

Volleyball For Life (coaches, officials, talent)

Achievements:

- Ipswich Ravens worked with Volleyball England to host an Assistant Coach Course. The Suffolk VA contributed one third of the course fee for seven candidates from our clubs with clubs providing additional support.
- We are very thankful to Amy Scrivener for making arrangements at our end and Bertrand Olie for travelling to tutor.
- Two of the participants in our 2023-24 officiating workshop progressed to Grade IV. The Suffolk VA contributed half the course fee for each of these.

Disappointments:

- Did not repeat our officiating workshop
- Unable to recruit volunteers to replace those stepping-down from Team Suffolk (our junior development programme). The programme is therefore suspended.

Ongoing work:

- Leadership development: At least two clubs are in need of additional Activators / Assistant Coaches / Coaches.

To service the demand for volleyball across the county, it may be time to consider funding models via which coaches / leaders are paid for their time.

Get Keep Grow (clubs, membership, volunteers, volleyball growth)

Points to note:

- A new company, Level-Up Beach, led by Rich Flynn (Norwich Spikers) and supported by Norfolk Volleyball Association has worked with East Suffolk District Council. Three beach courts have been installed on Lowestoft's South Beach and Level Up are providing a range of coached sessions every Saturday from May to September
 - We haven't been directly involved so can't claim as an achievement
- There is one NVL team in Suffolk: Newmarket Men (4th M2C), on the westernmost point of the large county. A number of Suffolk-based players travel considerable distances outside the county to play in NVL squads (Tendring, Team Essex, Norwich Spikers). It is pleasing to see players develop to the level where they want to play in NVL but problematic for club development when people involved with leading original club are no longer available.

Achievements:

- In addition to the six community clubs which have been affiliated to Suffolk VA for many years, Warriors affiliated with us and entered our Mixed Intermediate League.
 - Warriors are formed from members of the Filipino community based around West Suffolk Hospital in Bury St Edmunds. Prior to COVID-19s arrival in the UK some of their players entered a series of tournaments organised by Ipswich VC as "Fil-Suffolk-Smashes".

- Ipswich VC added a beginners session. This overlaps with their existing training session.
- We assisted with grant application which led to facilities upgrade at Farlingaye High in Woodbridge. This could lead to a community club in future.
- Inter-school events
 - Following relaxation of pandemic restrictions volleyball was removed from the Suffolk PE & Sports Network programme as, despite running popular events, from the network's perspective, too few schools were participating.
 - Nevertheless, School Games Organisers continued to help us find dates to host events. These have been successful.
 - In 2024-25 they brought us back into their central programme, but encouraged us to run six events rather than the seven we ran in 2023-24. U13, U15 & U19 events were scheduled.
 - Overall participation was up despite hosting one fewer event. Gender balance was closer this year:

	Boys	Girls	Total
2023/24	154	128	282
2024/25	148	153	301

- We are working to improve equipment at Haverhill
- Claydon High is our next focus w.r.t facilities upgrade; they offer volleyball at lunchtime five days per week and after school on Fridays!

Future plan:

- Encourage more schools to affiliate with VE as junior clubs so they can receive VE / VE Foundation support.
- Develop leadership development programme
- The first aid course required to qualify as a Volleyball England Coach costs over £200 per participant if booked individually through St John's / Red Cross. We know a couple of providers who can deliver a suitable course for up to 12 people for ~£600 and have a venue we can use for free. We know of two candidates wanting to take the course and are considering hosting. This would probably be on a Saturday in Ipswich.

An Ace Service (competitions / administering regional, area, local league)

- Local
 - Men
 - Three teams have contested our competition for men's competitive teams for the past few seasons. Our two other clubs with male members participated this season.
 - Mixed
 - Our Intermediate League continued to be popular. A few teams have fielded players also competing in men's competitions. The intention of this league was to give other players opportunities. A bit of overlap as players progress to the higher level is to be expected. The situation will be reviewed. All-female club Seagulls withdrew after the first half

of the season due to dwindling numbers but have since recruited new members. While the level is relatively high, they're unlikely to re-enter.

- Ladies
 - Our inter-school volleyball events show balanced gender splits, but the only Suffolk-based ladies team competing regularly is Bury Bobcats (Eastern Region series and Cambridgeshire league).
 - An attempt to get Ipswich VC and Bury to contest the Suffolk Ladies Cup was not followed-through.
 - A triangular between Seagulls, Ravens ladies and Bury was organised towards the end of the season. Bury ended up fielding some teenage boys.
 - Seagulls also played ladies / girls from Stowmarket in a 2v2 friendly event.
- Beyond Suffolk:
 - Newmarket are eagerly awaiting 2025-26 where their second team will be competing in NVL Div 3.
 - Bury Bobcats ladies and men regularly competed in Eastern Region Series and Cambridgeshire League.
 - Newmarket and Stowmarket Men also both competed in Cambridgeshire League.
 - No Suffolk club participated in the 2024-25 Chelmsford League. Ipswich Ravens expect to enter Div 1 in 2025-26.
 - Our clubs appreciate the opportunity to participate in neighbouring counties' and regional competitions - we are thankful to their organisers.
 - The Eastern Region Volleyball Development Camps have provided great opportunities for those in Years 9-12 with some progressing to England camps / squads.
 - Many members of the Suffolk volleyball community have enjoyed watching Essex Rebels in Super League action, including Super League Live.