



ETON FIVES
ASSOCIATION

Building the Future

2025-26 Season Review





A Message from the Chief Executive

After the extraordinary success of the EFA's Centenary year, it would have been easy to see 2025-26 as a return to normality. Instead, as the summary below demonstrates, the Centenary has proved to be the launchpad for the Association's next chapter.

Over the past year we have continued to strengthen the foundations for the future of Eton Fives: expanding our support for schools, investing in coaching and facilities, improving our governance, and exploring new opportunities to grow the game both at home and internationally.

The EFA is a registered charity and none of this work would be possible without the remarkable commitment of our volunteers, trustees, schools, supporters and members. My sincere thanks go to everyone who gives their time, expertise and enthusiasm to the Eton Fives community. Your contribution is what enables the Association to thrive.

As we bring our successful and longstanding partnership with Advanta Wealth to a close, I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to Craig Webster and everyone at Advanta Group. Their generous sponsorship over the past eight years has helped transform what the Association has been able to achieve, and leaves a lasting legacy for the future of Eton Fives.

Alex Knight

Chief Executive, Eton Fives Association

2025-26 Season in Numbers

572

Pairs in the National Schools' Championships

3

Activator coaching courses organised

8

Years of sponsorship from Advanta Wealth

19

Reps in the new Schools Support Network

30

Schools participating in World Fives Day 2026

7

EFA Champions appointed

1

New Festival of Eton Fives

65

Guests at the Annual Dinner



Tournaments & Competitions

Delivering outstanding competitions for players of all ages



National Schools Championships

The EFA organised a comprehensive programme of **school competitions** throughout the season, including individual championships (U12, U13, U14, U16 and Girls) and team events (U13, U15 and Senior), culminating in the **National Schools Championships** at Repton in March 2026. A record **572 pairs** entered the Championships and qualifying tournaments, while the introduction of **Tournify** improved the experience for players, organisers and spectators alike by providing live scoring and results.

Adult competition also remained strong, with **23 competitions** held during the season. A highlight was the Graham Turnbull tournament for school pupil/alumni pairs, which continued to strengthen the pathway from school to adult Fives by attracting 30 pairs representing 13 schools.

Twenty-three teams competed in the three-division **Advanta League**, which was won for the first time by the Old Millhillian club.

Promotion & Events

Celebrating the game and inspiring new audiences

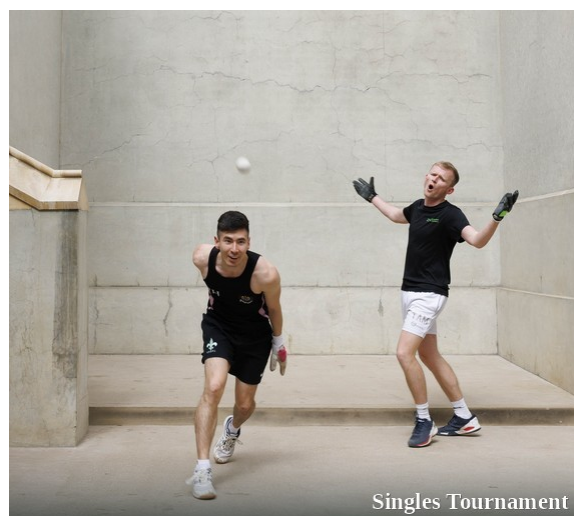
The Association concluded its Centenary celebrations with the production and distribution of a **commemorative Centenary booklet** to supporters, donors and the Heads of Fives-playing schools.

World Fives Day (WFD) — the worldwide celebration of Fives held each year on and around 5th May (5/5 = Fives) — returned for its sixth year with the theme 'Bring a Friend'. Thirty schools and clubs took part, introducing new participants to the game while celebrating the breadth of the Fives community.

An inaugural **Festival of Eton Fives** was held at Eton College on 3rd May, attracting national coverage in the *Daily Telegraph*. Players of all ages and abilities enjoyed coaching sessions, an exhibition match, a masterclass from national champion Riki Houlden, an exhibition of Fives artefacts, and the opportunity to play on the original Eton Fives court against the College Chapel.

Digital communications were enhanced through improvements to the Association's website, greater use of LinkedIn, and the adoption of new online platforms such as Tournify.

The end-of-season **Awards Dinner** returned to the RAF Club. As part of the ceremony, attendees saw the inaugural **Spirit of the Game Award** presented to Hugo Young and Riki Houlden, and enjoyed an address from guest speaker Mark Semmence, Headmaster of Repton School.



Singles Tournament

Community & Outreach

Supporting schools, strengthening clubs and growing the Fives community

A major focus throughout the season was strengthening links between the Association and Fives-playing schools. The new **Schools Support Network (SSN)** provides every member school with a nominated EFA contact, enabling better communication, earlier identification of opportunities and challenges, and more coordinated support.

Supporting young people beyond school remains one of the Association's highest priorities. The new **EFA Champions** programme, successfully piloted during the season, identifies and supports the next generation of ambassadors for the sport while helping young players make the transition from school into university, club and community Fives.

Building on new research and direct engagement with schools, the Association continued to support participation through coaching, fixture development and local initiatives, with a particular emphasis on **increasing girls' participation**.



Successful outreach work at schools local to Westway Sports Centre demonstrated the value of this approach. **Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School** expanded its coaching programme to include Years 9 and 10, entered pupils into a national tournament, and restarted its external fixtures.

EFA visits to **Bryanston** and **City of Norwich** schools deepened their engagement with Fives, including plans for regular coaching sessions next season.

Governance & Research

Building a stronger Association through evidence-based decision-making

Following the appointment of its first **Chief Executive**, Alex Knight, the Association continued to strengthen its governance and long-term planning. New financial, operational and strategic processes were introduced to ensure the EFA is well placed to support the sport over the coming years.

A **risk register** was introduced to help Trustees identify and manage risks to both the Association and the sport it oversees. The Association reviewed and updated its **safeguarding** policy, as well as its **reserves** and **investment** policies. It also began modernising its **IT infrastructure**, **membership systems** and **document management**.

Research continued to play an increasingly important role in informing the Association's work. During the season the EFA completed four significant projects:

- An analysis of **best practice in Girls' Fives**, involving wide consultation with coaches and Masters in Charge of Fives, resulting in practical guidance for schools
- A **review** of the organisation and delivery of the **National Schools Championships**, producing a reference guide for organisers, participants and spectators
- **Research into perceptions** of Eton Fives by pupils and staff at Holyport College, and recommendations for improving participation and engagement
- The introduction of an annual participation '**Pulse Check**' survey, enabling the Association to monitor trends, anticipate future needs, and better target its support



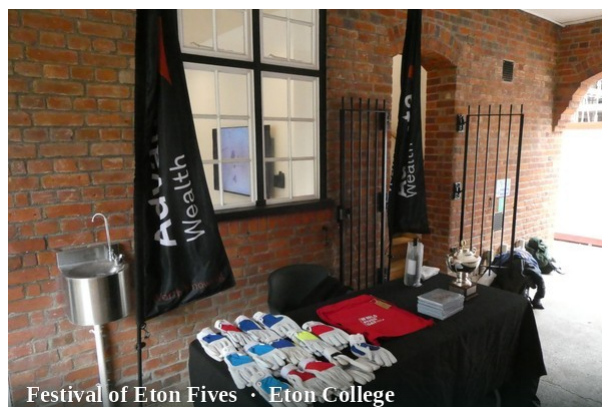
Sponsorship & Fundraising

Generating the resources to secure the sport's future

Advanta Wealth extended its **headline sponsorship** of the EFA to an eighth consecutive year, continuing its £30,000 annual investment in the sport. In addition, the Advanta Foundation once again matched funds raised for participants' chosen charities through World Fives Day, increasing the event's wider charitable impact.

The Association helped secure the successful restoration of the courts at **Charterhouse School**, subsidising the initial site survey and supporting the subsequent fundraising campaign, which **raised £225,000** to create a new court and refurbish five existing ones.

The Association also began developing longer-term commercial opportunities to support its charitable work, including **overseas licensing**, consultancy and intellectual property.



Coaching & Training

Developing coaches to inspire the next generation of players

Following the winding down of the Rugby and Eton Fives Coaching Agency (REFCA), the Association began developing a new **coaching strategy** to support the long-term growth of the sport.

Activator courses for teachers and PE staff were delivered at **Holyport College**, with further sessions arranged at **Wrekin College** and **Westway Sports Centre**. A feasibility study was launched into adapting the Activator programme for sixth-form students, helping to develop the next generation of coaches and leaders.

Planning has started on new coaching pathways and **digital learning resources**, complementing existing face-to-face provision and making high-quality coaching support more widely available.

Collaboration with the **Eton Fives Charitable Trust** was strengthened to support future coaching initiatives, while additional funding opportunities were explored with other trusts and foundations.

Courts & Equipment

Supporting the facilities and kit that underpin the sport

The successful completion of the **Charterhouse** court redevelopment represented a major milestone for the season, restoring the school to nine championship-standard Eton Fives courts and significantly enhancing one of the game's most important venues.

The Association continued to support schools considering refurbishment or new court developments, including **Queen Elizabeth School Barnet** and **King Edward VI School Birmingham**. Discussions were also progressed on international court development in **Cambodia** (Shrewsbury Phnom Penh), **Hong Kong** (Kellett School), the **UAE** (Repton) and elsewhere.

The innovative **TopFives** prototype, a dismountable half-court design created by former national champion John Reynolds, was supported by the EFA as both a way to introduce new audiences to Eton Fives and an affordable next step for schools that play the game but don't yet have facilities.

Demand for the Association's new **orange balls** continued to grow during the season, whilst trials of alternative **glove suppliers** and the development of additional **merchandise** — including World Fives Day kit bags — helped improve the range of equipment available to players.

Protecting existing courts remains an important part of the Association's work, with continued advocacy and support for schools where facilities may be threatened by redevelopment or declining participation.



Looking Ahead

Building on this year's progress — priorities for the 2026–27 season

- A review and possible redesign of the membership proposition
- Piloting a new coaching framework and digital resources
- Launch of the Kinnaird Society, a donor recognition programme
- Development of EFA licensing standards



Holyport College · World Fives Day 2026

Thank you for being part of the Eton Fives community.

www.etonfives.com