



2023/4

ANNUAL REPORT

A year of
broadening participation,
improving wellbeing +
serving the community.

SP
Sportspark

uea+sport



'Sweetspot'

Intro

Olivia Hunt, Activities & Opportunities Officer, ueasu.



Phil Steele, Director of Sport & Commercial Services, UEA.



Sportspark has long been recognised as a hugely important facility for Norwich, Norfolk and the wider sporting community. Since opening in 2000, the number of people that come through our doors to stay active, play sport and meet friends has steadily increased, and the range of activities that we are able to offer has never been wider.

Sportspark beautifully fills the sweetspot between the local community within which it sits and our campus users, helping the University deliver its Civic Charter, by building bridges that connect the life of the University with wider society, opening our campus to all.

But the Sportspark is more than just a building, more than the sum of its spaces. The role that sport and physical activity play in creating a vibrant, attractive and memorable experience for our students has long been appreciated, and we are at the forefront of efforts across the sector to demonstrate this, more of which you can read about over the coming pages. For us at the UEA, taking part in sport and physical activity means more than about winning or losing, it's about the friendships we make, the life skills it teaches and the resilience that it breeds.

We hope that whatever people's motivations for taking part in our community and student programmes, they are ultimately left healthier, happier and more prosperous because of their involvement.



Value of Sport

The benefits that regular participation in sport and physical activity have on the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals has been widely acknowledged for a long time.

The attractiveness of the uea+sport programmes to our students is clear, but there is growing recognition of the role that our programmes and facilities play across several key strategic themes important to the University.

Building on the 2020 British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Position Statement, UEA has been at the forefront of developing research into the value and impact of sport and physical activity programmes. Working alongside BUCS and a select group of institutions, UEA has supported the sector in this area. A strong and vibrant student sport programme can positively influence student recruitment, retention, and conversion to postgraduate study, contributing to the overall success of institutions.



Withdrawal rates of students engaged



Withdrawal of students not engaged



Conversion to PGT students engaged with uea+sport



Conversion to PGT other UEA students



Of engaged students received 2:1 or above



Of not engaged students received 2:1 or above



Active Campus



At the UEA, our award-winning Active Campus programme is a source of enormous pride, giving our students and staff the opportunity to take part in regular sport and physical activity at a level that is appropriate to anyone, regardless of levels of commitment or talent.


Our unique Ziggurat Challenge, which brings together staff and students from schools of study to compete against others, continues to go from strength to strength.

We have introduced Adventure Afternoons, where students are able to try activities such as tubing, paddle-boarding, raft-building and more. The Navigate Norfolk programme continues to take students, including many international ones, to some of our county's beauty spots for fresh air and exercise. We truly believe that we have something for everyone.



41.7%

of total student cohort engaged at least once

 39% in 22/23

11479

unique Moves users at year end, an increase of 2463 from 22/23

1152

Attendances at Volunteer Academy / CPD opportunities

1071

Total attendances at Ziggurat Challenge



Club Sport

3909

uea+sport memberships sold

21.3%

of total student cohort with uea+sport memberships


 19.5% in 22/23

4921

club subscriptions sold

26.8%

of total student cohort with club subscriptions

 25% in 22/23

10

Derby Day victories in a row



Our 56 sports clubs are the beating heart of our programme, offering opportunities for our students to not just participate and compete but to learn and to lead, across a huge variety of different sports and activities.

In 2023/24, over 21% of our total student cohort took out a uea+sport membership (the precursor to them joining a club) with 4921 individual club subscriptions then taken out, representing our best-ever set of results when considered against total student numbers.

733 individual students volunteered their time and energy in positions or responsibility within their clubs and other volunteering settings, helping our programmes run smoothly. Their efforts and successes were recognised at our annual Sports Awards, celebrating not only competitive success but the efforts of our clubs for their contributions to sustainability and the local community.

Performance Sport

In recent years, the University has developed its Performance Sport offering, and during 2023/24, we focused on consolidating this progress. This has positioned us well to enhance our reputation as a viable destination for athletes combining their studies with competing at the highest levels.

We continue to be supported by the University's Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing directorate through their funding of our scholarship programme, demonstrating our commitment to supporting talented student athletes.

We have further strengthened our involvement in Sport England's Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS), offering elite, non-student athletes the facilities and services to help them realise their potential and perform at the highest level.

52
Individual
scholars



39th
in BUCS league table

Amy Middlemas

Powerlifting Scholar
Norwich Medical School

I had such an incredible experience at the International University Sports Federation (FISU) World Championships. I didn't go in expecting much, with this being my first international competition and having been in the sport for just over a year. So finding out I pulled myself into 5th place with my final deadlift was very emotional for me. It was amazing to meet other athletes as passionate about this sport as I am, and I have definitely come away inspired to strive for more. I'm so grateful to have had this opportunity, which would not have been possible without the support offered by the scholarship.



Scholar testimonials

Patrick Croghan

Sailing Scholar
Norwich Medical School

UEA Sailing has been fantastic at progressing my sailing career. The club has allowed me to continue to race both nationally and internationally, constantly pushing me to develop as an athlete. The amount of support offered by the performance sport program has allowed me to compete at a high level whilst also balancing my University degree work.



Serena Grace

Athletics Scholar
Physical Education, Sport and Health

To be an elite sports scholar here at UEA, is a privilege. It feels great to be recognised for all hard work & dedication that I've put in over the years to achieve my full potential in my sporting career. Being a student athlete, places a huge demand on variety of factors, however, I am extremely lucky to have a strong support network on the programme, where I feel comfortable and confident to reach out. As an athlete, who has high aspirations over the upcoming years, the staff are incredibly supportive & really do want to see you succeed.

Connor Dudley

Rugby Scholar
Business MSC

The link between UEA and Walsham is brilliant and has made unbelievable progress over the past two years. Personally, it has supported my playing career by exposing me to a higher level of rugby during my time at university, making me a better rugby player. As a result of the professional outlook of North Walsham, this has filtered into university rugby in many different aspects; performance analysis, training facilities and standards and physio support. Performance analysis is something that I now lead at the University and is something I would like to continue and create a career path out of. I look forward to being part of the partnership for years to come and seeing it continue to develop.



Inspiring the local community

The Sportspark is of enormous importance to both our students and the community, being a landmark destination in Norfolk for many sports. Our 2023/24 trading results reflected a changing environment across the leisure industry and High Education institutions, further affected by a challenging financial landscape and a cost of living crisis.

Despite this, we retained our Quest 'Excellent' rating, demonstrating our team's commitment to high-quality service provision and meaningful interactions with our customers. The by-product of providing strong service and facility provision is strong financial performance; revenue broke the £5m mark for the first time and a 1.5% increase in participation brought us back within reach of pre-pandemic levels, hitting 1.35m visits.

Our Community Sports Development service continue to offer a wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in regular sport and physical activity. Our commitment to the local community was demonstrated by our involvement in the Holiday Activities Fund programme, offering 415 Holiday Club places to those on low incomes. Our Fitness in Later Life Programme offers a wide variety of activities to enable people to remain active and social, and in June we hosted 40 teams in our annual Business Games. We also supported the Norfolk Schools Games with sponsorship worth £10k, bringing children from all over Norfolk to compete at our fantastic facilities.

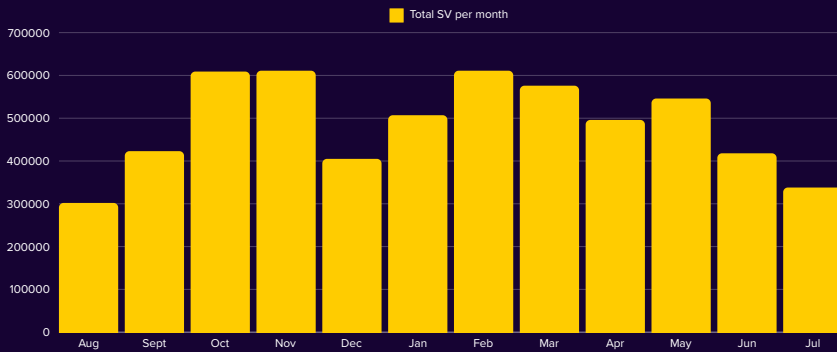
Sportspark records entries through the turnstiles on an annual basis. For 2023 this reached

1.35m

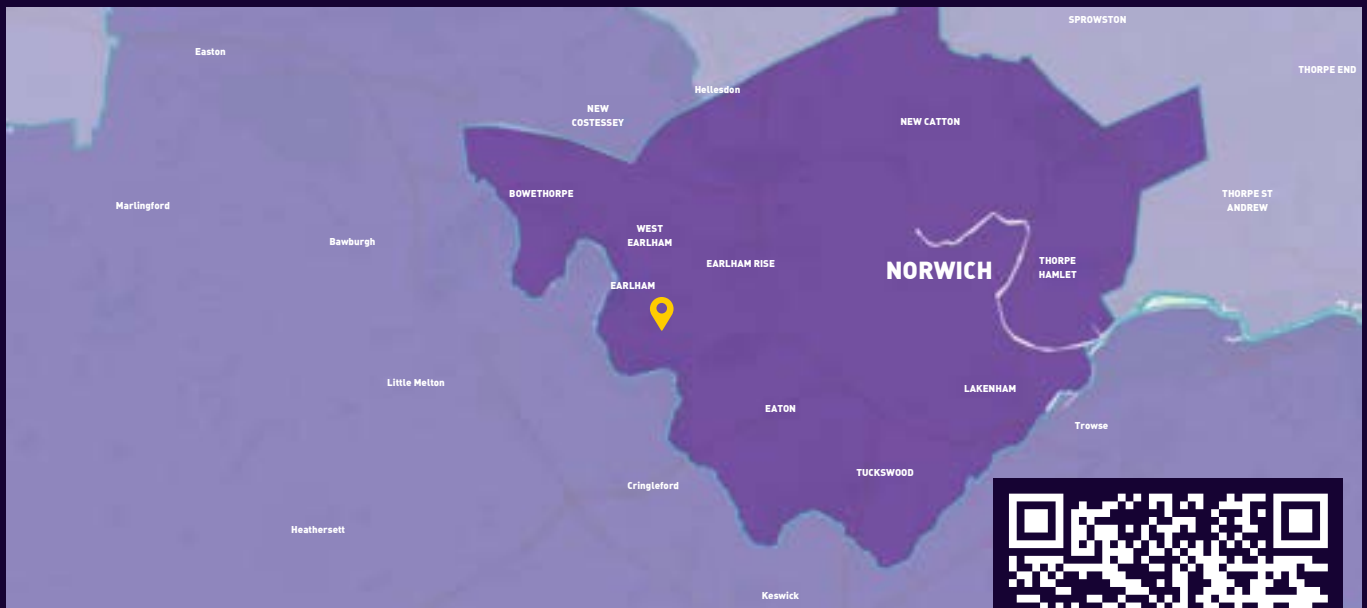


Inspiring the local community

We have also become one of only three universities in the UK to track the impact that we have on the local community, using DataHub's Social Value Calculator to estimate that the Sportspark and its services generate over £5.8m of value across the four domains of physical and mental health, subjective well-being, individual development and social & community development, highlighting the significant role that the Sportspark plays in the local community.



Total Social Value
£5.835m



Map view of social value generated.
Scan the QR code for the social value calculator.



Social media reach and impact

In July, uea+sport was awarded by British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) the Digital Engagement Award for our brilliant Derby Day, Women in Sport and Mental Wellbeing campaigns.



2024

**BUCS DIGITAL
ENGAGEMENT WINNERS**



Total reach

510,710

Impressions

3.9M



Partnerships

The relationships that we build is crucial to the success of our programme, and 2023/24 saw us strengthen and consolidate several key local partnerships with both sporting and non-sporting organisations.

In a sporting context, we are continuing to create pathways for talented athletes in rugby, women's football and swimming with relationships with North Walsham RFC, Norwich City Women FC and the City of Norwich Swimming Club respectively, who all provide bursaries to students that are competing in their settings as well as bolstering UEA sports clubs success.

We are also a delivery site for the Professional Game Match Officials Limited, helping to keep elite football officials in top shape, and this year we started to provide support to the Professional Footballers Association rehabilitation programme via our long-standing partnership with Game Changer Performance. A number of local clubs continue to call the Sportspark home, including the City of Norwich Athletics Club, City of Norwich Swimming Club, Norwich Spikers Volleyball Club, Norfolk United Netball Club and Norfolk Fencing Club, demonstrating our commitment to grassroots sport.

2023/24 also saw two prominent local businesses, Mills and Reeve and Harrod Sport International, reaffirm their support to the Norfolk Sports Academy programme, which delivers performance services to Norfolk's elite non-student athletes – we thank them for their commitment and ongoing support.

3 Externally-funded bursaries launched



MILLS & REEVE
Achieve more. Together.

 **Harrod Sport**
The original since 1954

The School of Education and Lifelong Learning

PE, Sport and Health placement outputs

As students from the PE, Sport and Health (PESH) cluster within the School of Education and Lifelong Learning (EDU) pass through their degree programmes, they have the option of undertaking modules in professional practice. We believe in the importance of experiential learning to develop real world competencies and knowledge. These professional practice placements put students within the local community, in a wide range of settings across the city, county and beyond.

uea+sport works closely with colleagues from EDU to help coordinate and monitor student placements through the employment of a Workforce Development Administrator who acts as a link between the university and the myriad of placement providers. Placement hours delivered have grown year-on-year since 2021/22 with 9042 hours undertaken by PESH students in 2023/34, equating to a cash value of at least £103,446, based on the prevailing National Living Wage at the time.

As well as providing hands-on experience for our students, we also have a hugely positive impact in the local sporting community, supporting the University's civic agenda. This commitment to graduate outcomes helped lift the UEA's PESH degrees to third in the 2024 Complete University Guide overall league table for Sports Science courses, and top for the Graduate Prospects metric, the culmination of many years of hard work from EDU staff.

2024 CUG

3rd

in Sports Science
Courses league
table

2024 CUG

1st

for graduate
prospects



9045

PESH hours

£103,446

cash value



Aspirations

Although 2023/24 was a fantastic year for our programmes, we don't want to rest on our laurels. We are ambitious and put simply, we want more people taking part in our sport and physical activity programme more often, making them happier, healthier and more prosperous.

From a student sport perspective, we wish to grow the overall engagement in our programmes as an overall proportion of total student cohort, which in 23/24 was 41.7%, with a target of 45% in 2024/25. We will also aim to increase the percentage of total student cohort that take up uea+sport membership (the precursor to them joining a sports club), from 21.3% to 23% in 2024/25 and growing the percentage of total student cohort with a club subscription to 28%, up from 26.8% in 2023.

If we are successful in achieving these ambitious targets, we hope to see improvements in the metrics that we measure as part of the Value of Sport work, which we will continue to undertake, with the evidence base for the impact that our programmes have on the areas of student recruitment, retention and conversion to post-graduate study at the UEA growing and strengthening.

The Sportspark will look to increase the footfall of people coming through our door, building on the 1.35m that did in 2023/24, as well as ensuring that we meet the financial targets that we have in place. Should we achieve both, we are targeting breaking the £6m mark in social value generated by our activity. Lastly, we very much intend to make it eleven Derby Day victories in a row.....





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Sportspark

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