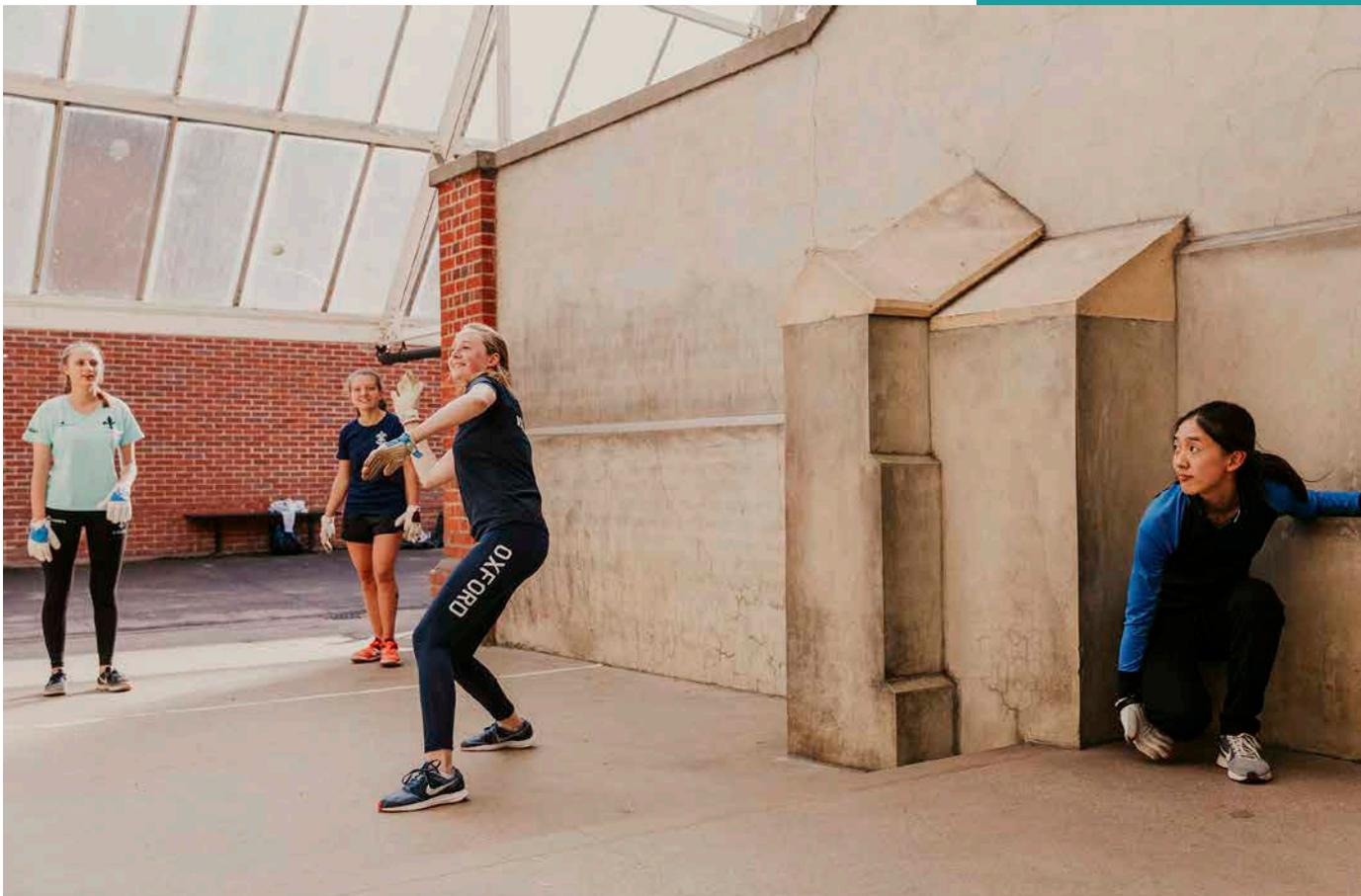




The
FiveStar
Project

Fives for all



Year 2 Review

February 2020

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ABOUT FIVESTAR

In October 2016 the EFA committed to a long-term development strategy for Eton Fives, named the FiveStar project. The strategy identifies five areas that are key to the expansion of the sport: Clubs and Communities, Schools, Universities, Coaches and Organisers.

Through supporting and influencing people in these 5 areas, the FiveStar project has set the ambitious aim of tripling the number of players by 2024 and extending the availability of the sport both geographically and socially.

September 2017 saw the employment of the first Regional Development Managers for FiveStar, giving the EFA national coverage for the first time.

The local organisers at Cambridge started the ball rolling in 2017. In 2018 our first Regional Organiser based at St. Bartholomew’s School, Newbury, Berkshire was appointed, followed in 2019 by our first Organiser for the London area. They have both made a great impact on increasing playing numbers.

The FiveStar Team

For the EFA:
Richard Black
Gareth Hoskins
David Cooper
Richard Dennis
Phil Lyndon
Emily Scoones
Simon Woolfries

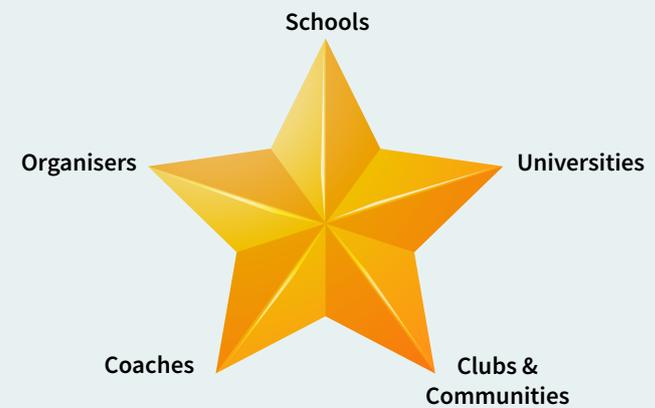
Head of Development:
Alex Knight

Research and Development Assistant:
Zach Hickmore

London Regional Organiser:
Mike Till

Thames Valley Regional Organiser:
Will Thomas

Organiser, Cambridge:
Nick Preston



In 2019, thanks to the generosity of the Oppenheimer Generations Foundation, we have appointed a Research and Development Assistant, whose work will give Eton Fives the knowledge and firm evidence it needs to promote and develop the game.

This report provides an overview of the first 29 months’ work in this exciting new chapter in the development of Eton Fives.



WELCOME

The FiveStar project is the most ambitious development project in the history of Eton Fives. Thanks to a very generous donation by an Eton Fives supporter, we have been able to set up a Development office of two Development staff for three years and we have just completed our first 29 months' work.

We have made real progress in the area of securing the future of our existing courts by developing them as **community hubs**. The Cambridge Sports Centre where Eton Fives and Rugby Fives are played and developed together, is going from strength to strength. The local adult club at Newbury plays two or three times a week and the pupils of St. Bartholomew's School are playing enthusiastically. New local adult clubs have been set up at Repton and most recently at the Emanuel School courts in Clapham, attracting a mixture of existing and new players. We hope the courts at King Edward School, Birmingham will be re-roofed as that will give us the opportunity to create a whole new local community club. These are win-win achievements – more school and adult players, greater geographical spread of membership and a better future for the courts themselves. Universities are seen as prime potential community hubs.

Another key initiative is “**Back to Fives**”. Over the decades so many players have left the game, most after leaving school. This lack of “pull-through” is the main reason why the Eton Fives community is smaller than we would like.

Taking a leaf out of other sports, notably hockey, the EFA is coordinating a national campaign to entice these players back, starting with the many ex-Highgate players. Our first “Back to

Fives” event was on 26 January 2020 at the Highgate courts. Seventeen Old Cholmeleians came back to play or support, including some family members, and loved it. Players and non-playing supporters are equally welcome. This initiative will be extended to alumni/ae of other schools in the future. The more enthusiasts and supporters of Eton Fives that we have, the stronger we will be as a game.

In the longer term, enlarging our limited geographic and socio-economic footprint will depend on building new courts in different regions of the UK. There are a number of ongoing court-building projects, supported by FiveStar, but we need far more funding to achieve our goals. For that reason, FiveStar will be focusing over the next two years on fundraising to build our expansion. Meanwhile we are very grateful to our sponsor Advanta Wealth for giving us the financial means to pay for new initiatives.

The establishment of an EFA national coaching infrastructure is a key ambition, and this will be a large piece of work in 2020 and 2021.

Finally, the strengthening and expansion of Eton Fives is not just down to the small FiveStar team. We need every Eton Fives player and supporter to contribute to it. Please contact one of the FiveStar team listed on page 8 to find out how you can play a role in realising your dreams for this wonderful game.

Richard Black
Director, FiveStar



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The FiveStar project has a number of different areas for development, identified in the table below. The project intends to extend access to Eton Fives beyond its traditional base, whilst at the same time securing and enhancing opportunities for the existing core of Eton Fives players.

These measures give a means to evaluate progress. At the same time the work that goes into the achievement of any advances can be valuable in itself – it often generates new ideas and benefits.

1. Adult Playing membership	8. Universities (regularly playing)
2. Adult EFA membership	9. No. of sets of courts (centres)
3. Number of state schools	10. No. of school players (entrants to Schools championships)
4. Number of independent schools	11. Disabled regular players
5. Number of prep. schools	12. Female players including schoolgirls
6. Total number of schools	13. Adult ethnic minority players
7. Community Fives centres	

A full table with detailed targets can be found in the Appendix on page 7. Good progress is being made towards the targets set.

YEAR 2 FIVESTAR HIGHLIGHTS

£50k over 2 years raised in sponsorship with Advanta Wealth

£213k raised in grants and donations

2nd Regional Organiser appointed

Legacy campaign launched

1st Advanta/EFA Dinner at RAC Club

International links strengthened

Record entry for Shrewsbury National Schools' Championships

Sponsored Research and Development Assistant appointed

2 new community clubs supported

2 sets of courts opened for public use

Major school resumes playing Eton Fives

"Back to Fives" pilot launched

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE CHALLENGE: AN OVERVIEW

Securing the base

This is all about preserving and developing the courts and the player base that we have. There would be little point in pursuing ambitious schemes for new facilities if those that we have are not fully utilised. Thanks to the funds generated by our sponsorship with Advanta Wealth we have been able to recruit a London Organiser, Mike Till, who has already opened the Emanuel School courts for public use with a large turnout over the first five evenings. Will Thomas and Nick Preston, organisers of the Thames Valley and Cambridge clubs respectively, are generating lasting increased footfall. The “Back to Fives” campaign has great potential and will be extended. More will be done to grow the player base organically.

We have been greatly heartened by the commitment shown by various volunteer organisers to make this all happen on the ground. These benefits constitute “low-hanging fruit”, as the results can be seen immediately, but they still need to be realised by enthusiasm and hard work. The lack of qualified coaches is hampering our development and this will be addressed in 2020 and 2021.

Pushing the boundaries

This means extending Eton Fives to new geographic and socio-economic groups within the UK and has always been part of



the FiveStar vision over the seven years. It is a much more difficult nut to crack. We have put in two bids to build courts in sports centres with major sports (rugby and football), one in a region where we have no courts at present. These would have been giant leaps forward. Despite encouragement from some of the Directors of those facilities and a promise from the EFA to find the necessary money and coaching support, we did not succeed in convincing those Boards to back the projects. We have to face the fact that we are still a little-known game and sports centres have an array of options to choose from when considering expansion.

Learning for the future

The two bids gave us, however, very useful experience and we have a template for such bids which we can use in the future. We need to raise a significant fund, initially £1.5 million, to offer an attractive package to new centres. We are also pursuing the idea of designing and manufacturing temporary, pop-up courts, which we could install locally on clients’ sites – these would allow them to try the game before committing themselves. Our experience leads us to believe that, once players have tried it out with full coaching support, they will enthusiastically want to play it.

The research generated by our new Research and Development Assistant, Zach Hickmore, whose two-year contract has been generously funded by the Oppenheimer Generations Foundation, will strengthen our hand. This part of FiveStar will take longer to achieve results but is already showing promise.

Finally, there is no doubt that the project thrives on momentum. Success breeds success in many different ways, not least because we hope that more Eton Fives enthusiasts will be inspired to do whatever they can for the good of the game.

Establishing priorities – what should we focus on?

We must not fall into the trap of trying to do everything at the same time.

Schools have been, and will continue to be, the bedrock of our game. Any new projects at schools will always be welcomed. Nevertheless, in the light of our experience so far we think that universities tend to make better community hubs than schools. Access is easier over a longer period of the day, with

fewer safeguarding restrictions. If there is a resident sports coach, he/she is often charged with a specific responsibility to widen community use. Having courts at universities will also help the currently lamentable pull-through from the school to adult game.

We have spent the first 29 months raising some new funds but we have concentrated on developing our current court infrastructure and player base. We think that we should now focus on raising new money for Eton Fives. Without that we will never be able to make a step-function move forward in expansion. Tom Tsang, our excellent Development Manager for The Midlands and the North, has taken a full-time coaching role in Rugby League, and we now intend to use that funding to pay for a Development Officer to assist Alex Knight, now Head of Development, and myself in a focused effort to raise funds. Fundraising takes time and the sooner we start it, the better.

Schools and coaches

Eton Fives at schools goes from strength to strength. In 2019 there were 582 pairs entries at the National Schools' Championships which were held at Shrewsbury School. Last time it was held at Shrewsbury the entry was 510 pairs. This massive 14% increase is a tribute to the commitment and hard work shown by the teachers and coaches at our Eton Fives-playing schools. Because of this increased demand, the Championships are being reorganised with more preliminary tournaments to ease congestion.

Other tournaments for young people, including those run admirably by The Rugby and Eton Fives Coaching Agency, have been very well subscribed. We should celebrate this success and thank those who put so much time into running these tournaments.

Repton is back but...

It is a real joy that Repton School has resumed its great tradition of playing Eton Fives after a gap of so many years. There are, however, some schools where progress has been stalled for whatever reason or where Eton Fives has not become established. Some of these schools would be happy to employ a coach. The EFA in recent years has placed "gappers" and other short-term coaches but we cannot keep up with the demand. This is hugely important, as a good coach can transform the game at the school and may even be able to stop it dying out for a generation. The lack of coaches has been identified as the biggest issue in a recent survey of Masters-in-Charge. Any future expansion of the game will generate further demand. FiveStar will tackle this problem in 2020 and 2021.



Is Eton Fives so special?

Yes, but what real evidence is there for this?

Why do so many players stop playing after school?

All of us who love the game (I call us Fives Nutters!) believe that it offers some things which are very special. Apart from the physical benefits of playing, the unique "no referee/fair play" tradition, applied at all levels, creates a remarkable sense of fair play and respect between players.

It is not so easy to convince those outside Eton Fives that it is so special. In 2019 the EFA ran a "Fit for Fives" day where male and female players of very different ages and playing levels took part in a measured test of the physical benefits of playing. For the first time we can now say with accuracy how much energy is expended in an "average" game of Eton Fives (250 calories per 30 minutes).

Zach Hickmore, our newly-recruited Research and Development Assistant, is amassing the real evidence on the benefits of our game, which we can use to support bids for funding and for inclusion in sport projects. He will also be systematically analysing why we lose so many players after school and will propose ways to improve our poor performance. What can we learn from other sports?

We are very heartened by the generous sponsorship from the Oppenheimer Generations Foundation for his two-year appointment. This shows that, with the right resources in place, we can raise money for worthwhile projects.

Publicity and PR: what more can we do?

The answer is – a great deal more. Any expansion plan for Eton Fives needs to include more and better publicity and PR. We have tended to “hide our light under a bushel”. This will not do. We should be confident in telling the world what a great game Eton Fives is and how we are intending to get more people playing it. We are now working with a Communications and PR partner, The Emilia Group (TEG). As a start, we organised a well-received live interview on BBC Radio London in the autumn. TEG has produced an excellent media pack that we can give to journalists, funders, sports centres and sports correspondents. We will continue to work closely with TEG in 2020. The EFA is now set up on Instagram – well done to Emily Scoones for getting us there so professionally.

Our international Eton Fives friends

The primary focus of FiveStar is on the development of the game in the UK – this is a big enough task in itself. But let us not forget the international Eton Fives community. Various steps forward have been made this year. The Swiss club was welcomed to the EFA/Advanta Dinner in May and visits are made every year by UK and Swiss teams. A pop-up court appeared in a Hamburg railway station. Malay College made a welcome return to the National Schools Championships. The Eton Fives activity of Malay College will be featured in a

forthcoming episode of Michael Portillo’s “Great Railways” programme as Michael himself visited the College and played on the courts during one of his journeys. In December we were delighted that a team of players from Nigeria visited the UK, playing a number of games against various opposition. Despite the dismal weather they had a good time and were very happy to resume international Eton Fives after a gap of 30 years. Australia (Geelong) and India (St. Paul’s, Darjeeling) are still playing. And then there are Artignosc and Grillon in France. Eton Fives is that much stronger with the game thriving internationally.

A glimpse into 2021 and beyond

A few thoughts on the longer-term future of FiveStar:

- We must get better at keeping school pupils playing after they leave school
- We must set up a national coaching organisation
- Develop the regional organisation – it is producing results
- If most of our centres are being well utilised, we need to raise the funding to build new centres in new geographic areas to serve new communities – this is the step function move that we need to meet our targets over the 2017-2024 period
- Keep aiming high

APPENDIX

Aims and Objectives of The FiveStar Project (2017-2024)

	2017	2022	2024
1. Adult playing membership	750 (est)	1,500	2,500
2. Adult EFA membership	550	1,000	1,500
3. Number of state schools	4	8	12
4. Number of independent schools	26	30	34
5. Number of prep. schools	8	10	12
6. Total number of schools	38	48 (+26%)	58 (+52%)
7. Community Fives Centres	1	2	4
8. Universities (regularly playing)	4	8	12
9. No. of sets of courts	41	54 (31%)	68 (+65%)
10. No. of school players	1,100	1,386 (+26%)	1,672 (+52%)
11. Disabled regular players	5 (est)	40	80
12. Female players including schoolgirls	100 (est)	300	500
13. Adult ethnic minority players	30 (2.25% of 1.)	150 (10% of 1.)	300 (12% of 1.)



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ETON FIVES
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