

Go Vikings!

An Officially Incomplete History of

Handball in Newcastle and North East England



2021 Edition

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club

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The Vikings Vault - Scrapbook Archive

Catalogue of Press and Newspaper Articles from the 1960s to the Present
(published separately)

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A Short History of Handball

The fantastically fun and fast-paced, action-packed sport of team handball has its modern roots in late 19th century northern Europe, primarily in Scandinavia and Germany where it is thought to have developed as a way to help keep footballers fit during the off-season.

Handball's origins nevertheless go back a long way, with early variations of the game believed to date from ancient Greek and Roman times. Ball-throwing games called *urania* and *cheirosphaira* were played by the ancient Greeks, while the Romans played games of *expulsim ludere* and *harpaston* which involved



throwing a ball over a line. Games not unlike handball were also thought to be played by the Inuit people of Greenland, while drawings of Egyptian girls in pairs playing a form of handball decorate five-thousand year old tombs at Saqqara in ancient Egypt. Handball players are also depicted on pieces of pottery, in sculpture and on wall paintings found at archaeological sites in Mexico and Central America.

During the Medieval period, Germans developed the 'catch ball game' of *fussballspiel*, while a 'palm play' game known as *jeux de paume* was popular in Middle Ages' France (although this was probably more similar to what developed over time into tennis). By the 19th century, forms of handball were played across Europe, including Danish *håndbold*, German *torball*, Ukranian *gandbol*, Czech *házená* and Slovakian *hádzaná*.

Denmark is widely recognised as the birthplace of modern team handball, where the rules for handball were first drawn up by gym teacher Holger Nielsen in 1889. Fellow Dane Rasmus Nicolai also drew up similar rules in 1897. Germans Max Heiser, Karl Schelenz and Erich Konigh then published revised rules in October 1917. Further amended and improved by Schelenz, these adjusted rules were used for the first international men's field handball game between Germany and Belgium in 1925.



Photo is of Holger Nielsen
originator of Handball Rules

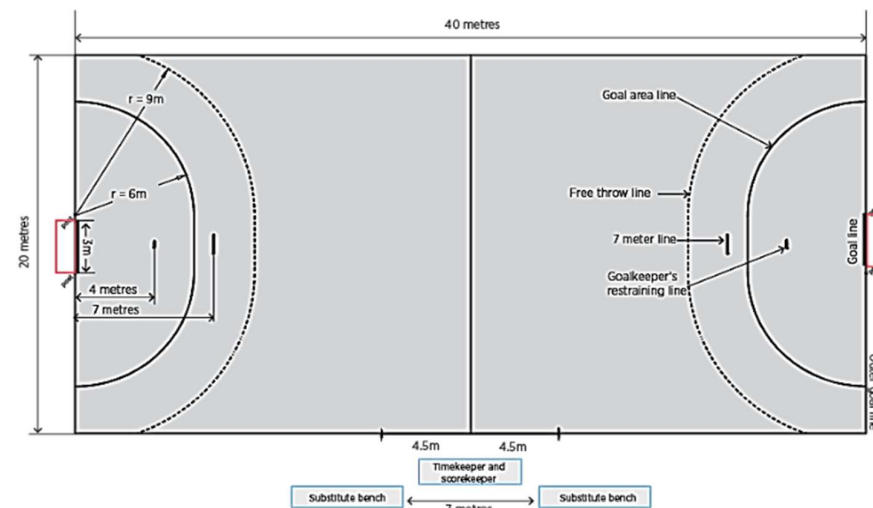
The Federation Internationale Handball Amateur was established to govern the sport on 4 August 1928, set up in Amsterdam, Holland. The first women's international match took place in 1930 between Germany and Austria.

Field handball, played as an 11-a-side outdoor sport on grass football pitches, was showcased at Germany's 1936 Olympics where six men's teams competed at the summer Games of the XI Olympiad in Berlin. The only other time field handball featured in an Olympic Games was in Helsinki, Finland, in 1952, again as a demonstration sport.



German Handball team in 1936 Olympics

Handball as we know it today emerged in Scandinavia, where it was scaled down to a 7-a-side indoor game to escape the cold wintry weather and proved to be increasingly popular. Played on a 40m x 20m court with 3m-wide goals at either end, indoor handball features two teams of seven players (goalkeeper plus six outfield players) from match squads of up to 14 players.



The International Amateur Handball Federation celebrated its 10-year anniversary by holding inaugural men's indoor and field handball World Championships in 1938, with hosts Germany winning both the winter and summer competitions.

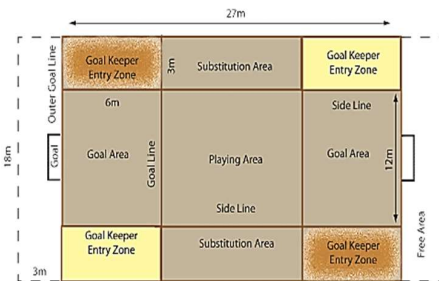
Following a hiatus due to World War II, Denmark and Sweden initiated establishing the International Handball Federation (IHF) as the sport's new governing body, founded on 12 July 1946 in Copenhagen. The other founding members were Finland, France, Holland, Norway, Poland and Switzerland. Sweden defeated Denmark in the first international match under the new Federation's auspices. Absent at the IHF's launch, Germany became birthplace of the European Handball Federation (EHF) later in November 1991 in Berlin.

Both field and indoor forms of the game were played at separate World Championships between 1938 and 1966, with the first women's indoor handball World Championship taking place in Yugoslavia in 1957. The initial dominance of the Scandinavian and Germanic nations was soon challenged by the Eastern European countries as the likes of the Soviet Union, Romania, Yugoslavia, East Germany and Hungary became increasingly competitive.

Handball re-emerged onto the world stage when men's indoor handball first became an Olympic sport at the 1972 Games of the XX Olympiad in Munich, Germany. Yugoslavia were victorious in a 16-team competition. Women's handball then joined the Olympic fold at the next 1976 Games of the XXI Olympiad in Montreal, Canada, when the Soviet Union won both the 11-team men's event and the inaugural 6-team women's tournament. Both men's and women's indoor handball have featured with increasing popularity at every Olympic Games since.



Since 1995 the handball world championships have taken place every two years, with several north African, Asian and South American countries gradually starting to challenge the traditional dominance of continental Europe.



A new outdoor version of the game emerged in 1994 in Holland. Beach handball is played as a 4-a-side sport on a smaller 27m x 12m court. Also known as 'sandball', it debuted as a demonstration sport at the 2001 World Games in Akita Japan, gaining full status in 2013 in Cali, Columbia.

Handball's Emergence in Great Britain

The earliest evidence of handball being played in Britain dates back to the time of World War II, when British Pathé footage from 19 June 1944 records an exhibition 11-a-side 'Norwegian handball' match played in London's Hyde Park between netball ladies of the Royal Canadian Air Force and their counterparts of the Royal Norwegian Air Force. Described as a mixture of volleyball and football, the Norwegians won 2-0.



An IHF-recognised Hull Handball League is recorded as playing 11-a-side field handball between 1958-62. The league's organiser Dr L M Seewald was also the author of *Continental Handball: Official International Rules* published in 1958. A first representative Great Britain field handball side lost to Holland on 28 June 1959 at the Costello Stadium in West Hull, followed by matches taking place against Germany and in Freiburg in 1960.



Great Britain team v Freiburg, August 1960

7-a-side handball emerged through universities and colleges in Scotland and North East England in the mid/late 1960s, with a British Universities Handball Championships reported as taking place at Glasgow's Strathclyde University in late 1966 and then at Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University in February 1967.



The British Handball Association (BHA) was founded in Liverpool in 1968 by teachers Jeff Rowland, Chris Powell, Phil Holden and Andy Smith, supported by local sports shop proprietor Ken Watson. Head of sports at the city's Cardinal Allen Grammar School, Rowland had been introduced to handball by young West German trainee teacher Wolf Schneggenburger in 1967, and together they had introduced the sport to the school's pupils. Having quickly initiated the founding of the BHA with his four friends, Rowland soon organised the first unofficial national 7-a-side handball match between representative teams of Great Britain and West Germany on 22 June 1968 at the St. Bonaventures School Fields in Liverpool, the experienced German students winning the game by a big margin.





Great Britain was soon accepted into membership of the International Handball Federation at the end of August 1968, and played their first official international indoor team handball match later that year, suffering a 13-27 defeat to Italy at Edge Hill College in Ormskirk, Lancashire. BHA chairman B J Rowland subsequently published the first book on handball in Britain, entitled *Handball: A Complete Guide*, in June 1970, shortly before the British Handball Association become a full IHF member on 18 September 1970 and soon formed the first Great Britain team. In recognition of its contribution to the development of handball in the country, the IHF awarded the British Handball Association as the first recipients of the Federation's Hans Bauman trophy in 1972.

Great Britain & Northern Ireland competed in the men's Olympic qualification tournament for the first time in Spain between 15-25 March 1972. However, the British team lost heavily 40-5 to the Spaniards, 37-2 to Switzerland and 37-12 against Luxembourg in the preliminary round, before being beaten 31-1 by Belgium and 23-13 by Italy in the main round to finish 16th and last of the European nations.



The Scottish Handball Association (SHA) was formed in August 1972, with the first women's game in the UK being played that year between East Kilbride and Hamilton's Bell College. Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University meanwhile won the inaugural 1972 men's British National Handball League Championships. The English National League began in 1976/77 under the auspices of the England Handball Association (EHA). Merseyside's Birkenhead became the first men's league champions, claiming a league and cup double by also winning the inaugural British Cup in 1977.



The first British handball victory at senior international level came in defeating the Faroe Islands 21-19 in Rovereto during the February 1984 men's World Championships in Italy, where they finished 10th out of the 12 teams.



The England and Scottish Handball Associations, together with Canada, Kenya, Pakistan and Nigeria, were instrumental in setting up the Commonwealth Handball Association (CHA) in 1985 in Salford, with an aim to try to get handball into the Commonwealth Games.

The British Handball Association was later an early member of the European Handball Federation in November 1991, although England and Scotland became separate affiliated EHF member nations in 2004, only to re-unify for international competition purposes under the British Handball Association banner in June 2012, just ahead of the London 2012 Olympic Games.



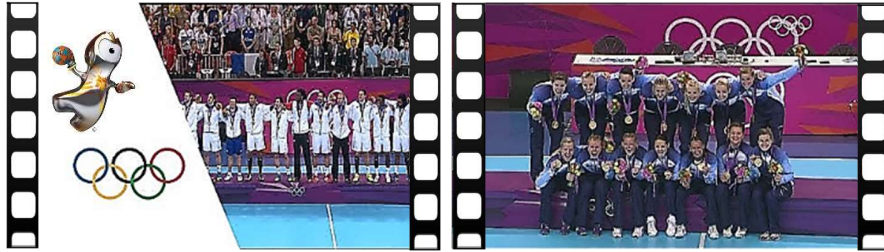
While national television sports programmes had featured brief highlights of Great Britain handball matches in the 1970s, handball's popularity only really rose to national recognition in the UK when the Games of the XXX Olympiad came to London in summer 2012. As hosts, Team GB were automatically able to enter teams in both the men's and women's 12-team competitions, held at the new Copper Box Arena in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.



Team GB made their Olympic handball debut on 28 July 2012 when the women's team lost 19-31 to Montenegro, before also losing 16-37 to Russia, 17-30 to Brazil, 25-31 to Angola and 14-37 to Croatia, while Norway won gold. Great Britain's men lost their opening game on 29 July 44-15 to eventual gold medallists France, before also losing 19-41 to Sweden, 21-32 to Argentina, 34-17 to Tunisia and 41-24 against Iceland.



London 2012 Olympic Games Handball Gold Medal Men's and Women's Matches
 – Men: Sweden v France / Women: Norway v Montenegro



Despite the Great Britain handball teams both losing all of their Olympic Games group matches, the sport had received a huge boost of interest. However, the loss of UK Sport funding for handball after London 2012 caused the Great Britain handball teams to be dissolved, before being eventually revived in 2016.



The first British Beach Handball Championships were held in August 2013 at Branksome Chine Beach in Poole, Dorset, with

London GD men and London Angels women becoming the first champions. The tournament became part of the EHF's European Beach Handball Tour in 2016.



North East England's Early Handball Heyday



The University of Newcastle's archives of its weekly Students' Union newspaper, *The Courier*, show that North East England was at the forefront of the emergence of British handball in the late 1960s. Despite the game struggling to get properly introduced in the university, and evidently hindered by competition from other more traditional sports and the availability of the Lightfoot Sports Centre training base, Newcastle University were one of the country's top handball teams of the late 60s and early 70s, with Sunderland and Teesside also featuring prominently too.

Reports show that one of the major aims of the Newcastle University Handball Club was the introduction of the sport of handball to England. It was introduced



to the university in 1966 by a group of Norwegian students, and within a year the club boasted around 40 players with 1st, 2nd and potentially 3rd teams. It was a recognised member of the university's Athletic Union as well as of the British and English Amateur Handball Association.

Success came quickly as Newcastle's all-Norwegian men's team became handball champions of the British Universities at the first attempt in the final term of 1966 up in Scotland at

Glasgow's Strathclyde University. Newcastle opened the five-team tournament with an 8-4 victory over Heriot-Watt University, before beating home side Strathclyde University 10-6, then Glasgow University 15-6 and finally Sunderland Technical College 6-3. The seven jubilant players returning unbeaten with the large silver Heriot-Watt Trophy cup were Knut Waagenes, Lars Fossum, Esben Poulsen, Harald Harung, Dag Nilson, Stuvus Eidsgaard and Geir Eidsgaard.



Ten Newcastle University players went up to Edinburgh for the next contest over the weekend of 18-19 February 1967. That tournament saw seven teams playing outdoors on two tarmac tennis courts, so the players had a rather rough time. Newcastle nevertheless successfully defended their trophy, despite Esben Poulson fracturing his right foot in the game against Strathclyde.



The University Handball Club had another very good record in the 1967/68 season. The British Universities Championship was this year held at Newcastle's Lightfoot Sports Centre for the first time on 2-3 March 1968. The reigning champions went into the six-team tournament as joint favourites to win the Handball Challenge Cup alongside Sunderland Technical College. Newcastle gained close-fought 9-7 victories over Glasgow University, Heriot-Watt

University and Queen's University Belfast, before putting on their best performance of the first day to beat a Sunderland side that had also won their first three matches but with a better goal average. With the cup more-or-less won, the home side confirmed their strong position on the second day in thrashing Strathclyde



	P	W	D	L	Pts
1 Newcastle U.	5	5	0	0	10
2 Sid. Tech. Col.	5	4	0	1	8
3 Q's Un., Bifst.	5	3	0	2	6
4 Heriot Watt U	5	2	0	3	4
5 Strathclyde U.	5	1	0	4	2
6 Glasgow Uni.	5	0	0	5	0

University 16-1, while Sunderland came through to beat Queen's University Belfast 7-5 and pip them to 2nd place in the tournament.

Having won nine of their 11 matches and retained their British Universities Championship title, that season culminated on 13 March 1968 with Newcastle coming from behind in the final minutes of a local derby match to claim a 27-25 victory over Sunderland Technical College. Newcastle University handball team members that year are recorded as including goalkeeper S Torp, S Eidesgaard, F Aschim, K Vaagnes and H Harung.

Despite the loss of three of their best players for the next season, Newcastle had a surprisingly successful and promising inter-University Championships weekend at Strathclyde University on 9-10 November 1968. Newcastle lost their opening match 13-10 to a strong Belfast side, before easily winning 16-10 against Heriot-Watt II, and then showing their fighting spirit on the second day to claim a 15-12 victory over Strathclyde and then thrash Glasgow 22-7 in their last match. Newcastle's players were captain Sturis Eidsgaard, Knut Vagnes, Dag Nilsen, Nils Arne Ottesen, Tor Ovrevik, Truls Jahnsen, Robert Jorgensen, Kjell Svendsen and Bjarte Svenheim. Sunderland had meanwhile lost out to eventual tournament winners Heriot-Watt I in the other group of the eight-team tournament.

Final results:

1. Newcastle I.
2. Heriot Watt I.
3. Sunderland I.
4. Newcastle II.
5. Strathclyde.
6. Heriot Watt II.
7. Sunderland II.
8. Queens, Belfast.

Glasgow were expecting to host the official British University Championships the next term, but it turned out to be a disappointingly quiet one. Newcastle University nevertheless rounded off the term by once again winning the local derby fixture on 15 March 1969. After a slow start gave Sunderland Technical College a 5-7 half-time lead, Newcastle showed their superiority in the second half with some high speed plays matched with good technique, including good goalkeeping, safe defence, brilliant wing play and startling jump-shots, to round the term off with a convincing 22-14 win. Newcastle's players were recorded as goalkeeper Creon Olav Ottesen, captain Sturis Eidsgaard, Svein Jacobsen, Truls Jahnsen, Robert Jorgensen, Dag Nilsen, Peter Smedvig, Per Straumen and Tron Ourevik.

The following season saw Newcastle University Handball Club travel up to Edinburgh again for a successful start at the annual handball weekend tournament on 18-19 October 1969. Having won all of their three group matches and beating Belfast's Queens University 9-4 in their semi-final, Newcastle's only defeat came in the final of the eight-team competition, losing 5-9 to Heriot-Watt University. The Newcastle team were Byorn Alveburg, Lars Grosted, Geir O Ottesen, Peter Smedvig, Tor Ovrevik, Sturla Eidsgaard and new German players Jochen Thomma and Gunjen Kalbacher.

By the early 1970s both Newcastle's and Sunderland's student handball clubs had grown enough to each enter two men's teams for Heriot-Watt University's

Challenge Cup weekend in Edinburgh on 13-14 November 1971. The participating teams came from all of the British universities and colleges where handball was practiced – Newcastle, Sunderland, Heriot-Watt, Strathclyde and Queens Belfast. Both Newcastle teams successfully came through their groups to qualify for the semi-finals, along with Sunderland I. However, the two Newcastle sides were drawn against each other in the first semi-final, Newcastle I beating their compatriots to reach the final once again, while Heriot-Watt I beat Sunderland I in the other semi-final. Newcastle I then played their best match in the final for a 14-11 victory against perennial cup holders and pre-tournament favourites Heriot-Watt I. Sunderland I beat Newcastle II in the fight for 3rd and 4th places, while Sunderland II came 7th in the eight-team competition.

Newcastle played an exhibition match against Teesside Fliers Handball Club at the city's Lightfoot Sports Centre on 31 January 1972, as part of a handball lecture-demonstration by the Fliers' Colin Gerrard who was also Senior Area Coach of the British Handball Association and captain of the Great Britain squad

GRAN BRETAÑA					
Nombre y apellido	Club	Edad	Altura	Peso	Número de veces Internac.
PORTEROS:					
Raymond P. CLARNE	ST. ANDREWS HC	19	1,79	72	3
James Mc. DOUGALL	STRATHCLYDE UNIVERSITY HC	24	1,85	75	—
JUGADORES DE CAMPO:					
Stephen E. CARROLL	HUYTON HC	18	1,85	89	3
John DAVIES	ST. ANDREWS HC	25	1,75	76	4
Francis G. DENSAMORE	ST. ANDREWS HC	17	1,72	66	—
Colin GERRARD	TEESSIDE FLIERS	24	1,73	70	3
Norman HEINER	BIRKDALE SOUTHPORT HC	26	1,78	76	—
John C. JACOBSON	ST. ANDREWS HC	18	1,84	77	3
Robert J. KAY	TEESSIDE FLIERS	25	1,82	79	—
David MILLS	TEESSIDE FLIERS	25	1,83	71	—
Eric PEARSON	TEESSIDE FLIERS	23	1,91	92	—
Bernard J. ROWLAND	BIRKDALE SOUTHPORT HC	31	1,75	68	3
Michael J. VRIERS	C.F. MOTT COLLEGE HC	29	1,75	77	3
Thomas COWLEY	TEESSIDE FLIERS	24	1,76	68	—
Stanley MORNE	HUYTON HC	17	1,78	73	—
Sieven WILLIAMS	AJAX COPENHAGUEN	21	1,75	73	—



preparing to compete in the forthcoming Olympic Games qualification event. Gerrard would be one of five Teesside Fliers players, along with Robert J Kay, David Mills, Eric Pearson and Thomas Cowley, who were selected to form the core of the first Great Britain men's team to travel to Spain to compete in the 16-nation European qualification tournament for the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, which took place in Spain during March that year. The British team were, however, heavily beaten in all five of their matches, finishing in last place.



Meanwhile, the University Handball Club again proved its quality in their own Geordie Cup tournament at Walker's iconic domed Lightfoot Sports Centre on 12-13 February 1972. The competition saw two Newcastle teams take on Great Britain A and B teams, alongside Heriot-Watt University and local rivals Sunderland Polytechnic. After beating Sunderland 14-7 and the Great Britain B team 9-7 on the Saturday, Newcastle's A team played their best match of the season to also dispose of Great Britain's A team 10-6 in Sunday's semi-final. In the final, facing

Heriot-Watt University, they then staged a tremendous comeback to score two late goals in the final minute to win the tournament. Meanwhile, Newcastle University's B team also showed their strength by beating Sunderland 8-7 in the play-off for 5th place.

Sunderland, however, got the upper hand over their local rivals the following season, defeating them 5-6 in the December 1972 Edinburgh tournament.

The following year's Geordie Cup tournament on 24-25 February 1973 saw only four of the seven invited teams show up to take on the reigning champions at the Lightfoot Sports Centre – Sunderland, Teesside Flyers, Heriot-Watt University and Essex club Brentwood. Newcastle University's team of mainly Norwegian, French and German students quickly made up for their recent derby loss with a 6-4 victory over Sunderland in the opening match. They then went on to beat Teesside 10-5, draw 5-5 with Brentwood and fight back from 0-4 down to defeat Heriot-Watt 5-4 to top the group just above the Wearsiders. Sunderland faced Heriot-Watt in the first semi-final, but despite having beaten them 7-4 in the group matches they lost out 4-6. Teesside had beaten Brentwood 9-7 to progress to the other semi-final against Newcastle, but once again lost to the hosts 11-5. Sunderland then defeated the Flyers 12-9 in the match for 3rd place, before Heriot-Watt (recently crowned winners of the inaugural British National Handball Championships) beat a tiring and somewhat unlucky Newcastle team 5-15 in the cup final.

Final table :

1. Heriot Watt
2. Newcastle
3. Sunderland
4. Teesside Flyers
5. Brentwood

Newcastle University's handball team travelled to London over the weekend of 17-18 November 1973 to compete in the National Handball Championships at Edmonton's Picketts Lock Centre. They gained a 6-6 draw with Brentwood in their first match, before winning 9-8 against Heriot-Watt University. Eventual champions Brentwood took an undisputed lead on the Sunday, but Newcastle picked up the 2-2 draw they needed in their final game against Merseyside's Huyton to take 2nd place in the six-team tournament on goal average.

After finishing runners-up at the British Championships, Newcastle University was once again successful a few weeks later in the Heriot-Watt University Challenge Cup tournament in Edinburgh on 1-2 December 1973. The 10 competing teams played in two pools of five, with Newcastle playing against Heriot-Watt University, Glasgow's Bellahouston, Strathclyde and Sunderland. They only lost one game against Bellahouston in winning group B, before managing to beat the group A 2nd-placed team Wolverhampton in the semi-finals. In the final against East Kilbride, Newcastle raced into a 6-1 half-time lead before ending up with a 10-8 win. The victory ensured they kept the cup for a fourth time and once again confirmed Newcastle University as one of the best handball teams in the county.

Handball News, the then official journal of the British Handball Association, reports that in February 1974, the North East Open tournament in Newcastle was won by Merseyside team Birkenhead, a title which they retained a year later in February 1975. Former Great Britain player, coach and England Handball Association Performance Director, Mick Hegarty, recalls his old team Halewood Forum, the forerunner of Liverpool Handball Club, also playing in Newcastle's annual Geordie Cup tournament at the Lightfoot Sports Centre in 1975. Hegarty reminisced that back in the mid-1970s Newcastle University had a fantastic team of Norwegian students using a 'magic' resin stuff that made the ball stick to their hands. He recalls that both Newcastle University and Sunderland had teams playing in the 1974 British National Handball Championships tournament held at the Bletchley Leisure Centre in Milton Keynes, where Newcastle lost in the final to a Birkenhead team who were then coached by former Great Britain international and England Handball Association chairman Mike Briers. That defeat saw Newcastle University just miss out on European competition as the Merseysiders took the honour of going on to play in the old European Cup.

Twenty years later, Newcastle University entered both men's and women's teams at the first revival British Student Handball Championships at Nottingham University on 5 March 1995. The men beat Northampton's Nene College 7-3 before drawing against both Staffordshire's Keele University and Loughborough University, but hosts Nottingham University just won the trophy on goal difference. However, two big wins for Newcastle's women, 10-2 against a combined Nottingham/Nene side and 11-2 against Loughborough, meant that despite losing 2-5 to Keele in their last match they had done enough to win the championships overall, becoming the first women's British university handball champions. Newcastle's all non-British men's team were B Ribesen, R I Jonassen, K Vassbotn, P O Baalerud, S Langsethagen, K Knutsen, K Fersum and T Holst, while the victorious women's team were E. Sjoelie, R Mardalen, C Clark, L Skughei, J Risa, M Anderson, E Bakken, K Gronvold and M Rekvik. Organiser Colin Wills (who had set up Nottingham University's handball club a few years earlier) recalls that Newcastle's men had gone into this revival competition as the reigning British University title holders (from back in the 1970s), and continued to do really well in the subsequent year's championships as well as they had mostly Scandinavian players who knew what to do. He adds that they probably still have the trophy somewhere!

Braves New World for North Tyneside Juniors

The Killingworth Braves Handball Club, also sometimes known as the Newcastle Braves, was formed in 1997 by school teacher and scout leader Dave Clay, whose interest in the sport developed after seeing handball played while on holiday in Poland. Based at the Killingworth Leisure Centre in North Tyneside, on the outskirts of Newcastle, the Braves were a junior club with under-16 and under-12 boys teams, the majority of whom were school friends from the local George Stephenson High School.



While only running for a few years, the Killingworth Braves teams competed in several junior handball tournaments across the country, including in Leeds, Ashford in Kent, and at the Isle of Man Handball Festival in both 1998 and 2000.



Most notably, in 1998 they became the first junior English handball team to compete abroad when they travelled to play in a 7-team junior tournament in

Szczecin in north-west Poland. While they returned winless, former player Chris Bowe recalls they only narrowly lost one of their matches against a strong Polish club team after frustrating them with a tactic of man-marking their best player out of the game. Killingworth Braves youngsters Ross McNaughton and Bowe would later also go on to become original members and the first men's team captains of Newcastle Vikings Handball Club in 2012/13.

The late 1990s also saw Clay seek to form a spin-off junior handball club in the Walker suburb of Newcastle. Walker Warriors took their name from the Wharrier Street address of their Lightfoot Sports Centre base.



Greater success came with another revival of handball in North Tyneside in the mid-2000s, again at the junior level of the game with Dave Clay once again at the forefront. Coached by Clay and colleague Tom Robertson, Monkseaton Middle School formed boys and girls handball teams in 2003 to play in the Scottish under-12 and under-14 junior leagues. Their debut 2003/04 season began with some heavy defeats before rallying to gain victories over Cumbernauld side Tryst and Edinburgh's Gracemount High School. The U12 team finished fourth in their four-team league while the U14s finished third out of five teams in their league. They were then invited to attend an end-of-season international *Focus Europe* handball event in Sligo, Ireland, where three teams competed against Irish and German opposition. Monkseaton's boys finished 8th and 9th out of 11 teams in the boys competition, while a joint Monkseaton/Solingen squad took the girls title after going undefeated in their eight games.

They were joined by Whitley Bay and Monkseaton High schools for the following season to form Monkseaton Handball Club. While their older squad played in the English junior event, the newly-formed under-12 squad suffered only one defeat all season on their way to winning the U12 2004/05 Scottish league title. They then went on to beat Gracemount High School again in the U12 Scottish Cup final at the Tryst Sports Centre in Cumbernauld. The match finished 9-9 and then 12-12 after extra time, before Monkseaton captain Jonathan Armstrong scored the cup-winning golden goal decider. The victorious North Tyneside squad were represented by Jonathan Armstrong, Seraosha Ferozepurwalla, Jack Gibson, Ryan Carr, James Gray, Jamie Hansford,

Scott Latimer, Robert Bray, Kieran Graham, Aman Majid, Ryan Brooke, Christopher Wilson, Steven Borg and Robbie Chedburn.

The Monkseaton Handball Club's junior teams again challenged for the Scottish U14 and U16 league titles the following season. A friendly match against a



Belgian under-16 team however saw them lose heavily while scoring only one goal. But with the departure of their coaches in 2006 – Clay going on to coach Bedford Hawks while Robertson went on to coach Cheshire-based Deva Handball Club – the impetus for handball in the North East died away.

North Shields-based Northumbria University graduate Steve Swinyard nevertheless established *Access Coaching* in 2007 in partnership with friend James Carron. Both qualified handball coaches, the North Tyneside-based sports coaching provider became the first company in the North East able to deliver handball coaching to school children as part of a multi-sports package aimed at developing more diversity in sports in the region.

The Pre-Olympics University Revival



Newcastle University's handball club was revived in September 2011 by school-friends Mark Harrison and Jack McKay.

Northumberland-born Harrison had been playing handball for Loughborough University the previous season and had represented Great Britain Students before returning to the North East to study at Northumbria University, while McKay was at Newcastle University. Supported by the University Students' Union's popular *Go Play* initiative aimed at encouraging students to try new sports, they ran weekly mixed training sessions and developed a competitive team. McKay took on the role of club President while Harrison became coach due to being unable to represent Newcastle University in a playing capacity.



The largely beginner men's team showed great potential in their debut competitive showing at the newly-formed Association of British University Handball Clubs' (ABUHC) first University Handball Championships, held in Manchester on 25-26 February 2012. The multi-cultural

team of Spanish, French, German, Mexican and British students scored a good 6-4 opening win over Bangor, although that was followed by a 5-13 defeat to group winners Oxford and an unfortunate 4-9 loss to Lincoln A – a team they had drawn against only a couple of weeks earlier. They then narrowly beat Lincoln B 4-3 to secure third place in their group and a play-off against Brighton. Goals from Geoffrey Laborde and Juan Carlos Schez, combined with a strong defensive display, then helped Newcastle pull off a fantastic 7-6 victory in one of the games of the tournament to finish in a creditable joint 9th place out of 24 teams.



Several of Newcastle's British university students were subsequently invited to attend trials for the Great Britain Students' squad. Further boosted by a pre-Olympics British Handball UK tour visit to Newcastle in April 2012 offering handball taster sessions at the city's Eldon Square Leisure Centre, they joined compatriots from Loughborough, Lincoln and Brighton to compete for Great Britain Students in the Oktopus International Handball Tournament in

Eindhoven, Holland, in June 2012. Northumbria University's Mark Harrison was part of the men's 1st team, while Newcastle University students Jack McKay and Sam Boyd were in the 4th team along with Sunderland University's Jack Woods. For Harrison it was his second experience of the Oktopus tournament having represented Great Britain Students the previous year, as well as at another international tournament in Krakow, Poland. After heavily losing all their 2011 games, the British students had an improved experience in 2012 with the 1st team winning twice and the 4th team also picking up a win.



Mark Harrison was then selected for an Irish handball training camp, before going on to play for Ireland in friendly matches against Merseyside club Deva and Spain's Barcelona B in a friendly tournament in Dublin in August 2012.

On the back of this growing promise, Harrison and Jonny Purkiss started up a new Northumbria University handball club in September 2012, training with their Newcastle counterparts but with an intention to enter separate teams in the University Championships. However, both clubs soon struggled to attract enough new student players to sustain regular training sessions, so towards the end of 2012 they opted to join with the newly formed Newcastle Vikings Handball Club.

McKay and Harrison nevertheless still managed to assemble enough Newcastle University players to compete in the ABUHC University Handball Championships in London on 2-3 February 2013. Following their achievements in the 2012 competition they were one of 16 seeded teams in the expanded 40-team men's tournament. After coming third in their initial group stage matches against Leeds University, Dundee, Bangor II and Loughborough I, they then played Kent, Liverpool John Moores University and Lincoln II in the second group phase. They finished an improved joint 7th place overall after getting knocked out at the quarter-final stage.



However, having by then integrated with the Vikings they chose not to re-register the University's club for the following academic year.

The 2012 Olympic Legacy and Vikings Invasion

The London 2012 Olympic Games was the trigger for considerable growth in handball interest both nationally and in North East England. So much so that within a couple of months of those summer Olympics the North East suddenly had three new handball clubs establishing themselves in Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland, as well as interest in Middlesbrough, all seeking to capitalise on that growing popularity and opportunity to build participation in the sport.



Experienced Norwegian handball teacher and former London GD player Marlen Slinning got together with Brazilian Mariana Saba and a diverse group of fellow sports enthusiasts to found Newcastle Vikings Handball Club in September 2012. Weekly training sessions for men and women were held at the Percy Hedley Sports Academy in Killingworth – where the London 2012-accredited disability and para-sports centre also offered *wheeltastic* wheelchair handball. Newcastle Vikings were the first developmental handball club in the North East, with a mission to practice handball while contributing to the development of the community through sport. Early promotion of the club saw the Vikings selected as joint winners of the England Handball Association's *Handball does Hollywood* competition in October 2012 with a fun video introduction to the game.



Handball Does Hollywood – Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's Promotional Video





Over on the south side of the River Tyne, regional rugby league development officer Jo Drapier also set up Gateshead Handball Club in late September 2012. However, after a few months of highly popular weekly training sessions at the Gateshead International Stadium, together with men's and women's friendly matches with Newcastle Vikings on 12 December



2012, interest unfortunately waned in the New Year following a change of training evening and venue to Gateshead Leisure Centre, and then Drapier's departure from the region. Many of the remaining players had already started joining the Vikings for further training and to take part in local friendly tournaments. Gateshead Thunder RLFC development officer Rob Jones sought to keep the club going with the help of Vikings' head coach Marlen Slinning, but by summer 2013 numbers had declined to just a handful of keen men and women. Despite attempts to encourage new interest after a summer break from training, the club quietly died by the wayside.



Meanwhile down on Wearside, student and long-time handball fan Jack Woods had been inspired by the London Olympics and after playing with Newcastle University colleagues in the Eindhoven tournament in June 2012, and sought to set up a club at Sunderland University. Newly affiliated with the Association of British

Universities Handball Clubs (ABUHC), they played their first friendly matches against Northumbria and Newcastle Universities in a mini Northern Tournament at Newcastle's Eldon Square Leisure Centre on 11 November 2012. Sunderland lost 10-29 to Northumbria and 7-19 against Newcastle, with Newcastle also defeating Northumbria 20-13 to win overall. Newcastle and Northumbria Universities dissolved into Newcastle Vikings soon afterwards.

The University of Sunderland's CitySpace then hosted showcase exhibition friendly matches against combined Newcastle Vikings and Gateshead men's and women's squads on 9 February 2013. The Newcastle-Gateshead side beat Sunderland 15-9 in the men's match, before the Vikings' strong women's team also beat Sunderland's men 11-9. Despite the loss of a few experienced German players the following season, Sunderland University were beginning to develop a cosmopolitan men's team of British, Cypriot, Greek and Polish players. However, the lack of a British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) handball league continued to limit match opportunities.



Newcastle Vikings hosted a North East Handball Tournament on 9 March 2013 at Percy Hedley Sports Academy, featuring three men's teams – Newcastle Vikings, Newcastle-Gateshead and Sunderland University – plus Newcastle Vikings women and a mixed women's team from the Vikings, Gateshead and Sunderland. Newcastle Vikings women and Sunderland University men faced each other in the final having scored the most points from their matches, with Sunderland coming through 13-7 winners.



Another North East tournament took place at Sunderland University's CitySpace on 20 April 2013, featuring Sunderland University, Newcastle University's reassembled University Championships team and Newcastle Vikings' men's and women's teams. The Vikings men were this time victorious after winning all of their matches, while the Vikings women again performed well against the all-male opposition.



Newcastle Vikings hosted their first national handball tournament on 4 May 2013 at the Percy Hedley Sports Academy, involving men's and women's clubs from Newcastle Vikings, Sunderland University, Edinburgh and Dundee. Six men's and three women's matches took place, with Edinburgh going home with a double victory. Nationalities represented included English, Scottish, Norwegian, Swedish, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Brazilian and Greek.

Vikings players Mark Harrison (centre) and Sofie Vaula (line) were invited to take part in ABUHC trials on 20-21 April 2013 at Leeds Futsal Arena, and were successful in being chosen for the British University teams for the 2013 Oktopus International Handball Tournament in Eindhoven, Holland only for the trip to be cancelled.



The Vikings' Scottish Invasion – 2013/14

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's rapid development during their first year had seen them improve to a sufficient standard to embark on their first competitive season in autumn 2013, as well as begin developing a junior side. Having gained special dispensation from the England Handball Association, they joined the Scottish Handball Association, due to the closer proximity for travelling to Edinburgh and Glasgow where most of their games were to be played given the centralised venues approach to handball in Scotland, coupled with the absence of any handball-size courts in North East England – the Percy Hedley sports hall being too small to host competitive handball matches.

The season's curtain-raiser tournament at Edinburgh's Meadowbank Sports Centre on 28 September 2013 saw the Vikings taking on teams from Scotland and Ireland. Newcastle's women beat Dublin's Lughnasa handball club 9-5 in their opening game, before being cruelly edged out 8-9 by hosts Edinburgh and then going down 5-12 to a 'Rest of the World' team in their final group match. In what was to become frustratingly symptomatic of their season to come, the Vikings men lost each of their group games 5-21 to Glasgow, 12-20 against Edinburgh and then 6-13 to eventual winners Dundee. Edinburgh won the women's competition.



The Vikings travelled north of the border for their debut league matches on 19 October 2013 at the Blackburn Community Centre near Bathgate. Newcastle's women opened their league account with an impressive 21-10 win over Dundee, before the men's team lost their Division 2 match 12-34 to a powerful EK82 side from East Kilbride.



Newcastle's multi-national women's team, including four Norwegians, would go on to win five and lose five of their matches that season, including double victories over both Dundee and Glasgow, to finish a very creditable 3rd position in the women's league and with the second-best defensive record just behind unbeaten Cumbernauld-based champions Tryst 77. Norwegian half-player Selina Stenberg top-scored with 33 goals, just pipping Dutch winger Nina van Ruijven's 30 goals in only four early season games (a fantastic strike rate of 7.50 goals per game) including 10 goals in the first match against Glasgow. Arguably the highlight of their season was the return fixture against Glasgow on 8 February 2014 at the Dundee International Sports Centre, where a depleted team of just six Newcastle women – goalkeeper Andrea King, player-coach Marlen Slinning, Tonje Olsen, Selina Stenberg, Lea Vestergaard and captain Sandra Christke – scored a brilliant adrenalin-fueled 20-12 victory.



However, it proved to be a much tougher season for the Vikings men who lost all of their nine matches in the four-team development league, including a heavy 20-50 defeat to East Kilbride's EK82 on 15 February 2014. French half-player Jonathan Bastit top-scored with 29 goals, while centre Mark Harrison scored 11 of his 23 goals in their first match against Motherwell Heat, a game in which both Scott Garrow and captain Chris Bowe were sent off.



Scottish Handball Association National Leagues 2013/14

Men's Division 2		Results	
12 Oct.	EK82	L	34-12
19 Oct.	Motherwell	L	33-23
17 Nov.	Dundee II	L	15-39
23 Nov.	EK82	L	18-42
14 Dec.	Motherwell	L	17-28
18 Jan.	Dundee II	L	22-13
15 Feb.	EK82	L	50-20
9 Mar.	Motherwell	L	14-17
22 Mar.	Dundee II	L	16-24

Women's Division 1		Results	
19 Oct.	Dundee	W	21-10
26 Oct.	Edinburgh	L	26-23
17 Nov.	Glasgow	W	7-23
30 Nov.	Tryst	L	36-21
8 Dec.	Aberdeen	L	19-17
18 Jan.	Dundee	W	12-15
26 Jan.	Edinburgh	L	21-30
8 Feb.	Glasgow	W	20-12
1 Mar.	Tryst	L	14-34
15 Mar.	Aberdeen	W	29-12





























Men's Division 2		W	D	L	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
				(by <-10)	(by >-11)				
1	EK82	7	0	0	2	+317	-199	+118	21
2	Dundee II	5	1	2	1	+245	-223	+22	19
3	Motherwell Heat	5	1	1	2	+205	-204	+1	18
4	Newcastle Vikings	0	0	4	5	+148	-289	-141	4

Women's Division 1		W	D	L	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
				(by <-10)	(by >-11)				
1	Tryst 77	10	0	0	0	+411	-189	+222	30
2	Edinburgh	7	1	1	1	+280	-233	+47	24
3	Newcastle Vikings	5	0	3	2	+204	-198	+6	18
4	Aberdeen RGU	5	0	1	4	+189	-277	-88	16
5	Dundee	1	0	6	3	+189	-257	-68	9
6	Glasgow	1	1	2	7	+146	-265	-119	7

The Vikings men's team travelled to Manchester for an end-of-season friendly match at the National Cycling Centre on 26 April 2014. Playing on a court in the middle of the velodrome while the British cycling team were in training was something of a surreal experience, and while Newcastle made a strong start it was the home side who ran out comfortable 27-14 winners.



Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's Scottish League Players 2013/14

Men		Played	Goals	Women		Played	Goals
Daniel Walsh (GK)		7	-	Andrea King (GK)		10	-
Mike Cooke (GK)		4	-	Laetitia Renard-Watson		1	1
Kole Viejo-Cabellero		7	20	Marlen Slinning		9	29
Chris Bowe (C)		7	17	Annabelle Guinouard		3	11
Craig Swanson		7	2	Nina van Ruijven		4	30
Gareth Bowden		4	9	Sofie Vaula		8	24
Charles Goultly		6	1	Tonje Olsen		4	5
Scott Garrow		4	5	Selina Stenberg		9	33
Robert Thompson		8	10	Lea Vestergaard		10	28
Matthew Lamb		8	20	Eiman El Banhawy		5	9
Neil Bhandary		6	11	Kathryn Powell		4	5
Kamran Saeed		6	-	Michelle Anderson		3	-
Jonathan Bastit		9	29	Sandra Christke (C)		10	29
Mark Harrison		6	23				
Sam Turner		5	1				

Newcastle Vikings' new mixed junior handball team of mainly British 10-16 year-olds made an impressive overall 22-10 winning debut in their first competitive match on 24 April 2014 against Wallsend's Churchill Community College at the Percy Hedley Sports Academy. A follow-up fixture against the Churchill school on 2 July 2014 saw the Vikings' juniors claim a further double victory, 8-6 and 6-2. Newcastle Vikings' junior teams were represented by goalkeeper Cameron Reaveley, Ethan Patterson, Thomas Harrison, Raymond Latham, James Porter, Morgan Monaghan, Jamie Clarke, Krystina Coulson, Rebecca Johnson, Charlie Pears and Romanian Ana Botezatu.



The second annual Tyneside Handball Tournament took place on 3 May 2014 on the newly marked-out full-size 40m x 20m handball court at the Temple Park Leisure Centre in South Shields. Twelve teams from across England and Scotland took part including two Newcastle Vikings men's teams competing against Sunderland



University, York Hunters, Bedfordshire's Cranfield University, Edinburgh, Glasgow and East Kilbride's EK82. In the women's competition the Vikings took on York Hunters, Cranfield University and Edinburgh. In men's Group A, Newcastle I beat Sunderland 14-10 in the opening local derby match, before losing 6-12 to Cranfield and 2-21 to Glasgow. Sunderland also lost their other games 3-16 against Glasgow and 3-22 to Cranfield. Newcastle II won 13-7 against York in their first Group B match, but lost 9-21 to EK82 and 4-20 to Edinburgh, meaning both Vikings sides finished third in their groups. Glasgow went on to narrowly beat EK82 10-9 in a thrilling final. In the women's tournament Newcastle Vikings women beat York Hunters 10-5 and Cranfield 9-3 before losing out 7-9 to group-winners Edinburgh. However, the Vikings women were victorious 10-4 in the final re-match against their Scottish rivals to claim their first competitive trophy and first win over Edinburgh.



The Vikings Impress on English League Return – 2014/15

With the benefit of a new home match venue at South Shields' Temple Park Leisure Centre – one of only a dozen full-size handball courts in the country – Newcastle Vikings joined the England Handball Association's expanded North Regional Development League for the 2014/15 season. Training sessions also became twice-weekly making use of both the Percy Hedley and Temple Park venues, the latter also operating as 'satellite club' South Shields Handball.

But before the English league season commenced, the Vikings renewed acquaintances with many of the Scottish teams at the annual pre-season Edinburgh tournament on 20 September 2014. Newcastle's women opened with a close-fought 5-3 win over the hosts, before narrowly losing 8-9 to a 'Rest of the World' team, beating St. Andrew's University 13-4 and then suffering a 6-8 defeat to guest Norwegian side Gulset/Heerkules. An 8-5 revenge win over the 'Rest of the World' side nevertheless took the Vikings through to the tournament final against Gulset/Heerkules, but after levelling at 5-5 the Norwegian side broke away for a 7-5 win to lift the trophy. The Vikings men lost 2-12 to Edinburgh, 4-8 to guest French team Paris St. Germain, an agonisingly close 3-4 against EK82 and 4-8 to Dundee University. However, they did claim a morale-boosting 10-4 win over York, as Tryst won the competition.



It was to be a much improved and far more enjoyable season for the Newcastle Vikings men as they benefited under new player-coach and former England Handball international Jason Lee, together with an influx of new multi-national students including a few players from Sunderland University and the newly-formed Durham University



Handball Club adding extra experience to their line-up. Despite an opening loss away to Liverpool, they then drew at Manchester II before picking up their first league victory on 29 November 2014 with a 26-19 home win over Leeds Carnegie. It was to be the first of five league wins in a row sandwiched by two draws in a mid-season seven match unbeaten league run, punctuated only by an EHA League Cup first round 36-15 defeat away at London GD II on 24 January 2015. However, despite gaining a well-deserved first win over Manchester II, three end-of-season defeats saw them finish a still creditable 4th in the seven-



team league, only just missing out on third place by goal difference to Liverpool. The turnaround in fortunes this season was nevertheless a huge boost for the Vikings men, helped in no uncertain terms by flying French winger Simon Heintz's 67 goals (6.70 per game) including 13 in their second win of the season away to Leeds University.

The Vikings women also had a good first English season, winning seven of their 12 league matches to also finish 4th in the league, and once again with the league's second-best defensive record. A mid-season treble over the two Leeds teams saw them score 104 goals in three games while conceding only six, including a massive 49-0 home win in a great team performance without any substitutes over the University of Leeds on 7 February 2015. Goalkeeper



Andrea King's clean sheet was an achievement rarely seen in competitive handball, having also only just missed out on the same feat a week earlier. The record-breaking team were Andrea King, Marie Brevet, Marlen Slinning, Sofie Vaula, Blessing Ogbee, Judyta Turulska and Sandra Christke, with player-coach Slinning, Vaula and Turulska all scoring 11 goals apiece. Having broken through the 30-goal barrier for the first time in the Vikings' history, they went on to score another big 7-48 win away at Peninsula in their penultimate game of the league season in Wrexham, Slinning and Turulska each firing in 13 goals with captain Christke also scoring 10 of her own.



The mid-season achievements of the Vikings women's and men's teams that had catapulted them both to the top of their respective Regional Development League tables gained national recognition, featuring in the England Handball Association's highly popular *Vikings on the March* website article published on 16 February 2015 promoting the club's progress.

But the Newcastle Vikings women's season did not end there. Having gained a bye through to the EHA League Cup semi-final, they took on Bristol in a home tie at the Temple Park Leisure Centre on 25 April 2015 seeking to reach their first national cup final. And that they did with a hard-fought 15-11 victory. However, due to the unavailability of several players, it was a depleted team of only seven Newcastle women who travelled to Manchester's Trafford Soccerdome for the EHA League Cup Final on 6 June 2015 to take on a strong London GD II side. Despite a poor start to the game, the Vikings fought well and put in a good team display, Marlen Slinning leading the way scoring seven to take her season's tally to 75 and fittingly become the first to pass 100 Vikings goals in the process against her former club. But it was the London side's day as they beat Newcastle 22-14 to win the trophy. The Vikings' cup final runners-up team were Andrea King, Marie Brevet, Marlen Slinning, Simone Smith, Gesa Junge, Blessing Ogbee, Fienke Nanne and Sandra Christke.



England Handball Association North Regional Development Leagues 2014/15

Men's North RDL		Results	
12 Oct.	Liverpool	L	29-17
26 Oct.	Manchester II	D	20-20
29 Nov.	Leeds Carnegie	W	26-19
18 Jan.	Uni. of Leeds	W	20-27
25 Jan.	Huddersfield Uni.	W	23-14
1 Feb.	Leeds Carnegie	W	22-27
7 Feb.	Uni. of Leeds	W	27-8
15 Feb.	Bolton Hussars	D	18-18
21 Feb.	Huddersfield Uni.	L	26-14
1 Mar.	Manchester II	W	28-19
7 Mar.	Liverpool	L	15-22
29 Mar.	Bolton Hussars	L	14-23

Women's North RDL		Results	
26 Oct.	Manchester	L	13-11
8 Nov.	Peninsula	W	21-9
29 Nov.	Leeds Carnegie	W	25-3
14 Dec.	Liverpool	L	12-26
18 Jan.	Uni. of Leeds	W	5-26
1 Feb.	Leeds Carnegie	W	1-29
7 Feb.	Uni. of Leeds	W	49-0
1 Mar.	Manchester	L	17-18
7 Mar.	NEM Hawks	W	10-0 *
15 Mar.	NEM Hawks	L	23-21
18 Apr.	Peninsula	W	7-48
19 Apr.	Liverpool	L	4-26

* walk-over win

Men's North RDL	P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1 Bolton Hussars	12	10	1	1	+280	-158	+122	33
2 Huddersfield University	12	9	1	2	+283	-213	+70	31
3 Liverpool	11	7	1	3	+260	-196	+64	26
4 Newcastle Vikings	12	6	2	4	+256	-240	+16	26
5 Manchester II	12	3	1	8	+218	-267	-49	19
6 University of Leeds	11	1	1	9	+168	-269	-101	14
7 Leeds Carnegie	10	0	1	9	+155	-277	-122	11

Women's North RDL	P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1 Liverpool	12	12	0	0	+398	-90	+308	36
2 Manchester	12	9	0	3	+302	-161	+141	30
3 NEM Hawks	12	8	0	4	+302	-178	+124	27
4 Newcastle Vikings	12	7	0	5	+273	-131	+142	26
5 University of Leeds	11	2	0	9	+59	-345	-286	15
6 Leeds Carnegie	10	0	0	10	+52	-348	-296	10
7 Peninsula	9	1	0	8	+98	-231	-133	9

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's English League and Cup Players 2014/15

Men	Played	Goals	Women	Played	Goals
Daniel Walsh (GK)	8	-	Andrea King (GK)	13	-
Faisal Albathali (GK)	7	-	Marie Brevet	12	37
Mike Cooke (GK)	4	-	Marlen Slinning	13	75
Kole Viejo-Cabellero	4	2	Sofie Vaula	5	26
Amaury Michelant	6	26	Simone Smith	1	-
Peter Schichtel	6	14	Gesa Junge	8	11
Chris Bowe (C)	10	11	Blessing Ogbee	12	6
Craig Swanson	6	2	Judyta Turulska	11	60
Simon Heintz	10	67	Josefine Fienke Nanne	8	13
Jason Lee	7	7	Kathryn Powell	6	5
Dan Hudachek	1	-	Sandra Christke (C)	13	59
Scott Garrow	8	13			
Robert Thompson	7	4			
Dawid Miozga	7	24			
Mark Harrison	8	13			
Tom Harrison	5	1			
Neil Bhandary	8	1			
Matthew Lamb	10	15			
Jack Woods	7	14			
Jonathan Bastit	13	32			
Stephan Stricker	6	17			
Sam Turner	11	8			



Meanwhile, down on Wearside, the new Durham University Handball Club, founded in August 2014, saw their men's team reach the national finals of the ABUHC University Championship in Birmingham on 14-15 February 2015. Led by club captain Leif Hubert, they gained early wins over Manchester Metropolitan University 8-2 and Liverpool John Moores University 9-3 to help ensure they made it through the group stages, despite then losing 6-8 to Loughborough. However, they were then knocked out 4-9 against Nottingham in the last 16 round.



Sunderland's Farrington Community Academy junior handball team of Year 9/10 girls, part-coached by Marlen's Handball Coaching, won the Sunderland and North regional qualifiers for the English Schools Under-15 National Handball Championship finals. They finished an impressive 4th in the 13-14 June 2015 finals tournament at the University of Worcester.



Newcastle Vikings' juniors meanwhile gained their third straight victory over Wallsend's Churchill Community College on 4 March 2015. After a tight start, the Vikings broke away and kept a clean sheet in the second half of the game to run out convincing 11-2 winners. The largely British junior mixed Vikings team were Cameron Reveley, Krystina Coulson, Charlie Pears, Rebecca Johnson, Jamie Clarke, Raymond Latcham, James Porter, Matthew Fairgrieve and Romanian Andrei Inta.





Newcastle Vikings took the opportunity to give a run-out to several new and less experienced players in the annual Tyneside Handball Tournament on 2 May 2015 at the Temple Park Leisure Centre. The three visiting Scottish teams – Glasgow, Edinburgh and East Kilbride’s EK82 – dominated the men’s group with some big scores, but Newcastle I nevertheless gained a 10-8 play-off win over EK82 to take 3rd place overall. Newcastle II also improved on their group position to beat York Hunters 13-7 in the play-off for 5th place, while Glasgow



retained their title in a thrilling penalty shoot-out win over Edinburgh after the final had finished 10-10. Cranfield University were victorious and unbeaten in the women’s competition, scoring in the dying seconds to beat a combined York-Durham team 9-8 in the final, while a tiring Newcastle side lost 2-8 to Glasgow to finish fourth.

In July 2015, Newcastle Vikings Handball Club became the first handball club in the country to be awarded Sport England’s prestigious Clubmark accreditation, gained in partnership with Tyne & Wear Sport. The Clubmark status recognised the club’s high quality standards in club management, including coaching and child welfare as well as promoting best practice on- and off-court in introducing handball to school children and the wider community.



The Vikings ladies, together with qualified handball referee Craig Swanson from Newcastle’s men’s team, went on tour to England’s south coast in the summer to compete in the third annual British Beach Handball Championships, held 8-9 August 2015 at Branksome Chine beach in Poole, Dorset. One of 14 women’s teams taking

part, they narrowly lost their opening group match 0-2 to London-based Olympia, the first half only by a 'golden goal', and then also 0-2 against London GD I. Newcastle won their first half-match point against Coventry, but their opponents won the deciding running penalty shoot-out for a 1-2 defeat. They then also went down 0-2 to guest team TV Ettlingenweier I from Germany. The

next day’s Plate competition play-off against Cambridge saw the Vikings win their first beach handball match, taking the first half 9-3 and then battling back from six down in the second half with some well-taken two-point goals to win 11-10 for an overall 2-0 match victory. However, Oxford Blues knocked them out 0-2 with a second-half ‘golden goal’ in a close Plate quarter-final. Newcastle Vikings were represented by Andrea King (GK), Marlen Slinning (GK2), Nina van Ruijven, Gesa Junge, Blessing Ogbee, Ed Ogbee, Kathryn Powell and Sandra Christke.



The women’s Plate was won by local club Sandbanks, while TV Ettlingenweier won the women’s Cup final. In the men’s competitions, London GD won the Cup final with Poole Phoenix winning the Plate final.

British Beach Handball Championships 2015 – Newcastle Vikings v Olympia



The Vikings' North East Development Season – 2015/16

Newcastle Vikings' second English League season began with both the men's and women's teams suffering tough away defeats to Manchester, before winning their first games of the season at home to Leeds Carnegie a week later.

With the Edinburgh International Handball Tournament taking place a month later than in previous seasons, a clash with league fixtures meant only the Newcastle Vikings men travelled up to Scotland on 24 October 2015. After a 7-4 opening group win against Dundee, they then lost 6-8 to Dublin, 6-10 against Cumbernauld-based Tryst and 4-7 to eventual tournament winners Glasgow. A battling 8-8 draw with EK82 in their final play-off match between the two fourth-placed teams ensured Newcastle a joint seventh place finish overall.

Vikings brothers Mark and Thomas Harrison also travelled to Dublin in October 2015 to train with the Ireland men's squad. Both made good impressions, but Mark ruptured a knee ligament a week later, an injury that would prevent him playing outfield – he would return to action as a goalkeeper the next season.

Returning to league action, the Vikings men broke through the 30-goal barrier for the first time in the team's history on 7 November 2015, defeating Merseyside club Peninsula 25-32 away in Wrexham. Their biggest margin of victory came later in the season in another high-scoring 19-31 away victory against Leeds University on 12 March 2016.



EHA Men's Regional Development League 2015/16 – Manchester v Newcastle Vikings



However, despite these achievements, it proved to be an inconsistent season for Newcastle's men under new player-coach Jonathan Bastit as victories were interspersed by hard defeats to leave them with another mid-table finish. In the EHA League Cup, a heavy 15-35 home defeat to London side Fulham Hawks on 25 January 2016 saw Newcastle once again knocked out of the men's competition at the first round stage. Polish winger Wiktor Laczny top-scored with 40 league and cup goals across the season, while Danish half-player Nichlas Foldager had the highest strike rate with 18 goals in his three Vikings games during the first half of the season.

Despite losing player-coach Marlen Slinning to an early season training injury, the Vikings women went on a four-game winning run that briefly propelled them to the top of the league. Their 7-33 away victory over Peninsula on 7 November 2015 proved to be



their biggest win of the season, a game in which Polish half-player Judyta Turulska scored 13 goals to add to her 12 strikes against NEM Hawks in the previous match. German line-player and team captain Sandra Christke became the second Vikings player to pass 100 league and cup goals for the club in that Peninsula win. Turulska soon passed the same century landmark in the following league match against the University of Leeds' A team on her way

to a season top-scoring 62 goals. However, three tough defeats then saw the Vikings slip down the table, and with it having been decided to split the nine-team league in two at the half-way stage of the season a frustrating home defeat to Leeds Hornets meant they pipped Newcastle for fourth spot and an opportunity to challenge for a higher league finish. The resulting hiatus of league action, coupled with Leeds University B and Peninsula opting to drop out of the league having been unable to fulfil all of their matches, however left the Vikings with just two more



league fixtures to play. Nevertheless, they duly won both games with 30-or-more goals to seal 5th place in the league, Romanian half-player Alina Inta scoring 11 in their home victory over North-East Manchester's NEM Hawks.

The Vikings women once again gained a bye through to the semi-final of the EHA League Cup and were drawn in a re-match of last season's cup final against London GD II. But with their home Temple Park venue unavailable the tie on 23 April 2016 took place at the Leeds Futsal Arena instead. Newcastle fought back from behind in the early stages to open up a four-goal advantage in the second half, but the London side clawed their way back and agonisingly snatched the lead away in the dying seconds for a 16-17 knock-out.



England Handball Association North Regional Development Leagues 2015/16

Men's North RDL		Results	
11 Oct.	Manchester II	L	18-22
17 Oct.	Leeds Carnegie	W	17-18
7 Nov.	Peninsula	W	25-32
14 Nov.	Uni. of Leeds	D	22-22
22 Nov.	Leeds Hornets	L	20-17
10 Jan.	Liverpool S-G	L	19-34
30 Jan.	Leeds Hornets	W	22-15
14 Feb.	Manchester II	L	23-15
12 Mar.	Uni. of Leeds	W	19-31
19 Mar.	Leeds Carnegie	W	17-16
2 Apr.	Peninsula	W	10-0 *
17 Apr.	Liverpool S-G	L	23-22

Women's North RDL		Results	
11 Oct.	Manchester	L	22-23
17 Oct.	Leeds Carnegie	W	8-22
24 Oct.	NEM Hawks	W	19-28
7 Nov.	Peninsula	W	7-33
14 Nov.	Uni. of Leeds B	W	10-0 *
12 Dec.	Uni. of Leeds A	L	24-15
10 Jan.	Liverpool	L	12-24
16 Jan.	Leeds Hornets	L	11-23
2 Apr.	NEM Hawks	W	33-20
16 Apr.	Leeds Carnegie	W	30-12

* walk-over win

Men's North RDL	P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
Newcastle Vikings	12	6	1	5	+243	-213	+30	25

Women's North RDL	P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
5 Newcastle Vikings	10	6	0	4	+216	-160	+56	22



In friendlies, the Vikings men and women both suffered early season defeats away to Warrington Wolves on 8 November 2015, losing 37-16 and 21-10 respectively. Newcastle's ladies however beat a makeshift University of Leeds side 23-9 in their next game on 14 November 2015 after their B team had defaulted the league match. They also defeated Edinburgh 22-18 at home on 6 March 2016 during their mid-season lull of league action, but injuries led an end-of-season friendly game at Manchester on 1 May 2016 to be abandoned.



Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's English League and Cup Players 2015/16

Men	Played	Goals	Women	Played	Goals
Daniel Walsh (GK)	9	-	Andrea King (GK)	10	-
Faisal Albathali (GK)	2	-	Meghan Acres	5	5
Robin Devilette	4	15	Marlen Slinning	5	11
Athbi Almarzouq	6	32	Judyta Turulska	10	62
Gracjan Joppek	9	19	Krystina Coulson	5	3
Tom Harrison	5	1	Sofie Vaula	2	8
Craig Swanson	9	4	Gesa Junge	4	5
Matthew Lamb	8	13	Sina Linsenmann	7	23
Niall Flanagan	1	3	Lea Muething	3	5
Kole Viejo-Cabellero	6	8	Blessing Ogbee	10	15
Sam Turner	1	-	Kathryn Powell	5	3
Wiktor Laczny	8	40	Paulina Szulc	4	-
Kasper Ottosen	3	-	Alina Inta	8	48
Adam Moberley	5	1	Sandra Christke (C)	10	34
Robert Thompson (C)	6	-			
Nichlas Foldager	3	18			
Kamran Saeed	2	-			
James Porter	9	6			
Mark Harrison	1	-			
Jonathan Bastit	10	5			
David Topacho	1	2			
Stephan Stricker	8	29			
Holger Schulz	10	10			
Peter Schichtel	6	25			
Johannes Bellm	4	17			



The inaugural North East Handball tournament, seen as a friendly precursor to establishing a new North East league, took place over three rounds between York Hunters, the University of Durham and Newcastle Vikings. However, with Durham unable to make the trip to York on 13 December 2015, the hosts took the first round after beating Newcastle 16-12 and 10-6 in the men's matches, although the Vikings won the first of two mixed friendly matches 9-5 with the final game drawn 12-12. The second round in South Shields on 30 January 2016 saw Durham defeat York 13-8, before a combined Newcastle/Durham women's team thrashed York/Durham women 20-2 and later 9-3, while the Vikings men beat York 17-10 and Durham 16-6. Newcastle ultimately wrapped up the overall North East tournament title with another clean sweep of victories in the third round of matches on 28 February 2016 at the University of Durham Sports Centre in Stockton-on-Tees. The Vikings men beat Durham 7-5 and York 12-10, with Durham's men beating York 15-5 in the other game, while Newcastle/Durham women defeated York/Durham 15-2 and 8-3.



Durham University Handball Club's men's and women's teams, led by club captain Lucas Palumbo, once again took part in the national ABUHC University Championship finals in Birmingham on 5-6 March 2016. The men's team lost their first match 6-10 to Nottingham before beating Liverpool 9-6, but a 5-5 draw with Essex saw them just miss out on qualifying for the latter stages. A depleted women's team lost all three of their matches, 8-10 against Kent, 3-6 to Middlesex and then 6-11 against Bournemouth.



After an intermittent start to handball club development in Sunderland through Sunderland University, and evolving out of beach handball team BHT Albatross Sunderland formed by a group of local Polish handball fans in June 2015, former Newcastle Vikings players Paulina Szulc, Gracjan Joppek and Wiktor Laczny got together with the university's Jack Woods to establish Sunderland Handball Club in February 2016.



The fourth annual Tyneside Handball Tournament took place at Temple Park Leisure Centre in South Shields on 7 May 2016. Having opened with an 8-6 win over a combined York Hunters/Durham University side, Newcastle Vikings' men



lost 6-10 to Glasgow before beating Edinburgh 12-4 and defeating Sunderland 5-4, followed by a 6-12 loss to the University of Strathclyde. Meanwhile, Sunderland also beat Edinburgh 5-1 and York/Durham 10-8 before going down 5-9 to Strathclyde and 3-8 to Glasgow in their other group fixtures. Sunderland then gained revenge

for their group defeat with a 9-7 win over Newcastle in the play-off for 3rd place, while unbeaten reigning two-time champions Glasgow eventually succumbed

5-6 on penalties to Strathclyde after the final had finished 8-8. In the women's competition, the Vikings defeated Edinburgh 5-3, lost 4-7 to Durham University and beat the University of Leeds 8-2 to top the group, while Durham lost their other matches 6-7 to Leeds and drew 8-8 with Edinburgh



to finish in 3rd place. Newcastle then ran out clear 17-10 winners over Edinburgh in the final to reclaim their title, with 10-year-old Romanian Alexandra Inta scoring twice.



The Vikings entered both a women's team and a combined Newcastle-Sunderland *Sandcastles United* men's team in the summer's fourth annual British Beach Handball Championships, played 6-7 August 2016 at Branksome Chine beach in Poole, Dorset. Following an opening 0-2 defeat to Cambridge, Newcastle's women gained a 2-1 penalty shoot-out win over Reading Lions having won the first half 8-3 before unluckily losing the second half 10-12. But a 0-2 loss to Oxford Blues left the Vikings in third place in their group. A tough 0-2 defeat to London team Olympia in their next Cup qualifier match meant they dropped into the Plate competition. However, they then ran out convincing 2-0 winners (8-5 / 19-7) in the quarter-final against Poole Phoenix I, before going down 0-2 to eventual Plate winners Oxford Blues once again in the semi-final. 10th-placed Newcastle were represented by Andrea King (GK), Marie Brevet, Marlen Slinning (GK2), Krystina Coulson, Sofie Vaula, Blessing Ogbee, Ed Ogbee, Eiman ElBanhawy, Kathryn Powell and Sandra Christke. London GD retained their Cup title in the 13-team women's competition.





Meanwhile, in the 18-team men's tournament the *Sandcastles United* team lost their first match 0-2 to Ruislip West London Eagles, but surpassed expectations to win 2-0 against reigning champions Brighton I before also defeating both Southampton and Coventry 2-1 in penalty shoot-outs after the games were drawn (23-12 / 10-13 and 14-13 / 7-15). However, they were then knocked out 0-2 in their cup quarter-final against Oxford Blues, finishing 7th. The *Sandcastles United* team were Wiktor Laczny (GK), Chris Bowe (GK2), Gracjan Joppek, Jamie Lau, Matthew Lamb and Robert Thompson. Guest Dutch team Hiekka Hauskaa won the men's Cup with Brighton claiming the Plate, while Hauskaa also won the boys under-18 crown.



Having refereed numerous English development league matches and also at the British Beach Handball Championships in 2015, Newcastle Vikings line-player Craig Swanson gained his first experience of referring senior international club handball at the Copper Box International Handball Cup in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on 27-28 August 2016. Swanson, also a qualified rugby league referee, was in joint charge of the women's match between HV Ventura (Netherlands) and Hammel GD (Denmark), before being appointed to referee the men's semi-final between Castanet-Ramonville Auzerville (France) and Hammel GD and then the men's third place play-off between Castanet-Ramonville Auzerville and Sport Club Frauenfeld (Switzerland).



The Tyne & Wear League Rivalry Resumes – 2016/17

The 2016/17 North Regional Development League season appropriately began with the first English handball league Tyne & Wear derby match between the Newcastle Vikings and Sunderland men's teams on 1 October 2016 at the Temple Park Leisure Centre in South Shields. The Sunderland side, featuring four former Vikings players, led the way throughout most of a tense closely-fought match, but it was ultimately Newcastle's day as they battled back late on for a 16-13 home victory following the sending-off of Sunderland's goalkeeper Gracjan Joppek in the dying minutes. Sunderland's first league win came in their next match on 16 October 2016, beating the University of Leeds 29-27 at Sunderland College.



Newcastle's men then travelled up to Scotland for the annual Edinburgh International Handball Tournament on 22 October 2016. After an initial 2-10 loss to London's Olympia, the Vikings drew 5-5 with Edinburgh before defeating Dublin International 8-6 in their group matches. A quarter-final 6-4 win over Strathclyde-Glasgow University saw them progress to the semi-finals, where they lost 5-10 to Dublin. A play-off against hosts Edinburgh resulted in a 4-12 defeat as the Vikings finished 4th overall.



Following selection for an 18-man British Handball training camp in Nottingham in October 2016, Newcastle Vikings and Durham University winger Niall Flanagan was named as a reserve for the newly re-established Great Britain men's Under-21 squad for the IHF Trophy to

be held in Kutaisi, Georgia, between 8-13 November 2016. Having previously represented England Handball at Under-19 level in the August 2015 international Cell Cup competition in Hungary while with previous club Peninsula, Flanagan had then been selected in November 2015 for an English Under-20/21 handball training camp before injury in his first Vikings league match away to Leeds Hornets/Huddersfield the following weekend cruelly ended his season prematurely. His first British Handball call-up saw him join



the 14-man Great Britain squad for their pre-tournament holding camp in Portugal between 31 October - 6 November 2016, and play for the British team in a training match against Porto.

After three early season wins each, both Vikings teams sat in 2nd place in their respective league tables come the Christmas break. Following a good double victory away to Manchester on 5 November 2016, the men beat Sunderland again 27-35 in their return fixture at Sunderland College on 4 December 2016 and the women also did the double over Leeds Carnegie. However, wins largely eluded them in the second half of the season as they slipped down to both finish in 4th place by the end of their seasons, the women's team being unfortunate in losing four games by just one goal, including three in a row.



Judyta Turulska became the first Newcastle Vikings player to pass 150 league and cup goals in the narrow loss to Peninsula on 14 January 2017, soon followed by captain Sandra Christke a month later against Liverpool. Men's captain David Topacho top-scored with 41 league goals, while Alina Inta and Turulska each netted 40 for the women. Rebecka Östergren racked up the best strike rate of 5.40 goals per game in her five matches, with Niall Flanagan averaging the men's best strike rate of 4.75 across his four appearances.



England Handball Association North Regional Development Leagues 2016/17

Men's North RDL		Results	
1 Oct.	Sunderland	W	16-13
30 Oct.	Leeds Carnegie	L	23-25
5 Nov.	Manchester II	W	12-18
13 Nov.	Uni. of Leeds	L	31-18
4 Dec.	Sunderland	W	27-35
11 Dec.	Leeds Carnegie	L	27-19
22 Jan.	Liverpool S-G	L	29-26
5 Feb.	Manchester II	L	16-17
12 Feb.	Liverpool S-G	W	24-11
18 Feb.	Uni. of Leeds	W	10-0 *

Women's North RDL		Results	
23 Oct.	Peninsula	L	34-16
5 Nov.	Manchester	W	16-25
6 Nov.	Leeds Carnegie	W	26-10
13 Nov.	Uni. of Leeds	L	23-22
10 Dec.	Leeds Carnegie	W	8-29
14 Jan.	Peninsula	L	19-20
5 Feb.	Manchester	L	15-16
12 Feb.	Liverpool	L	17-18
18 Feb.	Uni. of Leeds	W	10-0 *
11 Mar.	Liverpool	L	21-14

* walk-over win

Men's North RDL		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1	Leeds Carnegie	10	6	2	2	+245	-211	+34	24
2	Manchester II	10	5	1	4	+243	-226	+17	21
3	University of Leeds	10	5	2	3	+177	-169	+8	21
4	Newcastle Vikings	10	5	-	5	+205	-192	+13	20
5	Liverpool Speke Garston	10	4	1	5	+227	-239	-12	19
6	Sunderland	10	2	-	8	+226	-286	-60	13

Women's North RDL		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1	Peninsula	10	9	-	1	+264	-140	+124	28
2	Liverpool	10	7	1	2	+218	-157	+61	24
3	Manchester	10	5	-	5	+210	-226	-16	20
4	Newcastle Vikings	10	4	-	6	+193	-166	+27	18
5	University of Leeds	10	4	1	5	+181	-177	+4	17
6	Leeds Carnegie	10	-	-	10	+106	-306	-200	9

In the EHA League Cup, Newcastle's men and women were both drawn away to Reading Lions, although only depleted teams were able to make the long journey south on 4 March 2017. Following a first round bye, the Vikings men went down 31-17 in their semi-final tie, despite 10 goals from Johannes Bellm and a first goal for usual goalkeeper Daniel Walsh playing outfield. After a good start the Vikings women then lost out in their quarter-final match 22-14 to eventual cup winners Reading Lionesses, with goalkeeper Andrea King also shooting her first Vikings indoor goal from the half-way line in the last minute of the game.



Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's English League and Cup Players 2016/17

Men	Played	Goals
Daniel Walsh (GK)	8	1
Mark Harrison (GK)	7	-
Kole Viejo-Cabellero	6	5
Vlad Cocos	5	4
Craig Swanson	9	6
Matthew Lamb	10	22
Peter Schichtel	5	10
Mohammed Ghuloum	9	37
Adam Mobberley	10	7
James Porter	3	2
Robert Thompson	1	-
Niall Flanagan	4	19
Jonathan Bastit	8	6
Tom Harrison	7	3
Johannes Bellm	5	19
David Topacho (C)	9	41
Holger Schulz	8	9
Stephan Stricker	8	21

Women	Played	Goals
Andrea King (GK)	10	1
Malin Walle	4	1
Judyta Turulska	9	40
Krystina Coulson	9	5
Rebecka Östergren	5	27
Maren Liane	9	30
Blessing Ogbée	8	15
Emmanuelle Chandler	4	-
Eiman El Banhaway	1	3
Meghan Acres	3	3
Claire Guyon	1	-
Alina Inta	8	40
Sandra Christke (C)	10	31
Rebecca Johnson	4	1

Meanwhile, it proved to be a tough debut league season for Sunderland's men who finished bottom of the table after picking up just two victories all season – both by the same 29-27 scoreline at home to the University of Leeds and then away to Liverpool Speke Garston on 13 November 2016.

Sunderland Men's North RDL		Results
1 Oct.	Newcastle	L 16-13
16 Oct.	Uni. of Leeds	W 29-27
6 Nov.	Leeds Carnegie	L 17-24
13 Nov.	Liverpool S-G	W 27-29
4 Dec.	Newcastle	L 27-35
11 Dec.	Uni. of Leeds	L 10-0 *
29 Jan.	Manchester II	L 28-34
5 Feb.	Leeds Carnegie	L 36-23
12 Mar.	Liverpool S-G	L 32-41
19 Mar.	Manchester II	L 36-28



The season's North East friendly competition took place over three rounds in Sunderland, South Shields and York. Durham University's men won the first round on 20 November 2016 at Sunderland College's Bede Campus with four victories, defeating Sunderland 8-5 and 14-12, and Newcastle 12-7 and 8-6. Sunderland beat an experimental Newcastle side 10-5 before the two sides fought out a 12-12 draw. The second round at South Shields' Temple Park Leisure Centre on 14 January 2017 saw Durham's men again dominate, beating



Newcastle 16-11 and 11-7, while losing 7-10 and winning 10-9 against York Hunters. Newcastle won 14-9 and 8-7 over York. The third round on 26 February 2017 at York St. John's University formed part of York Hunter's first handball festival, with the hosts' men opening with a 6-5 win over Newcastle before losing 4-7 to a combined Sunderland-Durham University side and then beating the University of York 6-1. Newcastle's men won their other matches 8-6 against the University of York and 8-4 over Sunderland-Durham, while Sunderland-Durham defeated the University of York 8-3 in their other game. Newcastle Vikings dominated the two women's matches by beating the University of York 10-1 and 11-1. With all the results combined, Durham University had nevertheless done just enough to take the overall title.



Durham University's men also enjoyed another positive showing in the British University Championship finals held at Medway Park in Kent on 18-19 March 2017. Club captain Lucas Palumbo led his team to 2nd place in their group after a 7-4 win against Imperial College London, a 9-12 loss to the

University of Manchester and a 15-5 victory over the University of Kent. However, they then went down 7-12 in the round-of-16 match against eventual finalists the University of Warwick.



Glasgow and Edinburgh took the men's and women's honours respectively in the fifth annual Tyneside Handball Tournament at South Shields' Temple Park Leisure Centre on 6 May 2017. Glasgow went unbeaten to become three-time champions with a 16-11 victory over East Kilbride's EK82 in a repeat of the 2014 final. Durham University claimed third place with a 12-7 win over Bedfordshire's Cranfield University, having previously defeated Newcastle

Vikings 10-8, York Hunters 10-4 and Cranfield University 6-4 in their group matches, in between losing 4-7 to Glasgow and 7-11 against EK82. Newcastle Vikings meanwhile defeated York Hunters 12-5 in the 5th/6th place play-off, having opened with an 8-6 win

against the Hunters before also suffering defeats to Cranfield University 3-7, EK82 3-11 and then Glasgow 7-11.



In the women's competition Edinburgh won for the first time since 2013, beating the University of Leeds 11-5 in the final. Newcastle Vikings' ladies beat Cranfield University 7-5 to take third place, having previously also defeated them 7-4 in the group stage in between losing 7-8 to the University of Leeds and 5-8 to Edinburgh.

Newcastle's women also played Edinburgh in an end-of-season home friendly match on 18 March 2017, losing 11-23 while giving a run-out to a couple of their junior players. The junior Vikings meanwhile competed in two mixed mini-tournaments on 18 March and 10 June 2017.



The 2016/17 season saw a strong growth in junior handball action in the North East. The first Tyne & Wear Handball Schools Festival, organised by Newcastle Vikings Handball Club took place on 9 December 2016 at South Shields' Temple Park Leisure Centre. Over 150 boys and girls from seven local schools took part in the Under-15 and Under-13 competitions. The U15 winners were Newcastle's Walbottle Campus 1 boys and South Shields' Mortimer





Community College girls, while Gateshead's Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy boys and South Shields' St. Wilfrids RC College girls won the U13 competitions. The most promising young handballers were scouted to take part in a series of monthly trials to represent the first Tyne & Wear County U16 boys and girls handball teams ready for competing in future national handball competitions.



Tyne & Wear Sport's first Handball School Games County Finals, held in partnership with Newcastle Vikings and Sunderland handball clubs, took place on 9 March 2017 at Temple Park Leisure Centre. The U15 winners were Sunderland's Oxclose Community Academy boys and Biddick Academy girls. In the U13 competitions, North Tyneside's Churchill Community College won the boys tournament and St. Wilfrids RC College girls again went unbeaten in all of their matches. The Vikings also helped run the first Northumberland Schools Games mixed handball competition at Cramlington Learning Village on 22 June 2017, which was won undefeated by the Morpeth & Ponteland sub-area team.



England Handball's first North East Regional Handball Games on 15 May 2017 at Temple Park brought together the top schools teams from Tyne & Wear, Northumberland and Durham. Oxclose Community Academy U15 boys, St. Wilfrids RC College U13 girls and Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy U13 boys all picked up the honours. Only Oxclose Community Academy took up the opportunity to represent the North East region at the English Schools Handball Finals on 10-11 June 2017 at the University of Worcester. However, with no wins coming their way their first national finals proved to be a tough lesson.



Newcastle Vikings referee Craig Swanson gained further big match experience by taking charge of his first England Handball League Cup Final games at Manchester's Trafford Soccerdome on 13 May 2017, involving London GD2 v Reading Lions men and Reading Lionesses v Liverpool women. He also refereed one of the women's semi-finals in the EHA National Cup, the women's final and a men's semi-final at the British University Championship finals at Medway Park, Kent in March 2017, and at the Liverpool International Tournament on 27-28 May 2017.

The summer's British Beach Handball Championships saw reduced North East representation, although Newcastle Vikings and Sunderland players did take part in the annual event in Poole, Dorset, on 5-6 August 2017. Vikings ladies Blessing Ogbee and Krystina Coulson featured as guest players for Liverpool Handball Club, who



reached the semi-finals of the women's Plate competition. Sunderland's Gracjan Jopek made a guest appearance for Brighton Handball Club, while former Viking Annabelle Guinouard played once again for her London-based club Islington.



Meanwhile, over the same August weekend, Sunderland's Wiktor Laczny was part of the Gdansk Foundation Academy of Sport's beach handball team that came third at the Polish National Beach Handball Championships in Warsaw.

Ahead of the new season, the withdrawal of Bolton Hussars from the Championship North led to the EHA inviting Newcastle Vikings men's team to fill the second-tier division's vacancy since the club satisfied the fit-for-purpose and quality criteria.



The Vikings men accepted the opportunity for promotion so would play up a level in the newly renamed National League North for the 2017/18 season. However, having struggled to field teams in some games over the past season, Sunderland opted not to re-register their men's team for the new Regional League season.

Vikings Get their Hands on First Silverware

These Vikings Girls Can – 2017/18

The traditional pre-season journey north of the border this season took Newcastle Vikings' men up to East Kilbride in western Scotland to take part in the local EK82 club's third annual Tom Cooper Trophy Tournament on 9 September 2017. Their opening match saw a depleted and somewhat inexperienced Vikings team lose heavily to the home side 35-7, before further defeats 26-38 against Tryst77 and 16-39 to Livingston meant they went out at the group stage.



That tournament would unfortunately set the tone for a tough league and cup season for Newcastle's men. Their first match playing up in the National League North on 24 September 2017 saw them face Coventry Sharks, who had been relegated from the top Super-8 league at the end of last season. Despite matching them in

the second half and an impressive 11-goal haul for Great Britain Under-20 international centre Adam Harwood, a new Vikings acquisition from Milton Keynes club Oly Cats following his move to study at Durham University, the match resulted in a 33-24 away defeat. Harwood's season was, however, cruelly cut short by injury in the next match. Struggling to contain the more experienced teams, Newcastle's men went on to endure several heavy defeats throughout a winless season as they finished bottom of the league table.

As a National League side, the Vikings' men were obliged to enter the EHA's top-level National Cup competition for the first time. However, a first-round 13-29 loss to fellow National League North side



Manchester I featuring former Viking Mohammed Ghuloum on 18 November 2017 meant they dropped into the rebranded National Shield competition. That Shield quarter-final tie brought a home rematch in the same competition against Reading Lions on 17 February 2018, but despite leading at half-time and led by 11 goals from back-court player Julien Eng in a much-improved team performance, they were knocked-out 22-28.



Frenchman Eng went on to net a top-scoring 61 league and cup goals over the season at an average 5.55 goals-per-game strike rate, only missing out on the opportunity to challenge Simon Heintz's 2014/15 men's goalscoring record of 67 due to Deva forfeiting the final league match of the season. Harwood's 12 goals in his two games played nevertheless gave him the best strike rate of 6.00.

Newcastle's women, meanwhile, had a starkly contrasting season. Opting not to enter the national knock-out competitions and focus on the league, an opening win at Manchester was followed by two defeats. But the new year brought a run of consecutive victories, and when the University of Leeds forfeited the penultimate match of the season the Vikings ladies suddenly found themselves guaranteed a best-ever top-two finish and in with an opportunity of winning the club's first league title if they could beat Liverpool for the first time in their final match. A brilliant hard-fought 13-18 victory away

to the Merseysiders at the Greenbank Sports Academy on 22 April 2018 duly jumped Newcastle into an unassailable position at the top of the table as they were crowned England Handball Regional League North women's champions for the first time.



The Vikings girls subsequently raised their championship trophy at the club's end-of-season beach party. However, a frustrating performance in the northern region promotion play-off match a week later at Oldham Leisure Centre on 29 April 2018 saw Newcastle narrowly lose out 14-16 to Midlands league champions the University of Loughborough I, who went on to gain promotion to the top Premier League despite losing their play-off final to Reading Lionesses. Norwegian centre Maren Liane top-scored for the season with 34 goals, just pipping half-player Alina Inta who had the best 5.50 goals-per-game strike rate.



England Handball Association North National and Regional Leagues 2017/18

Men's National North		Results	
24 Sept.	Coventry Sharks	L	33-24
21 Oct.	Manchester I	L	32-14
12 Nov.	Deva	L	41-17
25 Nov.	Loughborough I	L	40-13
10 Dec.	Loughborough. I	L	18-31
7 Jan.	Coventry Sharks	L	19-39
21 Jan.	Leeds Beckett	L	24-18
3 Feb.	Manchester I	L	13-27
24 Mar.	Leeds Beckett	L	16-24
14 Apr.	Deva	W	10-0 *

Women's Regional North		Results	
21 Oct.	Manchester	W	15-17
11 Nov.	Uni. of Leeds	L	16-9
10 Dec.	Liverpool	L	22-24
21 Jan.	Leeds Beckett	W	14-35
3 Feb.	Manchester	W	21-14
24 Mar.	Leeds Beckett	W	28-16
14 Apr.	Uni. of Leeds	W	10-0 *
22 Apr.	Liverpool	W	13-18

* walk-over win

Men's National North		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1	Coventry Sharks	10	10	-	-	+344	-216	+128	30
2	Loughborough Uni. I	10	6	1	3	+282	-224	+58	23
3	Manchester I	8	5	1	2	+196	-154	+42	19
4	Deva	9	4	-	6	+197	-209	-12	13
5	Leeds Beckett Uni.	9	3	-	7	+200	-287	-87	13
6	Newcastle Vikings	10	1	-	9	+162	-291	-129	12

Women's Regional North		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1	Newcastle Vikings	8	6	-	2	+160	-112	+48	20
2	University of Leeds	8	5	1	2	+172	-132	+40	17
3	Liverpool	7	4	1	2	+117	-99	+18	16
4	Manchester	8	3	-	5	+173	-168	+5	14
5	Leeds Beckett University	7	-	-	7	+109	-220	-111	6

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's English League and Cup Players 2017/18

Men	Played	Goals	Women	Played	Goals
Daniel Walsh (GK)	 10	-	Andrea King (GK)	 8	-
Pål Jakobsen (GK)	 5	-	Marie Brevet	 7	22
Mark Harrison (GK)	 5	1	Marlen Slinning Gouly	 6	23
Andrei Bogdan Ciurea	 7	16	Krystina Coulson	 1	2
Robert Thompson	 5	1	Katerina Gibson	 7	1
Cedric Le Lay	 7	19	Maren Liane	 7	34
Etienne Lisse	 7	9	Blessing Ogbee	 5	9
Craig Swanson	 1	-	Emily Bjerck	 6	15
David Topacho (C)	 10	25	Ingvild Misund	 3	3
Matthew Lamb	 9	16	Alina Inta	 6	33
Adam Harwood	 2	12	Sandra Christke (C)	 6	18
Adam Mobberley	 11	8	Maria José González-A.	 7	4
Mohammed Boussema	 9	8			
Tom Harrison	 1	-			
Jonathan Bastit	 9	1			
Stephan Stricker	 6	10			
Julien Eng	 11	61			
Pablo Docampo	 1	-			



In a season of landmarks and achievements, early 2018 saw both Newcastle Vikings teams pass 1,000 league and cup goals since the club began competing in the Scottish league five years ago. The Vikings men reached the landmark

first in their away match to Leeds Beckett University on 21 January 2018 in their 52nd competitive match, representing an overall average strike rate of 19.52 goals per game. Newcastle's women then passed the same milestone just two weeks later on 3 February



2018 in their 48th competitive game, their home win over Manchester, achieved at an average 21.23 goals per game strike rate. Fedi Boussema and Alina Inta had the honours of being the respective men's and women's 1,000th goal scorers. The women's title-winning match against Liverpool on 22 April 2018 also suitably marked

ever-present goalkeeper Andrea King becoming the first Vikings player to reach 50 league and cup appearances, with the added accolade of being the only player to have played every minute of every women's match since the club started.



The 2017/18 season also marked the debut in national league competition of Newcastle Vikings' juniors representing a Tyne & Wear County team in the English Under-16 Girls North Regional League. With all fixtures taking place over four weekends at the



Northgate Arena in Chester, their first game was on 7 October 2017 against Staffordshire team Olympia Cannock, which resulted in a 7-35 defeat. A friendly match against Shropshire that same day also brought a heavy 24-2 loss. But despite the steep learning curve, the Tyne & Wear



girls' performances as a team improved notably over the season, although they could not quite manage a competitive win. However, benefiting from several forfeit wins meant their commitment in fulfilling their fixtures ultimately gained them a creditable 3rd place league finish. Romanian youngster Alexandra Inta top-scored with 15 goals over the four league matches played at an average 3.75 goals per game, plus a further nine goals in friendly games.



England Handball Association Under-16 Girls North Regional League 2017/18

U16 Girls Regional North		Results	
7 Oct.	Tarporley	W	0-10 *
	Olympia Cannock	L	7-35
18 Nov.	Shropshire	L	6-15
	Peninsula	W	10-0 *
	Nottingham	W	10-0 *
9 Dec.	Nottingham	L	20-13
	Tarporley	W	10-0 *
	Olympia Cannock	D	0-0 *
20 Jan.	Shropshire	L	4-14
	Peninsula	W	10-0 *



* walk-over win

U16 Girls Regional North		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1	Olympia Cannock	10	8	2	-	+128	-45	+83	28
2	Shropshire	10	7	2	1	+97	-28	+69	26
3	Tyne & Wear	10	5	1	4	+80	-84	-4	21
4	Peninsula	9	3	1	5	+48	-77	-29	13
5	Nottingham	8	2	-	6	+48	-77	-29	9
6	Tarporley	9	-	-	9	+0	-90	-90	0

The other friendly matches played in place of the forfeited league games brought two losses against Olympia Cannock, 6-14 on 18 November 2018 and 13-7 on 20 January 2018, either side of a narrow 14-12 defeat to Merseyside club Peninsula on 9 December 2017.

Tyne & Wear County Handball Under-16 Girls' English League Players 2017/18

Under-16 Girls	Played	Goals
Bryony Coldwell (GK)	4	-
Alexandra Inta	4	15
Jess Hegarty	2	-
Esther Moffit	4	1
Alice Atkinson (C)	3	1
Zoe Barber	4	4
Nazish Amin	2	2
Ana Botezatu	2	7
Tahura Uddin	4	-



A Newcastle Vikings mixed juniors team then took on Scottish club Tryst 77 girls' 02 and 04 age-group teams in a friendly round-robin tournament on 27 January



2018 at Temple Park Leisure Centre. After losing their opening game 6-8 to Tryst 04 under-14s, the Vikings then beat them 3-7, while losing 14-5 and 3-12 to Tryst 02 under-16s. The junior Vikings players also played two mini tournaments on 2 December 2017 and 24 March 2018.



In schools handball competition, the second Tyne & Wear Handball Schools Games took place at Temple Park on 7 March 2018. Sunderland's Oxclose Community Academy went unbeaten in winning both the Under-15 girls and Under-13 boys titles, while St. Wilfrid's RC College from South Shields won all three of their games in the Under-13 girls competition. The Under-15 boys title was narrowly won on goal difference by Washington's Biddick Academy. The Northumberland Schools Games' Under-13 handball competition in Cramlington on 28 June 2018 was won by Bedlington's Meadowdale Academy.

The North East Handball Schools Games, organised by the England Handball Association in partnership with Newcastle Vikings Handball Club, followed on 26 April 2018 at Temple Park Leisure Centre, also featuring schools from Northumberland and the Tees Valley. Tyne & Wear's county champions Oxclose Community Academy girls and Biddick Academy boys won the regional Under-15 competitions, with St. Wilfrid's RC College winning the Under-13 girls tournament for the second year running. Hartlepool's High Tunstall College of Science came out top of the Under-13 boys. Oxclose Community Academy's Under-15's subsequently took up the opportunity to represent the North East region in the English national schools finals at the University of Worcester on 9-10 June 2018, but once again were unable to win any of their matches.



Meanwhile, in senior North East friendly matches, York Hunters took the season's regional honours. They began with aggregate 31-17 wins over the University of York on 15 and 21 November 2017, before narrowly losing out 24-20 to



Newcastle Vikings' men on 3 February 2018. The Vikings teams then both played the University of York on 17 February 2018 with Newcastle's women



thrashing the students 18-1 before the men picked up a 33-13 win. The Hunters again defeated their York city university rivals 31-19 on 27 February, before losing 24-38 to in-form Durham University on 17 March 2018.

Durham University had their focus on the University Championships this season. The first round on 18 November 2017 in Leeds saw them beat the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), before a last-minute penalty sealed a comeback 28-28 draw with Liverpool John Moores University. A 28-25 win over Leeds Beckett University on 2 December 2017 in Chester put them top of the table, sealing the regional trophy with another victory over UCLAN in Chester on 10 February 2018. The University Championships Finals took place on 10 March 2018 at Medway Park in Kent, where Durham performed beyond expectations in picking up group wins over University College Dublin, Bath and



Nottingham Universities, before beating Loughborough University in semi-final extra time. However, in a dramatic last minute of the cup final they agonisingly missed the opportunity to equalise as Cranfield University counter-attacked to win 10-12, leaving Durham (featuring Newcastle Vikings' Etienne Lisse) taking home the silver medals.



Newcastle Vikings referee Craig Swanson capped his season with being granted the honour of taking charge of his first England Handball National Cup final at Derby Arena on 6 May 2018 between London GD and NEM Hawks' men, with the

matches being live-streamed on the BBC Sport website for the first time. He was also selected as part of an EHA officiating exchange to referee at the Spanish 'Last Four' tournament in Logroño in April, as well as refereeing Under-11's in Lillehammer, Norway, before again at the Liverpool International Handball Tournament and the British Beach Handball Championships.

The end-of-season tournaments saw Newcastle Vikings goalkeeper Andrea King guest for Liverpool's ladies in their club's 19th annual Liverpool International Handball Tournament on 26-27 May 2018, where she picked up another trophy as they came back from a winless opening day's group games to win the final of the women's Plate competition against Bristol. Former Vikings player Sam Turner also competed in the men's competition for Bristol.



The sixth annual Tyneside Handball Tournament was held later than usual on 9 June 2018 at Temple Park Leisure Centre. With reigning three-time men's champions European qualification having just won the first British

championship play-offs, Glasgow focusing on two-time runners-up EK82 took the opportunity to claim their first Tyneside title and in doing so maintain the Scottish stranglehold on the men's



competition. The East Kilbride club's only two defeats in the group games came at the hands of a revived Newcastle Vikings team, but while the Vikings had topped the group the Scots gained revenge in winning the tournament final 11-16. The Vikings men had opened with an 8-11 loss to Durham University before drawing 9-9 with York Hunters. However, they came back to beat Durham 8-7 and York 8-4 alongside their 9-11 and 8-12 victories over EK82, on their way to sealing a morale-boosting best-ever runners-up tournament placing after a tough league and cup season.

Durham had finished the group in third place, but lost out 4-8 to York Hunters in the 3rd/4th place play-off. The day's women's matches saw three games taking place between teams representing Newcastle Vikings and Tyne & Wear, with the Vikings winning the first two 5-8 and 4-7, before Tyne & Wear gained a 7-6 win in the final match.



Newcastle Vikings' ladies returned to the south coast to round off their season at the British Beach Handball Championships in Poole, Dorset on 3-4 August 2018. They were handed a hard opening group match against reigning champions London GD I, losing both halves 21-12 and 20-9 as GD took a



clear 2-0 victory. The Vikings then fought well to beat home side Poole Phoenix I 0-2 (12-16 / 9-14), before losing 0-2 to Cambridge Honeybadgers (9-12 / 7-15) and rounding off day one with a strong 2-0 win over London Angels II (20-8 / 14-9) to finish third in their group of five.

Day two's Plate competition saw Newcastle drawn against West London Eagles in the semi-final, but after starting well to win the first half 13-5, the Eagles took the second half 9-15 for a 1-1 result and take the tie into a running penalty shoot-out which the West London side won 4-5. That defeat left the Vikings with a 3rd/4th place play-off re-match against London Angels II, and they came away victorious with another good 2-0 win (12-6 / 13-7) to take the women's Plate competition third-place trophy for a best ever seventh-place overall showing at the British Beach Handball Championships.



Newcastle Vikings were represented by Andrea King (GK), Marlen Slinning Goulty, Krystina Coulson, Caroline Steinhagen, Maria José González-Alvarez, Ed Ogbee, Birgitte Folkvord and Sandra Christke-Lamb. Their semi-final adversaries West London Eagles went on to win the women's Plate final, while London Angels I defeated London GD II in the women's Cup final.



The Vikings Boys are Back in Toon – 2018/19

The 2018/19 season began in much the same vein as the previous one ended with Newcastle Vikings' women picking up their third trophy of their most successful year so far. The club also signed their first sponsor partnership agreements with local Greek restaurant Kafeneon and sports outlet Decathlon.

Both Newcastle's men and women's teams travelled up to Scotland on 1 September 2018 for the 4th annual pre-season Tom Cooper Trophy tournament at the Alistair McCoist Leisure Centre in East Kilbride. A hard day for the Vikings men opened with a 4-13 defeat to Dundee, followed by going down 4-16 to Livingston, 1-18 to Tryst 77 and 6-12 to Edinburgh, before rounding off their group games with an improved performance in a narrow 8-10 defeat to hosts EK82.



Newcastle's women also lost their opening game 16-7 against a strong EK/Edinburgh Select team, but a 9-12 win over Tryst 77 put them through to the final of the three-team women's competition where a solid defensive display helped the Vikings gain a revenge 8-6 victory over the EK/Edinburgh Select team to raise the Craig Walter Trophy.



The Vikings' league season was set to open with the debut of the University of York in both the men's and women's regional leagues. But unfortunately they and Manchester II men had to withdraw late on, with the EHA consequently opting to merge the remaining men's North teams with the Midlands regional league, while adding centralised tournament-style days of shortened matches to both the men's and women's league fixtures at the end of the season.

The Vikings men got off to a delayed winning start with a 20-27 victory away at the University of Leeds, led by 12 Julien Eng goals. But a three-month gap in their fixture list due to the disrupted league set-up then left them having to wait until into the new year to continue their competitive season. A series of three friendly matches nevertheless kept them going, with a 28-25 away defeat to the University of Leeds followed by a comprehensive 9-37 win away at the University of York and a 24-14 home win over York Hunters.



Meantime, Newcastle's women opened their league account with their second away victory of the year over Liverpool as they looked set to continue their winning form. However, they struggled for consistency throughout the season and in a subsequent run of defeats the Merseysiders soon reversed the same 18-19 scoreline in the return fixture a month later, as both Marie Thompson and Judyta Turulska received late red cards in a tense finish. The Vikings were also knocked out 24-17 away to eventual winners Northampton in the first round of the EHA Shield competition on 9 December 2018, despite playing well to match the powerful Midlands side 11-11 at half-time, including two left-handed wing goals from player-coach Marlen Slinning Goulty bravely playing on after breaking her thumb, an injury that would prematurely end her season. Eventually getting back to winning ways with two wins over



Manchester and the University of Leeds, the Vikings' ladies went into the final match day's shortened games still with an outside mathematical chance of retaining their title if they could win all three games and other results went their way, but a draw and two narrow defeats ultimately left them having to settle for 3rd place, albeit with the best defensive record. French back-court player Rosa Larcy top-scored with 33 league and cup goals over the season at a best strike rate of 3.67 goals per game.



In the men's Shield competition, after benefiting from a first-round bye, Newcastle were then drawn away for a long trip south to face Guildford Sabres in the quarter-final on 19 January 2019. However, despite another 10-goal haul for Julien Eng, the South East regional league leaders proved too strong, winning 33-25 on their way to a second consecutive EHA Shield final.



Newcastle's men eventually resumed their league season in late February with the first of two tournament-style match days against the Midlands teams in Bradford. And their two wins and a draw, together with a forfeit win, suddenly jumped them straight to the top of the table. Having then consolidated their unbeaten position with a home draw against the University of Leeds, the Vikings

men went into the final multi-match day on 30 March 2019 knowing that, with the universities of Warwick and Leeds both forfeiting their remaining matches, they just needed to avoid losing all three games to seal their first



silverware and emulate the title-winning achievement of Newcastle's women's team the previous season. And despite narrowly losing by one goal to second-placed University of Birmingham in their first game of the day, a Julien Eng equaliser in the dying seconds against University of Loughborough II for a 14-14 draw was enough to secure the extra point they needed to ensure they could not be overhauled and became England Handball Regional League North men's champions for the first time. The Vikings were presented with their trophy by EHA Chair Tracy Wilkinson at the end-of-season clubs conference.



Julien Eng once again topped the season's scoring charts, his 51 league and cup goals coming at an impressive 6.38 goals per game strike rate. In doing so, the high-scoring Frenchman became the first male player to score 100 Vikings league and cup goals, notched up in the home draw against the University of Leeds, just pipping English winger Matthew Lamb who also reached the century landmark



three weeks later in their final match of the season against the University of Lincoln. Fittingly for one of the club's founding members, Lamb's 100th goal came on their title-winning day when the first game against the University of Birmingham also saw him become the first of the Newcastle Vikings men to make 50 club appearances.

The Vikings teams both struck their 1,000th English league and cup goals this season too, the men getting there first with Julien Eng's fourth goal in their win over University of Lincoln on 23 February 2019, and the women following on 30 March 2019 with Marie Thompson's goal against University of Leeds.



England Handball Association North National and Regional Leagues 2018/19

Men's Regional North		Results	
20 Oct.	Uni. of Leeds	W	20-27
23 Feb.	Loughborough II	D	15-15
	Birmingham Uni.	W	10-0 *
	Uni. of Lincoln	W	11-19
	Warwick Uni.	W	10-0 *
9 Mar.	Uni. of Leeds	D	19-19
30 Mar.	Birmingham Uni.	L	12-11
	Loughborough II	D	14-14
	Uni. of Lincoln	L	12-14
	Warwick Uni.	W	0-10 *

Women's Regional North		Results	
4 Nov.	Liverpool	W	18-19
17 Nov.	Uni. of Leeds	L	24-13
2 Dec.	Liverpool	L	18-19
12 Jan.	Manchester	L	12-20
27 Jan.	Manchester	W	14-17
9 Mar.	Uni. of Leeds	W	23-20
30 Mar.	Uni. of Leeds	L	13-12
	Manchester	D	7-7
	Liverpool	L	16-14

* walk-over win

Men's Regional North-Midlands		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1	Newcastle Vikings	10	5	3	2	+147	-105	+42	23
2	University of Birmingham	10	7	-	3	+173	-135	+38	22
3	Uni. of Loughborough II	10	3	2	5	+176	-174	+2	18
4	University of Leeds	10	4	2	4	+99	-102	-3	15
5	University of Lincoln	10	3	-	7	+141	-205	-64	15
6	Warwick University	10	4	1	5	+162	-177	-15	14

Women's Regional North		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
1	Liverpool	9	8	-	1	+185	-163	+22	25
2	University of Leeds	9	4	-	5	+193	-166	+27	17
3	Newcastle Vikings	9	3	1	5	+135	-151	-16	16
4	Manchester	9	2	1	6	+144	-177	-33	14

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's English League and Cup Players 2018/19

Men	Played	Goals	Women	Played	Goals
Daniel Walsh (GK)	6	-	Andrea King (GK)	10	-
Pål Jakobsen (GK)	8	-	Marie Thompson	10	16
Craig Swanson	7	6	Marlen Slinning Goulty	4	5
Benjamin Andrews	1	3	Judyta Turulska	7	15
Matthew Lamb	7	14	Katerina Gibson	10	3
Adam Mobberley (C)	5	12	Rosa Larcy	9	33
Mark Harrison	4	4	Maren Liane	7	22
Benoît Barthel	6	-	Blessing Ogbee	8	20
Mohammed Boussema	7	10	Alina Inta	6	21
Robert Thompson	1	1	Sandra Christke (C)	5	8
Julien Eng	8	51	María José González-A.	9	9
Bart Piorkowski	4	16			
Pablo Docampo	7	25			



Vikings goalkeeper Andrea King additionally got the opportunity to train with the Great Britain women's handball squad while attending an EHA goalkeeper masterclass course at Stoke Mandeville over the weekend of 23-24 March 2019.

In addition to being part of Newcastle's title-winning men's team, Craig Swanson's season included refereeing the English national Under-19 girls final between Stroud and West London Eagles at the Derby Arena on 11 May 2019, as well as at the London Beach Handball International Tournament on 21-22 July 2019. He also returned to Lillehammer, Norway to once again referee at April's Under-11 tournament, and travelled to Gothenburg, Sweden in July to officiate at the annual Partille Cup, the world's largest youth handball tournament.



Newcastle's own growing cohort of juniors and younger mini-Vikings enjoyed three fun tournament days on 2 December 2018, 10 February and 28



April 2019. But with insufficient junior players in the age group categories, no Tyne & Wear County girls or boys teams were able to be entered into the English leagues this season.

Tyne & Wear Sport's third annual Handball Schools Games took place on 7 March 2019 at Temple Park Leisure Centre, run in partnership with Newcastle Vikings Handball Club and supported by Tyne Metropolitan College's North East Sports Academy (NESA) as part of their EHA funding agreement to help grow





junior handball in the region. Sunderland's Oxclose Community Academy went unbeaten to narrowly win the Under-15 girls competition on goals scored and goal-difference, while North Tyneside's Wellfield Middle School won all of their matches in the Under-13 girls competition. In the boys competitions, North Tyneside's Churchill Community College took the Under-15 honours and Oxclose Community Academy went unbeaten in winning the Under-13 contest.

The North East Schools Games Finals at Temple Park Leisure Centre on 9 May saw Oxclose Community Academy go on to score a double win in the Under-15 girls and Under-13 boys competitions. Wallsend's Churchill Community College won a close battle for the boys Under-15 title, while Hartlepool's High Tunstall College of Science claimed the Under-13 girls honours.

The Oxclose and Churchill teams all took up the opportunity to represent the region at the English Schools Games Finals at the University of Worcester over the weekend of 15-16 June. In the Under-15 competitions, Churchill Community College's boys lost three of their matches but did pick up a 4-4 group-stage draw against Sutton Coldfield's (Birmingham) Fairfax Academy, while Oxclose Community Academy's girls lost all four of their games, both schools finishing in 8th place. The Oxclose Under-13 boys then came back from three group match defeats to record the school's first victory at the national finals in convincingly winning their 7th/8th place play-off match against Halstead's (Essex) Ramsey Academy 8-0, thus finishing in their best ever 7th place.



Northumberland's outdoors Schools Games Festival took place later in the summer on 27 June 2019 at Cramlington Learning Village, with Tynedale's Ovingham Middle School winning the Under-13 handball competition.



Durham University began their British University Championships campaign with a shaky start to the first round on 24/25 November 2018, losing 19-14 to Bangor I. However, they then beat Leeds Beckett 27-11, Liverpool John Moores II 24-4 and Manchester 23-9 to win their group. In the second round of matches on 16 February 2019 they went unbeaten in defeating Bangor I 23-9, Liverpool John Moores II 12-9 and Manchester 18-12, before drawing 14-14 with Lancaster in the regional final. However, despite looking forward to competing at the University Championship finals, Durham's team were ultimately unable to make the long trip down to Kent this season.

The annual Tyneside Handball Tournament returned to its traditional early May slot for the seventh edition on 4 May 2019, but relocated for the first time to Newcastle's Benfield Centre for Sporting Excellence.



Edinburgh dominated the group stage matches, winning all of their games in both the men's and women's competitions. However, a pulsating men's final saw Tyneside debutants Coventry Sharks, featuring former Newcastle and Sunderland winger Wiktor Laczny, fight back to snatch a thrilling 9-10 win from Edinburgh's grasp, and in so doing become the first English club to win the men's title. East Kilbride's EK82 finished in 3rd place, while York Hunters beat Durham University 5-8 and drew 6-6 with Newcastle Vikings and 5-5 with EK82 to win the battle of the North East clubs, their only defeats being 3-9





against both Edinburgh and 4th-placed Team Picon which featured several French players from Newcastle and Durham. The Vikings nevertheless beat the Frenchmen 6-3 in their last game of the day, but the opening draw with York together with losses to Edinburgh 10-3, Coventry 8-5 and EK82 6-7 left them down in 6th place, ahead of Durham University who also lost their other games 10-6 to Team Picon, 3-9 to Coventry, 7-9 to EK82 and 13-11 to Edinburgh.

In the three-team women's competition, Edinburgh's dominance in attack helped them to their third Tyneside title unbeaten. Coventry Sharks narrowly beat Newcastle Vikings to the runners-up spot, the Vikings ladies drawing 5-5 with the Midlanders before a 2-3 loss added to three defeats against the Scots 2-6, 6-4 and 4-9.



Newcastle Vikings' women rounded off their season once again with a trip to the south coast to compete in the British Beach Handball Championships at Branksome Chine beach in Poole, Dorset on 2-4 August 2019. Joining up with friends from Nottingham Handball Club once again, the Vikings team warmed up with a friendly match against home side Poole Phoenix on the Friday evening, only narrowly losing the two halves 19-18 and 20-18. Saturday's group games saw them taking on experienced former champions London GD in



their opening match for the second year running, GD easily winning 2-0 (24-6 / 16-8). The Vikings then ran out 0-2 (6-14 / 7-13) victors over Islington Ratitas, before their final two group matches against Chelsea and Poole Phoenix 3 were both drawn with each side winning a half to take the games into penalty shoot-



outs. Chelsea won the first half 4-15 before the Vikings battled back to take the second half 15-10, only for Chelsea to win the shoot-out 3-4 for an overall 1-2 win. Newcastle narrowly won the first half against Poole 12-11, but Phoenix took the second half 12-19 before snatching the penalty shoot-out in sudden death 5-6 to hand the Vikings another 1-2 defeat.

Fourth-placed in their group, Newcastle began Sunday's round-robin Plate competition matches against Poole Phoenix 2, winning the first half 13-12 with an extra-time golden goal after the scores were level at half-time, but Phoenix came back 11-12 before taking the penalty shoot-out 2-3 for a 1-2 match win. The Vikings' next match against Islington-on-the-Beach saw the Londoners take the first half on a golden goal 12-11, but Newcastle then racked up their biggest half win of the weekend 5-20 to take the match into yet another penalty shoot-out. However, for the fourth time in the weekend luck evaded them as Islington took the shoot-out 3-1 to win the game 2-1. Newcastle Vikings thus finished 13th overall and were represented by Andrea King (GK), Krystina Coulson, Blessing Ogbee, Ed Ogbee, Birgitte Folkvord, Eiman El Banhawy and Bruna Falgueras Vallbona. Bristol beat Poole Phoenix 2 in the women's Plate final, while London GD went on to regain the women's Cup.



Former Newcastle and Sunderland player Wiktor Laczny also competed in the British Beach Handball Championships once again, this year playing for an all-Polish Hussars Beach Handball team that finished 5th in the men's Cup competition.

Meanwhile, Newcastle Vikings' Spanish line player Maria José González-Alvarez took the opportunity to guest in defence for the B team of her sister's Madrid club Balonmano Playa Alcalá in the end-of-season XXI Beach Handball Spanish Championship tournament in Alicante over the same August weekend. However, despite fighting back to level their first match they ultimately suffered the same fate in the penalty shoot-out as the Vikings' ladies back in Poole, before also losing both of their other group matches, and so did not progress to the knock-out stages.



Off the court, Newcastle Vikings became one of the first clubs in the country to gain the England Handball Association's new *Pro-Active Clubs* affiliation in July 2019. Similar to Sport England's soon-to-be-ending Clubmark accreditation, this status recognised the club as being well structured, governed and managed, a safe place for young people to engage regularly with handball where their welfare is paramount, and that it engages regularly with its members and local community with an appropriate activity and playing programme.

Newcastle Vikings were also one of three clubs selected by the EHA in February 2019 to be part of their 12-month *More Than a Handball Club* support and mentoring programme in partnership with Danish adviser Svend Elkjaer's Sports Marketing Network, aimed at helping the club to become more vibrant, visible and viable. This initiative saw the club seeking to build upon previous community activities such as fun 'Try Handball' opportunities at local multi-sports events, International Women's Day handball mini-tournaments, and several players participating in the annual Decathlon 5k fun run and Great North Run half marathon.



The Covid Years

The Season that Never Was – 2019/20

The 2019/20 season began in as almost as surreal fashion as it ended. Newcastle Vikings' men, now with Dutchman Frank Smelt at the coaching helm, were set to begin the defence of their Regional League North title away to the newly-launched second team of experienced Premier League club Warrington Wolves in mid-October. However, the lack of any handball goals available at the previously untried venue meant that the home side had to forfeit the game and gift the Vikings a default opening win, a friendly game being played using 5-a-side football goals instead. Hence their first competitive fixture of the season did



not take place until 2 November 2019, although that match resulted in a 20-17 loss to the University of Manchester who featured former Newcastle player Vlad Cocos in their side.

Disrupted by injuries, player unavailability and without a regular goalkeeper in the squad, the Vikings men struggled for the first half of the season, suffering a run of five consecutive defeats in which frustrations were compounded as three



players, Adam Mobberley, Julien Eng and Robert Thompson picked up red cards in different matches. Usual winger Matthew Lamb ended up donning the goalkeeper's shirt for the league campaign, while in his





absence captain Mobberley took it upon himself to stand in between the posts for a home National Cup first round match on 10 November 2019 which saw them knocked out heavily 15-41 to National League North side Manchester once again. However, Lamb's improving performances were a big factor in the Vikings



finding some winning form in the new year as home and away league victories over the University of Leeds suddenly jumped them to the top of the league, Spanish centre Pablo Docampo dominating at the other end of the court with a 10-goal haul in the 19-24 away win on 1 March 2020.



Meanwhile, the Vikings ladies had opened their season with an away trip to Chester on 20 October 2019 to play a Peninsula side that had dropped down from last season's Premier league. A solid defensive display helped them get the season underway in positive fashion

with an 11-17 victory. Peninsula subsequently forfeited the return fixture in Newcastle at the start of the new year, but other than that additional default win and a first round bye in the National Cup the Vikings women also suffered a run of five frustrating losses, including a 21-14 second round cup defeat away to Regional League North rivals Liverpool on 18 January 2020. Newcastle's ladies were not to go away empty-handed though, the Merseysiders having the grace to surprise them ahead of that cup match with an excellence in fair



play award presentation by their club president Paul Forester in recognition of the Vikings offering to begin December's home league fixture 6-a-side until the rest of Liverpool's delayed team arrived at the match venue,



rather than taking advantage of having an extra player on court, a game that the league leaders narrowly won by just two goals. Right-half Alina Inta had become the third Newcastle player to score 150 league and cup goals for the club in that home game against Liverpool, with player-coach Marlen Slinning Goulty soon passing the same milestone in the subsequent cup defeat.



Mid-season had also seen Newcastle's men and women's teams both pass the 1,000 goals landmark in English league matches on the same day on 14 December 2019, through Frank Smelt's opener



against Warrington Wolves II and then just a couple of hours later by Ed Ogbee scoring the Vikings ladies' fourth goal in their match against Liverpool.



However, the onset of the Covid-19 coronavirus health pandemic in March 2020 led to Newcastle Vikings taking the proactive decision to postpone their scheduled penultimate fixtures against the University of Manchester's men and Trafford women, ahead of the England Handball Association formally postponing all handball matches a few days later on 16 March 2020. Ultimately, with uncertainty over when sporting action might be able to resume due to the ongoing social distancing lockdown and restrictions on mass gatherings, the EHA announced confirmation on 4 May 2020 that the season's league and cup competitions would be voided with all remaining unplayed fixtures cancelled.

At the point of lockdown, Newcastle's men were sitting top of their league, just one point ahead of Warrington Wolves II and the University of Manchester, with the Vikings women fourth in their league, six points behind leaders Liverpool. Another men's title may have been unlikely with most other teams having one or more games in hand, but the Vikings nevertheless remained reigning league champions. Pablo Docampo topped the Vikings' men's goalscoring with 23 goals, while Marlen Slinning Goulty led the women's scoring with 16 goals.



England Handball Association North National and Regional Leagues 2019/20

Men's Regional North		Results	
19 Oct.	Warrington W. II	W	0-10 *
2 Nov.	Uni. of Manchester	L	20-17
16 Nov.	Uni. of Leeds	L	14-19
30 Nov.	Uni. of Manchester	L	17-15
14 Dec.	Warrington W. II	L	10-20
25 Jan.	Uni. of Leeds	W	19-16
1 Mar.	Uni. of Leeds	W	19-24
14 Mar.	Uni. of Manchester	P-P	
4/5 Apr.	Warrington W. II	P-P	

Women's Regional North		Results	
30 Oct.	Peninsula	W	11-17
16 Nov.	Uni. of Leeds	L	13-20
30 Nov.	Trafford	L	21-15
14 Dec.	Liverpool	L	15-17
25 Jan.	Peninsula	W	10-0 *
1 Mar.	Uni. of Leeds	L	20-16
14 Mar.	Trafford	P-P	
4 Apr.	Liverpool	P-P	

* walk-over win

Men's Regional North		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
-	Newcastle Vikings	8	3	1	4	109	111	-2	13

Women's Regional North		P	W	D	L	For	Against	+/-	Pts
-	Newcastle Vikings	7	2	-	5	86	99	-13	10

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's English League and Cup Players 2019/20

Men		Played	Goals
Matthew Lamb (GK)		6	-
Robert Thompson		5	7
Adam Batley		5	16
Christos Illadis		1	1
Craig Swanson		3	1
Thomas Harrison		3	5
Milan Anilkumar		3	1
Adam Mobberley (C)		7	17
Mohammed Boussema		5	11
Julien Eng		1	6
Mark Harrison		2	6
Pablo Docampo		4	23
Bart Piorkowski		1	6
Frank Smelt		4	14

Women		Played	Goals
Andrea King (GK)		6	-
Marie Thompson		5	14
Marlen Slinning Goulty		4	16
Judyta Turulska		5	13
Katerina Gibson		6	1
Ed Ogbee		5	9
Maren Liane		4	8
Blessing Ogbee		6	15
María González Pascual		1	-
Alina Inta		4	11
Sandra Christke (C)		1	-
María José González-A.		4	3

The coronavirus pandemic lockdown also led to the cancellation of May's Tyneside Handball Tournament, as well as the summer's British Beach Handball Championships. Other than the men playing Warrington Wolves II at the start of the season, Newcastle Vikings' only other senior friendly games had been pre-season and in a mini-tournament against York City Hunters and the University of York on 8 February 2020.





In the first of the season's mini-tournaments for the Newcastle Vikings' younger handballers on 23 November 2019 at Benfield Sports Centre, the Temple Park juniors convincingly swept the board unbeaten with 2-4 and 4-0 wins over Benfield I, and big 7-0 and 0-9 victories over Benfield II, while Benfield I beat Benfield II 3-5 before ending with a 1-1 draw. In between, guests Gosforth minis scored a double win over the mini-Vikings 3-7 and 9-3 in the under-8 games. The Temple Park and Benfield juniors took on each other again on 25 January at Temple Park Leisure Centre, with the home team again coming out on top before the players mixed up for a final fun match.



The growth in numbers across the junior ranks enabled the club to then hold their first age-group tournament on 8 February 2020 at Benfield Sports Centre. That saw over 40 children enjoy a series of mixed under-16 matches between the Vikings' Benfield and Temple Park training groups, Newcastle and Craggside under-12's, and under-8 games between the mini-Vikings and Gosforth minis. In the under-16's the blacks won their first match 4-3, before the greens scored



3-9 and 3-4 victories. Craggside won the first under-12's match 3-4, but the Vikings also came back to take two wins 5-2 and 6-2. And in the minis matches Gosforth won the first two games 3-5 and 4-9 before the Vikings got a 5-5 draw in the final match of the day.

The Tyne & Wear Your School Games level 3 handball competition took place at Temple Park Leisure Centre on 5 March 2020, run in partnership with Tyne & Wear Sport with support from Tyne Metropolitan College's North East Sport Academy. North Tyneside schools scooped three of the trophies, with Churchill Community College retaining the under-15 boys title and John Spence Sports College's boys and Valley Gardens Middle School's girls victorious in the under-13 tournaments, while South Tyneside's Boldon School picked up the under-15 girls' title. However, with all handball competitions suspended for the rest of the season, none of them got the opportunity to challenge for North East regional titles and progress to the English national finals.



Also just before the lockdown, this year's British University Championships were wholly held over the weekend of 6-8 March 2020 at Medway Park in Kent, with Durham University entering both men's and women's teams for the first time. However, with several experienced players from the last few successful seasons having now graduated, Durham's men struggled and lost all four of

their group matches 8-4 to Kent, 6-16 to Glasgow, 11-8 to Manchester and 8-13 against Liverpool John Moores, before going down 14-3 to Bangor in the placings play-off to leave them 10th in the second-tier Plate competition (20th overall out of 36 teams).



Meanwhile, Durham's women made their debut in the third-tier Shield competition for emerging clubs, making a strong start with group stage 2-11 and 3-7 wins over Birmingham's second and third teams before narrowly losing 5-6 to Manchester. Their semi-final against Essex however resulted in a 9-4 defeat, before another tough 6-5 play-off defeat to Manchester placed them 3rd in the Shield (23rd out of 28 teams).

Meanwhile, the *More Than a Handball Club* support programme saw Newcastle Vikings' players and their families engaging in a variety of community activities to help further promote the club both on and off the court. These included helping out at a Great British Beach Clean event in Whitley Bay, participating in the Decathlon and This Girl Can 5k fun runs and assisting with marshalling at local park runs, holding a Parents in Sports Week thank you session and fundraising events for Children in Need, Sport Relief and collecting donations for local food banks, as well as initiating new 'walking handball' sessions.



The coronavirus lockdown did not however put an end to the season's activities as the club initiated a series of online *Zoom Handball* sessions for junior players, together with a variety of *#VikingsStayActive* fitness fun video clips across the club's social media channels throughout the spring and summer involving a mix of senior and junior players. The popularity and recognition gained led to head coach Marlen Slinning Goulty receiving the *Pass on Your Passion* award from WeAreRISE (the new name for the merged Tyne & Wear Sport and Northumberland Sport) in July 2020.



Reclaiming the Court – 2020/21

The Covid-19 coronavirus health pandemic continued to put pay to the 2020/21 season as national lockdowns caused further lengthy suspensions of senior training and competitive handball action for much of the season, as well as preventing any EHA league and cup competitions from getting underway.



However, with children's sports less affected by the lockdown restrictions, Newcastle's juniors and mini-Vikings were able to get back on court for a brief period in autumn 2020, before an eventual full return to play in late spring 2021. The Vikings took the opportunity of some England Handball Pro-Active Club funding to run an internal small-sided juniors' league, much to the enjoyment of the club's younger handballers who also chose their own team names and designed their team logos for the six-way competition.

The Newcastle-based players at the Benfield Centre for Sporting Excellence were split into two under-16 and two under-14 age group teams, while south of the Tyne the extended closure of Temple Park Leisure Centre saw the junior Vikings' satellite club sessions relocated to the Farrington Community Academy in Sunderland where the players all mixed together in two more teams. All teams picked up at least one victory in their matches.





Newcastle Vikings Handball Club Juniors League 2020/21

Farringdon Satellites		Benfield U16s		Benfield U14s	
Pink Panthers v Donald Ducks		Bouncy Balls v Corbynites		Eagles v Bean Boys	
2 Nov.	7 - 11	4 Nov.	6 - 6	4 Nov.	4 - 4
19 Apr.	12 - 11	21 Apr.	12 - 3	21 Apr.	2 - 10
26 Apr.	8 - 9	28 Apr.	14 - 12	28 Apr.	10 - 7
10 May	12 - 10	5 May	9 - 11	5 May	5 - 6
17 May	8 - 7	12 May	4 - 4	12 May	6 - 5
24 May	3 - 10	19 May	9 - 6	19 May	0 - 4
24 May	14 - 12				



The Vikings youngsters also enjoyed more weekly Zoom handball sessions during the lockdowns, before lots of summer fun playing beach handball.



The senior Vikings had eventually been able to return to training indoors at the end of May as part of the EHA's national 'Reclaim the Court' initiative, and welcomed new Romanian men's coach Calin Roman as well as the return to the club of former men's player-coach Jason Lee to lead coaching of the women's team for next season.



On 26 August 2020 it was announced that handball had gained full British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) status and would, after several years of developing the university game and last year's test event, become part of the official BUCS competition programme from the 2020/21 season. However, with the coronavirus pandemic restrictions continuing to prevent mass participation team sports from being played indoors, the inaugural BUCS Handball Championships ultimately made its debut with a somewhat scaled-back one-day outdoor event on 20 June 2021, which took place on the 3G pitches at Loughborough University. Nevertheless, for the first time, the North East had representation from two of the region's universities, Team Durham and Team Sunderland.



Durham University Handball Club again had representation in both the men's and women's tournaments, with the women's team this time coming out victorious in the second-tier Shield competition.

Having opened with a 7-12 loss against Leeds Beckett, they regrouped to claim four wins in a row in beating Manchester 10-5, hosts Loughborough II 3-5 and Heriot Watt 4-10, before rounding off with a huge 1-18 victory over Brunel in the decisive final game which ensured they beat Manchester on goal difference to claim the





university's first University Handball Championships title. Contrastingly, all of Durham's men's matches in the third-tier Trophy competition were tight closely-fought affairs, beginning with a 10-10 draw against Brunel I, beating Leeds Beckett 6-7, losing 7-8 to Portsmouth and drawing 8-8 with Warwick II, which placed them 3rd in their group.



Sunderland Handball Club reformed in February 2021, incorporated under the university's Team Sunderland banner, with an aim to run national league men's and women's teams and enter the new BUCS competitions. With past student and former Newcastle Vikings and Sunderland player Jack Woods returning in a coaching role, they entered a men's team in their first national University Handball Championships,



taking part in the other Trophy competition group. In their opening match they came up short 2-5 against Lincoln, before succumbing 21-7 to Manchester Met and losing a close game to Nottingham Trent 12-9. However, after losing captain Riccardo Martins to injury they were forced to forfeit their final game against Brunel II with a default 0-5 scoreline to finish bottom of



their group, so instead played a friendly match with coach Woods stepping in as a replacement and leading his side to a morale-boosting 10-2 victory.



The end-of-season British Beach Handball Championships made a welcome return over the weekend of 24-25 July 2021 down on the south coast in Poole, Dorset. While not enough players were available for Newcastle to enter any Vikings teams, six players took the opportunity to guest for other mixed-club teams and get back to playing competitive handball for the first time in nearly 1½ years.

Marlen Slinning Goulty, Maria González Pascual and Maria José González-Alvarez, plus new men's players Iacopo Benesperi and Timo Keller, joined up with González Pascual's former club Bristol and a few other players from Edinburgh and Liverpool to make up the *Sand Beaches* and *Sand Balls* teams. The ladies finished 5th overall after coming back from losing 2-0 to West London Eagles in their quarter-final to gain a 0-2 play-off win over Cambridge Honeybadgers, while the lads were knocked out 2-1 in a penalty shoot-out loss to Bishops Stortford in their second-tier Trophy competition quarter-



final. Goalkeeper Andrea King meanwhile guested for a Coventry Sharks team also featuring players from Northampton and Liverpool, who reached the women's Cup final and after leading early on ultimately lost out 2-0 to experienced reigning champions London GD to come away with the silver medals.



Tyneside Handball Tournament Roll of Honour 2013-2019

	Men		Women	
	Champions	Runners-up	Champions	Runners-up
2013	Edinburgh	-	Edinburgh	-
2014	Glasgow	EK 82	Newcastle Vikings	Edinburgh
2015	Glasgow	Edinburgh	Cranfield University	York-Durham
2016	Strathclyde University	Glasgow	Newcastle Vikings	Edinburgh
2017	Glasgow	EK 82	Edinburgh	University of Leeds
2018	EK 82	Newcastle Vikings	Newcastle Vikings	-
2019	Coventry Sharks	Edinburgh	Edinburgh	Coventry Sharks

North East Handball League Roll of Honour 2015-2018

Men & Women Combined		
	Champions	Runners-up
2015/16	Newcastle Vikings	York City Hunters
2016/17	Durham University	Newcastle Vikings
2017/18	York City Hunters	Newcastle Vikings

North East Handball School Games Roll of Honour 2017-2019

Under-15		
	Boys	Girls
2017	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)	Gosforth Academy (Newcastle)
2018	Biddick Academy (Sunderland)	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)
2019	Churchill Community College (North Tyneside)	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)

Under-13		
	Boys	Girls
2017	Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy (Gateshead)	St. Wilfrids RC College (South Shields)
2018	High Tunstall College of Science (Hartlepool)	St. Wilfrids RC College (South Shields)
2019	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)	High Tunstall College of Science (Hartlepool)

Tyne & Wear Handball School Games Roll of Honour 2017-2020

Under-15		
	Boys	Girls
2017	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)	Biddick Academy (Sunderland)
2018	Biddick Academy (Sunderland)	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)
2019	Churchill Community College (North Tyneside)	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)
2020	Churchill Community College (North Tyneside)	Boldon School (South Tyneside)

Under-13		
	Boys	Girls
2017	Churchill Community College (North Tyneside)	St. Wilfrids RC College (South Shields)
2018	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)	St. Wilfrids RC College (South Shields)
2019	Oxclose Community Academy (Sunderland)	Wellfield Middle School (North Tyneside)
2020	John Spence Sports College (North Tyneside)	Valley Gardens Middle School (N. Tyneside)

Newcastle University Handball Club Honours and Achievements 1966-1974 and 1995

British National Handball Championships	Men's runners-up	1973
	Men's runners-up	1974
British Universities Handball Championships	Men's champions	1966 *
	Men's champions	1967 *
	Men's champions	1968 *
	Men's runners-up	1969 *
	Men's champions	1971 *
British Student Handball Championships	Women's champions	1995
	Men's runners-up	1995
Heriot-Watt Trophy – Handball Challenge Cup	Men's champions	1966
	Men's champions	1967
	Men's champions	1968
	Men's runners-up	1969
	Men's champions	1971
	Men's champions	1973
Geordie Cup	Men's champions	1972
	Men's runners-up	1973

* the Heriot-Watt Trophy Handball Challenge Cup competitions doubled up as the British Universities Handball Championships in these years.

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club Honours and Achievements 2013-2019

England Handball Regional League North	Women's champions	2017/18
	Men's champions	2018/19
England Handball League Cup / National Shield	Women's runners-up	2014/15
	Women's semi-finalists	2015/16
	Men's semi-finalists	2016/17
	Women's quarter-finalists	2016/17
	Men's quarter-finalists	2017/18
British Beach Handball Championships	Women's Plate quarter-finalists	2015
	Men's Cup quarter-finalists (7 th)	2016
	Women's Plate semi-finalists (10 th)	2016
	Women's Plate 3 rd place (7 th)	2018
	Women's Plate quarter-finalists (13 th)	2019
Tyneside Handball Tournament	Women's champions	2014
	Women's champions	2016
	Men's runners-up	2018
	Women's champions	2018
Edinburgh International Handball Tournament	Women's runners-up	2014
EK82 Tom Cooper Handball Tournament (Women's Craig Walter Cup)	Women's champions	2018

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's All-time League & Cup Top Appearances 2013-20

Women	Position	Appearances			Total
		13/14	League	Cup	
Andrea King	Goalkeeper	10	51	6	67
Sandra Christke-Lamb	Line/Centre	10	45	4	59
Blessing Ogbee	Wing/Line		44	5	49
Marlen Slinning Goulty	Centre/Half/Line	9	29	5	43
Judyta Turulska	Half/Centre		39	3	42
Marie Thompson (née Brevet)	Wing/Half		31	3	34
Alina Inta	Half		29	3	32
Maren Liane	Line/Centre/Half		25	2	27
Katerina Gibson	Wing		21	2	23
María José González-Alvarez	Line		19	1	20
Krystina Coulson	Wing		14	1	15
Kathryn Powell	Centre/Half/Wing	4	9	2	15
Sofie Vaula	Line/Wing	8	6	1	15
Gesa Junge	Half		11	1	12
Lea Vestergaard	Half	10			10
Rosa Larcy	Centre/Half		8	1	9
Selina Stenberg	Half	9			9
Meghan Acres	Wing		8		8
Josefine Fienke Nanne	Half		6	2	8
Sina Linsenmann	Centre/Half		6	1	7
Emily Bjerck	Half		6		6
Eiman ElBanhawy	Wing	5		1	6
Rebecka Östergren	Line/Centre		5		5
Ed Ogbee	Centre/Half		5		5
Paulina Szulc	Half		4	4	4
Emmanuelle Chandler	Wing		4		4
Rebecca Johnson	Half		4		4
Nina van Ruijven	Wing/Half	4			4
Tonje Olsen	Wing	4			4
Malin Walle	Wing/Centre		3	1	4
Ingvild Misund	Half		3		3
Annabelle Guinouard	Half	3			3
Michelle Anderson	Wing	3			3
Lea Muething	Centre/Wing		2	1	3
María González-Pascual	Line/Half		1		1
Claire Guyon	Wing		1		1
Laetitia Renard-Watson	Wing	1			1
Simone Smith	Wing			1	1

















Men	Position	Appearances			Total
		13/14	League	Cup	
Matthew Lamb	Wing/Line/GK	8	45	5	58
Jonathan Bastit	Half/Centre	9	38	2	49
Daniel Walsh	Goalkeeper	7	34	6	47
Craig Swanson	Line	7	31	4	42
Adam Moberley	Wing/Line		32	6	38
Mark Harrison	Centre/Goalkeeper	6	26	1	33
Robert Thompson	Wing/Half	8	21	4	33
Stephan Stricker	Half/Centre		27	1	28
Kole Viejo-Cabellero	Wing/Line	7	14	2	23
Thomas Harrison	Half/Wing		20	1	21
Mohammed Fedi Boussema	Wing		17	4	21
David Topacho	Half/Centre		19	1	20
Julien Eng	Centre/Half		16	4	20
Holger Schulz	Line		16	2	18
Peter Schichtel	Centre/Half		16	1	17
Sam Turner	Wing	5	11	1	17
Chris Bowe	Half/Centre	7	9	1	17
Neil Bhandary	Half	6	8		14
Pål Jakobsen	Goalkeeper		11	2	13
James Porter	Half		12		12
Scott Garrow	Wing	4	7	1	12
Pablo Docampo	Centre/Half		12		12
Simon Heintz	Wing/Half		9	1	10
Faisal Albathali	Goalkeeper		9		9
Mohammed Ghuloum	Centre/Half		9		9
Gracjan Joppek	Wing/Half		8	1	9
Johannes Bellm	Half/Wing		7	2	9
Wiktor Laczny	Wing/Half		7	1	8
Mike Cooke	Goalkeeper	4	3	1	8
Kamran Saeed	Wing	6	1	1	8
Jason Lee	Centre		7		7
Dawid Miozga	Centre/Half		7		7
Jack Woods	Wing/Half		7		7
Etienne Lisse	Half/Centre		6	1	7
Andrei Bogdan Ciurea	Wing		5	2	7
Cedric Le Lay	Half/Line		5	2	7
Amaury Michelant	Centre/Half		6		6
Benoit Barthel	Wing		6		6
Athbi Almarzouq	Half		5	1	6
Charlie Goulty	Half/Wing	6			6
Niall Flanagan	Wing		5		5
Vlad Cocos	Centre/Line		5		5
Bart Piorkowski	Half		4	1	5
Adam Batley	Centre/Half		4	1	5
Robin Devilette	Centre/Half		4		4
Gareth Bowden	Wing/Line	4			4
Frank Smelt	Half		4		4
Kasper Ottosen	Wing/GK		3		3
Nichlas Foldager	Centre/Half		3		3
Milan Anilkumar	Wing/Line		2	1	3
Adam Harwood	Centre/Half		2		2
Christos Iliadis	Line/Half		1		1
Dan Hudachek	Half		1		1
Benjamin Andrews	Line		1		1







Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's All-time League & Cup Top Goal Scorers 2013-20

Women	Played	Goals Scored			Total	Goals per Game Strike Rate
		13/14	League	Cup		
Judyta Turulska	42		178	12	190	4.52
Sandra Christke-Lamb	59	29	142	8	150	3.03
Marlen Slinning Goulty	43	29	112	18	130	3.70
Alina Inta	32		142	11	153	4.78
Maren Liane	27		86	8	94	3.48
Marie Thompson (née Brevet)	34		82	7	89	2.62
Blessing Ogbee	49		73	7	80	1.63
Sofie Vaula	15	24	32	2	34	3.87
Selina Stenberg	9	33			33	3.67
Rosa Larcy	9		32	1	33	3.67
Nina van Ruijven	4	30			30	7.50
Lea Vestergaard	10	28			28	2.80
Rebecka Östergren	5		27		27	5.40
Sina Linsenmann	7		21	2	23	3.29
Gesa Junge	12		14	2	16	1.33
María José González-Alvarez	20		13	3	16	0.80
Emily Bjerk	6		15		15	2.50
Josefine Fienke Nanne	8		10	3	13	1.63
Kathryn Powell	15	5	8		8	0.87
Eiman ElBanhawy	6	9		3	3	2.00
Annabelle Guinouard	3	11			11	3.67
Krystina Coulson	16		10		10	0.63
Ed Ogbee	5		9		9	1.80
Meghan Acres	8		8		8	1.00
Lea Muething	3		5		5	1.67
Tonje Olsen	4	5			5	1.25
Katerina Gibson	23		4	1	5	0.22
Ingvild Misund	3		3		3	1.00
Laetitia Renard-Watson	1	1			1	1.00
Rebecca Johnson	4		1		1	0.25
Malin Walle	4			1	1	0.25
Andrea King (GK)	67			1	1	0.01

Men	Played	Goals Scored			Total	Goals per Game Strike Rate
		13/14	League	Cup		
Julien Eng	20		89	29	118	5.90
Matthew Lamb	58	20	71	9	80	1.72
Stephan Stricker	28		74	3	77	2.75
Jonathan Bastit	49	29	41	3	44	1.49
David Topacho	20		65	3	68	3.40
Simon Heintz	10		63	4	67	6.70
Peter Schichtel	17		47	2	49	2.88
Pablo Docampo	12		48		48	4.00
Mark Harrison	33	23	24		24	1.42
Adam Mobberley	38		40	5	45	1.18
Wiktor Laczny	8		34	6	40	5.00
Mohammed Ghuloum	9		37		37	4.11
Johannes Bellm	9		23	13	36	4.00
Kole Viejo-Cabellero	23	20	14	1	15	1.52
Athbi Almarzouq	6		31	1	32	5.33
Mohammed Fedi Boussema	21		20	9	29	1.38
Chris Bowe	17	17	11		11	2.8
Amaury Michelant	6		26		26	4.33
Dawid Miozga	7		24		24	3.43
Robert Thompson	33	10	13		13	0.70
Niall Flanagan	5		22		22	4.40
Bart Piorkowski	5		18	4	22	4.40
Craig Swanson	42	2	17	2	19	0.50
Cedric Le Lay	7		14	5	19	2.71
Graçjan Joppek	9		18	1	19	2.11
Holger Schulz	18		18	1	19	1.06
Nichlas Foldager	3		18		18	6.00
Scott Garrow	12	5	11	2	13	1.50
Adam Batley	5		11	5	16	3.20
Andrei Bogdan Ciurea	7		10	6	16	2.29
Robin Devilette	4		15		15	3.75
Frank Smelt	4		14		14	3.50
Jack Woods	7		14		14	2.00
Adam Harwood	2		12		12	6.00
Neil Bhandary	14	11	1		1	0.86
Thomas Harrison	21		10		10	0.48
Gareth Bowden	4	9			9	2.25
Etienne Lisse	7		5	4	9	1.29
Sam Turner	17	1	5	3	8	0.53
James Porter	12		8		8	0.67
Jason Lee	7		7		7	1.00
Vlad Cocos	5		4		4	0.80
Benjamin Andrews	1		3		3	3.00
Milan Anilkumar	3		1		1	0.33
Christos Iliadis	1		1		1	1.00
Charlie Goulty	6	1			1	0.17
Daniel Walsh	47			1	1	0.02

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's All-time British Beach Handball Championships Appearances 2015-19

Women		Appearances				Total
		2015	2016	2018	2019	
Andrea King		6	6	6	6	24
Ed Ogbee		6	6	6	6	24
Sandra Christke-Lamb		6	6	6		18
Marlen Slinning Goulty		6	6	6		18
Blessing Ogbee		6	6		6	18
Krystina Coulson			6	6	6	18
Kathryn Powell		6	6			12
Eiman ElBanhawy			6		6	12
Birgitte Folkvord				6	6	12
Gesa Junge		6				6
Nina van Ruijven		6				6
Marie Thompson (née Brevet)			6			6
Sofie Vaula			6			6
María José González-Alvarez				6		6
Caroline Steinhagen				6		6
Bruna Falgueras Vallbona					6	6

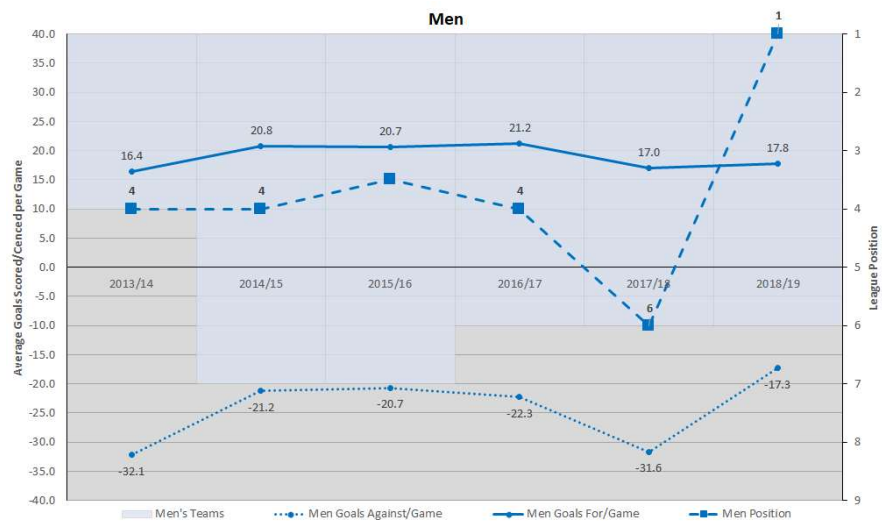
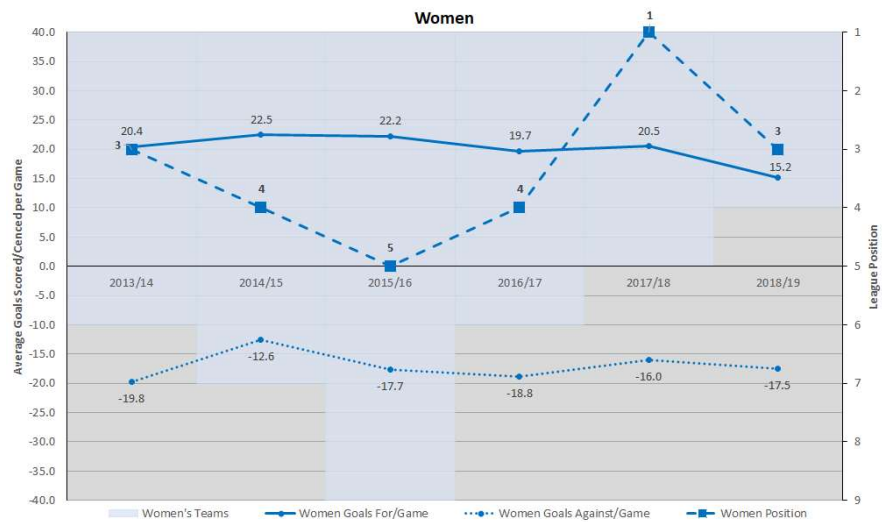
Men		Appearances	
		2016	Total
Chris Bowe		5	5
Gracjan Joppek		5	5
Wiktor Laczny		5	5
Matthew Lamb		5	5
Jamie Lau		5	5
Robert Thompson		5	5

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club's Season League & Cup Top Goalscorers 2013-20

Women	Top Goalscorers	Top Goals per Game	Strike Rate
2013/14	Selina Stenberg 33 (9 games)	Nina van Ruijven	7.50 (30 in 4 games)
2014/15	Marlen Slinning 75 (13 games)	Marlen Slinning	5.77 (75 in 13 games)
2015/16	Judyta Turulska 62 (10 games)	Judyta Turulska	6.20 (62 in 10 games)
2016/17	Alina Inta 40 (8 games) / Judyta Turulska 40 (9 games)	Rebecka Östergren	5.40 (27 in 5 games)
2017/18	Maren Liane 34 (7 games)	Alina Inta	5.50 (33 in 6 games)
2018/19	Rosa Larcy 33 (9 games)	Rosa Larcy	3.67 (33 in 9 games)
2019/20	Marlen S. Goulty 16 (4 games)	Marlen S Goulty	4.00 (16 in 4 games)

Men	Top Goalscorers	Top Goals per Game	Strike Rate
2013/14	Jonathan Bastit 29 (9 games)	Mark Harrison	3.83 (23 in 6 games)
2014/15	Simon Heintz 67 (10 games)	Simon Heintz	6.70 (67 in 10 games)
2015/16	Wiktor Laczny 40 (8 games)	Nichlas Foldager	6.00 (18 in 3 games)
2016/17	David Topacho 41 (9 games)	Niall Flanagan	4.75 (19 in 4 games)
2017/18	Julien Eng 61 (11 games)	Adam Harwood	6.00 (12 in 2 games)
2018/19	Julien Eng 51 (8 games)	Julien Eng	6.38 (51 in 8 games)
2019/20	Pablo Docampo 23 (4 games)	B. Piorkowski / J. Eng	6.00 (6 in 1 game)

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club – League Positions, Average Goals Scored and Average Goals Conceded 2013-2019*



* 2013-14 season – Scottish Handball Leagues (Men’s Division 2, Women’s Division 1).

* 2014-2019 – England Handball North Regional Leagues (except 2017/18 Men’s National League North).

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club Board Members 2012-2020

Chairperson	Marlen Slinning Goulty	2012- to date
Secretary	Mariana Saba	2012-2013
	Sofie Vaula	2013-2015
	Sandra Christke-Lamb	2015- to date
Treasurer	Selina Stenberg	2012-2014
	Robert Thompson	2014-2017
	Mark Harrison	2017-2019
	Blessing Ogbee	2019-2020
	Andrea King	2020- to date
Welfare	Charlie Goulty	2012-2015
	Craig Swanson	2015-2017
	Matthew Lamb	2017- 2019
	Caroline Snell	2019- to date
Marketing/Sponsorship	Daniel Walsh	2014-2015
	Jonathan Bastit	2014-2016
	Matthew Lamb	2016-2018
	María José González Alvarez	2018- to date
Media	Chris Bowe	2013-2014
	Andrea King	2014- to date
	Charlie Goulty	2014-2015
	Adam Mobberley	2016-2020
	Paula Scheel	2020- to date
League	Mark Harrison	2014-2015
Fixtures	Robert Thompson	2014-2015
Social	Matthew Lamb	2012-2018
	Sandra Christke	2013-2015
	Pål Jakobsen	2018-2019
	Matthew Lamb	2019- 2020
	María González Pascual	2020- to date
General	Maren Liane	2018-2020
	Mark Harrison	2019-2020
Webmaster	Abraham Metta	2012-2013
	Mark Patterson	2014
	Robin Devilette	2014- to date

Newcastle Vikings Handball Club Coaches 2012-2020

Head Coach	Marlen Slinning Goulty	2012- to date
Men's Coaches	Jason Lee	2014-2015
	Jonathan Bastit	2015-2016
	Stephan Stricker	2015-2018
	Peter Schichtel	2016-2017
	Pablo Docampo	2017-2019
	Mark Harrison	2017-2019
	Frank Smelt	2019-2020
Women's Coaches	Calin Roman	2021- to date
	Marlen Slinning Goulty	2012- to date
Women's Coaches	Jason Lee	2021- to date
	Juniors Coaches	Marlen Slinning Goulty
Robert Thompson		2014-2016
Mark Harrison		2016-2018
Kristina Kronborg		2016-2017
Ed Ogbee		2019-2020
Adam Batley		2019- to date
Minis Coaches	María González Pascual	2019- to date
	Katerina Gibson	2018- to date
Minis Coaches	María José González Alvarez	2019- to date

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