Ireland events, or out of competition.

All National team players have completed the FIVB PlayClean online course as well as Sport Ireland's module.

Garda Vetting

Over the last 12 months, VLY successfully processed 92 Garda Vetting applications. With Covid-19 now largely in the rear-view mirror, the National Vetting Bureau returned to processing applications in a timely manner, with most applications resolved within 2-3 weeks.

Following a question at last year's AGM, and based on guidance received from the National Vetting Bureau, Volleyball Ireland reviewing the policy in regards to the vetting of Referees. An update on this policy will be circulated in due course, ahead of the new National League season.

CASE STUDIES



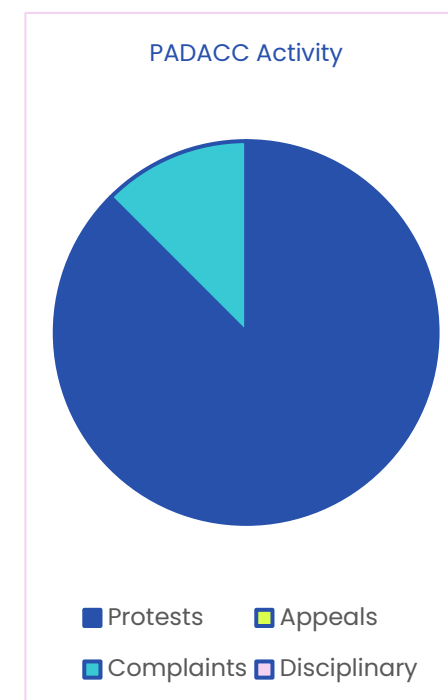
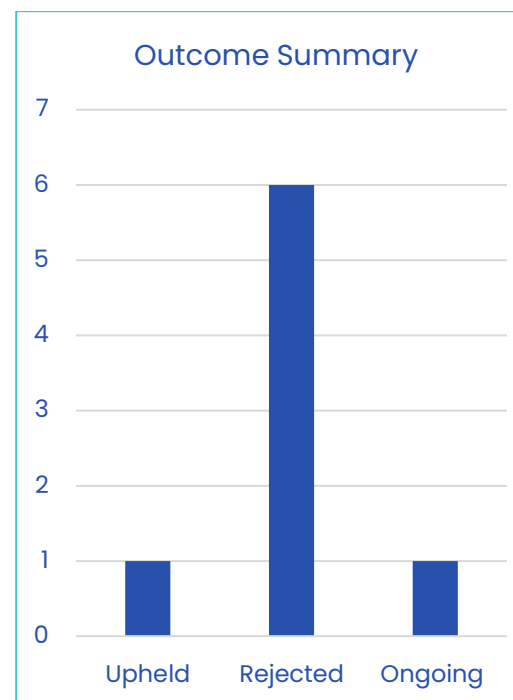
Case Study: PADACC.

Last October, the Volleyball Ireland Board approved the setting up of a new body to consider all matters relating to discipline and complaints. The Protests, Appeals, Disciplinary & Complaints Commission (PADACC) was charged with ensuring all such issues were dealt with consistently, independently and in a timely manner.

The PADACC consists of four members – two volunteers from Clubs, a Board member and VLY's Operations Manager, who acts as Secretary. For any incoming matter the PADACC, first and foremost, sense checks the detail to establish whether (i) any complaints have been submitted in a timely manner and with any relevant fees paid and (ii) whether the subject matter has a valid basis. Assuming the matter is valid and should be considered, the PADACC appoints a three member Hearings Panel, selected from nominees from Clubs, to consider the detail and make a ruling which is returned to PADACC for verification.

The PADACC process is effective on two fronts. First, because a consistent approach is taken towards all applications to the Commission – consistency is always the key and this goes a long way to upholding fairness and transparency necessary in this independent process. The second is that each matter is considered by the VLY community, and not the VLY office. Your peers determine whether a matter of grievance has been dealt with correctly, and as all Clubs would like it to be dealt with, should it for example have been their own grievance or protest.

In its first year of operation, seven panels have been appointed, with an eighth in progress at the time of writing. Of the seven to date, one matter was dismissed as being invalid, one was a complaint in relation to a card (and subsequent disciplinary points being issued) which was upheld, and the remaining five – all of which were protests against Competition related rulings made by the NLMC were rejected, ruling that the NLMC applied Competition Rules correctly.



With any new initiative, there are always areas for improvement as the protest procedure evolves and improves. These include;

- More clubs need to nominate individuals to sit on hearings panels. Several clubs declined to nominate an individual to sit on PADACC hearings panel list, making the pool of available personnel smaller than it needed to be.
- In some instances, more time than outlined in the process document has been required; this can be due to a lack of information in the complaint form, or a flawed application to the Commission; or often due to volunteer unavailability or conflict of interest.

Thanks are recorded to nominees from Balbriggan, Santry, Newbridge, DVC, Dalkey Galway, who frequently gave their time to ensure that the protest procedure worked successfully as well as to all those who were involved in the process during the 1st season it operated.

Case Study: Youth Council.

The Youth Council is a new initiative by Volleyball Ireland that aims to involve players, coaches, referees and volunteers between the age of 18 and 22 as advisory group for programmes and projects.

This includes reviewing, assessing and giving feedback on existing VLY. initiatives, as well as proposing new appealing activities that can help assist with the development of young players and the growth of participation.

Purpose:

- To advocate for and behalf of all youth players and members
- To facilitate and assist young people to voice their opinions and ideas
- Create opportunities for young people
- To provide feedback and have an input into Volleyball Ireland programmes & competitions that concern young people

The youth council was formally established in January 2023, with members in place until June 2024.

Already the council has identified several opportunities to enhance the sport for young people including:

- Attracting young players through more engaging content e.g. match highlights, player profiles and interviews

- Lobby and support university clubs with more resources such as coaches, equipment, hall space
- Connect University clubs with youth clubs to help young coaches and referees gain experience
- Supporting the formation of new clubs and expansion of established one by creating a map of venues with volleyball equipment (nets and post)
- Introduce a working group to devise a marketing and content creation plan



Case Study: VLY. Live

Utilising Covid Re-Start funding the intention of VLY. Live was to bring the whole Volleyball community together to learn, share and inspire.

Over 250 people attended the event including junior players, national team athletes, coaches, teachers, referees, administrators, fans, volunteers and parents.

Utilising pre-season guest speakers were strategically identified that would add value to our education & training programme. Key note guests included:

- Nicholas Sauerbrey – Technical Director for the French Volleyball Federation
- Gernot Schirnbacher – FIVB International Referee and tutor for Volleyball Austria
- Mary Barrett – International Masters Athlete
- Hannah Thornton – Nutrition and Sports Performance Consultant

The programme included:

- FUNDAVolley Challenges for 6-10 year olds
- Nutrition Workshops
- National Team Skill Sessions
- 4v4 volleyball matches for U14
- King & Queen of the court games for youth players
- Strength & Conditioning Workshop
- Technical Development Course
- Referee Video Analysis Workshop

- Volleyball Pathway Information Session and LTPD Q&A for parents
- Come & Try Courts for adults
- Garda Vetting Support Desk
- Game Management & Protocols Workshop for officials
- Perfecting Exercises course
- Club media photo shoot
- Ireland Men and Women teams VS The All Stars



VLY. LIVE
Learn. Share. Inspire.
01-02.10.2022
UL Sport Arena

Hannah Thornton
Nicholas Sauerbrey
Gernot Schirnbacher
Mary Barrett

For Juniors	For Coaches	For Referees	For Parents
Saturday 10.00 Welcomes & Intros 11.00 FUNda Volley challenges for U14 players 12.00 Mini-volley practical session for U14 players 14.00 "Nutrition for athletes" Workshop by Hannah Thornton 14.00 Skill sessions for U18 players with national team players 15.00 King/Queen of court matches for 14-17 years old players 15.00 "Strength & Conditioning for Volleyballers" by Mary Barrett Sunday 11.00 4v4 Mixed Competition for U14 players 13.00 Skill sessions for U18 players with national team players	Saturday 10.00 Welcomes & Intros 11.00 "Technical Development through mini-volley" Coaching workshop by Nicolas Sauerbrey 12.00 Garda Vetting Support Desk 14.00 "Nutrition for athletes" Workshop by Hannah Thornton 15.00 "Strength & Conditioning for Volleyballers" by Mary Barrett Sunday 10.00 "Perfecting exercises" Workshop by Nicolas Sauerbrey 14.00 Garda Vetting Support Desk	Saturday 10.00 Welcomes & Intros 12.00 Garda Vetting Support Desk 13.30 "Game Management and protocols" Refereeing workshops by Gernot Schirnbacher Sunday 11.00 "Video Analysis" Refereeing workshop by Gernot Schirnbacher 14.00 Garda Vetting Support Desk Club Support Saturday 10.00 Welcomes & Intros 12.00 Club Media Shoot 12.00 Garda Vetting Support Desk Sunday 12.00 Club Media Shoot 14.00 Garda Vetting Support Desk	Saturday 10.00 Welcomes & Intros 11.00 Come & Try Volleyball for adults 13.00 "Nutrition for athletes" Workshop by Hannah Thornton 15.00 "Strength & Conditioning for Volleyballers" by Mary Barrett Sunday 12.00 Parents VLY Pathway and player development Q&A

Saturday, 5pm
Women: IRELAND VS All-Stars Game

Sunday, 3pm
Men: IRELAND VS All-Stars Game

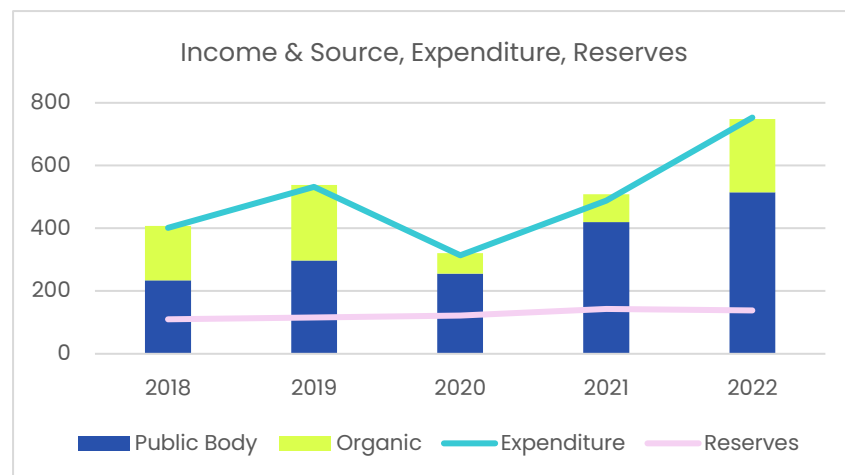


FINANCE REPORT

Finance Report.

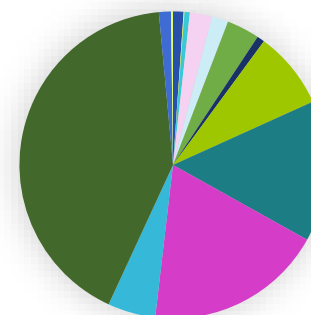
The organisation remains in a positive post-pandemic position which has seen turnover increase by €239k to €748K (+47%) v 2021. This is a 39% increase compared to pre-pandemic levels. After two years of cautious spending, it was important to jump-start volleyball activity in 2022 leading to our small deficit of €4.7k. This is the first time we have recorded a loss in several years.

In previous years VLY. identified the need to become more self-sufficient and move away from our dependence on Sport Ireland and other grant aid, which made up 83% and 81% of our income in the two years prior. Progress is being made, with 69% of our income coming from grants in 2022, however, we didn't achieve as much diversification of our funding streams as hoped by gaining meaningful sponsorship contributions and shop income. This will be a target for 2023.

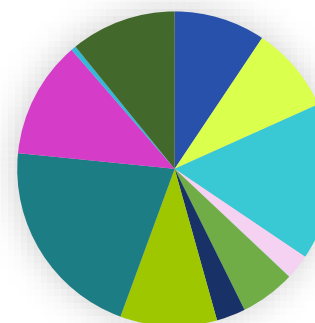


Organic growth was delivered as promised, which is evident as the increases in income came from areas such as registration, school entry fees, international events, national squads and competition, which is testament to the work of staff, volunteers, teams and clubs across the community to grow the sport.

Operational Expenses by Type



Operational Income by Type



Key P&L Movements:

- Player pathway programme income and expenditure are up around 20k to match an increase in development centre activity, with a similar trend for National teams. This highlights the focus on improving our junior and national teams. There has been a significant increase in national team activity versus 2021 with competitions for Snr Women & u19W, u22 Men and u20M.
- Grant expenditure increased by 137% as we continue to endeavour to best use the grants that were deferred from 2021 and before.
- Operational Costs have increased by 40% highlighting the overall trend of growth and increased activity post-pandemic.
- Salary expenditure increased by 22% after having been down €20K in 2021. A new finance employee was hired, and staff salaries were increased because of the increased activity levels and inflation. This is expected to be a continuing trend into 2023 as we increase our head count to support growth.

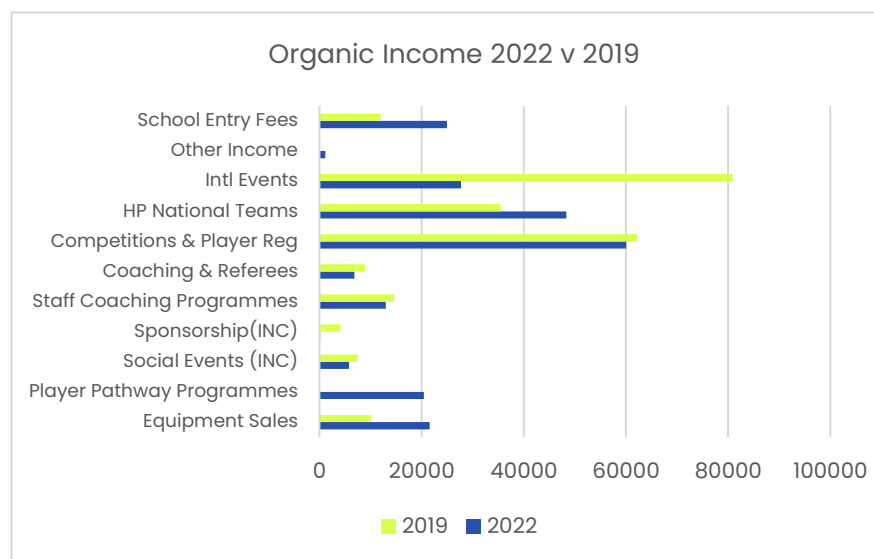
A full P&L comparison is available on p.19-20 of the Audited Accounts.

In 2022 we spent €519K in grants which is an increase of €110K as we look to get the sport back on track after Covid-19. We had €441k of Sport Ireland deferred grant money at year end, up 16% from 2021, with all unspent grant money recorded as deferred income. It is worth noting that a large proportion of this funding was paid in December so deferrals are expected.

To kick start new youth activities and support existing youth clubs, we worked closely with member clubs to develop programmes to grow participation. 89k of funding in 2022 from the Sport Ireland Covid Restart Grant has been allocated to club programmes, with 25% held back subject to completion of programme reports. This is reflected in the Development line of Covid funding.

Comparing 2021 and 2022 is somewhat unfair due to the restrictions which were still in place and the uncertainty which the organisation was facing. Despite this hindrance, the operational capacity has increased significantly, and stakeholders should expect continued growth and low profitability.

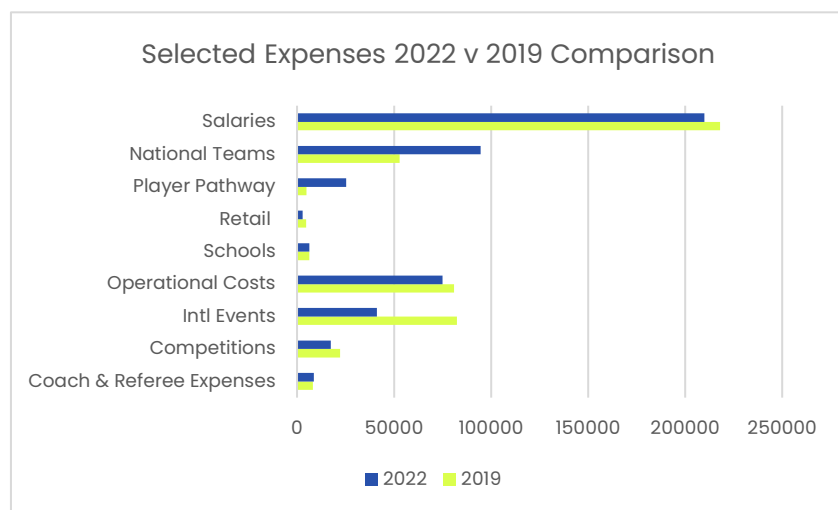
It is perhaps more relevant to compare 2022 with 2019 and pre-pandemic activities. This biggest differentiator being the hosting of the 2019 Continental Cup Beach Volleyball tournament.



Expenditure has also returned to 2019 levels with an almost identical comparison. The chart opposite outlines selected expenditure lines to demonstrate how the financial years compare. Despite a 22% increase in salary costs from 2021, the wage bill is still below 2019 levels.

It is important to note that Sport Ireland related Covid-19 funding has been used to develop the sport and aren't included in this comparison. For example, *Coaching & Referee* figures are similar, but the investment has been higher. One-off supports like the provision of Referee uniforms or Art of Coaching Volleyball licenses that were funded through the Covid-19 grants aren't included in this comparison they are expensed under grants.

Across both charts you can see how the increase in National team activities, the hosting of International events and the introduction of the development centre programme has impacted our finances.



Balance Sheet	2022	2021	2020	2019
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets	581	4580	6,833	9,352
Current Assets				
Stocks	21,861	12,942	14,030	9,395
Debtors	33,389	88,131	31,800	110,404
Cash & Equivalent	661,205	561,658	369,488	175,149
	716,455	662,731	415,318	294,948
Creditors due within 1 year	-579,168	-524,707	-299,848	-188,738
Net Current Assets	137,287	138,024	115,470	106,210
Total Assets Less current liabilities	137,867	142,603	122,303	115,562
Capital and Reserves				
Income & Expenditure Account	137,867	142,603	122,303	115,562

As we've achieved a small loss for 2022 the reserves of the organisation have reduced to 138k. A formal Reserves policy was agreed by the Board which sets our target of Reserves at €100,000, which is approximately our 6-month wage bill. Volleyball Ireland has the intention of hosting a major European Volleyball event in 2024, and as such the reserves target will likely be increased by the board from 100k in 2023.

The cash at hand within the organisation has increased 100k to 661k, which is largely due to increased grants and grant deferrals.

The Ivan Gormally fund has not been utilised in 2022, largely due to the covid funding that has allowed increased support for youth national teams. It is expected that youth national teams will apply to the Ivan Gormally fund in the coming years to make best use of his generous bequest. Grainne Culliton replaced Mary Lalor as a trustee of the Ivan Gormally fund.

In terms of grants awarded by Sport Ireland, we have seen a reduction from 640k in 2021 to 578k in 2022. This is due to an overall government decrease in Covid-19 related supports (255k in 2021 v 158k in 2022). Ongoing grant supports were increased.

Grant	Awarded 2022	Summary Aims
Sport Ireland Core	230,000	Core staff costs, offices, and some participation based programmes
Sport Ireland Aspire	23,958	Funding to support recruitment of Aspire Graduate
Sport Ireland Dormant Accs Inclusion	62,180	Development of social inclusion programmes and youth leadership initiatives
Sport Ireland Women in Sport	53,700	Development of WIS action plan, as well as Her Moves Youth Beach programme and live stream support for Women's match
Sport Ireland Special Women in Sport Projects	50,000	Team preparation funding towards 2024 European Championships and to help support recruitment of Head Youth Coach & Coach Developer
Sport Ireland Covid Re-Start	158,000	Re-start projects focussing on development, performance, volunteering and marketing



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Company Info.

Volleyball Ireland is the Governing body for the sport of Volleyball in the 26 counties of Ireland. Formed in 1968, the organisation's mission is to develop, promote and effectively govern Volleyball in Ireland.

In summary, the organisation's core work is to organise a range of competitions and programmes to grow participation in the sport, leading to an improvement in National team performance in both Volleyball and Beach Volleyball formats of the game.

As the National Federation, we are affiliated to the Confederation de Europeene Volleyball (CEV), Federation de Internationale Volleyball (FIVB), Olympic Federation of Ireland (OFI) and are members of the Federation of Irish Sport, as well as being a Sport Ireland funded body.

Our members are our clubs with National League clubs having AGM voting rights. 'Senior' clubs have two votes and are defined as having a minimum of 4 x National League teams, of which at least one is a junior team.



Legal Name: Volleyball Association of Ireland, Company Limited by Guarantee

Trading Name: Volleyball Ireland

Registered Office: 141 Thomas Street, Dublin, Ireland

Website: volleyballireland.com

Principal Bankers: Bank of Ireland, Ballsbridge

Auditor: Searing Point

Company Number: 317399

Directors:

President (Chair): Clodagh NicCanna (Doherty)

Secretary: Regina Halpin

Treasurer: Doris Enright (joined Nov 29, 2022)

Vice President: Alfredo Aloï

Ordinary: Vacant (Erica Fatini resigned Nov 29, 2023)

Independent: Cliona Boland

Co-Opted: Stephen Moreton

Co-Opted: Lochlann Walsh

Chief Executive: Gary Stewart

The Board.

The Volleyball Ireland Board has gender balance with a 57:43 split of Female: Male Directors. Volleyball Ireland are one of the few National Governing Bodies of Sport with gender balance on their Board.

Two Directors were born outside of Ireland.

Due to re-location Rachael Kilgallen stepped down from the Board at the last AGM. With no applications for the Treasurer role the Board co-opted Doris Enright of Dublin VC. In line with our governing documents Doris can remain on the Board until the next AGM (June 2023) where she must be elected by the members.

Due personal commitments Erica Fatini stepped down from the Board in November 2022.

Meetings

The Board met formally nine times since the last AGM, held in June 2022, and other ad hoc project specific meetings. Overall, the board had an 87% attendance rate which is up on 82% last year.

Chief Executive, Gary Stewart reports to the Board and sits in on Board Meetings in a non-voting capacity. Gary attended 9/9 Board Meetings since the last AGM and was absent when his performance and remuneration package was an agenda item.

Substantive Board Decisions 2022/23

Since the 2022 AGM the board has made the following substantive decisions:

- Approval of new remuneration package for the CEO and staff
- Approval to bid to host the 2024 U20 Women's European Championships
- New Conflict of Interest/Loyalty policy
- New Board Member Code of Conduct and Schedule of Board Matters
- Approved the formation of the Youth Council
- Approved the application to the FIVB's Empowerment Fund
- Approved a sustainability project
- Approved in principle signing of the UN Sports Framework for Climate Action
- Approved a new strategic plan
- Approved the recruitment of a Pathways & Performance Manager and a Finance Administrator
- Approved the reinstatement of the Referees Management Committee

Board Member Selection

The Board can be composed of between six and nine Directors, of which two must be Independent and recommended by a Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee is currently comprised of President Clodagh NicCanna and two non-board or staff members. The Board can co-opt up to two Directors based

on a skills gap analysis of the Board. All other Directors are elected by the Membership at an AGM or EGM.

Board members complete a skills gap analysis, the results of which help inform decision-making around co-opting new Directors. The Board also completes an annual Board Effectiveness Survey, that process for 2023 is underway now.

Board Member Induction & Training

Volleyball Ireland have developed a robust and in-depth induction programme which includes 1v1 meetings with staff, Commissions and fellow Directors, as well as formal training from external industry experts on the principals of Good Governance and the Role of a Board Member. The Board also underwent Finance report training delivered by former Treasurer Rachael Kilgallen.

A menu of training opportunities provided by Carmichael is available, as are a range of training supports from Sport Ireland. Upon joining the Board all Directors must sign a Letter of Appointment detailing their roles and responsibilities, and take part in a *Role of the Board* Training session. A calendar of training opportunities is provided related to a skills self-assessment that each Board Member completes. This method will be replicated with Commission members ahead of the new committee cycle.

The Role of the Board

The Board of Volleyball Ireland meets regularly so as to provide strategic leadership to the Company, exercise effective control

over the organisation, and monitor executive management and performance.

The Board is wholly non-executive and comprises nominees of the Membership, through election, co-option by the Board and independent Directors. The primary responsibility of all Directors is to act in the best overall interest of Volleyball Ireland at all times.

Some Board Members will hold portfolios and act as the accountable person for delivery of each Commission and Board Sub-Committee operational plans. Directors can hold multiple portfolios.

Specific responsibilities of the Board are:

- To provide vision, leadership and direction for the Company, normally through the consideration and approval of Strategic Plans
- In this context, to define the Company's mission, decide its strategic goals and approve policies to achieve those goals
- To ensure that the Company is well managed and that a proper balance is maintained between the respective roles of the Board and the General Manager and staff
- To set performance targets and, in particular, to approve and monitor the Annual Operating Plan and Budget
- To ensure that the Company behaves ethically and in a manner that accords with its core values as determined in the Strategic Plan

- To define and promote the Company's role in the community by consulting its stakeholders and informing the public in an open accountable manner
- To agree the General Manager's performance objectives in consultation with him/her

Conflict of Interests

The board has a conflict of interest and loyalty policy whereby each Director must declare any potential conflicts of interest and/or loyalty by written statement at the start of each year. Any board meeting agenda items which may raise a conflict are recorded in the minutes at the start of each Board Meeting. Conflict of Interests 2022-23: **Nil**. The *Conflict of Interest and Loyalty* policy was reviewed and amended in 2023, in line with Sport Ireland Governance Code recommendations. The next review date is October 2025.

Governance Code

In December 2020, Volleyball Ireland adopted and is compliant with the Sport Ireland Governance Code as a type B organisation. The Code includes the adoption of 64 different actions across five principles of good governance. We are now working towards adoption of the Governance Code as a Type C organisation and expect to be fully compliant by the end of 2023.

The Board completes an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the Sport Ireland Governance Code. In 2022, two items of the code were not being complied with:

3.2 (Complaints & Disciplinary Processes) and 4.1 (Decision making between board meetings. Compliance with both of these areas has now been met with the development of the Protests, Appeals, Disciplinary and Complaints Commission (PADACC) and an update to the Board Schedule of Matters which gives the Board powers to make decisions via email.

Decision Making

In summary, the Board control and govern the organisation. Strategic powers are distributed to the Commissions or Board Sub-Committees. Where necessary, Commissions may establish sub-committees to oversee competitions or specific tasks.

Staff are assigned to the day-to-day operations of the company, helping and supporting Commissions and Sub-Committees to carry out their functions. In short, the Board through the Commissions set the strategic direction for the company, and staff are tasked with ensuring its delivery.

Performance Management & Reporting

Volleyball Ireland's Performance Management and Reporting system are aligned with Performance objectives established for staff at the start of the year. Monthly Activities Reports relate to these objectives. Board Meeting papers are typically circulated 7 days in advance of Board Meetings and include updates from Commissions, staff and Management Accounts.

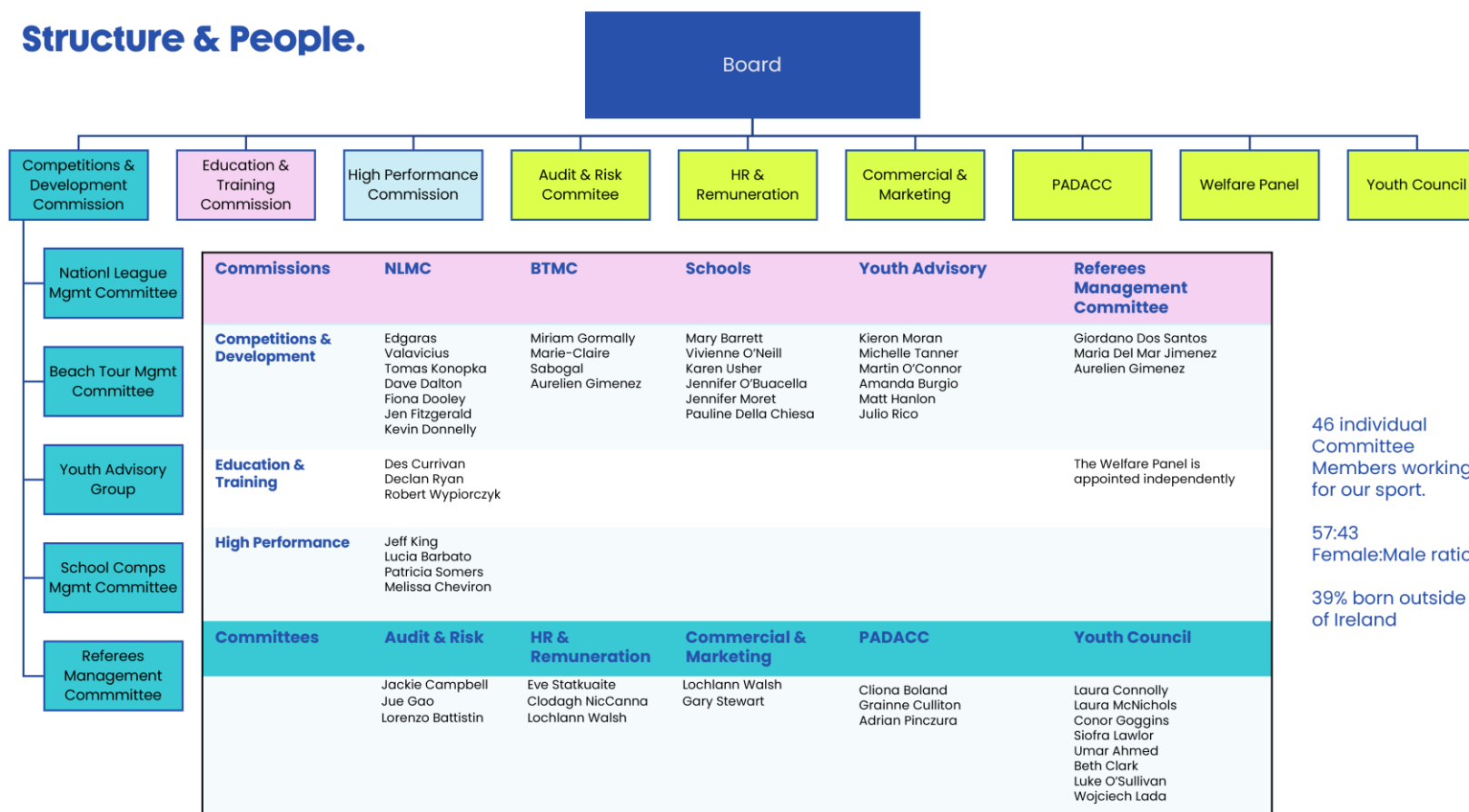
Each staff member takes part in an annual performance review, with weekly 1v1s. The President acts as the line manager to the

Chief Executive, who is the line manager of all staff within the organisation.

Remuneration

Any alterations to employee remuneration is advised by the formed HR & Remuneration Committee, which is chaired by an Independent expert in this field. Staff salaries are reviewed annually. There is a max 10% KPI based bonus available for full time staff. The Board ratify any decisions in this regard and at the end of 2022 approved new remuneration packages for staff

Structure & People.



46 individual Committee Members working for our sport.

57:43 Female:Male ratio

39% born outside of Ireland

Current Board Members.

Name	Bio	Att.	Term Info
Clodagh NicCanna (Doherty) President (since May 2021)	Clodagh is a Director of a global software development team who write software for the Optical Industry. Clodagh started playing Volleyball at the age of 13 in DCGA and has represented Ireland at various age groups through to the Senior team. She's held a number of leadership roles within clubs and within Volleyball Ireland including Competitions Secretary.	9/9	Joined 14/10/2019 1 term completed
Alfredo Aloï Vice President (since May 2021)	Alfredo's volleyball journey started over 20 years ago in Italy where he held various roles, from player to referee, including a 6 year collaboration with the Sicilian Committee of the Italian Volleyball Federation. During this time Alfredo was in charge of supporting their equivalent of the Competitions Board and in the latter part he was part of their Disciplinary Committee. Alfredo is currently actively involved in the development of volleyball in Cork.	9/9	Joined 19/02/2020 1 term completed as
Regina Halpin Secretary (since Sept 2018)	Regina is an active player for UCD, as well as on both Volleyball and Beach Volleyball National Team squads. Hailing from Co. Galway, Regina is a qualified physiotherapist. Regina has been involved in volleyball from a young age and has represented Ireland at junior level as well as Senior honours.	9/9	Joined 19/07/2018 1 terms completed
Doris Enright Treasurer (Co-opted Nov 2022)	Rachael Kilgallen is a Chartered Accountant employed in the National Treasury Management Agency as an Assistant Finance Manager. She completed her qualification in Deloitte where she trained as an Auditor in Financial Services. She has a huge interest in sport and is a keen runner in her spare time.	6/7	Joined 29/11/2022 0 terms completed
Lochlann Walsh Co-Opted	Lochlann is a highly experienced Board member in the sport world. He served eight successful years as President of Triathlon Ireland, and is a current member of the Board of the Olympic Federation of Ireland. In his professional career, Lochlann is a global sales manager for a multi-billion dollar US based tech firm.	9/9	Joined 20/06/2021 1 terms completed
Stephen Moreton Co-Opted	Stephen is a former professional cricketer, who has worked in a number of professional coaching roles including as Head Coach for the Ireland Women's team. Stephen has an MBA in International Sports Management from Loughborough University.	5/9	Joined 30/03/2022 1 terms completed
Cliona Boland Independent	Cliona M Boland is a practising Barrister, engaged in many differing areas. She works in Dublin and in the west of Ireland. As a student she studied Law (B.C.L.) in University College Cork and at the Honorable Society of King's Inns, Dublin. She studied at the Law Society of Ireland, post-qualification, and obtained a Diploma in Sports Law. She has extensive experience lecturing in many legal subjects and co-taught Sports law in UCD in 2020.	8/9	Joined 22/03/2021 0 terms completed

Commissions & Committees.

As well as sport focussed Commissions (Competitions & Development, Education & Training and High Performance, the Board has established, a number of Sub-Committees to focus on the business side of the organisation. Like the Commissions, each Committee has a board member representative and supporting staff member.

Taking the entire structure into consideration our Committees have gender balance with a 57/43 split. 39% of Committee members were born abroad which is reflective of our cultural diversity.

Back in 2021, a new HR & Remuneration Committee was formed, following best practice Governance advice. The HR & R Committee advises on contracts, performance management and other related issues. This was particularly important as Volleyball Ireland reviewed all staff benefits at the end of 2022, with the Committee making a recommendation to the Board.

A success of this season has been the creation of the Youth Council, which will focus on ensuring young people have a voice within the organisation.

The second newly formed committee is the Protests, Appeals, Disciplinary & Complaints Committee, otherwise known as PADACC. This was setup in 2022 which provides an independent mechanism for assessing the validity of any complaints and competitions related protests and implements next steps in the process, including the formation of hearings panels and appeals panels.

The case study section provides more in-depth detail on these new developments.

A new induction and training programme, as well as a strengthening of our governance arrangement relating to Commissions and Committees will be introduced in 2023, including term limits, effectiveness surveys and letters of appointment. The system will replicate the arrangements for the Board.

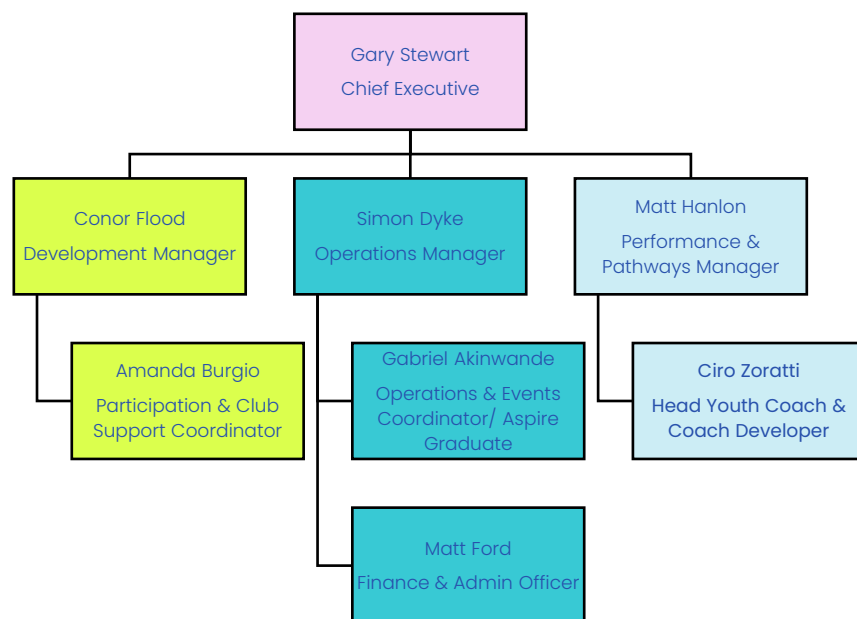
Staff.

Over the Summer of 2021, Volleyball Ireland re-shaped the staffing structure of the organisation. The previous flat line structure 4 x members of staff reporting into a General Manager has been replaced with a department-based focus. This structure will allow Volleyball Ireland to grow in the coming years, and provides for continuity planning.

A new staff member at Manager level, with a focus on Player Development & Pathways was employed (Matt Hanlon) to develop a new department. This will permit the development of

more coach education courses and player development initiatives. The FIVB have co-funded a full time Head Youth Coach and Coach Developer. Ciro Zoratti will join the organisation in August. Sport Ireland Special Women in Sport funding is assisting with this appointment.

A part-time finance admin officer (Matt Ford) was appointed to improve the quality of our financial management and has allowed the Operations team more capacity to deliver more events and competitions at a higher standard, whilst improving our financial processes.



Managing Risk.

The definition of risk appetite is the amount of risk an organisation is willing to take to reach its objectives. With this in mind the board have created a risk appetite statement that explains the amount of risk the Board are willing to take, related to the strategic objectives set out in Raising the Game, as well as the general operations of a progressive National Governing Body of Sport.

Raising the Game established core values that are embedded into the culture of the organisation. These include *Integrity* – that’s why it’s important our risk appetite is public and transparent for our members, and *Ambition* – that’s why we need to take risks to gain the rewards that our great sport and members deserve.

Risk Appetite

Understanding our risk appetite will help us govern effectively, making informed decisions across all areas of the organisation. There are certain risks that we will not tolerate, and some in which we have a high tolerance for. The following scale highlights the spectrum of risk tolerance.

Risk Seeking 10-9	Risk Tolerant 8-7	Risk Neutral 6-5	Moderately Risk Averse 4-3	Risk Averse 2-1
We believe that taking greater risks is justified to reap significant rewards and achieve strategic objectives.	We are willing to take some risks and take some negative impact than we normally would to achieve strategic objectives	We will take a balanced and informed approach, willing to accept both positive and negative impacts	We will take a cautious approach to taking risks, with only a small negative impact being tolerated	We will not tolerate any risk nor any negative impact

Volleyball Ireland's strategic goals each have a differing tolerance level. This is a summary of those tolerance levels:

Key Strategic Areas and Functions	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1 Participation and Growth										
2 Operational Standards including Compliance										
3 Player, Coach & Referee Development										
4 Marketing & Promotion										
5 Fundraising & Finance (Revenues and budgeting)										
6 Reputation and Image										
7 People Management										

Supporting the risk appetite statement is a comprehensive risk register which the Board reviews on a quarterly basis. The board identified the following as some of the key risks for 2022/23:

Risk Summary	Mitigation Action
Increased delivery of programmes and events, plus the higher demand for the sport reduces the capacity of staff to deliver at a high standard. This could lead to staff fatigue and potentially the loss of good quality employees	Recruitment of Matt Ford and Matt Hanlon to support the continued development of the sport.
Hosting of European Championships may have significant risk to the organisation's finances	Lobby CEV for increase to the per diem rate, and engage with Sport Ireland in relation to additional support as a major event.
Reputational risk of adopting the UN Climate for Action Sports Framework and not meeting targets	Deliver scoping exercise to understand full project implications
Not enough coaches and referees to meet the demand, with increased entries into National League and other competitions	Invest in Coaching & Referee training and supports to recruit more people into those roles



APPENDIX

2022-23 Roll of Honour.

National League & Cup		Youth League		Schools	
Premier Division Men	UCD	U16 Youth League Girls	Cork Volleyball Academy	Snr A Boys Championship	Patrician High School
Premier Division Women	Santry Calypso	U16 Youth League Boys	Dalkey Devils	Snr B Boys Championship	Dungarvan College
Division 1 Men	Dalkey Devils	U16 Boys Cup	Dalkey Devils	Snr C Boys Championship	Kilkenny City VS
Division 1 Women	Balbriggan	4v4 National Championship	Kildare Volleyball Club	Snr A Girls Championship	Holy Family SS
Division 2 Men	Gardians	Club & Volunteer Awards		Snr B Girls Championship	Grange Community College
Division 2 Women	Dalkey Devils			Snr C Girls Championship	Kilkenny City VS
Division 3 Men	Galway Volleyball Club			U16 A Boys Championship	Portlaoise College
Division 3 Women	Cork Volleyball Academy			U16 B Boys Championship	St Brigid's College
Association Cup Men	UCD	Participation & Community	Kilkenny Spartans	U16 C Boys Championship	Piper's Hill College
Association Cup Women	Gardians	Marketing & Promotion	Tallaght Rockets	U16 A Girls Championship	Colaiste Muire
Association Shield Men	DVC Abu	Club Development	Dalkey Devils	U16 B Girls Championship	Rockford Manor
Association Shield Women	Santry Calypso	Feel the Buzz Recognition	Carrick Crows	U16 C Girls Championship	Colaiste Chiarain
Intermediate Championships Men	Gardians	Coach of the Year	Alessandra Trio	U16 A Boys Championship	Portlaoise College
Intermediate Championships Women	Balbriggan	Youth Coach of the Year	Julio Rico	U16 B Boys Championship	Grange Community College
Junior Championships Men	Ballymun Patriots	Referee of the Year	Grainne Culliton	U16 C Boys Championship	Colaiste Muire
Junior Championships Women	Aer Lingus	Lifetime Service Award	Mary Lalor	U16 A Girls Championship	Presentation Kilkenny
All Stars Men	Evgenii Menschikov			U16 B Girls Championship	Our Lady's Bower
	Jackson Barrett			U16 C Girls Championship	Colaiste Christ Ri, Laois
	Artur Troska			Junior A Boys Championship	Patrician High School
	Amandip Rakkar			Junior B Boys Championship	Colaiste Muire
	Thomas Kozyra			Junior C Boys Championship	St Brigid's College
	Ivan Brigida			Junior A Girls Championship	Colaiste Muire
	Giovanni Consalvo			Junior B Girls Championship	Our Lady's Bower
All Stars Women	Giulia Fagiani			Junior C Girls Championship	Cancelled Weather
	Claudia Honorio			Junior D Girls Championship	Holy Family SS
	Bruna Conti			Schools Cup Boys	Patrician High School
	Melissa Aleixao			Schools Cup Girls	Doon CBS
	Edyta Jozwiak-McMullan			Connacht Beach Champions Boys	St Killian's NS
	Vika Bykova			Connacht Beach Champions Girls	Brierhill NS
	Roseli Marques Fernandes			Leinster Beach Champions Boys	
				Leinster Beach Champions Girls	
				Munster Beach Championships	
				All Ireland Senior Girls	
				All Ireland Senior Boys	
				Primary Boys Championships	
				Primary Girls Championships	
				Primary Mixed Championships	

External Strategy Review.

This external review has been provided by Teneo Ireland, a global consultancy firm.

Teneo examined results from over 300 stakeholder surveys, annual reports and various bits of historical data, as well as delivering consultation workshops with Commissions, Board, Staff and 1v1 interviews with members of the Volleyball community.

Raising the Game has been an excellent foundation for Volleyball Ireland and the catalyst for improvement across participation, governance, profile, performance and financing.

It is clear that Volleyball Ireland has undergone positive growth throughout this time, with participation growth being substantial.

COVID impacted the sustained progress of Volleyball Ireland especially in terms of school participation however, this creates a real opportunity for the upcoming strategy to refocus on driving participation particularly through schools.

General stakeholder consensus shows a 52% increase in NPS scores with significant opportunities to improve across Player Development, Marketing Engagement and Communication which scored 7.8 and 7.6 respectively.

Numbers in participation have grown leading to new considerations to be put in place to ensure demand is supplied at a high standard.

While entries into the national leagues have increased a review of the competition is required to ensure sustainable growth and participation.

A focus to increase the number of coaches and referees has been successful, however, the quality of coaching and continued assessment /development must be considered in order to drive higher playing standards. A review should take place to understand the number of games referees officiated to avoid burn out and unavailability.

Beach Volleyball has seen a dramatic rise in participation and performance with teams competing and medalling on the international stage. There should be a clear pathway for increased participation and entry into the sport.

National and international reputation of Volleyball Ireland has improved with growing relationships among the CEV and other participating nations growth of followers online has surpassed industry standards.

Licensing statistics show that Volleyball is the most culturally diverse sport in Ireland. Support toward Ukrainian refugees has reinforced Volleyball Ireland's values of inclusivity and community.

There is a requirement to recruit a media/marketing/communications specialist to improve the internal and external communications to promote these successes more.

The commissioning of regional development centres will drive forward the player pathway, however, more awareness is needed of this work. The consideration in the upcoming strategy is how to utilise these efficiently when developing a high performance plan.

Financially VLY in a healthy position with a track record of increased supports from Sport Ireland.

[Stephen Bradshaw | Director & Senior Sport Consultant, Teneo](#)

THE END