# Rugby Fives Strategic Plan 2021-2025

This document sets out the strategy for Rugby Fives from 2021-2025. We first define our vision and values, and then provide a 'sustain, nurture, grow' based strategy along with corresponding metrics for evaluation. Finally we outline the key positions and workforce required to carry out the strategy.

### Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	3
Executive Summary:	4
RFA Organisation:	5
Motivations for the 2021-25 Strategy:	5
Overview of Strategy and initiatives	8
Mission Statement:	8
Vision:	8
Values:	8
Strategic Framework:	8
Summary of initiatives:	9
'Sustain' Initiatives (2021):	9
'Nurture' initiatives (2022/23)	10
'Grow' initiatives (2024/25)	11
Detailed Roadmap of initiatives	13
School Fives	13
Objectives:	13
Metrics:	13
'Sustain' Initiatives (2021):	13
'Nurture' Initiatives (2022/23):	15
'Grow' Initiatives (2024/25):	16
Club Fives	18
Objectives:	18
Metrics:	18
'Sustain' initiatives (2021):	18
'Nurture' initiatives (2022/3):	19
'Grow' initiatives (2024/5):	21
Tournament Fives	22
Objectives:	22
Metrics:	22
'Sustain' initiatives (2021):	22
'Nurture' and 'Grow' initiatives (2022/5):	24
Fives Outreach	26
Objectives:	26

Metrics:	26
'Grow' initiatives (2024/5):	26
Marketing and Social Media	28
Objectives:	28
Metrics:	28
'Sustain' initiatives (2021):	28
'Nurture' and 'Grow' initiatives (2022/5):	30
RFA Roles and Responsibilities	32
RFA Board	32
RFA President	32
General Secretary:	32
Treasurer (Finance and Fundraising Committee):	32
Tournaments & Events:	33
Marketing:	33
Development Officer:	33
Webmaster:	33
Volunteering:	34
Welfare and Safeguarding:	34
Health and Safety:	34
Ladies:	34
Diversity and Inclusion:	34
Key Organisers	34
Gloves and Balls Supplier:	34
National Schools Organiser:	34
National Singles / Doubles Organisers:	34
Annual RFA event:	35
Other Organiser Groups:	35
Appendix:	37
List of courts in the UK	37
Map of Court Locations in the UK	41
Activator Course Materials	42
Advice for the Management of Fives Clubs	42

### Introduction

### **Executive Summary:**

Fives is a sport that has been played and enjoyed for over 100 years in the UK. It is a court-based game where you hit a ball with your hands. Historically there were many different types - or codes - of fives. Nowadays there are two predominant codes – a three wall version and a four-wall version. Within the four-wall versions there are two variants, specifically Rugby Fives and Winchester Fives, which we will refer to collectively as "Fives".

From as far back as the 1970s, Fives has struggled to tackle the same issues that have plagued the sport including disappearing courts, ball supply, and building new 'centres' for fives. There are several reasons that Fives has failed to adapt ranging from cultural shifts in the perception of sport (preference away from minority sports towards professionalism), to school resources (many Fives courts make excellent storage facilities or classrooms) to our own lack of progression and relevance within the fast-moving sectors that we operate.

The Rugby Fives Strategic Plan addresses the concerns of the Board and the wider community for the future of Fives. Within this document we outline the Board's primary motivations, describe our strategic framework (sustain, nurture, grow) and detail a roadmap of initiatives with assigned responsibilities for the next five years.

Our strategic framework is divided into three sections: sustain, nurture and grow. For 'Sustain', we aim to prevent further contraction of the sport and maintain the key components of Fives. For 'Nurture', we aim to build on the foundations set and improve and develop Fives for its playing community. Finally for 'Grow', we aim to expand the sport as we know it today and strive for our long-term vision of opening up the sport to new players.

For each of the strategies within the strategic framework, we have identified important initiatives and activities and assigned the people responsible. These are measured against specific metrics and have been assigned a provisional target date for completion. The section entitled 'Summary of initiatives' provides an overview of the initiatives for each strategy (sustain, nurture, grow). In-depth detail on the specifics of initiatives and the roles and responsibilities accountable are outlined in 'Detailed Roadmap of Initiatives' and 'RFA Roles and Responsibilities'.

Over the coming five years the Rugby Fives Association hopes to meet the goals laid out in this strategic plan. We hope to see the game grow from its current position into a more accessible, more inclusive and more professional sport.

Signed President RFA

### **RFA Organisation:**

The Rugby Fives Association Ltd. is a charity (no. 1136872) and a Sport England recognised national governing body for the sport of Rugby Fives.

In December 2019 the Rugby Fives Association consisted of the following:

- A charitable organisation (no. 1136872)
- A board consisting of 13 with 6 subcommittees
- 429 RFA paying members
- 21 Clubs affiliated with the RFA
- 34 Schools affiliated with the RFA
- 27 donors (ex-members)
- 600 estimated non-paying players
- 37 schools and universities with courts (see Appendix A)
- 5 Community venues and one other non-school facility (see Appendix A)
- A calendar with c. 30 National Tournaments, c. 250 School Fixtures, c. 40 Club and School Fixtures.
- An official website
- Official Facebook page (471 followers), Twitter (427 followers), Instagram (140 followers) & YouTube (88 subscribers)

### Motivations for the 2021-25 Strategy:

The Board has recognised that there are several motivations for driving a new strategy across the Fives playing community in the UK. In this strategy we propose a three-step approach to solving this problem: first we will sustain the sport in its current form, then nurture it by developing new initiatives and finally begin to grow the sport through innovation and bolder expansionary strategies.

The Board has identified the following motivations for proposing its 2021-25 strategy:

- 1. Fives is a fantastic game with huge potential and is well positioned to become a leader in UK handball based sports.
- 2. The Fives playing community has stubbornly refused to grow, remaining at fewer than 1,000 players since the 1970s. The number of schools playing has declined steadily over the last 50 years, which has placed the status of Fives as a National sport under threat. This has been driven by a fall in player retention after school and difficulty in attracting new players to the adult game, which has a perception of being unattainable. In order to sustain Fives we must both develop pathways for players after school, and provide training and support for new players entering the game at community hubs. It is critically important to expose the game to as many people as possible in order to attract new players. This will require a network of volunteers, organisers, activators and paid development officer(s) to achieve this.

- 3. Fives' current facilities are being underutilised, which has resulted in several Fives courts being used for storage and even the closure of courts altogether. Firstly, we need to promote more engagement in the schools and clubs that own the courts. We can achieve this by not being afraid of innovations to the game that will improve the experience for both new and existing players. Secondly, we need to improve the accessibility of the courts for local communities and develop sustainable community fives.
- 4. Fives suffers from an 'elitist' reputation and a lack of diversity on account of the majority of the courts being located at independent schools. As of 2020, we have 134 courts across the country, but only 5 of these locations are accessible to the community (See Appendix A). Whilst there are a few school locations that share their facilities with Adult clubs e.g. Derby, many are campus boarding schools that have proven inaccessible for growth of the sport for communities. To tackle economic diversity we need to address the lack of presence in major cities such as Birmingham, Liverpool, Sheffield and Glasgow. Fives is a cheap sport, which is well suited to these urban locations. We also need to reframe Fives as a welcoming community rather than a "posh" sport and encourage more women and ethnic minority groups into the game. To change the reputation of the sport we must first diversify the composition of players in the game. Following that there needs to be a coherent marketing campaign that demonstrates diversity in the sport and showcases our top amateur players.
- 5. **Fives has charitable status** as an organisation and aims to provide support for disadvantaged communities. We must strive for more and empower the Fives community to become volunteers and establish outreach programs. The RFA can help by facilitating training, supporting grant applications and providing the link between clubs / schools and other charitable organisations.
- 6. Fives has been restricted by part-time staffing, underfunding and a lack of coaching resources. This is a structural problem that needs to be addressed going forwards in order to sustain the sport. Until 2018 we operated solely with a board of volunteers, appointing our first Development Officer in May 2018. Whilst bringing in a development officer part-time has been a move in the right direction, there is a need for this position to be full-time as well as potentially having an additional role that focuses on funding and strategic issues. Funding these roles will prove challenging but these roles are critical for grant applications, expanding coaching resources and development of the game.
- 7. Fives has not responded to innovations within the wider sport and culture ecosystems and has been left behind as others have adapted to trends in the sporting industry (e.g. partnerships with other sports and increased visibility on social media). Whilst Fives and all handball sports share a history of variations and adaptations, there has been a lack in recent times of innovations in the game. Meanwhile, other sports have trialled and implemented innovations to great success e.g. Wall Ball makes use of rally points to speed up matches; tennis has adapted its courts, balls and court hire structure to maximise players. We are a Sport England

recognised sport but have not used this status for growth nor partnered with other sports for growth. Tennis has incorporated new high growth sports in the UK such as Padel to support the rest of the game.

8. Fives can do more to leverage its members and its social media presence. There is huge potential in the Fives members community and a wealth of creative talent. Going forwards, there needs to be a clearer and more coherent marketing strategy that leverages Fives members and promotes the initiatives and objectives that the RFA is driving.

### Overview of Strategy and initiatives

### **Mission Statement:**

To sustain, nurture and grow the whole of Rugby Fives by leading, promoting and governing the game across the country. Whilst we aim to maintain the game's core values, we will embrace innovation and evolution to ensure it remains relevant and appealing for all players and stakeholders.

### Vision:

- We will create exciting new opportunities for young people joining the game
- We will embrace innovative approaches to make Fives more accessible and more inclusive, particularly to our adult club players
- We will embed the Fives community around schools to inspire the next generation
- We will provide tournaments and events that are for our whole playing community
- We will drive the growth of outreach and volunteering within our sport to the rest of the community
- We will develop structures to facilitate fundraising, standardisations and ease of development
- We will celebrate, support and develop staff, organisers, volunteers and players throughout all levels of the game
- Our image will be recognised and respected by stakeholders

### Values:

- Fives is an active, exciting game which can be played by both men and women of all ages and from all backgrounds
- Fives is welcoming and inclusive for young players, nurturing them through their sporting pathway
- Fives is accessible and inclusive of players in the community, providing a social hub
- Fives champions top amateur talent both for National competitions and into other sports and activities
- The RFA will provide guidance and advice for clubs and schools across the country
- The RFA is supportive of its staff, organisers, volunteers and players
- The RFA will raise awareness and enhance the image and reputation of Fives

### Strategic Framework:

Our strategy is divided into three sections:

- Sustain maintaining Fives and preventing further contraction of the sport
- Nurture improving and developing Fives at a school, club and tournament level
- Grow expanding and opening up the sport to new players, areas and communities

For each of the strategies within the strategic framework, we have identified important initiatives and activities and assigned the people responsible. These are measured against specific metrics and have been assigned a provisional target date for completion.

Strategy	Initiatives	Metrics	Date
Sustain	Activator course; National Events; Brand relaunch; Challenger Tournaments; Club Financing	Court utilisation metrics; National events participation; Social media engagement	2021
Nurture	Fives Coaching program; Player pathway for school kids; Club Development; Tournament restructuring; 'Top 20' Leadership	Number of RFA members; Retention of school kids; Regional tournament participation	2022/3
Grow	School brand campaign; Building new courts; Partnership with another sport; Fives outreach	Number of courts; Total number of Fives players	2024/5

### Summary of initiatives:

We partition the initiatives into 'target areas' for the sake of clarity.

### 'Sustain' Initiatives (2021):

We have developed a timeline of initiatives for 2021 that are important for addressing the pressing issues within Fives and sustaining it for the future. These are all actionable initiatives that will provide the foundations for nurturing and growing the sport. The main areas of focus for 2020/21 are:

- Relaunching Fives by delivering a brand and marketing campaign that culminates in the 2021 Relaunch event
- Delivering fantastic events for Schools, Clubs and Tournament players that maximise enjoyment for all
- Piloting innovations in game formats, tournaments and rankings within Fives
- Laying the foundations for the RFA to support centralised tournaments, funding of clubs and development of the game in schools and universities

Target Area	Initiative	Person responsible	Date
School Fives	Activator Course: RFA certified course for 'Young Leaders' and staff / coaches with supporting materials	Development Officer, Dave Butler, Marketing	2021
	Junior Fives: Trial new form of the game for juniors and standardise it (introductory game). e.g. soft ball, possibly on squash court	Matt Shaw, Dave Butler, Development Officer, National Schools Organiser	2021

	National Schools: Regional qualifiers	National Schools Organiser, National Schools Group, Marketing	2021
Club Fives	Club financing: restructuring club financing to leverage RFA charity status	Finance & Fundraising	2021
	Fives relaunch event: Wood Cup, fundraising, prizegiving and branding relaunch	2021 (Dave Butler, Matt Shaw, Tom Watkinson)	2021
Tournament Fives	Scaling up of Major Tournaments: National Singles and Doubles	Tournaments Committee, Marketing	2020/1
	Tournament Administration: RFA provides administration for tournaments centrally	Tournaments Committee, Webmaster, Marketing	2020
	Dynamic Rankings Software	Dave Hebden, Chris Burrows, Will Ellison	2021
	Challenger / Alternative Tournament Pilot	Tournaments Committee	2021
Marketing	Promotional materials: Website, merchandise, posters, videos	Marketing	2021
	Communications strategy: to the world, to the players, to the board	Marketing	2021
	Brand Relaunch 2021	Marketing	2021
	Support of other initiatives: tournament package and marketing materials for other other initiatives	Marketing	2021

### 'Nurture' initiatives (2022/23)

Following the progress made in the first year of this strategy we aim to build upon a number of initiatives and nurture the sport by:

- Formalising a coaching program for schools that builds upon the RFA activator courses
- Providing a clear pathway for school kids to adult fives supported by mentors within the 'Top 20'

• Increasing the number of adult players by supporting the growth of Fives clubs locally and by making tournaments more inclusive

Target Area	Initiative	Person responsible	Date
School Fives	Fives Coaching Program	James Powley	2022
	Player Pathway for school kids: Transitioning from School to Adult Fives	Marketing	2022
Club Fives	Club Development: Socials, Club Matches and access to RFA resources	RFA Board	2022
Tournament Fives	Tournament restructuring to promote more inclusivity	Tournaments Committee	2022
	'Top 20' Leadership	RFA Board	2022
Marketing	Player Profiles	Marketing	2022

### 'Grow' initiatives (2024/25)

Finally, we outline a number of long-term aims that will help grow the sport long-term. These include:

- Growth of the sport at schools by identifying and developing keen players, launching a specific school brand campaign and building new courts
- Partnering with another handball sport to increase our adult playing base
- Creating and launching outreach programs for communities

Target Area	Initiative	Person responsible	Date
School Fives	Development Squad for school kids	Top Amateur Player Group	2024/5
	School Brand Campaign	nnd Campaign Development Officer, 20 Marketing	
	Building of New Courts	RFA Board	2024/5
Club Fives	Partner with another sport e.g. Wallball	RFA Board, Dan Grant	2024/5
Fives Outreach	Set-up a Fives outreach program	Volunteering RFA Board member	2024/5
	Partner with other charitable organisations	Volunteering RFA Board member	2024/5

Targeted community initiatives	Volunteering RFA Board member	2024/5
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The next section goes into more detail about the initiatives outlined above.

### **Detailed Roadmap of initiatives**

### **School Fives**

The mainstay of Fives is within schools. School pupils make up the largest portion of our playing base and the schools themselves host virtually all the courts. A big part of our future rests on sustaining our school base and encouraging more players to continue the game after school. Over the coming years we intend to make fives more appealing to both young players, teachers and the schools.

### Objectives:

- 1. Inspire the next generation of Fives players
- 2. Empower teachers to promote the sport internally
- 3. Make Fives a game schools are proud to support
- 4. Encourage students to volunteer and support the sport externally
- 5. Develop and nurture talented players

#### Metrics:

We will track our improvements in school Fives using the following metrics:

- Number of 'Young Leaders' and Staff/Coaches who have completed activator courses
- Number of school kids entering the National Schools (girls and boys)
- Number of schools playing (independent and state)
- Number of school kids playing in their first year at University

### 'Sustain' Initiatives (2021):

Initiative	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Activator Course (See appendix for example materials)	Release a RFA certified Activator Training course for school kids and one for staff / coaches:  • The course is run and certificated by the RFA and sits beneath the external coaching levels • Allows student to demonstrate leadership skills and support university applications • Supporting materials includes a handbook, activity cards and youtube videos demonstrating 'how to play Fives' and with different shots • The development officer will lead a group of trained individuals who can deliver the course on-site and to the schools timetable • Partnerships between clubs / communities and schools to achieve this	Development Officer Marketing	2021

	<ul> <li>If you attend an adult course and pass the criteria for success then we let you run a course yourself (e.g. for your schoolkids)</li> <li>Activator Training Days:         <ul> <li>Hold two trial events on-location at Stoke Newington (for staff) and Edinburgh (integrate Durham) for school pupils by end of 2020/2021 season</li> <li>Invite schools / students to the National Singles and host an Activator Training Day (for free)</li> <li>Will help to create a large crowd for</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Development Officer, Dave Butler (Edinburgh trial).	2021
Junior Fives: Trial a new form of the game for juniors	the final  Trial new forms of the game to improve accessibility. The aim should be that gloves (and a Fives court) should not be required to get into the sport and that it shouldn't hurt your hands:  • Test out different tennis balls/ Wallball on a Fives court with no gloves  • Test out a Eton Fives ball / Spanish yellow ball / coated stress reliever ball or a Wallball on a squash court	Matt Shaw, Dave Butler	2021
	<ul> <li>Encourage innovations in the game:</li> <li>Offer new options in Activator courses but also allow for innovation from the students themselves</li> </ul>	Development Officer	2021
	Run a tournament of the new game type:  • For kids that are knocked out early of National Singles, offer alternative tournament of Fives on a squash court • This adds legitimacy to this form of game • The game format and rules need to have basic branding and be standardised	National Schools Organiser	2022
National Schools: Regional qualifiers	<ul> <li>Regional qualifiers:         <ul> <li>Regional tournaments already happen at the Midlands, SE, Scottish, North, Colquhoun (West)</li> <li>These tournaments should be changed to qualifier tournaments to encourage mass participation but also to provide a 'pathway' for the best players to the Nationals</li> <li>The benefit here is to add an element of professionalism. By having regional first it shows that you can't just instantly be accepted into a National tournament</li> <li>Also, coaches &amp; parents of those who win the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	National Schools Organiser (responsibiliti es detailed in the workforce section) National Schools Group Marketing	2021

Regionals would definitely be supportive of then taking their children to London for the Nationals, it would increase their prestige.  This structure would require developing a London qualifier tournament  We need to identify teacher organisers to run the regional tournaments  National Tournament:  The administrative burden on the National tournament would be less in this structure and having it on a weekend would allow for the teacher / organiser to be supported by the RFA  Market the wider world of Fives and other handball based sports  Promotional video of the event with all schools wearing RFA shirts (see UK Wallball) – for example:  https://photos.app.goo.gl/GgvWXhztB15XwiS66	

### 'Nurture' Initiatives (2022/23):

Initiative	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Fives Coaching Program and Coaching Forum	Build on the Activator courses; we will market a Fives Coaching program for staff / coaches looking to become externally qualified Fives coaches:  • Program will be marketed to staff / coaches who have been on the Activator course  • Pathway will be: Activator >> Level 1 coaching >> Level 2 coaching  • Level 1 and Level 2 coaching has already been developed by the RFA  • Level 2 coaching is important for placing on CVs and for covering insurance	Development Officer, James Powley	2022
	Launch a coaching forum:  Create a forum where new coaches can be mentored, best practices shared and encourage a network of support  Provide good example videos for shots and drills Fantastic opportunity for networking	Coaching subcommittee	2022
Player Pathway for school kids:	Clear roadmap of the progression from Junior to Adult Fives for school kids, marketed at National Schools Event:	Marketing, National Schools	2022

Transitioning from School to Adult Fives	<ul> <li>Pathway: Regional Schools &gt;&gt; Nat Schools &gt;&gt; BUSF / U25s &gt;&gt; Challenger tournaments &gt;&gt; Open Tournaments</li> <li>Consider making BUSF for undergraduates only, capping the number of entries or having a 'B' singles / doubles event</li> <li>Mentoring of younger players by members of the 'Top 20': visits from the top amateurs are memorable for inspiring the next generation         <ul> <li>This could be a coaching session the Friday night of a tournament</li> <li>It would also then incentivise school kids to come the next day to watch the actual event</li> </ul> </li> <li>Embedding community or clubs in and around schools is a powerful way of keeping schoolkids enthusiastic as they transition to the adult game</li> </ul>	organisation committee	
Opening up courts to State schools	Invite more state school kids to private schools to play on the courts:  • This is a requirement for RFA funding and should be encouraged at all independent schools as many state schools need extra provision for sport  • This helps for receiving charitable status and applying for grants to maintain the courts  • We need staff from schools, Development officer and volunteers to run this	Staff Volunteers Development Officer	2022

# 'Grow' Initiatives (2024/25):

Initiative	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Development Squad for school kids	To increase the conversion rate of schoolkids to the adult game we propose introducing a development squad hosted by our top amateur players:  • The most promising and keenest school boys / girls are invited to a training day focusing on improving their game, structure would be the following:  • Match play  • Fitness  • Technique sessions  • Nutrition  • Sports psychology etc.  • By bringing together school kids, it will help foster relationships within each year group as well as with tournament players	Top Amateur Player Group	2024/5

	<ul> <li>Could consider sponsoring the best schoolboy and schoolgirl in their first year after school to go to challenger / open tournaments</li> </ul>		
School Brand Campaign	Targeting the poor reputation that School Fives suffers from, we propose launching a Brand campaign. This would be a twofold approach:  1. Demonstrate how accessible the sport is with variants and innovations  Turn school sessions into a variety of handball activities: fives, wallball, spikeball, kaatsen, llargues, chaza, international game etc. More options for kids both in school and around the world  Change the ball to lower the barrier to entry. Junior ball as tested in earlier initiatives.  i. Look at pelota example = rackets >> soft balls >> hard balls as pinnacle of sport  2. Showcase that the top of the game is competitive and challenging, with a program to support young player development:  a. Leverage marketing material / videos and social media  b. Market the player pathway, development squad and the wider world of handball sports e.g. Wall ball tournaments overseas	Development Officer Marketing	2024/5
Building of New Courts	<ul> <li>Building new courts at state / private schools:</li> <li>RFA will consider subsidising courts for either state schools or for a community club. This will require a significant fundraising effort</li> <li>RFA can support fundraising efforts for private schools providing there is sufficient demand for the courts to be used and active involvement of state schools or the community</li> <li>To achieve this goal by 2024/5 we need to establish the preparatory work for building new courts and have therefore outlined three potential contacts / partners:         <ul> <li>Courtcraft (Manchester)</li> <li>Melior Squash</li> <li>Courtcare/ASB</li> <li>RFA has a quotation for building courts using the "Panel System" method</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	RFA Board	2024/5

### **Club Fives**

The main Adult Fives playing groups are students at universities and club nights at school or sports centre venues. After school there is a large drop off in the number of people that continue the sport. This is because of insufficient access to facilities, the structural setup of the tournament circuit and the fact that Fives courts often lack a 'social space' or club atmosphere.

### Objectives:

- Restructure club financing, leveraging RFA charitable status and incentivising bringing in of new players
- Develop existing clubs and grow new clubs using local grants and RFA resources
- Improve the competitive environment for club players not in the 'Top 20'
- Increase the pathways into Fives to / from other handball based sports

#### Metrics:

- Number of RFA affiliated club members
- Number of players on the rankings system
- Number of established 'regular' adult clubs

### 'Sustain' initiatives (2021):

Initiative	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Club financing: restructuring club financing, leveraging RFA charity status and incentivising bringing in of new players	<ul> <li>Financial health is critical to the success of a club:         <ul> <li>To achieve this requires a restructuring of club financing</li> <li>We want to incentivise clubs to bring in new players to the game</li> <li>We need to have clear benefits for affiliation with the RFA</li></ul></li></ul>	Finance	2021
	Create a grant / sponsorship template that helps clubs in their applications locally:  • Encourage clubs to become registered with the HMRC as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC)  • RFA constitution and charity status  • Health and Safety documentations  • RFA Marketing materials	Finance	2021

	<ul> <li>Template for launching a new Fives project that includes demand statistics, previous case studies, photos etc.</li> </ul>		
	Proactive identification of grants / funding to apply for:  List of local grants near Fives courts that clubs can apply for  List of National grants and sources of funding	Finance	2021
	<ul> <li>Central RFA sponsorship and fundraising strategy:         <ul> <li>Investigate potential of gaining a sponsor for Fives to support RFA initiatives</li> <li>Formalise RFA member fundraising efforts e.g. Pub Quiz, Marathon running etc.</li> <li>Promote membership to the RFA</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Finance	2021
Annual RFA Event	Annual event that celebrates Fives and combines the AGM with a fundraising effort and awards ceremony for the year.	Dave Butler and Matt Shaw (2021)	2021
	<ul> <li>2021 - Relaunch event for RFA that brings the new strategy and initiatives to the attention of the members: <ul> <li>Celebration of the year, fosters a Fives community, and promotes the RFA initiatives for the year</li> <li>Marketing relaunch of new brand and image of the RFA (see Marketing section below)</li> <li>Awards for 2021 season including Activator courses, tournaments (challengers), volunteer of the year etc.</li> <li>Opportunity to fundraise for the year and communicate with the member base</li> <li>Considerations: <ul> <li>Host a tournament during the daytime e.g. Wood Cup?</li> <li>Host it on 5th May at 5pm?</li> <li>Food or no-food?</li> <li>Venue?</li> <li>Activities? Fives Pub quiz run by Dan Grant which may open up the possibility for people to participate virtually as well as at the event</li> </ul> </li> </ul></li></ul>	RFA Board	

# 'Nurture' initiatives (2022/3):

Initiative	Actions	Person responsible	Date
		responsible	

	T	Γ	
Club	Provide a 'How to guide' for club development (See	RFA Board	2022
Development:	Appendix). This should provide guidance for club		
Socials, Club	representatives:	Clubs Sub-	
matches and	<ul> <li>Target the right environment for a successful</li> </ul>	committee	
RFA support	club which should include the following:		
	<ul> <li>Access to potential players</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Access to courts, facilities, equipment</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Safeguarding of children</li> </ul>		
	o Coaching		
	<ul> <li>Creation of a community of players</li> </ul>		
	o Politics		
	<ul> <li>Oversight and organisation</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Creation and management of an</li> </ul>		
	income for Fives		
	<ul> <li>Develop Fives as a sociable community:</li> </ul>		
	O Create a social secretary of the club		
	<ul> <li>Encouragement of socialising after club</li> </ul>		
	nights or club matches at the sports		
	centre, or pubs / restaurants nearby		
	Events for club members		
	<ul> <li>Set aside a space at the club for</li> </ul>		
	pinning up activities happening in the		
	club		
	<ul> <li>Diversify the member base and bring more women into the game</li> </ul>		
	-		
	<ul> <li>Encourage club matches, leagues, ladders:</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Advertise to members the fixture</li> </ul>		
	calendar with descriptions of type of		
	tournament and expected playing level		
	<ul> <li>Create internal leagues e.g. Mixed</li> </ul>		
	doubles		
	<ul> <li>Have a Fives ladder</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Regional leagues or divisions with</li> </ul>		
	ability gradings similar to squash		
	Access to RFA resources:		
	<ul> <li>Club committee members will look to</li> </ul>		
	the RFA for guidance on first aid,		
	safeguarding and coaching		
	<ul> <li>Support clubs in becoming CASC</li> </ul>		
	<ul> <li>Make it clear what the RFA will help</li> </ul>		
	with including grant applications, social		
	media and activator courses		
	<ul> <li>Create microsites for clubs under the</li> </ul>		
	RFA website		
	<ul> <li>Administrative tasks of tournaments</li> </ul>		
	(see Tournament Fives)		
			I

# 'Grow' initiatives (2024/5):

Initiative	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Partner with Wallball	Embrace and leverage the variations of different handball sport games and enable more entry points into Fives by partnering up with other sports:  • Partner with Wallball – partner with UK Wallball to create an accessible entry point and access they're significantly larger player base. Wallball >> Fives with Wallball >> Fives  • Utilise squash court facilities – Identify squash courts which are closing and contact leisure providers >> squash court fives >> fives  a. Note: leisure provider e.g. GLL = better than talking with England Squash & Racketball  • Offer handball in general: run introductory sessions with a variety of handball activities: fives, wallball, spikeball, kaatsen, llargues, chaza, international game etc  • Work together with other handball sports on specific projects that have a mutual interest and potentially consider merging all combinations of fives under on banner:  a. Eton Fives / Rugby Fives / Wallball	RFA Board  Dan Grant	2024/5

### **Tournament Fives**

Out of the RFA Adult playing membership there is a relatively smaller subset that play in the majority of tournaments across the country (c. 10-20). Whilst the RFA will invest in new methods of showcasing this top amatuer talent for promoting the sport and inspiring future generations, we propose restructuring tournaments in favour of the majority. The reason for this is to encourage a larger proportion of the adult playing base to participate and enjoy playing Fives competitively.

### Objectives:

- Increase player participation and enjoyment at tournaments
- Provide administrative support for volunteers running RFA events
- Market and showcase tournaments and top amateur talent

#### Metrics:

- Number of players entering tournaments
- Number of spectators at the National Singles / Doubles Final
- Number of people engaging with tournaments, at the venue or online, or on Twitter etc.

### 'Sustain' initiatives (2021):

Initiatives	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Scaling up of Major Tournaments: National Singles and Doubles	National Singles and Doubles events are of strategic importance for showcasing Fives and should promote more inclusivity:  • Filming, spectators and commentary are important for these events. Host National Singles / Doubles at venues where this is straightforward e.g. Cambridge  • Host alternative activities, side tournaments and build an itinerary to drive crowds and encourage:  • Activator courses  • Pub dinner  • Group bookings of hotels  • Transport	Marketing  Tournaments  Committee	2021
	Host a 'Junior Fives' tournament on squash courts in Cambridge this year with a Wall ball / equivalent in order to formalise the new sport	Dave Butler / Matt Shaw	2020
	Film the National Singles and Doubles with high quality video, scores, commentary and streamed to Youtube	Marketing	2020

	Develop an itinerary and organise the National Singles Event	National Singles Organiser	2020
	Combine the Ladies and Mens Nationals Singles and Doubles Events	Tournaments Committee	2020
Tournament Administration: RFA provides administration for tournaments centrally	The administrative burden of tournaments will be performed by the RFA, allowing organisers and incentivising them to focus on 'making tournaments fun':  RFA to provide websites, marketing, draws, payments ahead of tournaments  Organisers can trial new formats and focus on other activities, food, music etc.  Promote a greater sense of community at the tournament events  Inclusivity in talking to new players led by the top players and organisers  Always have a group photo  Promote Saturday meals (And importantly book a table!)  Discounts at hotels / group bookings	Tournaments Committee	2020/21
	Tournaments websites on the RFA website as microsites	Webmaster	2020
	Payment for tournaments in advance and online entry through tournament microsites	Webmaster	2020
	Draws created and published based on tournament entry and payment on tournament microsites	Webmaster	2020
	Press releases / advertising for each tournament using Mailchimp and RFA Social Media	Marketing	2020
	Social Media and filming of tournaments	Marketing	2020
	Post tournament reports focusing on community and players and written in timely fashion	Marketing	2020
Dynamic Rankings Software	We propose implementing the following changes to the Rankings system:  • Every single player, schoolkid, member needs to be on the Rankings system. This should show the total size of the RFA community	Dave Hebden, Chris Burrows, Will Ellison	2021

	<ul> <li>To achieve this means investing in software for the rankings system and automating where possible</li> <li>Tournament organisers are able to input scores and results at events reducing the administrative burden</li> <li>In time, we could consider making it even more dynamic and including club matches so that players can move their rankings outside of the tournament environment</li> </ul>		
Challenger/ Alternative Tournament Pilot	Continue the two piloted challenger tournaments in 2019/20:  • Host a Challenger tournament at each of the National Singles and Doubles  • Attempt to hold these at the same location / time as Open tournaments  • Market these on the RFA website. Would be good to have a space for challenger players to be / interact	Tournaments Committee	2021
	Trial out new formats for tournaments that incentivise players to stay for longer and therefore draw spectators for the big finals  • Pilot new innovative tournament at Durham in 2021 e.g. group stages and round robin or rally points	Durham Organiser	2021

# 'Nurture' and 'Grow' initiatives (2022/5):

Initiative	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Tournament Restructuring to promote more inclusivity	Depending on the success of the pilot program and the Challenger circuits relaunch the tournament circuit with the following structural changes:  • Change the structure of tournaments that incentivise people staying for longer, which will boost spectator presence for finals:  • Group stages at beginning: Shorter games, more matches and greater variation of who you play against  • Tier the players: A tournament, Challenger tournament  • Give points out for each tournament to encourage travel to different venues	Tournament s Committee	2022

	<ul> <li>Make tournaments more fun when not playing:         <ul> <li>Other activities</li> <li>Music</li> <li>Food</li> <li>Shirts</li> <li>Games</li> <li>Other tournaments side by side for those who want to participate but more in a social capacity e.g. Mixed Doubles</li> <li>President's cup style events that pair higher ranked players with lower</li> <li>Drive greater diversity at tournaments and less focus on top players:</li></ul></li></ul>		
'Top 20' Leadership	<ul> <li>Encourage top players to become leaders in the sport, mentoring younger upcoming players through the Fives Development Squad:         <ul> <li>As described in School Fives we propose having the top 20 support schookids as they transition to Adult Fives</li> <li>Encourage top players to post videos to the coaching forum e.g. Dan Grant talks about the best technique for a volley</li> <li>Further it should be highlighted that often it falls on the top players to organise and volunteer for tournament organisation. The RFA should encourage and help them to achieve this, ensuring that handovers are successful</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	RFA Board	2022

### **Fives Outreach**

Providing outreach programs is a key area of development over the next five years and is strategically important for diversifying the sport, accessing funding and giving something back to the community. We plan to lay the foundations to grow this area going forwards. To achieve this it will be important to have a member of the RFA board championing volunteering within the sport.

### Objectives:

- Make Fives accessible for everyone in the community
- Diversify our membership, maximise our exposure and improve our reputation
- Provide members with the opportunity to give something back to the community

### Metrics:

- Number of outreach programs across the country
- Number of successful grant applications
- Number of RFA volunteers

### 'Grow' initiatives (2024/5):

Initiatives	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Set-up a Fives outreach program	Begin launching outreach programs at courts around the country  • How can we leverage Fives' charity status to incentivise schools to engage in community programs?  • Can we work with disability?  • Can we work with BME?  • Can we work with SEN?  • Can we work with chronic health?  • Can we work with inactives to make them active?  • Integrate this as part of the DoE program as demonstrated by Derby Moor  • Can we become a charity partner with schools?  • Can we interact with Parents Committees?  • At universities, can we make use of students to support a community program?  • Use our student base	Volunteering Board Member (Development Officer)	2024/5

	<ul> <li>We have some amazing young people who have time on their hands. Some are looking for volunteering days or Level 1 coaching for their CVs. This would likely occur on an ongoing rolling basis as students move on</li> </ul>		
Charity partnerships	Partner with another sport or with a charity to promote utilisation of the Fives courts for an outreach program. This may be for a handball based activity or using the space for something else:  • Partner with Wallball and share resources, volunteer networks and grant applications to deliver an outreach program • Partner with a charity and provide the enclosed space for the activity. RFA should encourage schools to share their facilities	Development Officer  Volunteering Board Member	2024/5
Targeted projects for different user groups	Fives has a lot of potential and we can apply for local grants that target specific user groups. Some examples of possible projects are:  Older players: Consider a programme to help older players back into the game – similar to Netball's Back the Netball – hugely successful https://www.englandnetball.co.uk/play/back-to-netball/ Schools (without courts): Change the ball to lower the barrier to entry. Junior ball – use something which exists already – e.g. soft tennis ball or wallball.  Youth Movements: consider the wider health impacts of physical activity including its positive benefits on mental health. Partner with a youth movement charity / organisation	Development Officer  Volunteering Board Member	2024/5

### Marketing and Social Media

Marketing and social media is a vital part of the strategy for targeting all of the Fives playing segments. We aim to leverage the RFA's existing social media and introduce a planned marketing approach to relaunch the sport and its brand in 2021.

### Objectives:

- 1. Incentivise adults to continue playing or come back to play the game
- 2. Increase awareness of the sport in schools
- 3. Engagement of clubs with schools to foster community hubs
- 4. Empower members
- 5. Improve structure and output of media & comms
- 6. Have a database of media and documents that can be used
- 7. Raise funding

### Metrics:

- We want 70% of the RFA membership to follow us on Twitter
- We want 50% of the RFA membership subscribed on YouTube
- We want 40% of the RFA membership following Instagram (and Tiktok)
- In 2021 we want our media footprint to have had 40,000 interactions

### 'Sustain' initiatives (2021):

Initiatives	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Promotional Materials: Website, merchandise Posters, Videos	Build up the Fives promotional materials for use at events, tournaments and online:  • Website makeover - maintain news in the background, but use it to sell the sport to new players and to potential funders  • Merchandise including RFA branded t-shirts, balls, gloves  • Poster templates for promotional use  • 2 x roll out banner for use at events  • 1 x media banner for interviews/commentary  • Coaching videos that provide a how-to-guide of the game  • A database of professional shots of players that can be used for all kinds of media  • Database of shots for the game that can be used for promotional material, etc.	Marketing	2021

	<ul> <li>Database of videos, more than just full recordings of games.</li> <li>O Highlights</li> <li>O Filming of matches, including matches of plates, Pres Cup, etc – i.e. not always featuring the same top players</li> <li>O Interviews with players that can be used for promotion</li> <li>O Integrate onto the website</li> </ul>		
Communications strategy: to the	Develop communication strategy for internal and external communications:	Marketing	2021
world, to the	To the world:		
players, to the	<ul> <li>Twitter – necessary for each</li> </ul>		
board	tournament with set plan		
	Twitter engagement of other     invested parties.		
	invested parties  o Instagram engagement		
	<ul><li>Instagram engagement (shared to Fb) to target</li></ul>		
	younger players (and TikTok).		
	From September we should		
	be having 1 post per day		
	<ul> <li>Cut costs by cutting some</li> </ul>		
	print media		
	<ul> <li>Review and redesign Twitter,</li> </ul>		
	Instagram, Facebook and		
	YouTube		
	We could even consider		
	empowering younger players  – a financial incentive if		
	necessary, to help post		
	• To players:		
	Mail shots from Rugby Fives		
	address		
	<ul> <li>Regular updates and calls to</li> </ul>		
	action		
	<ul> <li>Champion people from wide</li> </ul>		
	variety of backgrounds and		
	have a tick list of the variety		
	we need over the year		
	<ul> <li>Incentive new people to come on board</li> </ul>		
	Online tournament entry		
	<ul><li>Clear leadership</li></ul>		
	<ul><li>Show members progress</li></ul>		
	made		
	To board:		
	<ul> <li>Clear communication</li> </ul>		
	regularly		

	<ul> <li>Make use of event and team management software</li> <li>Official email addresses for all external communications</li> </ul>		
Brand Relaunch 2021	Prepare the brand over summer 2020 and launch the new brand at 2021 Relaunch Event  New identifiable brand for Rugby Fives  Consider name change – just "Fives", or something else  New logo Cleaner Website Action shots and videos of players Improved fixture calendar  Cross-platform rebrand Create tone of brand – we can begin to do this before the new brand comes in	Marketing	2021
Support of other initiatives: tournament package and marketing materials for other other initiatives	Tournament package to support the tournament organiser  Pre & post press release templates Tournament planning document/tournament software Draws online Results online Checklist of media Checklist of tournament planning things (e.g. dinner, hotel recommendation) A more professional set-up for live broadcasting – commentary, scoreboards, etc.	Marketing	2021
	Help develop wider strategies including:	Marketing	2021

### 'Nurture' and 'Grow' initiatives (2022/5):

Initiatives	Actions	Person responsible	Date
Player Profiles	Although we do want to champion our development players, we still do need to show off	Marketing	2022

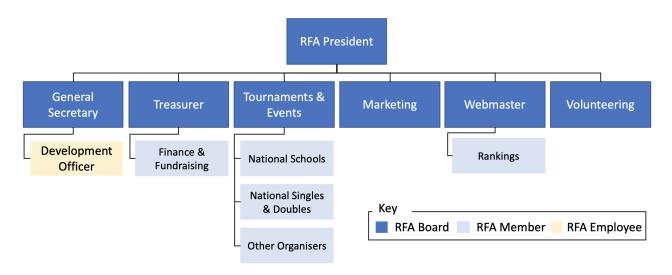
the cream at the top of the pile. We need to see people's character, not just their backswing.

- Identify top players who will have an impact on social media (we will win from THEIR followers and fanbase)
- Training
- Pre-game excitement
- Highlight members of organisation as well as players
- Profile top players
- Post-match interviews and positive soundbites
- Champion fans e.g. WAGs, uni buddies,
   etc
- Show players off the court
- Showcase any community contributions and charitable fundraising for RFA
- Exploit rivalries
- Show history of the game and profile the previous greats
- Let athletes and their teams do the social media
- Ideally we want to start recording stats from different events, etc. Then we can start doing head to heads
- We need professional photos of the players, committee members and Board members on the website - see UK Wallball work

### **RFA Roles and Responsibilities**

### **RFA Board**

Figure 1: Proposed RFA Board structure



#### **RFA President**

### Role and responsibilities:

- Govern and oversee all the activities and initiatives performed by the RFA
- Provide strategic direction for the direction of the whole of the sport
- Figurehead positions for speaking and endorsing the sport nationally
- Expected to be present at all major events in the Fives calendar
- Leads internal communications between the board and the RFA members

### General Secretary:

### Role and responsibilities:

XXX

### Treasurer (Finance and Fundraising Committee):

### Role and responsibilities:

- Overall finance strategy for the RFA
- Support fundraising efforts at schools / clubs / courts
- Raise funds for the RFA to support its own initiatives
- Liaise with teachers, volunteers, players to push membership to the RFA

### Fundraising for RFA initiatives

- Membership is a key part of RFA finances:
  - By becoming a member of the RFA, the member is supporting the development of the game and helping young people, Fives outreach and more accessibility in the sport

- Membership benefits? Can members of the RFA get more than just a magazine? Annual membership shirt. Ball for junior players? Membership should = belonging.
- Membership is £40 and is collected via Direct Debit
- The RFA can leverage the RFA's status as a charity to access funding opportunities.
   We should be looking to raise money for part-time roles and to identify several projects which we can raise money specifically for:
  - There are many funding pots both national and local
  - RFA members can donate to what we do. If they run the marathon run for us! Donate on facebook
  - Each initiative needs to be fully costed by its owner and this can then be approved by the Finance committee
- Explore other revenue streams such as merchandising, sponsorship or running some tournaments for the RFA
- Target high net worth individuals by promoting specific, targeted initiatives to them at RFA events
- Encourage entrepreneurial members to form companies under the banner of the RFA that finance a particular initiative e.g. form a charity that invests in coaching for disadvantaged school kids that looks to access grants for court hire, equipment etc.

### Tournaments & Events:

#### Role and responsibilities:

- Responsible for RFA calendar of tournament and events
- Manages and provides central administration for organisers
- Drive new initiatives to increase the participation at RFA tournaments and events

### Marketing:

#### Role and responsibilities:

- Development of the Fives brand and communications strategy
- Responsible for social media channels and all external communications
- Provision of promotional materials for support of other initiatives and for marketing campaigns

#### **Development Officer:**

### Role and responsibilities:

- Provide activator courses, coaching and resources to schools
- Support the volunteering board member with outreach projects in the future
- Support Marketing Officer in developing materials for schools, communities and clubs

### Webmaster:

- Improve, develop and maintain the RFA website and microsites
- Provide support for tournament and club microsites
- Work with rankings team to develop a more dynamic rankings system that is integrated with the website
- Work with the Marketing Officer on website content and promotional materials

### Volunteering:

Role and responsibilities:

- Identify volunteering opportunities and partnerships within the community
- Set-up and create outreach projects for disadvantaged groups
- Manage RFA members that volunteer to support these programs

### Welfare and Safeguarding:

Role and responsibilities:

XXX

### Health and Safety:

Role and responsibilities:

XXX

#### Ladies:

Role and responsibilities:

XXX

### Diversity and Inclusion:

Role and responsibilities:

XXX

### **Key Organisers**

### Gloves and Balls Supplier:

This is a strategically significant position to fill on account of the infrastructural requirement for Fives balls and Gloves to support the game.

Role and responsibilities:

- Manufacture, supply and distribute Fives balls and gloves to the Fives community
- Responsible for ensuring a smooth transition for the successor to this role
- Continue to improve the manufacturing method to both de-risk this role and provide a foundation for scaling up

### National Schools Organiser:

Role and responsibilities:

- Responsible for the coordination and successful delivery of the National Schools
- Manages a supporting team of RFA members that will deliver the National Schools event
- Liaises with teachers to drive participation at the event
- Communicates with Marketing and Development Officers for the organisation of the event

### National Singles / Doubles Organisers:

Role and responsibilities:

- Responsible for the coordination and successful delivery of the National Singles or the National Doubles
- Increase participation and spectatorship at tournaments by introducing additional activities
- Communicates with Marketing and Tournaments Officers for the organisation of the event

#### Annual RFA event:

### Role and responsibilities:

- Responsible for the coordination and successful delivery of the Annual RFA event
- Raise awareness of RFA initiatives and activities
- Brief summary of the AGM agenda to provide transparency to RFA members
- Fundraising effort for RFA initiatives
- Communicates with Marketing and Treasurer Officers for the organisation of the event

### Other Organiser Groups:

- Other tournament organisers:
  - Similar roles and responsibilities to the National Singles and Doubles but with more autonomy as these events are not as strategically important for the RFA
- New member manpower:
  - The RFA's best resource is the 16-40 bracket of members
  - Incentivise them, use them, champion their ideas, empower them, make members feel like they are part of *something*. Tournaments can have a different spin, we can run charity events, etc.
    - Market successful ideas and be public about them

### New coaches:

- Introduce an activator course and start upskilling young adults, multi-sport coaches, community leaders and teachers
- Level 1 and 2 coaching means that we are nationally recognised and is important for key coaches – but Activator is really where we shine and have ownership
- Activator courses will embrace the Fives ethos and provide generalised skills as well as merchandise / coaching activity cards etc.
- Use these in applications for funding. Note that activators can be used for match funding

# Appendix:

# List of courts in the UK

Courts	Location	Туре	Number of courts	In use (0,1,2 - scale. 0 not used, 1 somewhat used 2 used a lot
Merchiston Castle	Edinburgh	School	2	2
Edinburgh Academy	Edinburgh	School	2	2
Fettes	Edinburgh	School	2	2
Loretto	Musselburgh	School	3	1
Durham Uni	Durham	University and Community	2	2
Rossall	Fleetwood	School	8	
Giggleswick	Yorkshire	School	2	0
Heath School	Halifax	School	2	0
Dallam School	Heversham	School	1	0
Manchester Y	Manchester	Community	2	1

Little Hills	Scarborough	Private	1	0
Sedbergh	Sedbergh	School	4	2
Leeds Uni	Leeds	University	2 (closed)	0
Bedford Modern	Bedford	School	4	2
Bloxham School	Bloxham	School	2	0
Denstone College	Denstone	School	4	0
Derby Moor	Derby	School and Community	2	2
Malvern College	Malvern	School	4	2
Owestry School	Owestry	School	1	0
Oundle School	Oundle	School	4	2
Rugby School	Rugby	School	2	1
King Edward IV Sch	Stratford-on-Avon	School	1	
St Pauls	London, West	School	6	2
St Dunstans	London, South	School	3	1
Whitgift	London, South	School	4	2

Alleynes	London, South	School	4	2
UCS	London, North	School	2	1 (think club only)
Bank of England	London, South	School	2	0
Stoke Newington	London, East	School	6 (closed)	0
Surbiton	Surrey	School	2	0
Cambridge Uni	Cambridge	University and Community	3	2
Bradfield College	Bradfield	School	4	1
Eastbourne College	Eastbourne	School	3	1
Christs' Hospital	Horsham	School	4	2
Oxford Uni	Oxford	University and Community	2	2
Radley College	Radley	School	2	
Tonbridge School	Tonbridge	School	7	2
Clifton College	Bristol	School	4	1
Marlborough Col	Marlborough	School	4	2

Sherborne School	Sherborne	School	5	2
Mount Kelly	Tavistock	School	2	0
Blundell's School	Tiverton	School	6	2
Winchester College	Winchester	School	4	2

### Map of Court Locations in the UK



### **Activator Course Materials**

Ask Dan Grant for Wall ball example and Development Officer

# Advice for the Management of Fives Clubs

Document written by Stuart Kirby