



North East Scotland Touch Association Annual General Meeting President's Report – 2017

Firstly I would like to thank everyone on the Committee for their hard work over the last year. It has been another tough year for all and willingness of people to undertake tasks on top of workloads and family lives is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank anyone that has helped over the year in a volunteer capacity, be that coaching, referring or organising at events. None of the activities carried out by North East Touch would be a successful if it were not for all these individuals.

In the region, this year we have again had a busy season of leagues and one-day tournaments organised and run by Aberdeen Touch Rugby. The Summer and Autumn Leagues and 1-day tournaments have been run as smoothly as ever, and we pass our thanks to ATR for this. There was even the odd day of sun!

Last year we noted a reduction in the number of teams entering, and this has again been apparent, although we have welcomed new teams in both the Summer and Autumn League, but my feeling is the age demographic is firmly increasing which is a worrying sign compared to other regions.

ActivityMix after removing Touch from their calendar, were in November an unfortunate victim of the current climate and we have been slow to react to this; mostly due to the climate hitting a large majority of the local area, a lot of us and uncertainty around how best to act to replace what was an exceptional tool for recruitment for the game.

This year saw us run only one level 1 referee course, but plans are in hand to increase this from now on, and if there is appetite we will support level 2 course also. With the number of players not increasing the need hasn't been as urgent, but it is something that we will remedy, with a better offering being available. This also applies to coaching courses; we are looking to be more proactive and getting over this bump with a clear vision going forward.

This year also saw the introduction of Tartan Touch, and what I believe a big swell in the underlying desire for a rugby alternative. I have heard a lot of murmuring about Touch in schools, Touch as warm-up, Touch as an alternative, and that is something we have been trying to understand and look at exploiting.



This year we also ran, what I believe is the first formal Kids Touch event in Aberdeen. In conjunction with Aberdeen Wanderers we were able to run a half day event, with coaching and games, followed by a fairly damp BBQ. I would like to think the volunteers I had on the day, especially Kenny Morton and Robin Williamson who took big roles on the day. This event was attended by around 20 kids, and the feedback was that it was very well received and that we delivered at a good level. We are looking to replicate this, and build on this success.

August saw the annual National Championships take place in Edinburgh; this was an earlier Tournament than prior, following feedback to STA around the scheduling and to try to improve the quality of the event by making it closer to the summer leagues and STS's. Once again, this year we were lucky to have a number of volunteers to provide coaching and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

There was a good turnout for regional training, with a lot of new faces taking the step up to represent NE. We managed to enter a WO, W27 & M30 teams, and with help from Central entered a MO team. The standard this year was excellent, and we ended up joint second behind a very strong set of Edinburgh teams.

Nationally the STA for the first time ran an International Seniors Tournament, as well as Europe's first Permit competition. In both competitions Scotland had excellent performances, the highlights being the Men's 45's beating England handsomely to win their division and the Scottish Stags Men's coming 3rd in the Permits. NE Touch had a significant number of volunteers, refs and player attend these event as well as taking a play a big part in organising, and after speaking to the STA they would like to pass their thanks on for this. Everyone who has played a part should be very proud.

That is all from me. Good luck to the committee for the next year and again massive thanks to those stepping down.

Thanks
Iain MacKenzie

President, N.E. Touch
Sept 2017