

Rugby Union

- 20,800 women play rugby union at least once a month
- Rugby union is predominately played by young women – over 93% of players are aged between 16 and 34
- Female rugby players are the most likely to play as a club member (71.8%)

All charts are based on those adults (16 and over) who said they had played rugby football union (RFU) at least once in the last four weeks (Active People Survey (APS) 2007-08), unless stated otherwise. See Note 1.

Women who play rugby – overview

Trends in women's RFU participation

Played at least once a week (moderate intensity)

APS1 (2005-06) 0.04%

APS2 (2007-08) 0.08%

A significant increase in women's participation

Played at least once in the last four weeks

APS1 (2005-06) 0.06%

APS2 (2007-08) 0.10%

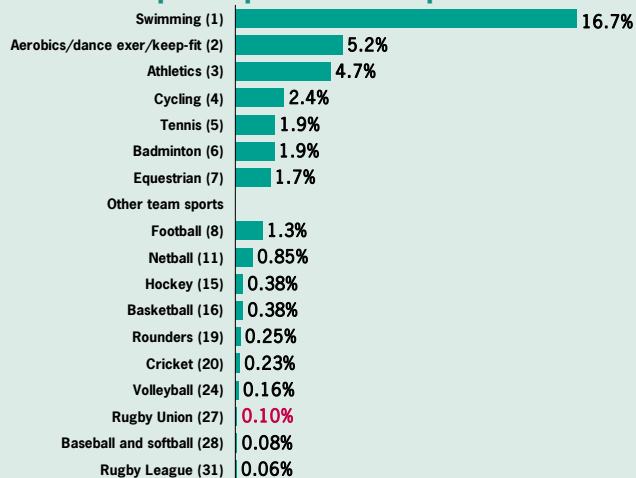
Base: All female respondents (APS1 = 212,568, APS2 = 113,056)

Participation overview

- 20,800 women play rugby union at least once a month (rugby league = 11,700)
- While only 1 in a 1,000 women currently play rugby union there has been significant growth in numbers between 2005-06 and 2007-08
- Men outnumber female rugby union players 14:1

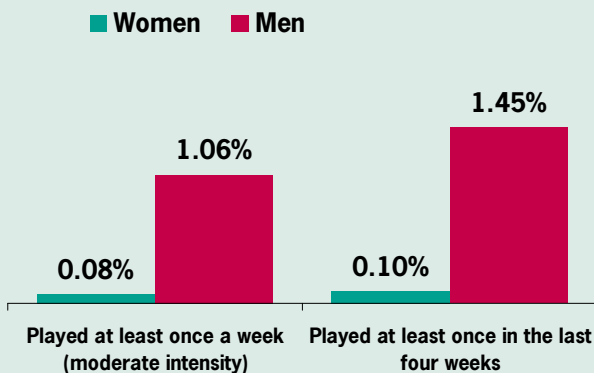
How does RFU fare?

Women's participation in all sports



Base: All female respondents. Figure for cycling is respondents who took part in at least four recreational cycles in the last four weeks at moderate intensity

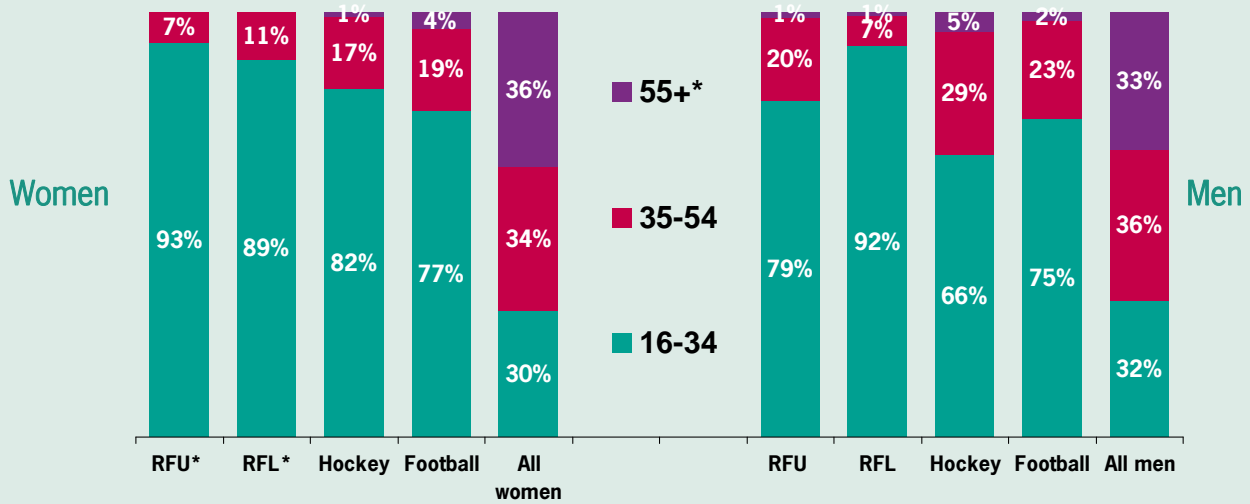
Proportion of people who play RFU by gender



Base: All respondents (women = 113,056, men = 78,269)

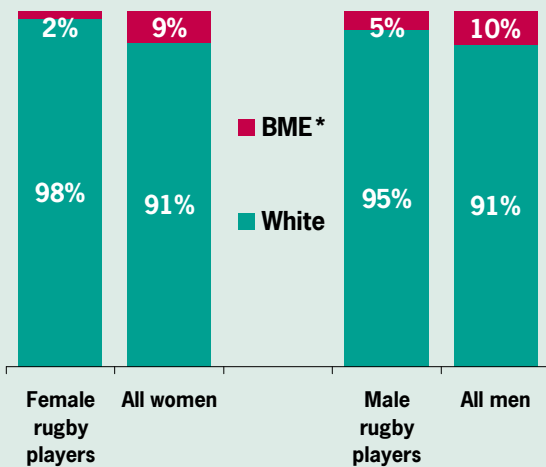
Demographic profile of rugby players

Age profile of men and women who play RFU v. similar sports



Base: All respondents. * Read data with caution due to small number of respondents

Profile of RFU players by gender and ethnicity

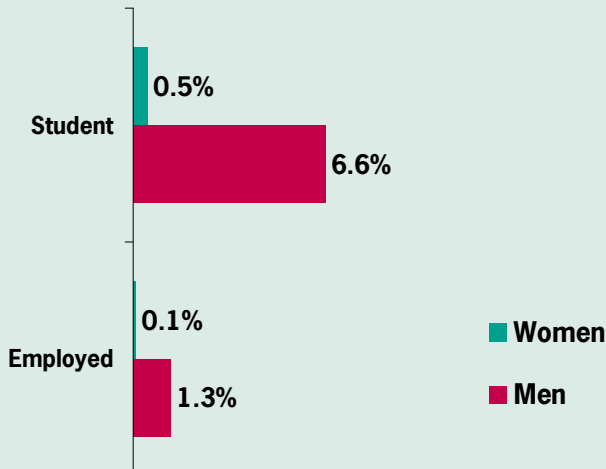


Base: All respondents. * Read data with caution due to small number of respondents

Participation – demographics

- Possibly due to it being played at school and universities and the relatively recent acceptance of rugby for women, rugby is predominately played by young women – over 93% of players are aged between 16 and 34
- BME women make up just 2% of female rugby players (England profile = 9%)
- As mentioned rugby is predominately played by young women, who may play at school or university. This is backed up by the fact that 44% of rugby union players are students

Proportion of people who play RFU by gender and working status



Base: All respondents

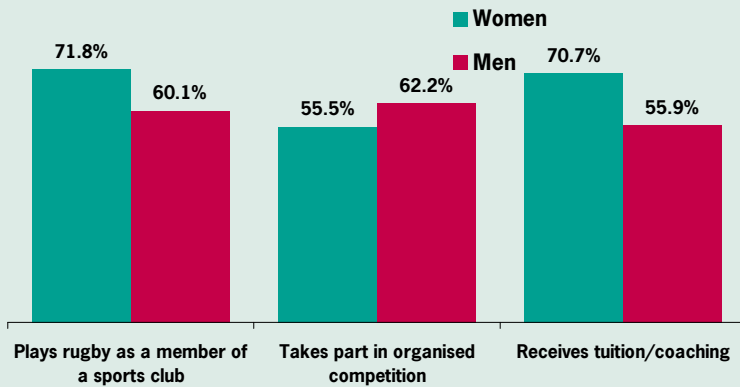
Profile of RFU players by gender and working status



Base: All female respondents

Organised participation

Women who take part in RFU: as a member of a sports club; in organised competition; and receive tuition



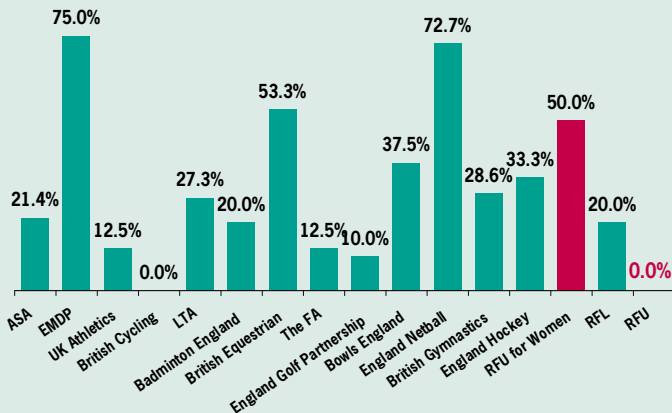
Base: All respondents who played rugby union at least once in the last four weeks. See Note 2

Organised participation

- Of all the Sport England funded sports female rugby players are the most likely to play as a club member (71.8%). This is possibly because of the few opportunities to play rugby informally
- Female rugby players are also more likely than most sports to take part in competition or receive tuition, with more women than men receiving coaching

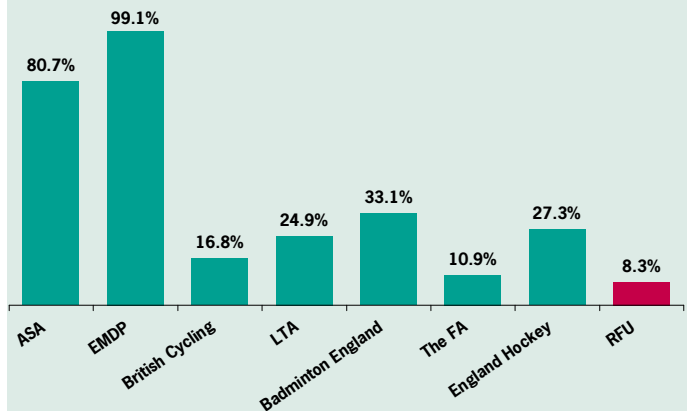
Women as leaders, coaches and volunteers

Women as leaders of sport % of NGB Board members who are women



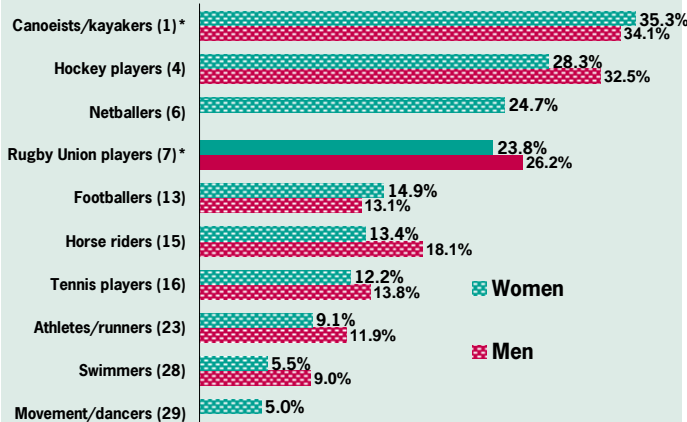
Source: WSFF 2009 NGB audit. See Note 3

Women as sports coaches % of NGB affiliated coaches who are women



Source: WSFF 2009 NGB audit. See Note 3

Women and men as volunteers



Base: All respondents who play the sport at least once a week. Selected sports for women. Figure in brackets is the sport's ranking out of 29 sports for volunteering. See Note 4. * Read data with caution

Women as leaders, coaches and volunteers

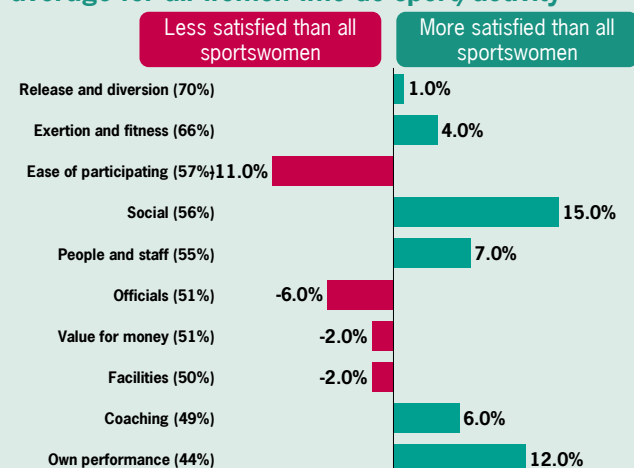
- 50% of the RFU for Women board members are women (compared with the average of 21% for all NGBs).
- Women make up one in 12 RFU affiliated coaches

Satisfaction with rugby union (see over)

- Female rugby players are a lot more satisfied than average with the social aspect of their sport and their own performance, but less so with ease of participation

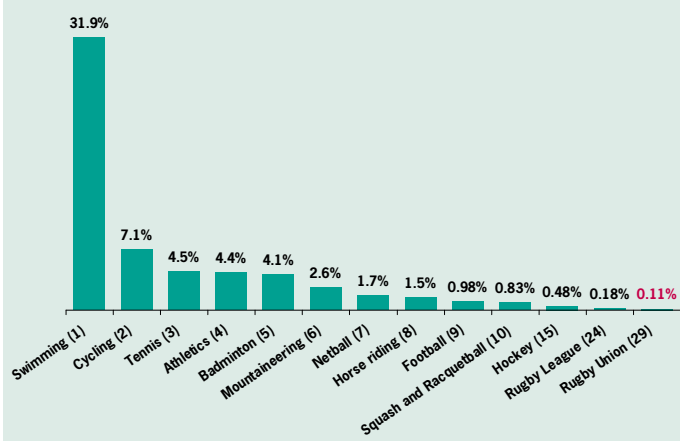
Women's satisfaction and latent demand

Satisfaction of female RFU players compared with average for all women who do sport/activity



Source: Sport England's Satisfaction with the quality of the sporting experience survey (2009). Base: Female respondents (16+) who rated their satisfaction as 8-10 on a 1 to 10 scale. Figures in brackets are satisfaction percentages for all sportswomen. See Note 5

What sports do women want to do more of?



Base: All female respondents who said they wanted to do more sport and physical activity

To sum up...

The number of female rugby union players is increasing, however, there is a long way to go to reach the high number of men who play each week. Rugby is predominately played by young women and students, where there are opportunities to play as part of school and university.

Positively, rugby union does not have the drop off in the 20s/30s that many other sports have, which may be that the women who currently take up rugby are very committed to it. Female rugby players are also satisfied with the social aspect of their sport, and so this may also be part of why women stay in the sport.

Most women who play rugby union do so within a club system – more so than within any other sport, therefore the RFU for Women might want to consider how to move these members into coaching or leadership positions. Female rugby players are some of the most willing of all sports to volunteer within sport (almost one in four), so they have already demonstrated they are prepared to get involved.

Notes

- 1 Source for all data is the Active People Survey 2 (2007-08) unless otherwise stated. 16 year olds and over in England only. Sports used in comparison are the 46 Sport England funded sports except where data are not available or sample sizes too small. Using a gym is not included in this series of factsheets.
- 2 Club membership is based on those who have been a member of a sports club to participate in rugby union in the past four weeks. These figures may not correspond with National Governing Body's (NGB) affiliation figures. Organised competition is defined as 'having taken part in any organised competition in rugby union in the last 12 months'. Received tuition is defined as 'having received tuition from an instructor or coach to improve your performance in rugby union in the last 12 months'.
- 3 In 2009 WSFF undertook an audit of all 46 Sport England funded NGBs. NGBs were asked to provide demographic data about board members, affiliated coaches and members. Sports chosen for comparison are the top participation sports for women + sports similar to rugby union. Data not available for all NGBs.
- 4 Volunteering is defined as 'volunteering to support sport for at least one hour a week'. Sports chosen for comparison are the top participation sports for women + sports similar to rugby union.
- 5 Survey respondents were asked to rate their perceived satisfaction for 75 questions across ten themes. Figures in brackets are aggregate satisfaction percentages of the individual theme questions. Domains ranked in order of satisfaction for all women.

To convert overall percentages to population numbers use the following figures:

| Survey | Male 16+ | Female 16+ |
|--------|------------|------------|
| APS 1 | 19,756,900 | 20,954,000 |
| APS 2 | 20,170,100 | 21,266,200 |

Source: Office for National Statistics England Mid-year Population Estimates, 2005 and 2007

WATCH THIS SPACE...

To be updated with Rugby Union specific data from Active People Survey 3...

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