

EMERALD<sup>TM</sup>  
WARRIORS  
RFC

Emerald Warriors RFC  
Annual Report 2021-2022

JULY 2022



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## Introduction

Hello Fellow Warriors and welcome to this seasons annual report.

I'd like to start by thanking you our members. The season has had its challenges coming out of the pandemic. The support, enthusiasm and ambition for us to succeed throughout the season is greatly appreciated. All of you contributing towards our vision of being the leading inclusive rugby team in Ireland and beyond.

Following on from months of searching and negotiating, it was fantastic to get over the line, The High School as our new training facility. There may have been teething issues at the start but great to have all working out so well, this is a year on year contract. We are currently agreeing the license for renting grounds into our season ahead.

Starting off the season on the back of a long break on the pitch our full contact teams built on performances and went from strength to strength. Exciting to have non-contact established as a year round rugby option for members and thriving after an incredible Naoise summer series.

Three teams represented the club at Hadrian, including for the first time, women competing for the club. Rounding off a fantastic trip was returning with silverware. Our regular season was rounded off with our largest fundraiser event in the history of the club, well done everyone, bursting with pride.

Huge thanks to our committee, coaching team, volunteer members, supporters, partners and stakeholders for bringing together an incredibly productive season to be proud of. I look forward to building further on the success of the season with you all into 2023.

The following annual report was prepared by our committee and Director of Rugby to ensure that all members of the club and our stakeholders were fully informed of all the activity and achievements of the club over the last year.

#TryWithPride

Richie Fagan,  
Club President





## Committee Members 2022

The Club was incredibly grateful for the 2021/2022 committee who brought so much energy and commitment to the forum this year. This has had a hugely positive impact on the Club and how it operates. Thank you to each and every one of the committee members this year for a fantastic job.



**Richie Fagan**  
Club President



**Philip Purcell**  
Vice President



**Aaron Doyle**  
Membership Secretary



**David Donnelly**  
Comittee Member



**Gary Gaughan**  
Secretary



**Eoin Blaney**  
Committee Member



**Pauric Cave**  
Committee Member



**Eamon McConomy**  
Treasurer



**Graham Flaherty**  
Committee Member



**Simon Murphy**  
Committee Member



**Club Trustees**

Thank you for being on hand for advice, guidance and introductions with possibilities of grants and funding. We have lots more to work on, and look forward to doing so in the season ahead.

**Strategic Plan**

We have reviewed the strategic plan, taken time to assess what was achieved around our core pillars this season but also noting what we have to do. Thank you for the commitment and buy in from our committee and members, all leading to accomplishing strong results for a stronger more sustainable club. We'll continue to engage, and discuss what is being done on our Strategic plan with members, allies and stakeholders

**Grants**

We have been successful with receiving a second grant this year from the IRFU. Work is going into Ireland Funds, with no promise of receiving previous grants, but relationships re-established with workshops planned on showing us how to apply, manage and cultivate the club going forward.

**Home Grounds**

Coming out of the pandemic, the landscape for partnerships in this area has moved. Working with consultants Onside we continue to Identify brands and organisations that could be prospective partners that have spaces, and other organisations that want to talk to about supporting our new home. I have also been working on identifying philanthropists/HNW individuals. We have been lucky to have introductions made this season to many key new stakeholders in this area and the work continues.

**President's Report**

In 2021/2022 you will see throughout this report areas completed in line with the club's strategy to achieve our objectives; I have worked closely with our committee and members in charge of these areas of membership, coaching, finance, social media and fundraising. Further details will be given by the primary owners, and it is encouraging to see such growth and progression in all these areas.

**Partners and sponsors**

Partner sponsorship as you maybe aware is our single biggest income stream and remains so this year, with Bank of Ireland our lead sponsor. Partner contracts are up in 2023 for all sponsors. There is a large piece of work to start, negotiating new contracts with hopefully all existing and possibly new partners. Fantastic to have a new partner in Lululemon this season and again to note thanks to DLA Piper on assisting with pro-bono work around legals and accounts which is invaluable to protecting the club going forward, as ever huge thanks to them and all partners for this support.

**Community Engagement**

We are grateful for the incredible support within our Rugby and LGBT+ community. Coming out of the pandemic we reconnected in person with all and seen the great results of this. Thank you, Sporting Pride Ireland, GCN, BelongTo, TENI, The Dublin Lesbian Line, LGBT+ Ireland, Outhouse, IGR, Leinster Branch and the IRFU. It was an incredible buzz to have so many of our stakeholder march with us in Pride this year, and introduce many of those to their first pride.





**Diversity and inclusion in Sport**

We continue to work on opportunities to best promote and collaborate, increasing the diversity and inclusion in Irish rugby. Following on from work done this year. We have been invited to partner with the IRFU and their Spirit department. Looking at ways to drive people back to better behaviours for next season, based on some accounts of poor behaviour over the last year. The focus will not be on one area, we will be chatting with referees and other departments within IRFU.

It cannot be overstated that the achievements and updates noted here could not have been achieved without the incredible support, energy and drive from you the members involved with the committee, and all in sub committees. I am very grateful to you all and look forward to continuing our work in the season ahead.

#TryWithPride

Richie



**VP Report**

A note from Vice President Phillip Purcell on the past (21/22) season – Annual Report 2022.

This year has seen the club return to in person events and games and back to some level of normality. It has been a phenomenal year for the club in terms of growth, milestones hit, the level of engagement from our peers and allies within the Irish rugby community and the wider LGBTQ+ community. I am honoured to be part of this club on a daily basis providing what we can only hope is an incredibly enjoyable sporting experience for all our members. Please see my update below for this past season of what was achieved:

Continued engagement with schools and business promoting diversity and inclusion through sport. Over the past season I have spoken to in excess of 1,200 students varying from 3rd years to 6th years in their respective schools about the importance of diversity and inclusion, the use of terminology used on and off the pitch, how this can affect many other students in the class along with teammates who may or may not be a member of the community.

Topics that regularly came up from these students were; How can they be better allies?, How can they be there for friends going through their 'Coming Out' experience?, How can they make their club more inclusive along with the need for safer spaces for the LGBTQ+ community. These talks have been so successful that we have been booked as a club to revisit these locations to speak with the next batch of students coming through the ranks.



Disciplinary committee which were all resolved in an efficient manner thanks to the work of the current outgoing Disciplinary Committee. I would like to say a special thank you to Jay Newton, Shane Dunne & Alan McCormack for all of the hard work they have put into the Disciplinary Committee over this past season.

As many of you reading this will know, the roles the Committee undertake in the club crossover with many, many other roles in terms of sub committees and general committee dealings along with not so general committee dealings. This past year has been incredibly busy for all of us on the committee and if it was not for the support and hard work by our phenomenal team I would not have been able to perform the aforementioned events. If anyone would like to discuss any of the above mentioned points in more detail please reach out to me directly via mail and I will gladly go into more detail!

Phillip Purcell – VP EWRFC.

### Treasurer

The club had another strong financial year, with a profit of €13.8K. Post Covid, one of the committee’s objectives was to invest in the club and re-engage with the membership on the pitch and in person. Income remained constant year on year. 2021 income was inflated by Union Cup profits contributed at €21.5K reported in Other, and Grants in 2021 was €6.3K higher. Adjusting 2021 total income figure for these exceptional items would revise income to €55.5K versus €81.6K in 2022. Subscriptions increased by €11.2K which is great as a strong membership bodes well for the long-term

#### Fundraising/Sponsorship:

Queen of the Warriors was one of my main priorities this year which was organised, managed and executed by myself resulting in the largest fundraiser the club has ever had to date. I am incredibly proud of the 9 other Queens that took part in making this event such a success. Of course, this event would not have been successful if it was not for the help of the wider committee and members with the selling of votes and raffle tickets along with the George kindly sponsoring the event. We can only hope that the bar is now set for a record breaking event every year.

Lululemon saw a crossover from the previous season to this current season and I am incredibly proud to have been a driving force behind this relationship which saw our members have access to free yoga sessions every week to prepare the bodies for the season ahead. As part of the sponsorship agreement between the club and Lululemon I secured Yoga mats for our sessions along with Lululemon t-shirts resulting in a total sponsorship worth between €10,000 & €11,000.

#### Coaching Team Liaison:

As part of my role within this club I am tasked with the very enjoyable job of being the liaison between committee and coaching staff via the Director of Rugby. As part of this role I am closely associated with our Director of Rugby to ensure a smooth plan is continuously communicated to the committee ensuring that we are all on the same page and all working towards the goals of the club.

#### Disciplinary Committee:

As Vice President of the club I am Chair of the elected Disciplinary Committee which oversees the management of the complaints referred by the main Committee for dealing with. This year we had a number of issues before the





health of the club. The work to introduce Naoise has been a major driver to this, thanks to all involved. Our Fundraising Team reached new levels this year, €17.2K of income is fantastic achievement, illustrating the success of all events. Return to playing and training has seen expenses increase €42.4K year on year.

Match day in both our codes have increased €24.1K and is explained by a full schedule of matches, training and open day events [part of investment post covid]. Administration costs increased by €15.7K year on year. The key drivers have been for Onside Management Consultancy [€12.3K] who are providing advice and guidance on the project to find a long-term home ground and coaching costs [€7.9K]. A saving of €3.7K was made on branding and postage.

Profit and Loss		2022	2021
Income:	Subscriptions	25,159	13,964
	Fundraising	17,220	1,378
	Sales	341	366
	Sponsorship	28,500	30,600
	Grant	9,152	15,525
	Other	1,206	21,489
Total Income		81,578	83,322
<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>Match Day</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>(20,162)</b>
		Non Contact	(12,268)
		Tournament	(3,453)
	Administrative		(31,498)
	Other		(414)
Total Expenses			(67,795)
Profit / (Loss) in period			13,783

The club's balance sheet position remains healthy. Five-year government bonds are due to mature in 2025 and 2026. Liquidity of the club is good, with a strong cash balance. Debtors are all collectible and at the time of this report have been lodged to the club's bank [€10.4K fundraising and €5.5k sponsorship]. Creditors are payments due for events [€3.2K], match day [€2.2K] and tournament registration [€1.9K] that occurred in the year and therefore accrued for.

Our Accounts paint part of the picture of a successful year. The club with your help contributed €1,350 to Sporting Ireland, driven by profits raised at the Oscar Wilde Cup. Thanks to all for supporting events such and supporting others.

Balance Sheet		2022	2021
Financial Investment:	Government Bonds	85,000	85,000
Fixed Assets		253	1,858
Current Assets:	Stock	987	1,147
	Debtors	18,495	-
	Cash	40,622	37,177
Total Assets		145,357	125,182
<b>Current Liabilities:</b>	<b>Creditors</b>	<b>9,718</b>	<b>3,327</b>
Total Assets less liabilities		135,639	121,856
Capital Account	Reserves	121,856	63,898
	Profit / (Loss)	13,783	57,958
Total Capital		135,639	121,856



## Hon Secretary Report

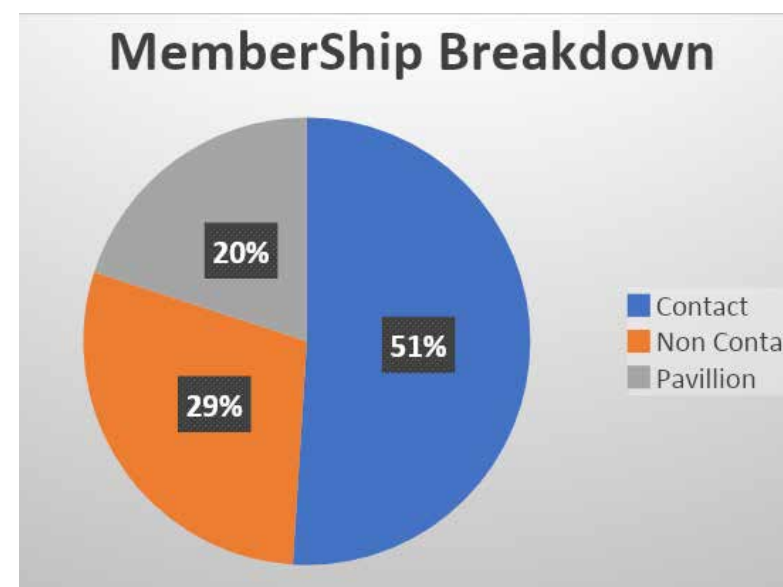
Over the 2021/2022 season this was our first season to also include Naoise and to have female playing members of the club. The club committee has met monthly since the last AGM in May 2021. There were also numerous meetings of the committee and subcommittee on an ad hoc basis as the need arose over the last year. Meetings varied from 30 minutes to over 3 hours, depending on the agenda and items to discuss. Meeting minutes and actions were recorded and approved during these meetings, with reports from different leads being communicated and discussed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank this year’s committee for their incredible work and commitment since our appointment and for the collective effort that was made to realise so many of our goals and objectives. I feel that the Club is in a much stronger position as a result and look forward to enjoying those benefits with our members in the future.

## Membership Secretary

The 2021/22 Season has seen the club grow to over 200 members with over 115 new members joining the club this season. This influx of members is largely due to the introduction of the Naoise – Non Contact Offering. Naoise has been a great addition to the Club and has provided another pathway for individuals to join and actively participate in the club.

The club is made up of a blend of members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies. The 2021/22 season has seen the club increase our gender diversity and now 17 members identify as Female, Non-Binary or Queer, while we still have a long way to go this is a step in the right direction. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee and Coaching Team for their commitment, hard work over the previous 12 months as well as the support they have provided to me since I took up the role of Membership Secretary in October 2021. I look forward to continuing to work with them to deliver our club’s goals in the next 12 months.



## Sponsorship and Stakeholder Engagement

The Emerald Warriors RFC are privileged to have such a wide range of well-established organisations supporting our Club with sponsorship.

Sponsorship is the Club’s single biggest income stream in 2021/2022. This year saw an increase in sponsor investment in the Club and additional new partners in Lululemon coming on board. We can proudly say our partnerships align to our values and vision and go beyond a monetary value.

It is important to note all sponsorship agreements expire



in 2023 and we are preparing to enter into discussions with all existing partners with the ambition to sign new contracts for the upcoming 3-5years. The Emerald Warriors RFC are incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported us this season.

### Bank of Ireland

As our main partner, Bank of Ireland has extensive core values in diversity and inclusion along with an incredible passion for rugby.

With such active diversity and inclusion programmes in their organisation along with continued support for LGBTQ+ groups through their Begin Together fund, Bank of Ireland demonstrates a strong and visible show of support for our community, making this partnership a truly authentic and exciting one. We are one of a very few International Gay Rugby clubs sponsored by such an established and inclusive corporate partner.

The club were delighted to attend the bank’s 2022 With Pride event at Bank of Ireland College Green, at which the bank funded BelongTo elearning module for LGBTQ+ youth volunteers was launched. Bank of Ireland’s value to the Club goes beyond monetary and the club is very grateful for the bank’s support in helping us to play, promote and foster rugby in an inclusive manner.

### The George/Mercantile Group

Our longest running proud partners and this season they have opened up the use of their venues within their group for not just social and fundraising events but meeting spaces and assisting on advice with their business development team on boasting fundraiser events. The George has been servicing our LGBT+ community for over 30 years, embracing and playing part in the evolutionary cultural and social change in Ireland.

They play a pivotal role in fighting for LGBT+ rights and equality and we are incredibly proud to be associated with them. We wish The George and the Mercantile Group every success as they reopen their businesses and emerge from this pandemic. We plan to meet management in The George and the Mercantile Group soon for planning into the season ahead.



**Meagher's Pharmacy**

We are honoured to call Meagher's Pharmacy our wellbeing partners. Meagher's are at the forefront of an industry embracing the evolving role of pharmacy whilst delivering new innovative services at the core of our community. Meagher's are contributors to our Folláine Welfare Programme, suppliers of our medical kits with further plans for our member engagements for seasons ahead. Thank you to Oonagh and all the team in Meagher's for looking after us during these strange times with Warrior discounts and our Folláine Programme.

**Kukri Ireland**

Emerald Warrior's long established partnership with Kukri as a club sportswear manufacturer continued into the 21/22 season. Over the past twelve months Kukri have continued to support EWRFC with the same drive for quality and professionalism that the club experienced when they first came on board as sportswear manufacturer. The club looks forward to partnering with Kukri into the 22/23 season and are delighted to be taking delivery ahead of the upcoming season of three new Kukri playing kits, ensuring that our players are looking their best on the pitch in both green and navy.

**LuLuLemon Ireland**

Lululemon are passionate about working closely with communities and giving back. We are honoured that Lululemon approached us to see how they can be more involved in the club. Lululemon's IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Action) focuses on making systemic changes. determined to be accountable, engaged, and to act in allyship. They have come on board to help us with our recovery, providing us with one of their yogi's Shane Lennon. Shane has run online yoga classes for our members. Lululemon provided our members with yoga mats, apparel and discounts for in-store purchases.

**DLA Piper**

DLA Piper came on board this season to assist with helping us elevate the standards in the running and operations of our Club with pro bono legal work. Diversity and inclusion are key to DLA Piper's global identity. As a global business law firm, with a diverse client base, their pro bono practice is consistent with our vision to be "truly local, truly global". Thank you to Chris and the team in DLA Piper for their expensive work on review on the Club constitution, recommendations, many meetings and appreciate their vision to prepare us for 2022 and beyond.





## Strategic Plan

The 2021/22 Season marked the first year of the Emerald Warriors Rugby Football Club's (EWRFC) Strategic Plan. The EWRFC Committee (The Committee) worked with the Coaching Team, Volunteers and members to deliver this strategic plan. We look forward to building on what has been an incredible first year under the strategic plan for the Club.

### 1. Performance

Throughout 2021/22 the Committee worked to strengthen the development and performance of members, players and coaches and the committee. This involved.

- Forming a structure and direct line of management for our club, players and coaching staff by appointing former Ireland International and Leinster Player Ms. Juliet Short as Director of Rugby. Since her appointment Ms. Short has been an amazing addition to the Club, both in professional influence, and enthusiastic participation.
- Before the 2021/2022 season kicked off the Coaching Team attended an Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) coaching course ensuring that they had the most up to date skills and knowledge to aid with multiple different levels of experienced players.
- The Coaching Team put in place coaching plans and retrospective overviews to take on learnings and tweak future coaching sessions while keeping the Committee updated on coaching plans. The coaching team arranged for numerous guest coaches and Leinster referees to attend training sessions to offer expertise and insights to players on the Laws of Rugby and position specific training. This provided players with an incredible opportunity to have



Subject Matter Experts on hand to answer technical questions but also learn from.

- On several occasions throughout the season, Navy team players have been called up to play for the Green Team.
- Naoise tag was introduced within the club in the previous twelve months, this has provided another avenue for individuals to join the club and enjoy the game of rugby. There has also been a number of Naoise players who have made the transition to contact rugby providing another pathway within the club. We've also had players over the course of the last year sign up for full contact, and realise it's not for them and move to Naoise, which ensures that there is a place for everyone in the club.
- Over the course of the last year we've had both male and female identifying members who have started with the club through the Naoise programme attending full contact training. Although the club doesn't have a female contact team (yet), this has led to Female Naoise players playing tag with the Emerald Warriors.
- Naoise players attended a referee course, this has been beneficial for our Naoise training evenings and also to diversify player options throughout the year. This has been proven to strengthen the relationship with the ITRA and also show all members of the club that there is a culture of growth and progression.
- For the first time in the clubs History a tag Coach was appointed to develop and improve the skills of our tag players during the Naoise Summer Series.
- In addition, there were also numerous first aid courses carried out throughout the year to build contingency plans for match day situations and avoid a lack of medical presence.
- To recognise player accomplishments during matches, the coaching team have established post match awards in which Forward players pick their Back player of the match, and vice versa. A Coaches choice of player of the match



is also awarded. This process helps different factions of the team to seek and recognise player performance, which helps to build appreciation levels after a game. These recognitions were also acknowledged at the Captain's Dinner with physical awards following a player vote.

- Throughout the year it has been noted on social media through posts and sharing of the incredible work and achievements of the club and players. There has been a wide audience reach, celebrating different members(contact, non-contact & Pavilion) through Warrior Wednesdays, players making their debut as part of the Emerald Warriors teams is also highlighted on social media.
- During various times throughout the year and in addition to the Monthly Committee meeting, the Committee attended leadership workshops to work through elements of the Strategic Plan, as well as working on how to be better leaders for the club and to work closer together to ensure the clubs ethos and values ring through for any and all work that is carried out.

Leveraging off the foundation which has been laid in 2021/22 season, the Club plans to do the following in 2022/23;

- After the success of female identifying players coming onboard last year, we'd like to explore the potential for a dedicated female identifying contact team as well as attract more female identifying players to our non contact team.
- Host a volunteer open day to highlight the various different ways members can get involved in the club. We've grown as a club to over 200 diverse members and want to continue to grow but also showcase how there is a place for everyone and all members can have a hand in the success of the club.
- Appoint a Pavilion Officer and create a specific plan for Pavilion members to maximise engagement with the club, including ways to volunteer, non player fitness classes and be part of match days, events to socialise and build their

network within the club.

- Explore options for retired players to participate within the coaching team/wider club to ensure they continue to stay part of our community.
- Hire a Head Coach to expand and ensure there is a robust coaching team that serves the needs of the players and direction the club is going.
- Develop a year round training program for Tag and appoint a permanent coach to ensure our Naoise Offering is set up for success.

### 2. Wellbeing & Duty of Care

Our ambition as a club is to continuously provide opportunities for personal wellbeing and improved physical and mental health outcomes for both the Club's membership and the wider LGBTQ+ community. Our membership, volunteers, welfare officers, coaching team and sponsorship partners have all played key roles in striving to achieve this goal in the last year. This past year has been an incredibly exciting year with the return of face to face events and we began our dive into the wellbeing/duty of care policy by taking action in a number of key areas:

- Our club welfare officers were appointed at the beginning of the year and have played an incredible role in offering support to our membership that need it in areas extending much further than your average welfare officer would offer.
- Providing an opportunity for a wider segment of the LGBTQ+ community to participate and enjoy the physical mental health benefits of playing sport as playing members of the club through the introduction of Naoise tag into





the club. This has also increased the diversity amongst our membership, with now over 20 members who identify as female, the highest female participation in our club ever.

- Yoga classes were offered to members in advance of the season commencing in order to increase the readiness to train and go into contact thanks to sponsorship from Lululemon via Shane Lennon which was greatly appreciated by both the coaching team and players alike. This sponsorship amounted to almost €12,000 when you consider the yoga, mats and free kit the club was given by Lululemon.
- Nutritional talks by current members to educate other members on how best to prepare for game days, recovery and performance. EWRFC are incredibly proud to be fostering relationships with our members that can give back to the club in more ways than one.
- Fitness classes have been integrated into the training program to prepare the contact teams participation in the Bingham Cup.
- The Committee has reviewed and updated the duty of care policy within the club to ensure all members are now covered and a step by step system has been implemented to ensure logging of injuries and recovery back to the pitch.
- All club medical kits now come complete with sanitary products and are present at all games the club partakes in to ensure the comfort and safety of our members are looked after. These products are free should members need them at matches or events and this initiative was sponsored by our health and wellbeing sponsor Meagher's Pharmacy.

Heading into the end of season and looking into the next year the club has major ambition and huge determination to build on what has been an incredible year under our Wellbeing and Duty of Care pillar. In the next year the club looks:

- Through Follaine, we aim to progress the mental wellbeing of all members. This will have a knock-on effect of improved attitudes, self-awareness and inter-player support which will bring up the performance, recovery and commitment of our players.
- Continuing to provide Yoga classes to Club members.
- Continue to train and appoint more first aiders to ensure the safety of the members on match days.

**Research & Events**

Throughout the 2021/22 Season the Committee has worked to progress delivery of this theme, this includes ;

- Tag Rugby Sports Day in partnership with the TU Dublin LGBTQ+ Society. To continue progressing with this goal we plan to build-out the relationship with the TU Dublin LGBTQ+ Society, as well as reaching out to the other third-level organisations to explore opportunities to engage with them with similar events. Opening this route of communication will also allow the club to seek research opportunities with third-level organisations around LGBTQ+ participation in sport.
- The Committee is currently working alongside Leinster rugby to create Diversity policies within rugby. We hope that this programme will educate all stakeholders involved within the support and provide a more inclusive landscape for individuals to thrive at all levels of rugby.
- The Committee members took part in many school talks at secondary levels. These talks focused on the club and what we do but also focused on peoples individual journeys of accepting their sexual identity.
- Homophobia sadly has been on the rise since we exited a mass lockdown over the last few years. The club is





(such as the Phoenix Tigers) to broaden the scope of the wider community having opportunities to learn about the Club and what it has to offer.

- The Club hosted the Oscar Wilde Cup in partnership with The Dublin Devils FC. This is a day of friendly competition to raise funds for Sporting Pride Ireland - a volunteer-run group that aims to encourage and support LGBTQ+ participation in sports across Ireland. A huge success, we will look to run this session again in the future and look to continue to involve other LGBTQ+ inclusive clubs.
- The Club travelled to Newcastle, United Kingdom, and competed in the Hadrian Cup to great success. Our Green team came home with the Hadrian Cup, while the Navy team took home the Antinous Plate. For the first time also, the Hadrian Cup boasted a tournament for Touch rugby players. We were delighted to have members from our Naoise team compete in this - it was the first time we had female-identifying members competing for our club.

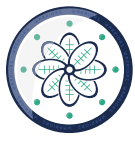
Leveraging off the foundation which has been laid in 2021/22 season, the Club plans to do the following in 2022/23;

- We will continue to host a Naoise Tag Summer series, encouraging new members to meet the team and try the sport for themselves. It is also informing female-identifying members that the club is open for them to join, enabling the club to explore the option of a women's contact team through growing membership.
- The Club will participate in the Mark Kendall Bingham Memorial Tournament, or Bingham Cup; as it is more widely known – the biennial world championships of gay and inclusive rugby. Our club was fortunate to host the Tournament here in Dublin in 2008, and we'll be representing our club and country again in Ottawa, Canada, for this years' Tournament in August 2022.

working hard at all levels to ensure this is stopped by engaging with our key stakeholders and partners and continuing to educate people on the matter.

- Members of the Club participated in Guinness Podcast – The42.ie and spoke of their experiences and shared their success stories from the Hadrian Cup 2022.
- Dublin Pride provides the club with a huge opportunity to engage with other organisations such as the other sporting bodies, who joined the club in marching in the annual parade each Pride. Each year we invite representatives to join us in the parade as members of the LGBTQ+ community themselves or as allies in support. This year we had representatives of the IRFU, Leinster Rugby come join us in the parade demonstrating their commitment to the club and the wider LGBTQ+ community.
- We have established a relationship with the Irish Tag Rugby Association (ITRA) through our Naoise Team. This sporting body came out in support of the Emerald Warriors and the LGBTQ+ community after the attack on a member of our club and hosted a reflection during one of the Tag leagues. We will continue to engage with all our partners building on existing relationships and building new as the club grows and diversifies to promote the participation of the LGBT+ community in sport through the creation of a safe and inclusive environment.
- Over the last year we continued to explore opportunities to host and participate in local events such as annual non-contact rugby tournaments, rugby clinics, open days, meet the team evenings and social events to provide members of the wider community opportunities to learn about the Club and what it has to offer.
- We hosted our first Naoise Tag Summer Series and hosted a Pride Tag blitz during Summer 2021. The Naoise Summer Series also took place in Summer 2022.
- The clubs also supported the LGBTQ+ Women's Sports Day this year and will continue to connect with female clubs





- We will continue to provide educational talks to schools and organisations promoting LGBTQ+ participation in Sport.
- Continue to host regular events, open days and participate and promote wider community events.
- Publishing a full yearly event calendar at the beginning of the season detailing all key events throughout the year including key talks with our sponsors, educational talks, fundraising events and key dates in both the Metro, IGR and Naoise leagues.

### Sustainability of the Club

Throughout 2021/22 EWRFC Committee worked to ensure the long term sustainability and viability of the club. This involved

- The establishment of a Home Grounds Steering Group to explore the viable options of securing a home ground for the Club. The Club has also engaged [Placeholder for name of consultants] to work to assist the club in this endeavour and establish relationships with key partners as well as leveraging off existing relationships. In the interim the club announced in August 2021 the move to The High School Rathgar .
- The club continued to attract new members as well as retaining existing members in 2021/22 Season, hosting an open day in late summer 2021, ensuring training resumed in person and matches took place as soon as COVID-19 restrictions allowed. The Club also established our non-contact tag rugby offering “Naoise” in 2021/22. These activities allowed the club to grow to the largest it has ever been with over 200 members and allowed the club to increase the diversity of our members and provide another avenue for members to join.
- To ensure the appropriate Governance of the Club all decisions by the Committee are taken in line with the Club constitutions and policies. As well as this, a series of appropriate financial practices are in place and all spend on behalf of the club is approved by the Committee, Trustees (As necessary under Sec 9.7 of club constitution),

recorded in the minutes of each committee meeting, and a two – tier payment process in place for all payments. As well as this new payment expense claim process has been implemented.

- Successfully applying and receiving over [xx] in grants and registering as a Sports Club with Revenue.
- Managing the Clubs membership and Club Shop via ClubZapp.
- Maintaining and developing our relationships with our key partners and sponsors is essential to ensuring the long term sustainability of our Club. We continued to engage with our sponsors and key partners throughout 2021/22 via direct meetings, hosting events and collaborating on our social media channels.

Leveraging off the foundation which has been laid in 2021/22 season, the Club plans to do the following in 2022/23;

- Complete further work to secure a home ground for the club.
- Ensuring the club’s policies are reviewed and updated as necessary.
- Continue to attract new members and retain existing members.
- Explore the possibility of establishing an all female contact team and touch rugby team.

### 5. The Voice of Diversity & Inclusion in Sport

Over the course of the year the has become more diverse than ever. What started out in 2003 as a club which allowed





access for LGBTQ men to enjoy contact rugby has become so much more.

- This season we welcomed our first female identifying Director of Rugby Ms. Juliet Short and our first Tag-rugby Coach Clare O’Sullivan. We also introduced our Naoise division, which is also open to female identifying members and attended Female specific sports days aimed at welcoming women to sport. We are constantly looking for ways to attract potential members who do not identify as a cis-gender male.
- The committee has also taken time to educate the broader community on what diversity means in sport. The committee has attended numerous panel discussions, podcasts, articles and visited schools and large companies to discuss the topic. We as a club have been described by our Sponsor Bank of Ireland as “Ireland’s leading LGBTQ+ rugby club” but we aim to become the world’s most inclusive club. This means ensuring that people of different race, religions, gender and ability feel welcomed in our club.
- We have developed a relationship with the LGBTQ+ Society in The Technological Diversity of Dublin to establish a relationship with students. We have also engaged with members of the academic research department of TUD to gain a better understanding of the barriers to sport for different groups of society.

Leveraging off the foundation which has been laid in 2021/22 season, the Club plans to do the following in 2022/23;

- Develop a script for use in school educational talks and develop and train members to deliver presentations on behalf of the club.
- Develop and provide Diversity & Inclusion awareness training to club members and volunteers.
- Continue to work with and foster connections with LGBTQ+ clubs and organisations in Ireland and abroad.

## Director of Rugby

Go raibh maith agat and comhghairdeas to everyone at the Club, including our fantastic players, hardworking committee, dedicated coaches, team coordinators, volunteers, social media staff, and, of course, our supporters, and sponsors. We are extremely grateful for your efforts and ongoing assistance.

I’m pleased to report on a season that saw incredible and noteworthy achievements across the board.

The 2021–22 season was the first full one since the COVID–19 epidemic, and it was wonderful for the EWRFC Contact teams to be able to continue a regular rugby season and to add our Naoise Rugby Tag to the Warrior’s armoury. For many members of the community, both on and off the field, the Club was able to provide important sporting and social engagement.

We’ve had a lot of fun and success since August 2021:

We now have a new home at The High School where we train and play our games. The High School has demonstrated a deep understanding of our club’s mission and unique offerings. We cannot express how grateful we are for your hospitality and support.

The Emerald Warriors Rugby Club has nearly 200 members, and the addition of women to the Naoise Tag Rugby team demonstrates that we are an open and inclusive club.





reflect on the season’s successes and shortcomings to help us continue to improve this wonderful club and community.

Yours in rugby,  
Juliet Short, Emerald Warriors Director of Rugby.

## Naoise

### TAG RUGBY - BROADENING OUR COMMUNITY, ENRICHING OUR CLUB

As a club the Emerald Warriors pride ourselves on being an inclusive space for members and allies of the LGBTQ+ community in the participation of sport. We are passionate believers that diversity and inclusion makes a club a richer place. In early summer 2021 the Emerald Warriors launched a tag rugby offering called ‘Naoise’ meaning ‘young warrior’. The introduction of this tag programme has had far reaching benefits for the club which we are still reaping as we look towards the end of the 2021/22 season.

From May 2021 the club began hosting Friday evening ‘Naoise’ tag sessions at TU Dublin’s Grangegorman campus which were open to people of any ability, experience level, sexuality or gender who were interested in playing tag rugby. The uptake and demand among the LGBTQ+ community was fantastic and made for a very special series of rugby filled Friday evenings during the summer at a time when we were emerging out of a long lockdown. Along with the obvious social and both physical and mental health benefits the Friday evening sessions offered a first introduction

In the Leinster Metro League, two teams competed in 14 games each. Divisions 7 and 10 won three games, drew one, and lost ten, putting them in sixth and eighth place, respectively.

Mixed Naoise Tag Rugby team that competes in summer and Winter Leagues.

The Hadrian Cup Tournament in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne was a huge success for the club, giving the Naoise mixed tag rugby team the opportunity to represent the club in an overseas competition. To cap off a fantastic weekend for the club and everyone involved, the two contact teams brought home silverware.

Thank you to the six IRFU and Leinster affiliated guest coaches who made appearances (Colin Moran, Christian Short, Ben Armstrong, Gareth Murray, Luke O’Dea, and Matt Gill). Your advice is priceless.

We have 8 sessions left before heading to Ottawa, Canada for the Bingham Cup. Thank you so much to everyone who made it possible for us to start training three months ago. We are thrilled to announce that over 50 people will be attending the tournament, which will include two teams as well as old and new support staff.

Congratulations to all the participants, both players and coaches! The attitude and commitment of everyone at EWRFC was one of the year’s greatest triumphs and most pleasing aspects.

Finally, I’d like to express my gratitude to the committee and volunteers for their input on the end-of-season survey. As Emerald Warriors Rugby Club strives to recruit and retain the growth and quality of Warriors, it is critical that we





to rugby for many of the participants who up until this point had never considered playing any sort of rugby or had felt barriers to their participation because of their ability or sexuality.

This first introduction fuelled a real appetite for tag amongst participants so much that we extended our Friday sessions into August while also organising Emerald Warrior teams to participate in competitive tag leagues. During this period the club launched a tag membership option which allowed our new tag participants to become full members of the Emerald Warriors club. The benefits that this new membership have brought to the club have been immeasurable both from the point of view of diversity and membership levels. At a time when many clubs are struggling to field teams Naoise has provided a massive and welcome boost to our membership numbers which now stand at circa 200 with approx. 25% being Naoise tag members.

This increased membership is also a more diverse and broader membership meaning that for the first time in Warrior's history in June 2021 women's players represented the club in Navy and Green club jerseys competing in summer tag leagues. Many of the tag players have continued to represent the club through the year in competitive weekly tag leagues with great enthusiasm. From a rugby union perspective our Naoise tag programme has provided a successful pathway to full contact rugby for some of the it's participants with some players who joined as tag members progressing to represent the club in the Leinster Metro League this season. This has provided an invaluable player number boost to our two teams and is a welcome additional source of new players outside of our traditional yearly open day recruitment drive.

Now in 2022 we hope to further increase our membership numbers and diversity to help ensure the long-term viability of the club for future generations to watch, play and enjoy rugby in its various forms in an inclusive and safe

environment . Tag rugby will undoubtedly be a key pillar in achieving this goal as we continue with our Summer Naoise Series 2022 #TryWithPride

## Leinster Metro League

With the live games back in full swing, the Metro Committee had more live rugby discussions this year. Topics discussed included league timetables, division gradings, preseason and postseason Cup tournaments.

The Metro Committee also showed huge support towards the Emerald Warriors on two instances. First when our players were subject to homophobic abuse during a game. There was a very strong rebuttal towards this type of behaviour. And secondly when Evan Somers was attacked. Many clubs reached out after the meeting to offer support. We also had Shane Delaney, Metro & Leinster Rugby Executive member, show his support in person with Evan's tag team, and during our Pride march.

A subject that came up numerous times was verbal abuse towards referees and match officials. This was experienced across all levels, and is a growing concern.

On both of these points of abuse, there are motions to develop sanctions towards players & club members who verbally abuse fellow players & match attendees.

On a sad note, we were informed of the passing of Thomas Magner, a member of the Metro Committee, representing Suttonians RFC. Our condolences to his family and club members.





witness the vibrance of the Club and its growing membership during the last 12 months as we attempt to highlight and promote all aspects of Emerald Warrior activities on our Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and TikTok platforms. From Friday evening Naoise tag summer sessions, contact training sessions, Leinster Metro league fixtures, Hadrian Cup, tag leagues, fundraising events such as Queen of the Warriors, social events such as the Captains dinner and Halloween party and of course the return of the Dublin pride march, the content shared was exciting, original and well received by all and only made possible through the cooperation of the club membership.

As always the club's membership and their activities were critical to the continued growth of our social media platforms during this period and enabled us to continue to promote the Club and rugby to a wider audience. In particular we have increased our Instagram following by approximately 39 per cent to circa. 6,130 followers making us one of the largest the LGBTQ+ sporting organisation Instagram followings in Ireland. This places us in an excellent position to continue to be an important voice for diversity in sport in Ireland and internationally through our social media platforms. Over the past year the Club's social media platforms have remained an important communications outlet for the Club.

For many prospective members a visit to one of the Club's social media pages is the first step in the process to membership by getting a feel for what the Club is all about before coming down to training or an open day. We hope to continue this work into next season and in particular highlight the increased diversity which we have gained over the last 12 months within our membership. Thank you to all the members of the social media team who contributed their time and effort over the last year in helping to create new content and successfully grow our social platforms making the last season one of our most successful to date.

## Folláine Welfare Programme

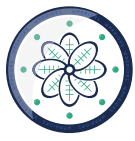
As the club added the additional Naoise offering to attract new members and the Green Team had moved up a more competitive division, the committee decided to update the duty of care policy. The duty of care policy has been updated and will be implemented in the coming season, this duty of care policy has a strong focus on return of play for players and concussion. We would strongly suggest all players purchase a scrum-cap for playing contact. We were also delighted to have some of our Coaches and players trained in first aid and have them support members at games and at training. This was a necessary spend for the club to add value for our members but also to ensure our players are looked after on the pitch.

The club is currently struggling for volunteers and should you want to get involved with first aid, match days, or events please reach out to the committee. The club also planned to host follaine events however the uptake on this was extremely poor. An event being the charity walk with Darkness into light with 8 of our members walking through Phoenix Park in the early hours of the morning to help raise money for the very worthy cause.

## Social Media Team

The last 12 months have seen the much awaited return of rugby to post-pandemic society and with it the return and substantial growth of all Emerald Warriors club activities. It has been a privilege for the social media team to





information is shared with groups via WhatsApp messages including (but not limited to) internal and external events, attention to important mails, return to play updates and time-sensitive updates. WhatsApp Messaging was the most popular method of communication to Emerald Warriors RFC members, however training-specific and match-specific communication is mainly channelled through the ClubZap application.

**ClubZap**

ClubZap is the online membership function, lotto and club accessories store. It is also used as the primary means of contact to all contact players, with separate groups for both the Green and Navy teams. It is through this platform that details of scheduled games will be shared with the players, along with plans for the bi-weekly contact training.

**Newsletter**

The Emerald Warriors RFC Club Newsletter continued this year and even underwent a design refresh - moving to Mailchimp as a platform to build and design each issue. The newsletter was also adjusted to be a quarterly communication, rather than a monthly communication. The newsletter is used as a way to disseminate large amounts of information to club members, the purpose of which is to communicate what has taken place within the Club within the previous period and what was scheduled to take place in the coming weeks and months.

**Mailchimp**

Mailchimp is used for compiling the quarterly newsletter. The newsletter is a summary of club activities including important past and future updates for members.

**Communications**

In the last 12 months Communications has been utilised to support the progression of the club and promote the significant amount of work we have done throughout the year – there is a substantial amount we have achieved that we should be incredibly proud of. Communications uses a number of channels to connect with our Members, listed below with some additional detail on how each is used:

**Email**

Upon registering as a member with Emerald Warriors, all members are added to the '2021/2022 Members' email group. There were a number of additional email groups established for varying sub-groups e.g., pavilion members, sub-committees etc.. Peaks in communication via email can be linked to significant topics for club communication e.g., Annual General Meeting and return to training. Emails are important or text-heavy club updates, requests and general information. To drive members' attention towards emails they received, in some instances we follow up with a WhatsApp message alerting them to check their inbox.

**WhatsApp Messaging**

Upon registering as a member with Emerald Warriors, all members are added to the 'EWRFC Members 20/21' WhatsApp group. A number of other smaller groups were formed to facilitate direct communication with sub-groups within the Club, such as a Naoise WhatsApp group for members confirmed competing in the ITRA leagues. A variety of





### Google Forms

Used on an ad-hoc basis, Google Forms is used for gathering responses to the annual club survey and strategic plan suggestions.

## Events

Thankfully after hosting some online events during the COVID-19 Pandemic the events team was delighted to get back organising in person events. The events team took great care in ensuring events ran in line with government guidelines. Overall the year itself was packed full with many interesting and exciting events from our Naoise Pride Blitz last June All the way to our unforgettable Halloween Party in October. The events team were delighted to see great uptake in the events not just from members but also from families and friends. The events team are excited to continue to organise more events in the coming year.

Below is a sample list of what we organised this year - we hope you have great memories from them all!



## Club Captains Awards 2021/2022

We were delighted to gather as a club for our first in-person Captains dinner and awards night since 2019 to celebrate the 21/22 season and some of the people who helped make it such a success.

The Captains dinner gives the club and its members the chance to recognise their fellow Warriors across a number of categories. This year's winners are listed below:

- Warrior of the Year - Gary Gaughan
- Club Green Player of the Year - Gary Gaughan
- Club Navy Player of the Year - Patsy O'Callaghan
- Captains Green Player of the Year - Finbar Ryan
- Captains Navy Player of the Year - Cormac Doherty
- Captains Naoise Player of the Year - Aoife Fox
- Captains Most Improved Green Player - David Revins
- Captains Most Improved Navy Player - Paul Sheehan



- Naoise Pride Blitz 2021
- Oscar Wilde Cup 2021
- Emerald Warriors Open Day
- Contact Team Building Weekend with Activities and Team Meal
- Halloween Fancy Dress Party
- Series of Watch with The Warriors (Six Nations)
- Captains Dinner Awards Ceremony
- Darkness into Light Team Walk
- Kangaroo Court at Hadrian Cup
- Pride Parade
- Dublin Pride Run
- Solidarity Stand Event for Attacks in Ireland
- LGBTQ + Women's Sports Day
- Naoise TU Dublin Tag Event
- St Patrick's Day Parade
- End of Metro League Party
- Naoise Summer Series Launch and 1st Birthday Party



- Volunteer of the Year - David Donnelly
- Ally of the Year - Stephen McCabe
- Spirit of the Warriors - Evan Somers
- Fundraiser of the Year - Shane Rafferty
- Presidents Award - Eamon McConomy
- Club Naoise Player of the Year - Daniel Proctor + Eoin Blaney
- Captains Most Improved Naoise Player - Davide Massa

A huge congratulations to all of our winners, and thank you to everyone who voted and came along to Opium to make it a great night!

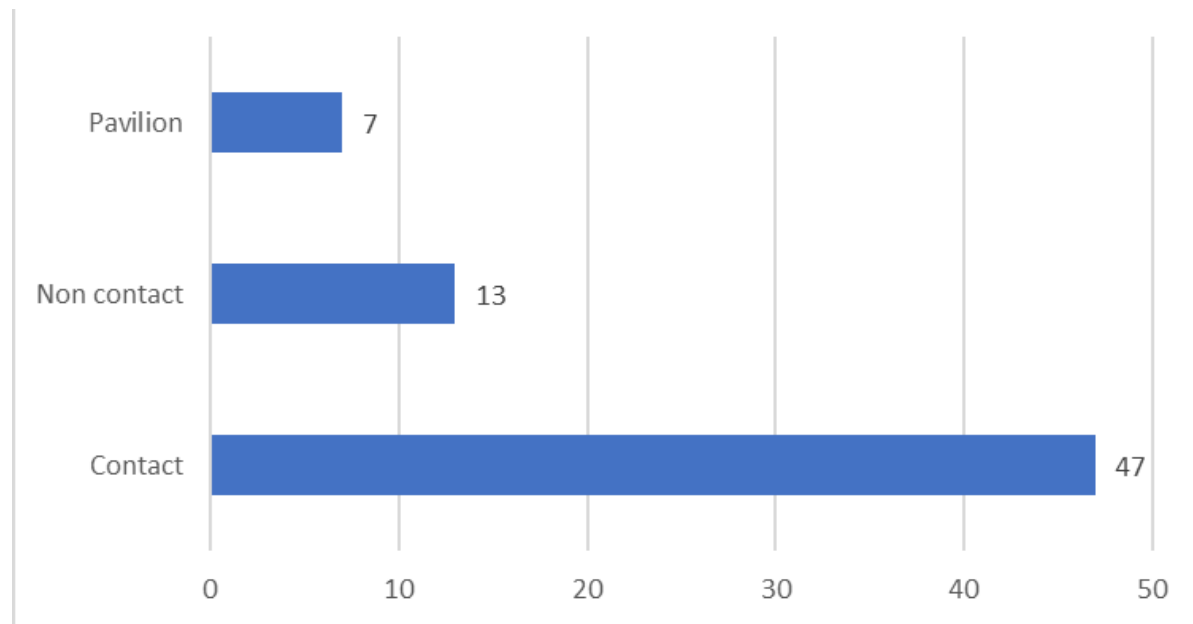


## 2021/2022 Survey

The 2021/2022 Annual Club Member survey was sent to 196 members of the Club who had been registered by May 2022. There was a response rate of 36% and the survey was open for members to complete for a 5-day period. All members were initially contacted by email and subsequently by WhatsApp message with a reminder. Findings from the survey are outlined below.

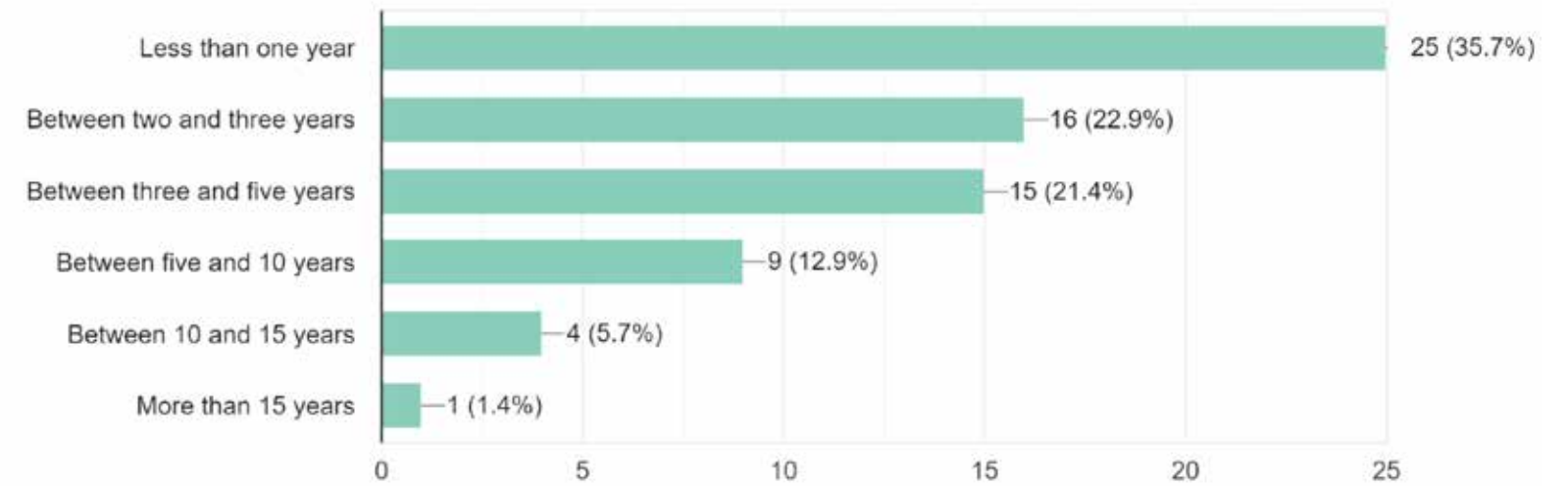
### What type of membership do you have?

67 responses



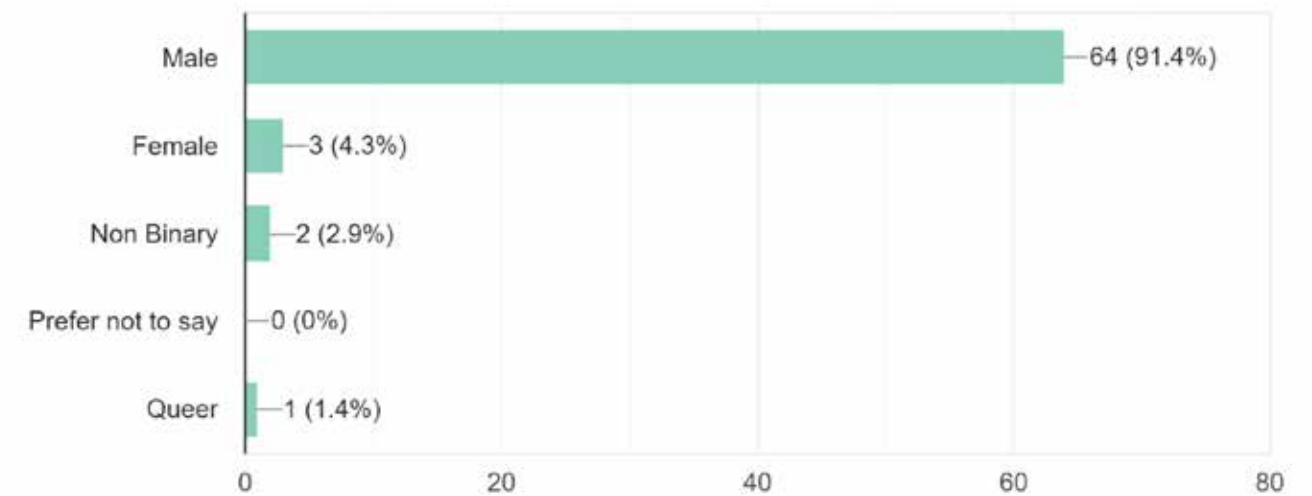
### How long have you been a member of the club?

70 responses



### What gender do you identify as?

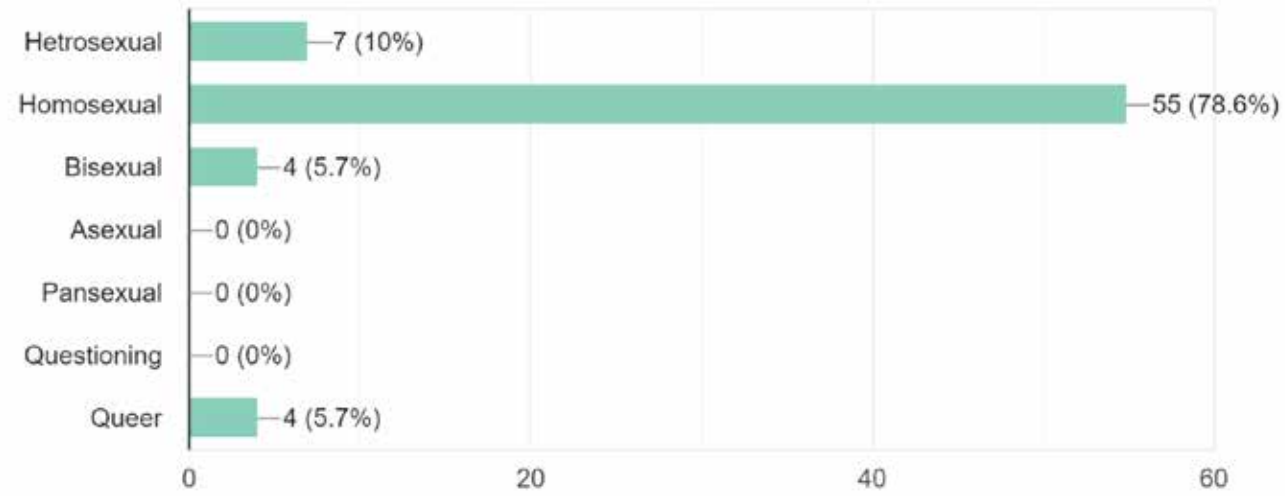
70 responses





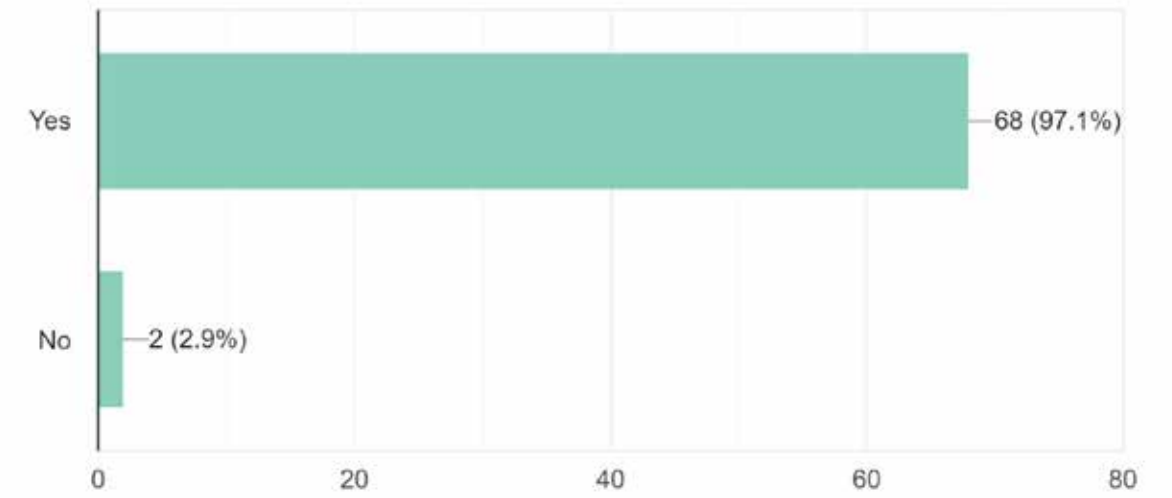
*Which sexuality category best describes you?*

70 responses



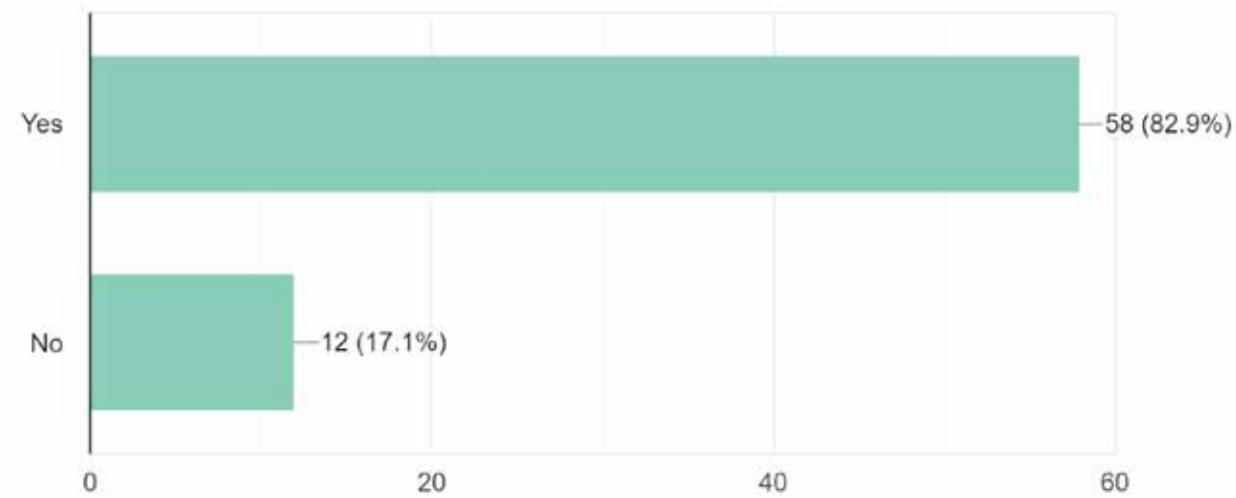
*Would you recommend Emerald Warriors RFC to a friend, family member or colleague?*

70 responses



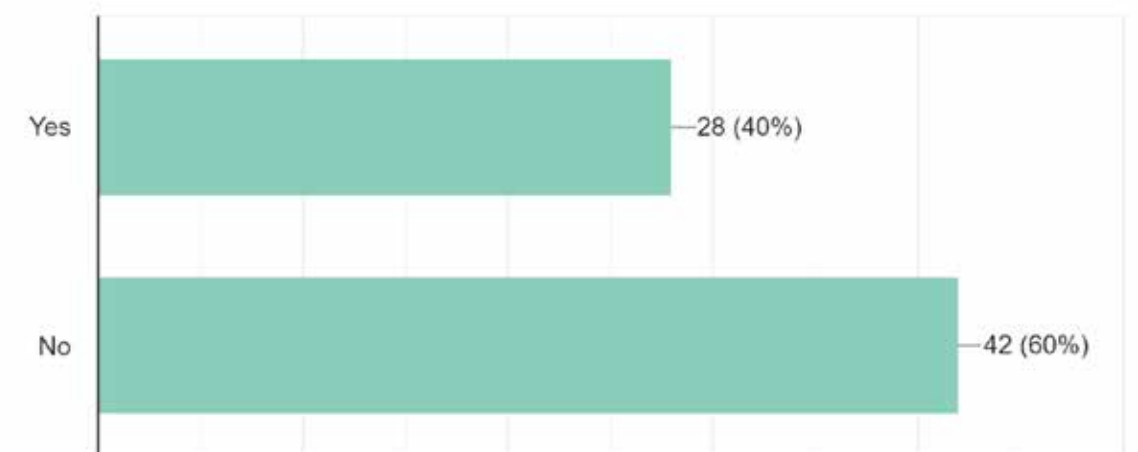
*Do you feel like a valued member of Emerald Warriors RFC?*

70 responses



*Before joining Emerald Warriors RFC, had you played contact/non contact rugby competitively in the past e.g. with a club or school team?*

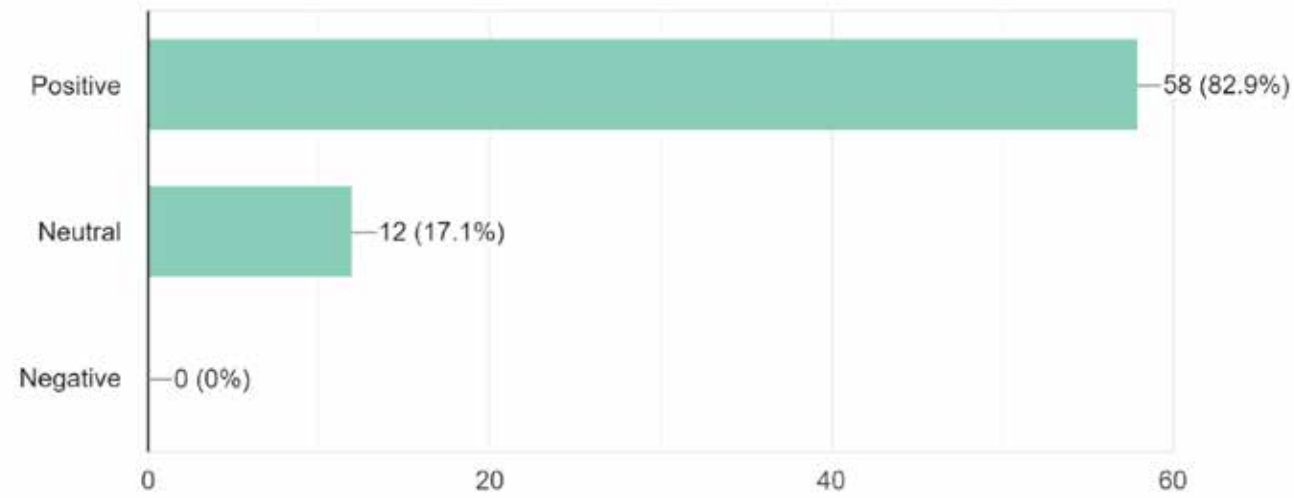
70 responses





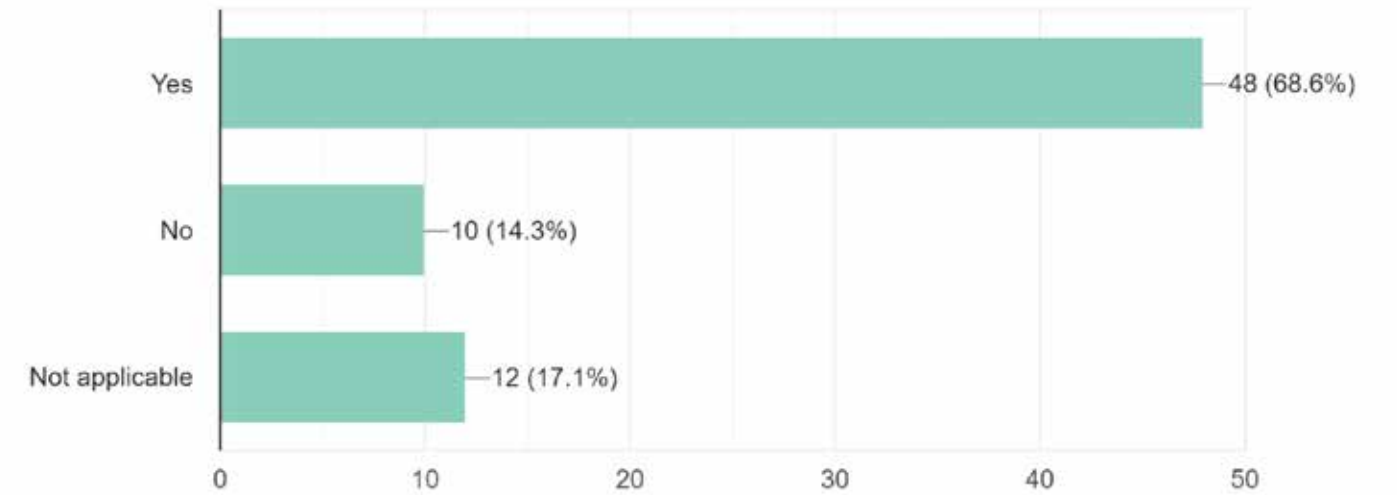
*Since joining Emerald Warriors RFC, has the club had a positive or negative impact on your life?*

70 responses



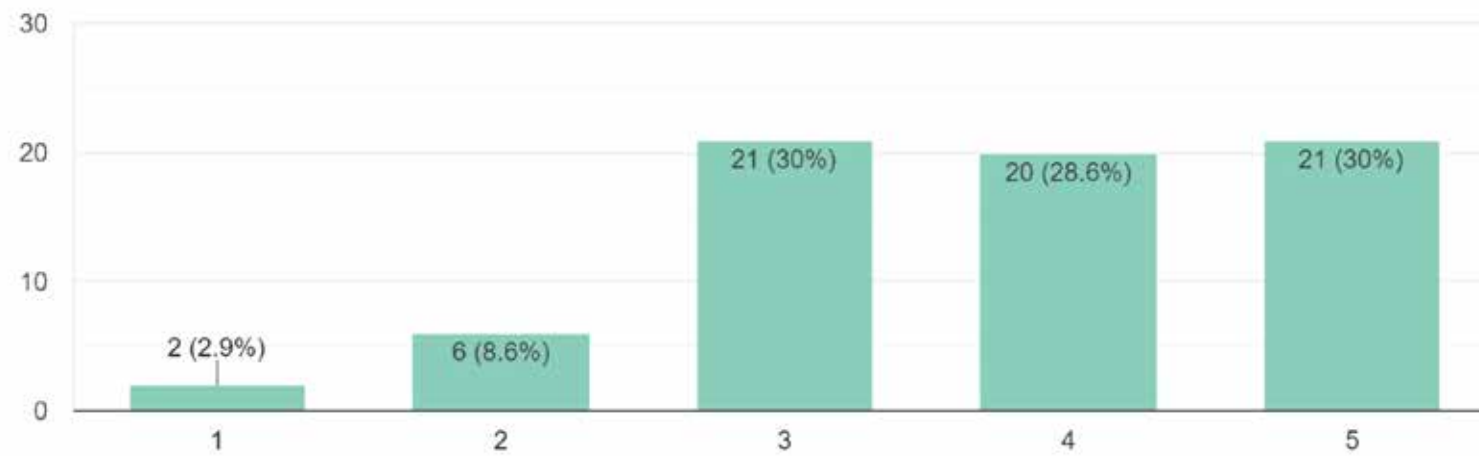
*Do you feel your knowledge of contact/non contact rugby has improved this season?*

70 responses



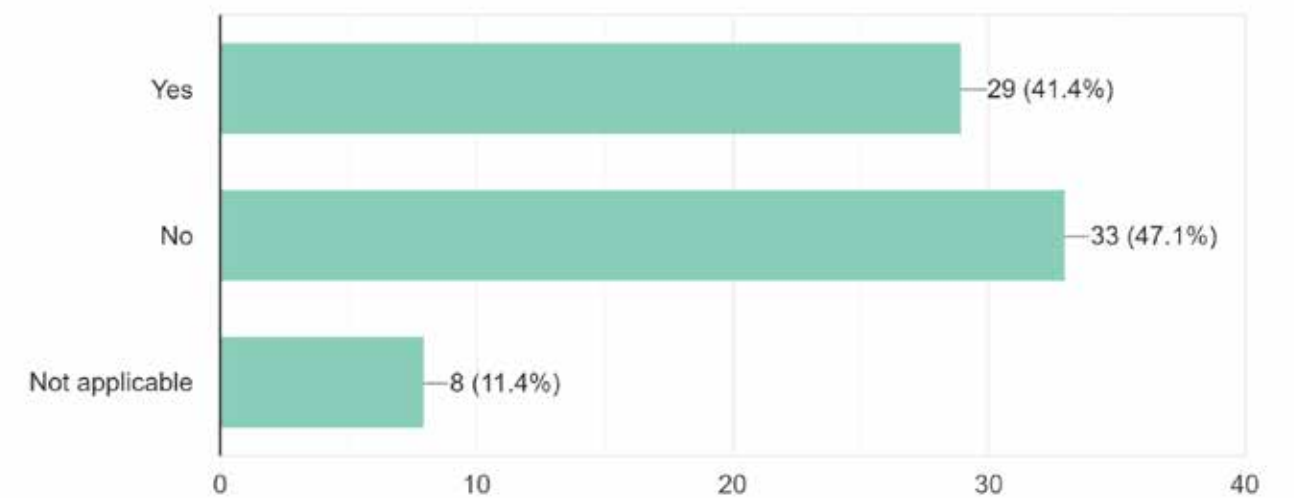
*Overall, as a member and considering the limitations due to COVID-19 restrictions, how enjoyable did you find the 2021/2022 club season?*

'1' being the lowest, '5' being the highest. 70 responses



*Have you ever experienced homophobic actions or language?*

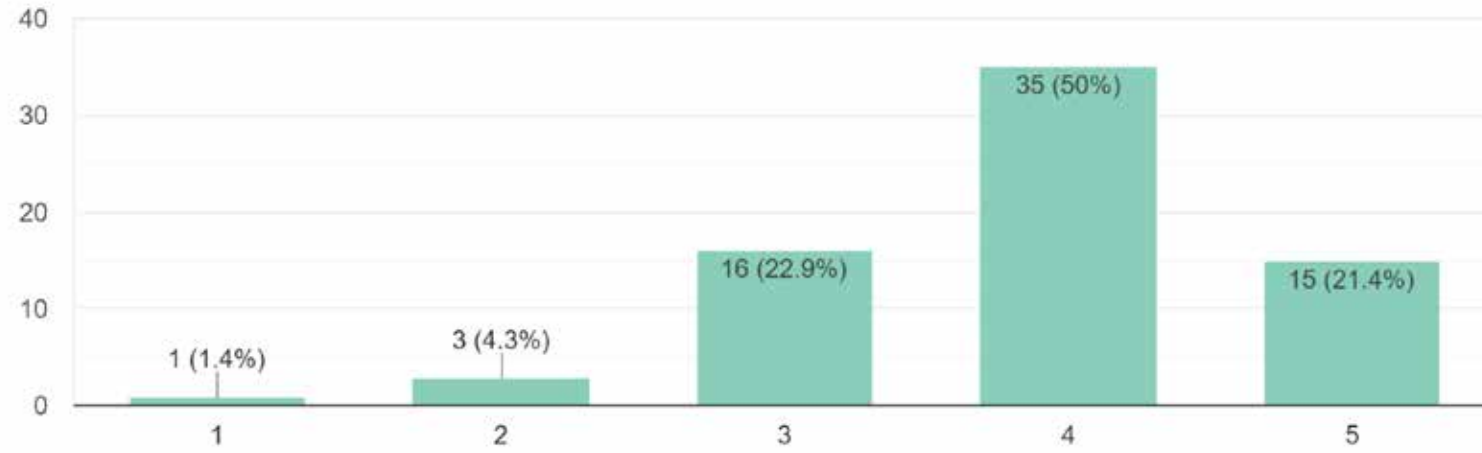
70 responses





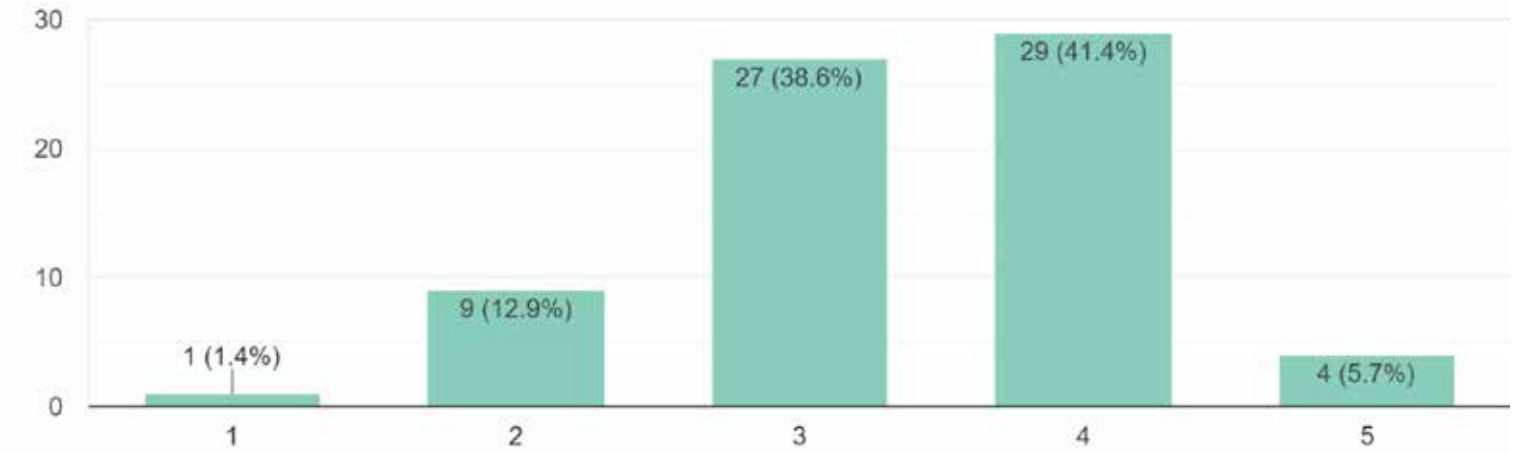
**How would you rate the performance of the current Emerald Warriors RFC Coaching Team?**

'1' being the lowest, '5' being the highest. 70 responses



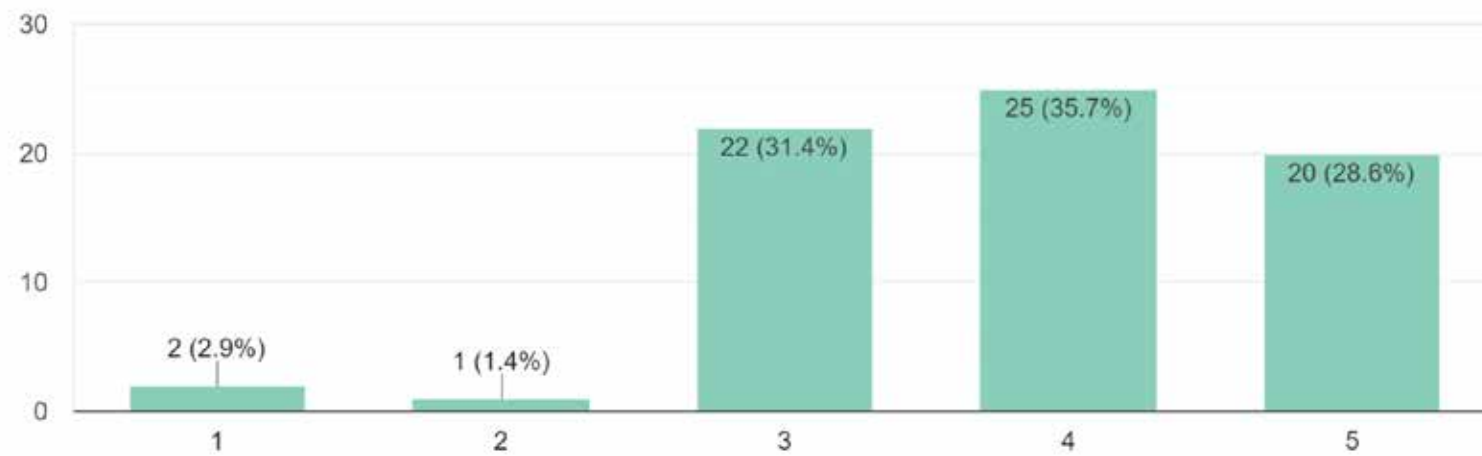
**How physically fit would you rate yourself?**

'1' being the lowest, '5' being the highest. 70 responses



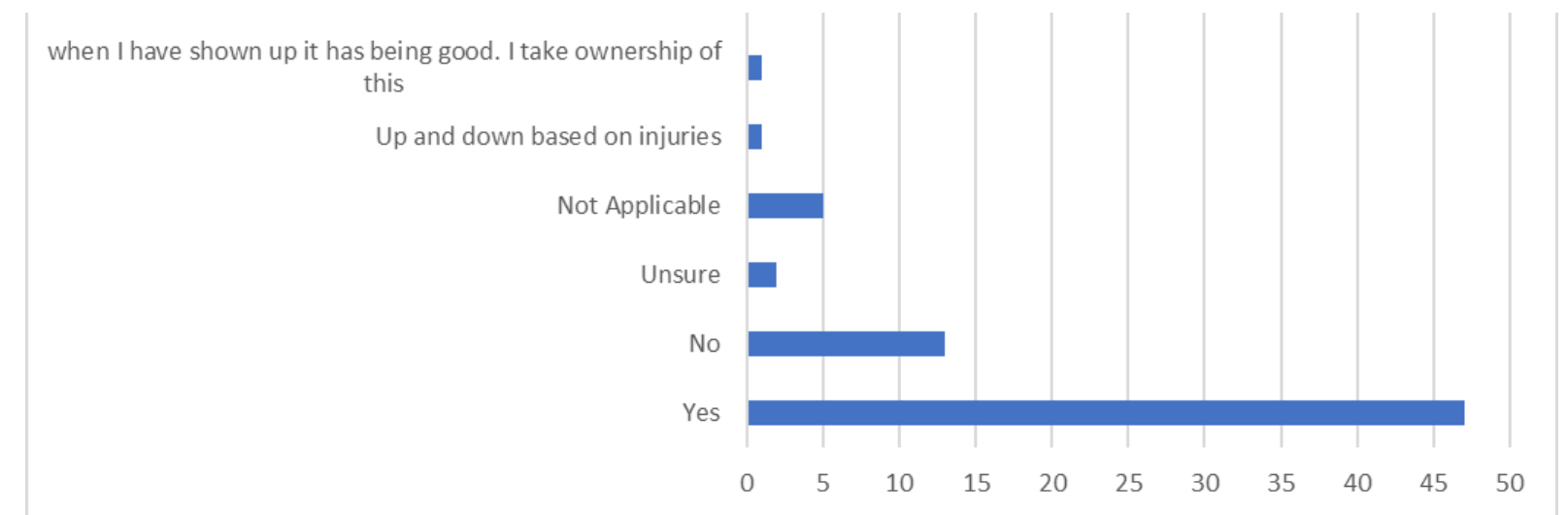
**Considering the implications of the COVID-19 restrictions, how would you rate the training provided during the 2021/2022 season?**

'1' being the lowest, '5' being the highest. 70 responses



**Has your fitness level increased since you joined the Emerald Warriors?**

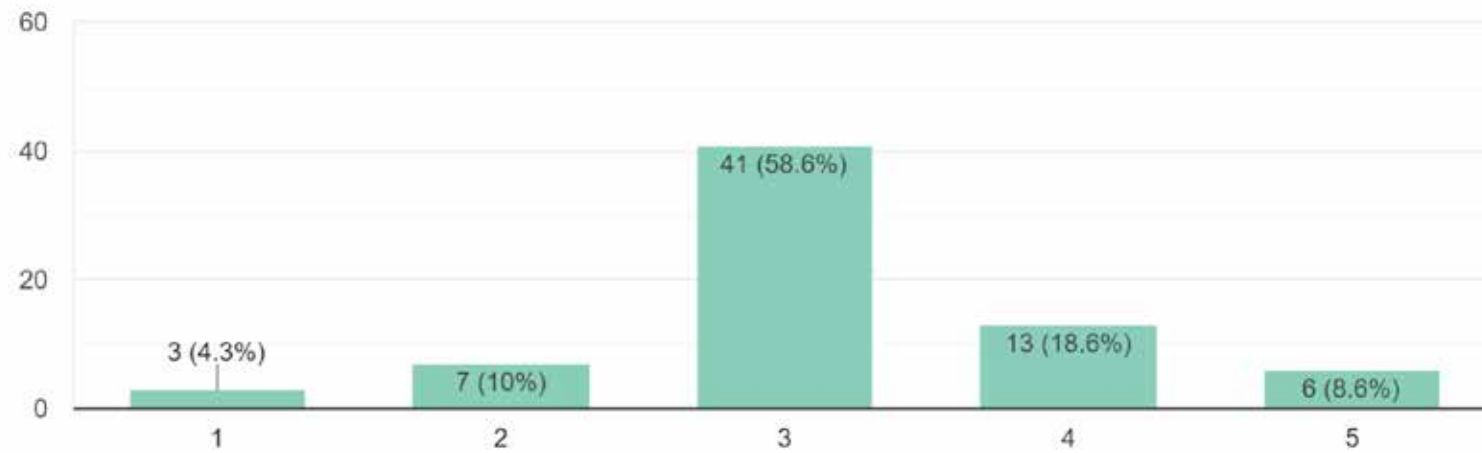
70 responses





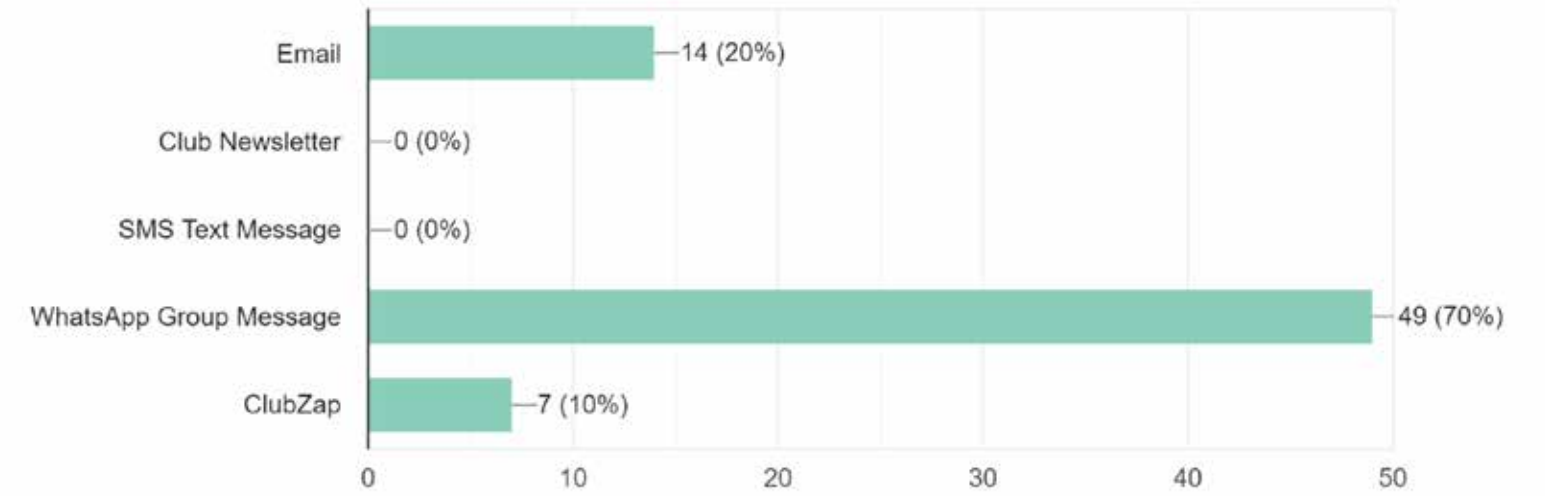
*How would you rate the club's Folláine Welfare Programme?*

70 responses



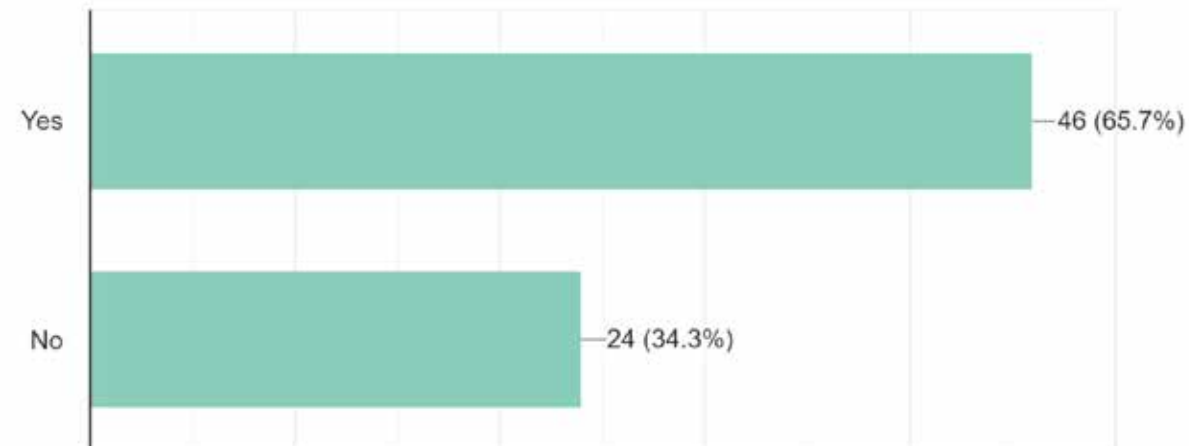
*What do you feel is the best method of communication to reach you for time sensitive in club updates?*

70 responses.



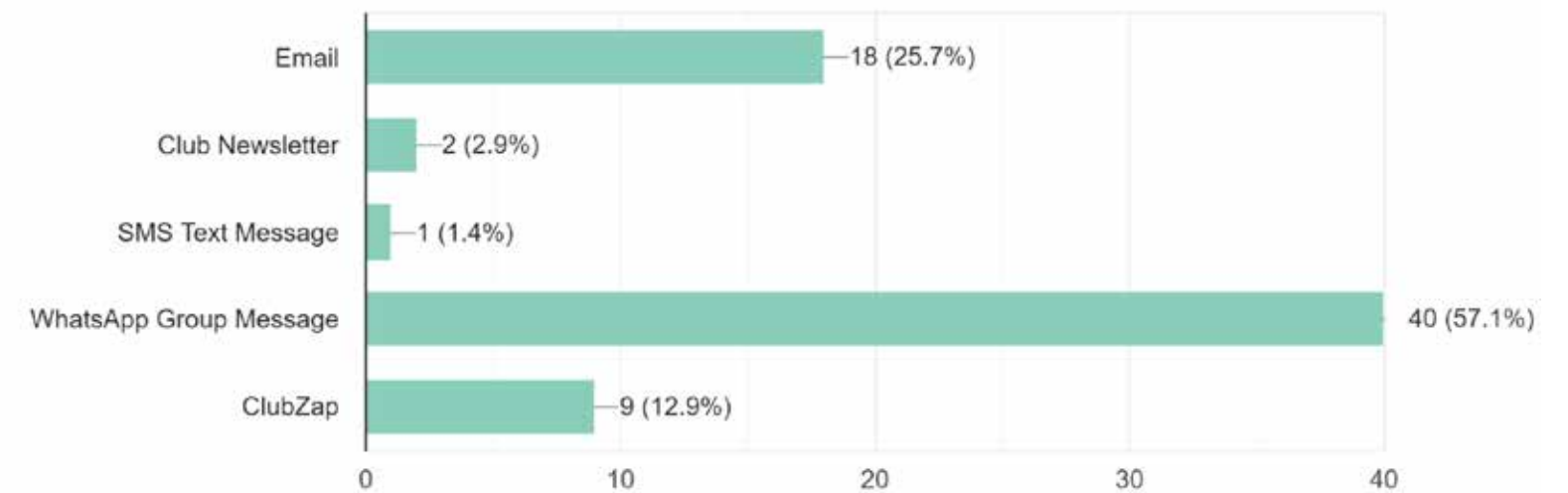
*Do you feel you contributed sufficiently towards fundraising efforts for Emerald Warriors RFC in 2021/2022?*

70 responses.



*What do you feel is the best method of communication to reach you for general updates?*

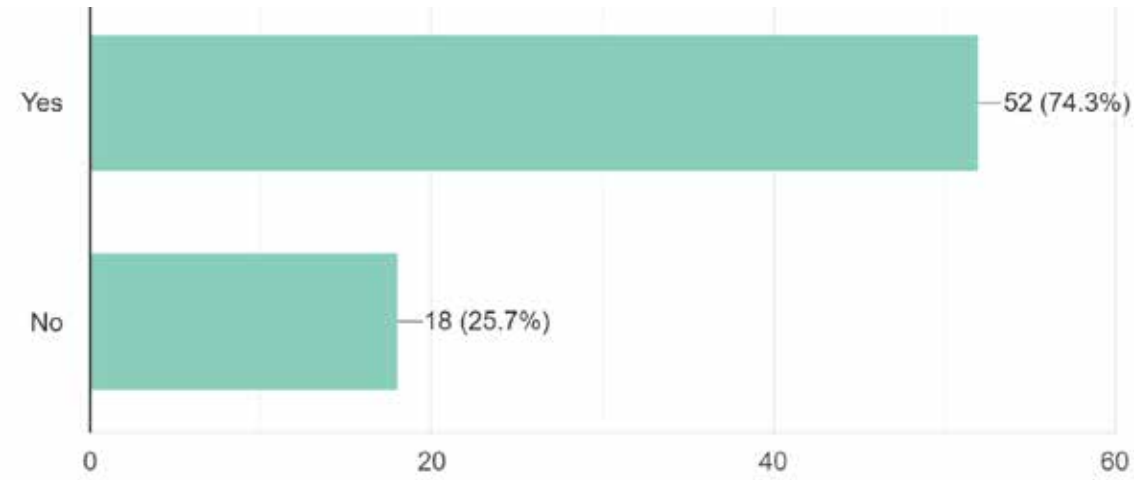
70 responses.





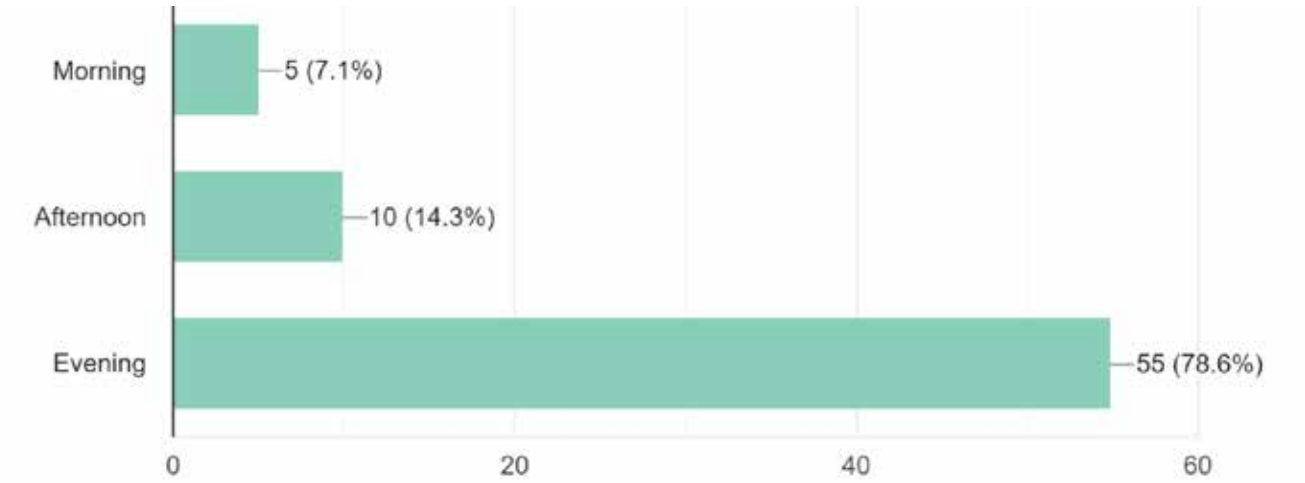
*Do you read the Emerald Warriors RFC Newsletter?*

70 responses.



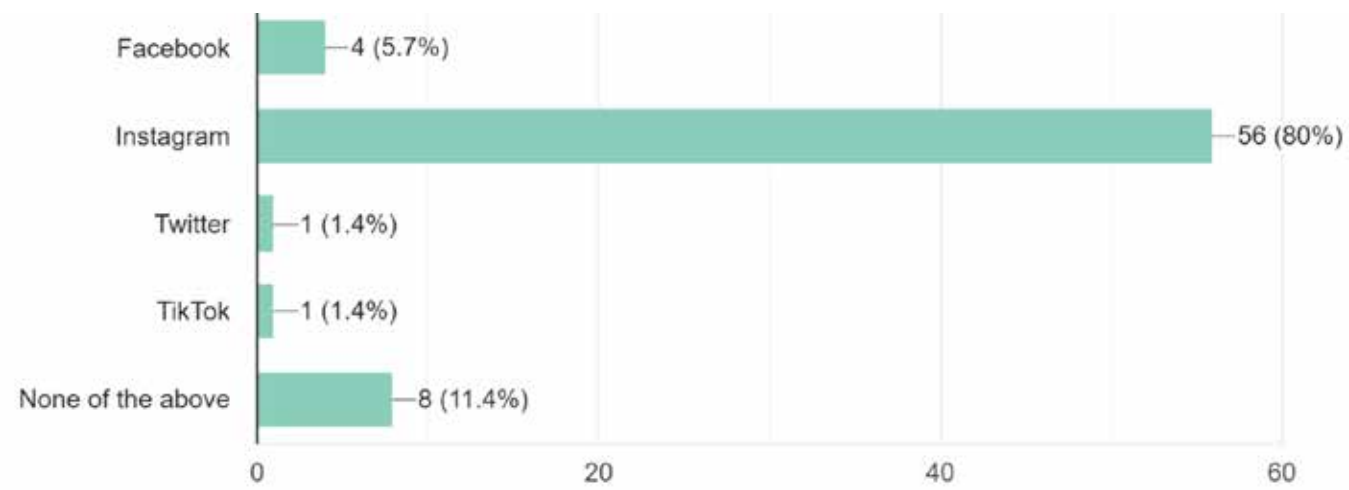
*What time of day are you most active on social media?*


70 responses



*Which of Emerald Warriors RFC's social media platforms do you use most frequently?*

70 responses





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