



Junior Competitions 2026–27 – Club Consultation on U15 & U16 Structure

Dear Coaches, Club Administrators and Regional Team Managers,

As we approach planning for the 2026–27 junior competitions season, Volleyball England is beginning a formal consultation with clubs and coaches on the future structure of our U15 and U16 junior competitions.

This consultation follows a comprehensive review of junior competitions delivery over the 2025–26 season, covering participation, club capacity, venue availability, competition quality, player experience and long-term sustainability.

Why we are consulting

The 2025–26 season has shown that junior competitions are growing, well attended and highly valued, with:

- Strong overall participation and gender balance
- 8/10 High satisfaction from players, coaches and volunteers
- Strong national reach and engagement

At the same time, our data shows significant overlap between U15 and U16 participation, with clubs, volunteers and 45% (268 players) of players participating in both competitions during the same season. This has created duplication in delivery without always providing additional developmental benefit as seen in the first round of the U15 competition.

We are fully aware of the challenges many clubs have faced, particularly in relation to travel distances in Tier 1 and the impact this has had on participation and decision-making specifically in the U14, U15 and U16 tournaments. We recognise the financial, logistical and welfare considerations involved.

As a result, we are exploring how junior competition structures can be simplified, strengthened and made more sustainable, while protecting access, opportunity and quality for players and clubs.

What is being considered

For the 2026–27 season, Volleyball England is proposing to combine the U15 and U16 Tier 1 Grand Prix Series to become the U16 Tier 1 Grand Prix Series with five rounds of competition, this will achieve:

- Reducing duplicated competition entries for the same players
- Create stronger, better filled competition events
- More equally matched Grand Prix Pools improving the quality and value of competition weekends
- Growth of U16 competition from four to five Grand Prix Events
- Dedicated space in the calendar for an increase in more local and regional U14 4v4 development





This is not about reducing opportunity, but about creating a more sustainable and player-centred competition model that improves quality and aligns with national sport expectations.

What we want to hear from clubs and coaches

Your insight is essential to shaping the future of junior competitions.

To support this, we have prepared a set of infographics (Appendix 1 & 2) which outline the evidence, reasoning and proposed approach in clear terms

We are keen to understand:

- How current U15 and U16 structures work for your club
- The impact of competition duplication on players, coaches and volunteers
- Your views on the proposed direction for 2026–27
- Any different approaches to these issues that you would like to propose
- What success would look like for your club and players

How to provide feedback

As part of this consultation, we invite you to complete a Microsoft Form to share your views, experiences and suggestions. This consultation is designed to understand how competition structure supports (or limits) player development from a club/coaching perspective.

[Volleyball England Junior Grand Prix Consultation 2026 – Fill in form](#)

The form should take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete and will be open until:

Monday 1st June 2026.

All feedback will be reviewed carefully and will directly inform decision-making ahead of finalising junior competition structures for the 2026–27 season.

What happens next

- Feedback will be collated and reviewed alongside participation and delivery data
- Further updates will be shared with clubs as planning progresses
- Final decisions will be communicated clearly and in good time for the 2026–27 season

We are committed to working collaboratively with clubs, coaches and volunteers to ensure junior competitions continue to be competitive, enjoyable, meaningful and sustainable, while supporting player development at every stage.

Thank you for your continued commitment to junior volleyball and for taking the time to contribute to this consultation.

Kind regards,

Richard Williams





JUNIOR COMPETITIONS

2025-26: PROGRESS, GROWTH & FUTURE

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX



CLEAR PROGRESS AGAINST OUR OBJECTIVES. STRONGER PARTICIPATION. BETTER EXPERIENCES. GREATER VISIBILITY. A STRONGER FUTURE FOR JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL.



OUR OBJECTIVES



1. GROW
Participation while maintaining competition quality



2. OPERATE
at a sustainable club and volunteer capacity

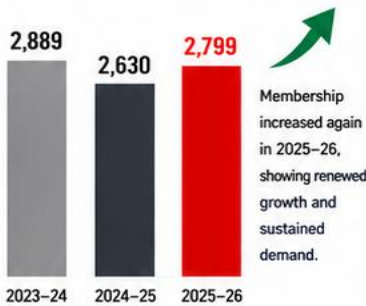


3. IMPROVE
visibility, communication and engagement with the junior game

1 PARTICIPATION & MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

OBJECTIVE MET

Junior membership trend



Gender balance



OBJECTIVE OUTCOME:
Participation has grown without destabilising competitions or club structures.

2 CLUB CAPACITY & COMPETITION SUSTAINABILITY

OBJECTIVE MET

Number of clubs engaged nationally



While total club numbers have reduced, player demand has increased, resulting in:

- Higher player numbers per club
- Fewer under-capacity events
- More stable and predictable competition delivery

Tier 1 competition coverage



OBJECTIVE OUTCOME:
The programme is operating at a more sustainable club, venue, and workforce capacity.

3 VISIBILITY & DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE EXCEEDED

A major focus was increasing the visibility of junior competitions, particularly U18 Super Series and Inter-Regional Championships.

SUPER SERIES & IRC DIGITAL REACH (END APRIL 2026 SNAPSHOT)

Across Instagram, Facebook and YouTube livestreams

Competition	Instagram Views	Facebook Views	YouTube Views
SUPER SERIES GP #3 (DEC)	535.9k	107.5k	6k
SUPER SERIES GP #4 (FEB)	343.8k	152.1k	6k
SUPER SERIES GP #5 (MAR)	214.9k	62.7k	9k
INTERREGIONALS (MAY 25)	602.3k	478.8k	48k

Average watch time over 6 minutes

OBJECTIVE OUTCOME:
Visibility and engagement targets have been substantially exceeded.

4 QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE & SATISFACTION

OBJECTIVE MET

Junior competition satisfaction



OVERALL SATISFACTION

KEY STRENGTHS

Pre-competition organisation	8.1/10
Venue organisers	8.1/10
Venue quality	7.6/10

IDENTIFIED IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Website ease of use	6.8/10
Results tables & pools information	-7.0/10

OBJECTIVE OUTCOME:
We have maintained a strong athlete, parent, and club experience while managing growth.

THE BIG PICTURE: A STRONGER JUNIOR GAME



THANK YOU TO OUR CLUBS, PLAYERS, COACHES, VOLUNTEERS & PARENTS



TOGETHER, WE'RE GROWING THE GAME AND BUILDING THE FUTURE OF VOLLEYBALL IN ENGLAND.

Appendix 2 - Junior Grand Prix Proposed Plans 26-27



Building on the success of 2025-26, we are proposing evolving our competition structure to better support players, clubs, and the wider volleyball community.

5 UNDERSTANDING THE U15-U16 OVERLAP

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX PARTICIPATION PROFILE

2,799

JUNIOR COMPETITION-AFFILIATED MEMBERS

- High crossover between U15 and U16 competitions
- Many players entered into both competitions within the same season

OPERATIONAL IMPACT

- Repeated admin for the same players
- Duplication for clubs, organisers and officials
- Additional time and cost pressures with limited developmental difference



OVER 50%
OF U15 PLAYERS
COMPETED IN U16
COMPETITIONS
IN 2025-26

We are currently serving largely the same cohort twice.

REDUCED TRAVEL FOR TEAMS OUTSIDE OF THEIR REGIONS

- Moving to a single U16 competition will reduce the need for developing younger teams to travel out of their region to compete, lowering costs and time commitments for clubs and families.

6 THE CASE FOR MOVING TO A SINGLE U16 COMPETITION

EVIDENCE-LED RATIONALE

- Strong U16 participation numbers
- Significant U15/U16 cohort overlap
- Stable overall membership growth
- Clubs already operating at sustainable capacity
- Reducing weekend expectations to relieve coaches and volunteers to support 4v4 development in local communities

EXPECTED BENEFITS

- Clearer player pathway
- Reduced duplication for families and clubs
- Freed-up workforce capacity
- Greater focus on coaching, officiating and player development
- Reduced travel and costs for teams through more regionalised competitions



THE DATA NOW SUPPORTS A MOVE FROM U15 + U16 TO A SINGLE U16 COMPETITION MODEL.

OUR PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE



U16 TIER 1 FOR ADVANCED PLAYERS

A single, national Tier 1 competition for all U16 players (current U16 & U15 playing at advanced level).



U16 TIER 2 FOR DEVELOPING PLAYERS

A Tier 2 competition for developing U16 and U15 teams, focused on growth, learning and progression.

Tier 2 competitions will be more regionalised on a per Grand Prix basis – reducing costs and giving teams a better experience.

7 PROPOSED STRATEGIC TARGETS FOR 2026-27



TARGET 1 OPTIMISE THE COMPETITION STRUCTURE

- Successfully transition to a single U16 competition
- Maintain overall junior participation levels
- Improve quality, clarity and efficiency of the player pathway



SIMPLER STRUCTURE.
STRONGER PLAYER EXPERIENCE.
BETTER DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES.



TARGET 2 DEEPEN CLUB SUSTAINABILITY

- Consolidate club numbers while increasing player retention
- Support clubs to host higher-quality, consistently delivered events
- Reduce organiser and volunteer workload through smarter structures



SUSTAINABLE CLUBS.
EMPOWERED WORKFORCE.
STRONGER VOLLEYBALL COMMUNITY.



TARGET 3 GROW DIGITAL & AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

- Increase YouTube livestream viewers for all Junior Grand Prix events
- Improve average watch time and repeat viewing
- Use digital platforms to promote clubs, players and progression routes



BIGGER REACH.
MORE ENGAGEMENT.
MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.

8 SUMMARY: A STRONG FOUNDATION, READY TO EVOLVE



PARTICIPATION HAS GROWN



CAPACITY IS SUSTAINABLE



SATISFACTION REMAINS HIGH



VISIBILITY HAS EXPANDED SIGNIFICANTLY



THE SYSTEM IS READY TO EVOLVE



25-26 has delivered strongly against its objectives and positioned junior competitions for a clear, focused next phase in 2026-27.

TOGETHER, WE CONTINUE TO GROW THE GAME AND BUILD THE FUTURE OF VOLLEYBALL IN ENGLAND.



ONE GAME. ONE COMMUNITY. ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES.