



Women's Softball Cricket: Yorkshire 2017 Impact Report



YORKSHIRE
CRICKET BOARD

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Introduction. . .

This summer we've held softball cricket festivals all over the county for women of all ages and abilities to get involved in. With softball proving immensely popular, and more women than ever before engaging in the sport, we'd like to take this opportunity to share with you the fun, the laughter and the impact this summer has softball has had.

From highlights, to feedback, to next steps and future direction, this booklet is a whistle stop tour of women's softball cricket in Yorkshire so far.

With over 500 women getting involved and a huge response from all the women who attended saying that they want the opportunity to play more and more cricket, the initiative has been a huge success. Softball has not only engaged an audience of women, it's reignited a love for the sport in those who haven't played for a while, provided those who've never had the opportunity to play before to give it a go and given them the opportunity to have a laugh simultaneously. Through softball cricket this summer, women haven't just been playing the game, they've been enjoying it, and it's clear to see from the festivals themselves and the wealth of positive feedback we've had that this is the case.

Statistics of



out of 5 in terms of
enjoyability

11

Softball
Festivals

509

Women

9.3

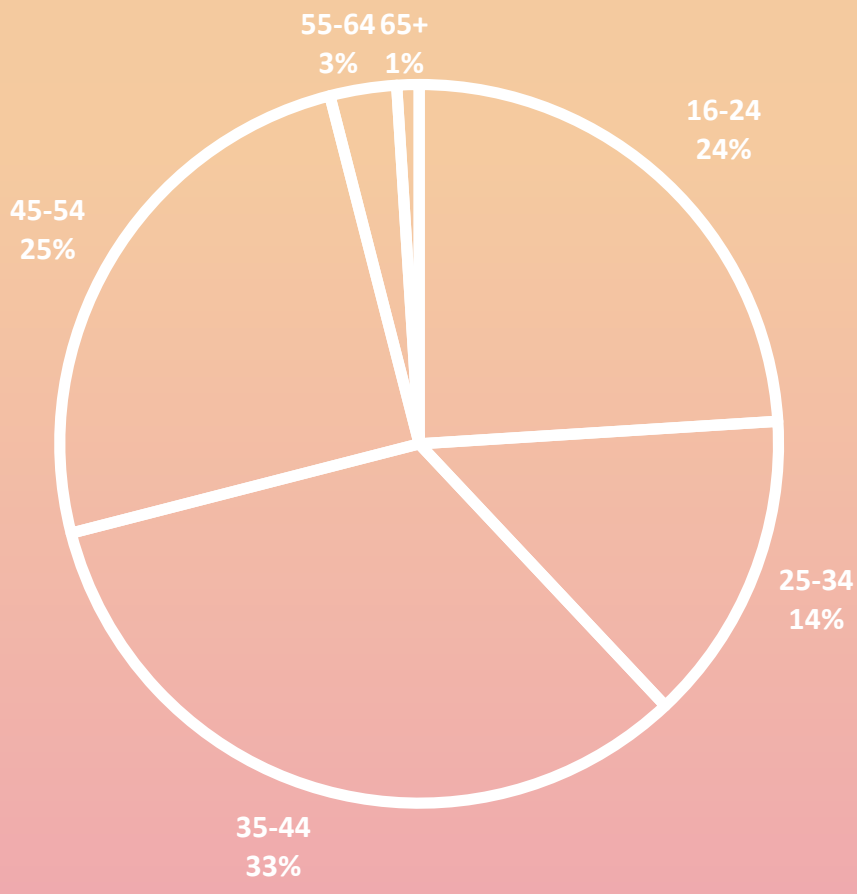
out of 10 in terms of how
likely they are to
recommend to a friend

81%

said the softball festivals
positively changed their
perception of cricket

the Summer...

Statistics of



100%
interested in playing more cricket in some form



200
Facebook
Likes

3445
Highest reach for a post on Facebook

100% interested in participating in another softball festival

the Summer...



East Yorkshire

Driffield...



90



Watch the festival video below...



<https://youtu.be/sqgzGP-8sEQ>

Cottingham...



43



Watch the festival video below...



<https://youtu.be/v8HD6khvU-0>

Feedback

All the attendees said they **enjoyed** the festivals, and that they **achieved their aims** in coming to the festival, that is to have a laugh with their friends. They also **enjoyed the competition format** of the day. Overall the festival scored **4.7/5** for how much **participants enjoyed their day** and **9.14/10** for how **likely** they would be to recommend the day to a friend.

The attendees felt the **prosecco was a good selling point** of the day bringing many women to the festival, one of the organisers noted that **before the mention** of prosecco many **women did not want to know**.

The majority of attendees said they **would attend another softball festival**, with this coming out from the survey as the **option the most people** were most interested in. Some were **unsure** whether they'd like any **more commitment** than the festivals, however noted their attendance to sessions indoor etc. would **depend on where or when** the sessions were being held.

Many **did not want to be committed** to a team, with **joining a women's club** coming out as the **least preferable** option among attendees.

It was noted that an **indoor prosecco cricket festival would be well attended**, with **options** for women interested in playing more often in place to **signpost women to**. Furthermore the **second most preferred** option from the survey was **indoor cricket** throughout winter.





North Yorkshire

Long Marston...



31



Watch the festival video below...



<https://youtu.be/q2-38WSABVY>

Feedback

Festivals **were well received** with all attendees saying that they **enjoyed both the day** and the addition of the **free kit bags**. The Long Marston festival received a rating of **5/5** for enjoyability and **all** who attended said they would **recommend the festival experience to a friend**.

One of the teams from the festival have **attended numerous softball festivals** throughout the summer, both in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, showing the **want and need for such an offer** among women. Furthermore the other teams have since been in touch to **ask about more opportunities** to play softball cricket socially.

All who answered the feedback survey remarked that they were **very interested** in further softball cricket **festivals in the area**, with interest also for a **softball cricket season** and **indoor softball cricket** throughout the winter.

Interestingly despite **lack of interest in hardball cricket** amongst participants, there was an **interest in the joining of a women's club**, suggesting the possibility of **women's softball sections within cricket clubs**, either standalone or alongside existing hardball sections.

Most suggested they would prefer the activity to be **shorter than the original 3 hours**.





South Yorkshire

Warminster Road...



85



Watch the festival video below...



<https://youtu.be/pCDAIKqXFNE>

Sheffield Collegiate...



87



Watch the festival video below...



<https://youtu.be/uznGW9Ht8Ng>

Feedback

All who attended the festivals **enjoyed the day** with the two South Yorkshire festivals receiving an average rating of **4.7/5** for enjoyability.

Many commented on how much they enjoyed the **opportunity to play cricket socially** where it **otherwise did not exist**, asking for more **women's only sessions** to be run on a regular basis.

All those who responded on the survey have expressed future **interest in playing more cricket**, with the most favoured options coming out as **more softball cricket festivals**, the possibility of an **organised softball cricket season**, and **indoor cricket sessions** similar to the festivals themselves.

“

It's been a fantastic opportunity. Thank you very much for the great organisation. Considering I went there alone and the team I ended up making up on the day with strangers was great. And we were one of the winners. What more.

”

“

I really enjoyed the festival, had a fantastic day, never stopped laughing, would definitely do it again for my son's cricket club if asked.

”





West Yorkshire

St Chad's ...



50



Watch the festival video below...



<https://youtu.be/qMeVZ32Ozbc>

Scholes...



90



Watch the festival video below...



<https://youtu.be/ue9myc0n2AA>

Feedback

All the attendees said they **enjoyed** the festivals, particular how **social** they were, emphasising **the appeal of softball** as opposed to hardball. Also **enjoyed the game format** as there was **no pressure**, describing it as a **friendly environment** to have a go.

All at the festival agreed they **would like to continue playing** cricket after the festivals.

Interest in **similar social cricket events indoor** over winter, where the emphasis is on social aspect as opposed to competition.

More interest in **skills sessions** before the festival than a softball league as such, **enjoy less competitive**, more **social environment** and would like any other offers to reflect this also.

Would like even **more festivals** and similar events next summer. Suggested **festival activity itself should be 3 hours** long, with more time for games, giving them **more time to bat**. However other activities such as **skills sessions or indoor sessions** were suggested to be **no longer than two hours**.

Preferred the idea of **bi-weekly** commitment, or **turn up as you please** as opposed to fixed weekly sessions.

Next steps for those who trained regularly at St Chad's identified to be **longer format fixtures, but still softball**. Also interest in **softball leagues** running into a festival for next summer.



Next Steps...

Driffield: Rugby team that attended on the day joined 'Have A Go' hardball competition ran by the club in the aftermath of the Festival.

Warminster Road: University Women ran 7 weeks of coaching at Warminster Road for the attendees of the festival.

Long Marston: In the process of using the £250 gained from reaching target of 30 women to set up women's section at the club.

Sheffield Collegiate: Julie Thompson from Whiston Parish in partnership with Kevin Gresham set up two evening softball sessions at both Whiston Parish CC and Treeton CC. See video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFIPfVOpxtM>

Holmfirth/Scholes: Amanda Garrard using £250 gained from reaching 30 women target to set up indoor women's social softball sessions from January onwards.

Cottingham: Plan to run indoor prosecco cricket sessions in Hull both for women who attended softball festival in the area and to attract women for festivals in place next season.

Summary and Conclusions

From the above it's clear to see that Women's softball cricket has been a huge hit with the ladies of Yorkshire. As well as the filmed festivals above, we held two more festivals at Aine Cricket Club and North Stainley Cricket Club, getting us up to that 509 figure. Both festivals again were well received with the demand increasing for more opportunities for women to get involved in cricket socially.

Interestingly, the last festival at North Stainley was facilitated only by conversations with the club, and the dropping with them of a kit bag to run the festival themselves. The club provided us with the names of all women who attended after the festival so that they could be added to the online system. This provides an interesting opportunity to capitalise upon for softball delivery next year if handled correctly, allowing us to expand the reach of softball in the area, and cover more ground without spreading resources too thinly.

The emphasis for the huge involvement of women seems to be the social impact. From all the feedback sessions held, it is this that rings true amongst all settings, and is undoubtedly the reason for such a high engagement of women in the programme throughout the summer. The only current offers that exist for women are both rigid and require a lot of commitment. Softball cricket, and the festivals in particular represent a fun and social way for women to get into cricket without being put off by the thought of excessive commitment and it is key that this continues into next year, forming the basis of our plans and offers.

Having said this, there is also the need to keep women engaged with the sport after the one-off or standalone festivals. As the feedback has indicated, women want to play cricket more. Therefore, more emphasis next year needs to go into creating an offer for women after the festival, that remains fun and sociable, whilst also providing them with the opportunity to get more involved.

